

VOLUNTEER ROLE DESCRIPTION

ROLE:	Adult Ward Companion-Support
CLINICAL GROUPS:	Manchester Royal Infirmary North Manchester General Hospital Wythenshawe and Trafford Hospitals
SPECIALIST HOSPITALS:	Manchester Royal Eye Hospital Royal Manchester Children's Hospital Saint Mary's Hospital
DEPARTMENT:	Inpatient Wards across MFT
REPORTS TO:	Ward Manager, Nurse in Charge
ACCOUNTABLE TO:	Patient Experience Matron, Voluntary Services Manager, and Voluntary Services Administration Officer

ROLE PURPOSE

This volunteer role is designed to enhance the patient experience by offering companionship and helping to create a calm, and positive atmosphere on the ward. Volunteers will spend time engaging with patients through friendly conversation and simple activities, helping to reduce feelings of loneliness, and isolation particularly for those who may not receive regular visitors; by offering a warm and empathetic presence, volunteers support social interaction through games, reading aloud, or other light activities.

Volunteers provide emotional support by listening to patients' stories or concerns, helping them feel heard and valued during their hospital stay.

You will:

- Support only those patients identified by the nursing team as appropriate for volunteer interaction.
- Provide face to face, peer support to patients, by helping to create a warm, welcoming, and non-judgemental environment.
- Spend time with patients through conversation, reading, playing games, or other simple activities.
- Assist patients with basic non-clinical tasks such as fetching water, magazines, or personal items within the ward.
- Assist ward staff with keeping a clean and tidy environment.
- Help patients access entertainment resources such as books, puzzles, or hospital TVs.
- Offer a friendly, respectful, and compassionate presence at all times to promote trust and emotional well-being.
- Maintain patient confidentiality and uphold the values of dignity and respect.
- Be reliable, flexible, and able to adapt to different situations as they arise.

Please note: This role does not replace that of a member of staff. However, the volunteer will directly benefit colleagues by offering valuable support to patients during their stay.

MAIN DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE VOLUNTEER

- Report to the Ward Manager or Nurse in Charge (NIC) at the start of each session.
- The volunteer will be introduced to a Nursing Assistant (NA) or Registered Nurse (RN), who will identify a suitable patient or small group of patients to support.
- Introduce yourself to the identified patient, obtain their verbal consent to offer support, and always use the patient's preferred name.
- Provide a warm, positive and welcoming environment for patients on their arrival at each session.
- Listen, communicate and engage in conversation with patients to help reduce stress and feelings of isolation.
- Read to patients from newspapers, magazines, or books to promote cognitive function and improve mood by maintaining engagement with the outside world.
- Provide hand-rub therapy to patients (where appropriately trained) to promote wellbeing and relaxation using gentle massage techniques.
- Ensure patients have access to toiletries, clean pyjamas, clothes, and footwear during their stay, and notify the nursing team if any items are unavailable.
- Promote patient wellbeing by supporting and encouraging participation in suitable activities based on individual needs, such as puzzles (crosswords, Sudoku), games (draughts, chess, cards, quizzes), or other cognitive and fine motor activities. Volunteers should make use of the activity boxes where available.
- Offer support and information as directed by colleagues, in line with relevant training and NHS standards.
- Help maintain ward information, displays, and promotional resources, ensuring they are up to date and well presented.
- Assist staff with setting up and tidying away the relative's room.
- Contribute to patient experience initiatives, such as Nurses Day, Hydration Week, and other local or national campaigns.
- Support colleagues with general enquiries and light administrative duties, including filing, laminating, photocopying, scanning, and processing incoming and outgoing post.
- Assist with patient and visitor support, including signposting and helping with simple hospitality tasks (e.g., making drinks).
- Support the collection of Friends and Family Test (FFT) data by engaging directly with patients and colleagues within clinical areas. Log incoming FFT cards and prepare them for onward delivery.
- Help deliver, distribute, and collect Patient Experience related surveys and posters across hospital wards and departments.
- Collate patient experience information to assist managers in preparing reports.
- Promote and uphold equality, diversity, and individual rights, ensuring that your practice is aligned with MFT policies. Take appropriate action if you witness behaviour that undermines these principles.
- Act as a buddy or mentor for new volunteers, providing guidance and encouragement.
- Volunteers must follow all food hygiene and uniform guidelines, including:
 - Hair tied back
 - Bare below the elbows
 - No jewellery
 - No artificial nails, gel or acrylics
 - Cuts must be covered with a waterproof plaster
 - If in doubt, volunteers must always seek advice from NA/RN

RECORD AND REVIEW

- Observe sessions and complete a paper-based record.
- Submit the completed record to the Ward Manager or Nurse in Charge, who will then upload the information onto HIVE.

TRAINING

- Ensure all Trust Mandatory Training requirements are completed and within date.
- Hand Hygiene and Infection and Prevention – Level 2
- Develop a working knowledge of Trust policies and procedures relating to patient care.
- Actively promote and support equality, diversity, and the rights of individuals, ensuring your practice aligns with Trust policies. Identify and take appropriate action if you witness behaviour that undermines these principles.
- Be prepared to adapt to new or different duties as required in response to service developments.

ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PRACTITIONER SUPERVISING THE VOLUNTEER

- Provide the volunteer with a full orientation to the venue, ensuring they are familiar with the environment, safety procedures, and processes.
- Share all relevant information with the volunteer to enable effective support, including any cultural or religious considerations and any other special needs.
- Serve as the primary point of contact for the volunteer, offering guidance, support, and regular communication to help them feel welcomed and valued, and to address any questions or concerns they may have.

The above responsibilities will also be covered in the training programme provided by the Voluntary Services team and the Ward Manager / NIC prior to the volunteer starting in this role.

INFECTION CONTROL

All volunteers are required to adhere to the MFT Infection Prevention and Control policies and procedures applicable to their role. Managers are also responsible for ensuring that their volunteers complete all relevant, required training in this area.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

MFT has a statutory responsibility to provide and maintain a healthy and safe environment for its volunteers to work in. You have a personal responsibility to ensure that you do not put the health and safety of either yourself, or of anybody else, at risk.

You must not willingly endanger yourself or others whilst on hospital grounds; safe working practices and safety precautions must be adhered to and protective clothing and equipment must be used where appropriate. The MFT Health and Safety Policies detail your full responsibilities regarding Health & Safety at Work, which can be found on the MFT Intranet.

All accidents/incidents must be reported to your Senior Manager, including the reporting of potential hazards.

Please note you must only act within the remit of your role and is important that under no circumstances as a volunteer you become involved in any of the following activities:

- Clinical or medical treatments of any kind, including the handling of pharmaceuticals
- Psychological and or physical interventions, counselling or nursing duties. This includes supporting a patient with feeding or using the toilet
- Advising patients on matters at all – personal, financial, medical, nutritional etc. If a patient asks for advice; the volunteer must direct them to the nursing colleagues
- Be involved in lifting/handling patients or pushing patients in wheelchairs unless trained
- Monitor or supervise patients
- Access or input a patient's records
- Handle complaints from patients. Any concerns raised must be escalated to the nursing team, and or the volunteers' services managers
- Escorting patients off hospital premises

Please speak with your manager if you have any queries regarding this.

SAFEGUARDING

All volunteers must ensure that the policies and legislation relating to child protection and Safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults are adhered to. Any concerns should be reported immediately in line with defined MFT processes. Managers are also responsible for ensuring that their volunteers complete all relevant, required training in this area.

SECURITY

All volunteers have a responsibility to ensure the preservation of NHS property and resources. Any concerns should be raised immediately with your line manager, or via the Freedom to Speak Up team.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All volunteers are required to maintain confidentiality at all times in all aspects of their work and to retain the required standard of Information Governance training. Managers are also responsible for ensuring that their volunteers complete all relevant, required training in this area.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION

MFT operates a system of comprehensive communication with all volunteers, which is based on the principles that people will be more committed to their work if they fully understand what is happening in their organisation and how it is performing. Regular updates are issued by MFT and which are accessible via the MFT Intranet. Colleagues can also access a wide range of information, including Workforce Policies, via People Place.

NO SMOKING

MFT operates a Smoke Free policy across all of its sites. The policy applies to all colleagues, affiliates, volunteers, patients and visitors and extends to the hospital grounds as well as internal areas.

Person Specification

Attributes	Essential	Desirable	Method of Assessment
QUALIFICATIONS	<p>Successful candidates will require a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check.</p> <p>Ability to communicate effectively in English, both verbally and in writing.</p>		<p>Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS).</p> <p>Application form / interview / recruitment event.</p>
KNOWLEDGE	<p>Demonstrates understanding of the Trust's core values and how they relate to the volunteering role.</p> <p>Shows a strong understanding of the hospital.</p>	<p>Experience of working within a health care environment.</p> <p>Shows a strong understanding of the ward and its functions.</p>	<p>Application form / interview / recruitment event.</p>
TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE	<p>Full training will be provided to all successful candidates.</p>	<p>Healthcare / related Qualifications.</p>	<p>Completion of the Trusts Mandatory Training.</p> <p>Role specific training provided by department of placement.</p>
SKILLS AND ABILITIES	<p>Displays skills such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compassion, empathy, active listening and responsiveness • Ability to work independently and take initiative • Enthusiastic and strong motivation • Enhanced communication skills, with the ability to engage effectively with a variety of health professionals, the general public, and fellow volunteers • A commitment to maintaining confidentiality at all times. • A professional attitude • An understanding of the role's boundaries and the ability to recognise when to refer matters to staff. 	<p>Ability to manage occasional challenging behaviour with professionalism and empathy.</p> <p>Experience using office equipment, such as, computers, printers, scanners and telephones.</p>	<p>Application form / interview / recruitment event.</p>

		Previous ward experience.	
ATTRIBUTES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enthusiastic and committed to supporting and contributing to high standards of patient care. • Friendly, open, empathetic and compassionate. • Professional outlook with a positive attitude. • Honest and trustworthy. • Resilient and able to handle challenges effectively 		Application form / interview / recruitment event
OTHERS	You must be 18-years of age to apply for this role.		Application form and evidence of ID.

