

VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTION



Volunteer Role:	Companion Volunteer
Department:	GRI – Acute Services
Ward(s)	Palliative Care Services
Key Contact:	Palliative Care Services Team/Volunteer Manager

1. Background and Role Purpose

The Hospital Palliative Care Team (HCPT), which comprises Doctors, Nurses, Admin and Pharmacy staff operate across all clinical areas in the hospital and provide specialist palliative care within the hospital to patients with life limiting conditions.

The primary role of the Companion volunteer is to provide befriending support to patients, many of whom are receiving palliative care, but rarely have visitors or who would benefit from more companionship during their admission. The role would involve chatting to patients and exploring the patient's personal interests, generally getting to know them and learn a little about their lives; their likes/dislikes etc.,

Depending on the patient's preference and interests, you may also find yourself playing board games and jigsaws, doing puzzles or listening to music. Our companion volunteers basically provide a little welcome distraction for patients, some of whom may be in hospital for a prolonged period.

Some patients may be fearful or distressed during their stay, so being able to offer a calming presence can make a big difference.

The Volunteer would also have a role in helping manage the syringe pump hub within the palliative care office. This would require liaising with ward teams and community teams to ensure the safe return of syringe pumps to the hub.

2. Volunteer Role: Key Tasks and Duties

- 1) Chatting to patients who would benefit from more social interaction
- 2) Offering companionship and reassurance to patients during their stay
- 3) Encouraging patients to engage in activities, if desired/appropriate
- 4) Escalating any patient concerns to staff
- 5) Helping to update "What Matters to Me" Boards at patients' bedsides
- 6) Assist the HPCT with the syringe pump hub.

3. Time Commitment

2-3 hours per week

4. Support

Support and supervision will be provided by the Palliative Care Team. The volunteer will get to know the team and will be encouraged to discuss any day-to-day concerns with staff members, who will be identified as points of contact for the volunteer.

5. Induction and Training

Essential Induction and training will be provided for all Volunteers to ensure they are prepared for the role and training will also be provided to enhance volunteers' knowledge of palliative care and end of life. This will consist of online training videos, face-to-face training and a buddying shift.

6. Essential Skills, Attributes and Experience for the Role

- High level of verbal communication & listening skills
- Mature outlook
- Resilience (being able to bounce back after a tough conversation/challenging visit)
- Empathetic
- A willingness to learn more about palliative care and end of life care
- Non-judgemental

7. General Information

In this role, volunteers will visit and chat with patients who would benefit from additional social interaction. This will be in addition to and complement the services provided by employees.

Prior to taking up this role, all volunteers must comply with the NHS process.

All volunteers must wear ID badges and polo shirts.

Volunteers are entitled to claim 'out of pocket' expenses.

Volunteers must be over 18 years of age. Volunteers are covered by NHS CNORIS Insurance scheme while fulfilling their role.