



Volunteer Role Description

Volunteer role:	Ward Volunteer
Based at:	ECU, (Elderly care unit) , Homerton Hospital, Homerton Row, London, E9 6SR; or
Days/times:	8.30-11.30am, 11.30-2.30pm, 4.30-7.30pm Monday to Friday
Volunteer Supervisor:	Ward Manager/Nurse in Charge
Main purpose:	To assist patients at mealtimes, to help patients at other times as required, and to support the smooth running of the ward

Background

Homerton has 15 wards where patients with a wide range of conditions receive nursing and medical care.

Help at mealtimes is crucial to ensure patients have a nutritious diet – and it's an area where patients and carers often say they would like more support.

Outside mealtimes, this role is about finding out whether patients need any other help, whether this is making tea, running errands or keeping a patient company.

As the ward 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 priorities and any issues the volunteer should be briefed about.
2. Ensuring patients are ready for their meal – e.g. that they've washed their hands and have a clear table.
3. Taking trays of food to individual patients as directed by the Nurse in Charge.

4. Helping patients who need assistance with eating, e.g. cutting up food, ensuring the tray and napkin are in the right position and their drink is within reach, clearing away the tray when the patient is finished.
5. Where patients have a food chart, noting what the patient has eaten and taking the chart to the Nurse in Charge for completion.
6. Asking patients if they need help and responding to their requests, e.g. making refreshments outside the main drinks rounds, running errands (e.g. on-site shopping at the hospital, posting letters, buying phone cards), tidying the bedside, reading.
7. Chatting to patients if they would like company.
8. Meeting and greeting visitors as they come onto the ward and directing them to the patient they've come to see.
9. Assisting nurses with making up beds.
10. Assisting with general ward tidiness.
11. Asking patients to give feedback on their experience of the ward by completing a hand-held survey device.

Person Specification

Ward Volunteer

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
- 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.