



## Role Description

<b>Volunteer role:</b>	<b>Ward Volunteer, Acute Care Unit</b>
<b>Based at:</b>	Acute Care Unit, Homerton University Hospital Homerton Row, London, E9 6SR
<b>Days/times:</b>	11.30-2.30pm, 3-5.30pm, 5.30-8pm, Mondays to Fridays
<b>Volunteer Supervisor:</b>	Ward Manager/Nurse in Charge
<b>Main purpose:</b>	To welcome visitors into the Acute Care Unit, to provide help to patients and to support the smooth running of the ward

## Background

The Acute Care Unit (ACU) treats emergency patients admitted through A&E who only require a short hospital stay (up to two nights) rather than being transferred to a specialist ward.

Visiting hours to the ACU run from 3-8pm. Volunteers meet and greet visitors at the entrance to the unit, directing people as required. They also offer vital additional help to patients, including assistance at mealtimes.

By volunteering in this role, you will ensure visitors are effectively welcomed into ACU, patients have more help and nursing staff more time to care.

As the ACU is a busy environment, it is essential that volunteers are able to take a proactive approach to the role, whilst always being guided by the Nurse in Charge and wishes of the individual patient.

## Duties

1. To check with the Nurse in Charge about the priorities for the shift and any issues the volunteer should be briefed about.
2. Greeting all visitors as they enter the Acute Care Unit and directing them to a particular patient if required.
3. Ensuring patients are ready for their evening meal – eg that they've washed their hands, are sitting comfortably and have a clear table.

4. Taking trays of food to individual patients as directed by the Nurse in Charge.
5. Helping patients who need assistance with eating, eg cutting up food, ensuring the tray and napkin are in the right position and the glass is within reach, clearing away the tray when the patient is finished.
6. Where patients have a food chart, noting what the patient has eaten and taking the chart to the Nurse in Charge for completion.
7. Assisting with the evening drinks round.
8. Asking patients if they need help and responding to their requests, eg. making refreshments outside the main drinks rounds, running errands (eg on-site shopping, posting letters, buying phone cards), tidying their bedside, reading.
9. Chatting to patients if they would like company.
10. Assisting with packing up a patient's belongings when the patient moves beds.
11. Asking patients to give feedback on their experience of ACU by completing a hand-held survey device.

## **Person Specification**

### **Ward Volunteer, ACU**

#### **Essential**

- Aged 18 or over
- Able to commit reliably to at least 3 hours a week for a minimum of six months
- A commitment to improve the patient's experience of their time in hospital
- Well presented, with a friendly and approachable manner and good verbal communication skills
- An ability to relate well to people on a one to one basis and be sympathetic to others' situations
- An ability to be patient and calm even in the face of difficult situations
- An ability to act on own initiative within the role description
- A willingness to be flexible and to follow the guidance of a Volunteer Supervisor
- A commitment to the trust's equal opportunities and diversity policies
  
- A willingness to abide by the Homerton's volunteer guidelines, including rules on confidentiality, health and safety, safeguarding adults and children and manual handling
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- To be willing to receive training in customer care, communication skills and any other areas as appropriate to the volunteer role

#### **General information**

- Volunteers should not undertake duties outside this role description without checking first with their Volunteer Supervisor.
- Volunteers must not undertake any manual handling tasks.
- A volunteer can offer emotional support and empathy but must under no circumstances offer advice or a medical opinion on a patient's treatment or assist with anything of a clinical nature.
- Volunteers are reminded of the importance of confidentiality at all times. They must under no circumstances discuss patients' affairs with any person other than the relevant staff. If a patient discloses information relevant to their condition, the volunteer should direct the patient to speak to the Nurse in Charge.

- Volunteers are complementary to paid staff and must not be used to replace roles that are usually undertaken by hospital employees.