
7.7A VOLUNTEERS POLICY

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INTRODUCTION

- ❑ Volunteers play an important role within the Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Foundation Trust and their contribution provides the opportunity for the Trust to enrich and extend the range of services offered to patients and members of the public visiting the hospital.
- ❑ The use of volunteers also plays an important role in fostering and strengthening the links between the hospital and the local communities which it serves, including the various voluntary organisations.

PURPOSE

- ❑ The purpose of voluntary services is a two-way process of helping to meet and enhance the care of patients and their families and to provide an avenue for members of the community to offer their services.

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- ❑ This Policy is intended to ensure that there is a clear framework for the management and accountability of volunteer activity, a procedure for the recruitment and induction of new volunteers and a means of developing further opportunities for voluntary work. The Policy also recognises the links which already exist with the voluntary organisations which provide help within the Trust.
- ❑ This Policy takes account of Health Service Circular 1999/023, "Promoting Volunteering and relations with the Voluntary Sector in the NHS" and the principal recommendations of the report "Making a difference: Volunteering in the NHS" EL(96)15, both of which aim to strengthen the participation of volunteers in the Service.
- ❑ This Policy should be read also in conjunction with the Trust's Recruitment Practices, Equality Scheme and Disability Discrimination in Employment Policies, as well as the complementary policy "Travelling Expenses and Meals for Volunteers" - No. 7.7(B).

Equal Opportunities

- ❑ The Trust welcomes the contributions that volunteers of different gender, culture and background can make to the organisation and promotes equality of opportunity regardless of race, ethnic or national origin, disability, colour, gender, gender orientation, age, religious beliefs, creed or marital status. The Equal Opportunities monitoring form is attached as an Appendix to this policy. Please click on link to view
- ❑ The minimum age for a volunteer will be 16 with the exception of those who may be accepted for a short-term Community Scheme. Whilst the Trust will take all possible action to ensure that age discrimination does not occur, Volunteers' fitness for their role will be reviewed regularly by either the voluntary group to which they belong, or by the manager of the area in which they work. Such reviews will be carried out in conjunction with the Voluntary Services Co-ordinator. However, providing that the individual remains capable of carrying out the role required in a safe manner, age will not preclude them from continuing as a volunteer.
- ❑ **The Young Persons Directive** will apply to volunteers up to the age of 18. To comply with the Directive, all potential risks associated with the intended voluntary work must be identified through a risk assessment and made known to the volunteer's parent(s) or guardian. The written agreement of the parent(s) or guardian must then be obtained before the volunteer can commence any voluntary activity.

DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- ❑ The Trust recognises the important role which voluntary work plays in complementing its staff and supports and encourages the efforts of the voluntary sector.
- ❑ Volunteers provide a service to patients and their relatives. **Their role is complementary and not a substitute to that of paid staff and they will not, in any circumstances, undertake the duties associated with vacant staff posts.**

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- The Trust recognises the value of separate voluntary groups, some of which constitute a substantial volunteer service and actively encourages and recognises their autonomy.
- The Director of Marketing and Communications has specific responsibility for volunteers within the Trust.
- The lead responsibility for co-ordinating the recruitment, organisation and deployment of volunteers, and the development of further opportunities for volunteer activity has been devolved to the Trust's Voluntary Services Co-ordinator.
- The Voluntary Services Co-ordinator, in conjunction with the co-ordinator from each voluntary group, will maintain a register of volunteers. The register will include such information as appropriate, eg. personal details, hours and activities.

FUNDRAISING VOLUNTEERS

- Fundraising Manager will have responsibility for recruitment of those volunteers working outside of the hospital (collections/one-off events).

SCOPE OF POLICY

- This policy applies to all volunteers and voluntary groups working for and within the Trust.
- All volunteers will be covered by the Trust's membership of the NHS Litigation Authority Liabilities to Third Parties Scheme (LTPS) which includes Public Liability Insurance.
- Every Volunteer has an obligation to comply with all Health and Safety policies and procedures and safe working practices (especially the Fire Alarm procedure) which have been established within the Trust.
- Volunteers will be given written details of the Trust's requirements in regard to confidentiality and the protection of patient-identifiable information. Each volunteer will be required to sign to acknowledge receipt of the information.

DEFINITION OF A VOLUNTEER

- Anyone whose offer of help without payment, who is accepted by the Trust and who attends by invitation or arrangement is, by definition, a volunteer.

RECRUITMENT, SELECTION AND PLACEMENT OF VOLUNTEERS

- The Trust will encourage the role of voluntary groups by ensuring that contact is made with the local community to develop relationships with interested groups and to identify individuals who may wish to undertake voluntary activities within the hospital.

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- The Trust will regularly publicise the opportunities available for volunteers.
- The Director of Marketing and Communications will ensure that consistent high standards in the recruitment, selection and placement of volunteers operate across the Trust. This will be implemented through working with local voluntary groups/co-ordinators/managers who will have delegated responsibility for agreeing volunteer placements with managers in the Trust's Divisions/Departments.
- All individuals who wish to offer their services as a volunteer will be directed to the Voluntary Services Co-ordinator. An application form will need to be completed, on receipt of which the Voluntary Services Co-ordinator will arrange to interview the individual(s) concerned. **References will be taken up.** The Trust's policies on Equal Opportunities and Disability Discrimination in Employment will be applied in this process.
- A CRB check must first be undertaken by the Trust for all prospective Volunteers prior to commencement of any voluntary activity.**
- Volunteers may be introduced to the Division/department for a trial period during which the suitability of the placement can be ascertained by all concerned.
- Responsibility for daily supervision of the volunteer lies with the line manager of the Ward, Division or Department in which he/she has been placed.
- The Voluntary Services Co-ordinator should ensure that the volunteer and the line manager are aware of their responsibilities towards each other and that the volunteer adheres to the duties set out in the outline task description prepared for the particular attachment.
- Volunteers will be expected to comply with all Trust policies and procedures as amended from time to time, except those relating to terms of employment.

HEALTH SCREENING

- All volunteers will be required to complete a health declaration questionnaire prior to being offered a placement. This will be sent to the Trust's Occupational Health Unit who may, if the situation demands it, require the applicant to attend a follow-up appointment.
- In assessing the health of a prospective volunteer however, due account will be taken of the nature of the assistance he/she will be giving to the Trust; persons who have a condition which makes them unsuitable for paid employment can, therefore, still be considered for voluntary work.
- As part of the Trust's commitment to their general well-being, Volunteers will have access to the services of the Trust's Occupational Health Unit.

INDUCTION PROGRAMME

- The Voluntary Services Co-ordinator will ensure that all volunteers undertake an induction programme. This will include making each volunteer aware of the relevant aspects of the hospital structure, lines of communication, Infection Control, Health and Safety at Work Act, the hospital's Fire Procedures and the need for

confidentiality, etc. The provision of an identity/security badge should be arranged as soon as possible by the Voluntary Services Co-ordinator before commencement.

EXPENSES

- ❑ The payment of volunteers' travelling expenses and, where appropriate, meals allowances, and the procedure for making such payments, are set out in the complementary Policy "**Travelling Expenses and Meals Allowances for Volunteers**", reference **7.7(B)**. The Trust recognises the importance of ensuring that its volunteers are not financially disadvantaged, particularly members of the community on low incomes who might otherwise be deterred from offering their services as volunteers.
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COMMUNITY SCHEMES

- ❑ Candidates undertaking Duke of Edinburgh Awards or other proficiency schemes, within an organised youth programme, may be accommodated where possible by the Trust's voluntary services for their community service placement. In the case of those aged under 17, they will be placed under the supervision of a designated employee.
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RECOGNITION AND LONG SERVICE

- ❑ The Trust values the significant contribution made by volunteers and in order to highlight particular noteworthy projects or long service, the Director of Marketing and Communication, in consultation with the appropriate voluntary group, will bring such achievements to the attention of the Trust Board. The Trust will also host an annual social function (usually in the pre-Christmas period) for its volunteers to recognise their valuable contribution to the hospital during the year.
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COMMUNICATION

- ❑ The Director of Marketing and Communication, in conjunction with the Voluntary Services Co-ordinator and the placement managers, will ensure that channels of communication are established to enable staff and volunteers to enhance their working relationships, identify possible problems and to support the commitment of volunteers. Volunteers will be made aware of Trust developments through regular meetings and through the provision of Trust Newsletters, etc. Volunteers will also be encouraged to contribute to any discussion on policy and practice.
- ❑ The Trust's **accredited staff representatives** will be kept informed of all developments and extensions of the voluntary activity either on an individual basis (eg. if they represent an area in which increased voluntary activity is being planned) or collectively via the Trust's Staff Partnership Forum. The Trust recognises the value of such consultation in facilitating and establishing the lines along which both staff and volunteers can co-operative effectively without conflict.

MONITORING OF THE POLICY

This policy will be monitored on a quarterly basis through the PALS report to the Board of Directors.

REVIEW

This Policy will be reviewed every 3 years through the Trust's Staff Partnership Forum.

APPENDIX - EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES - VOLUNTARY WORKERS

This form is issued with each application for Voluntary Work.

To enable us to monitor the effectiveness of the Trust's Equal Opportunities and anti-Discrimination policies, it would be very helpful if you will complete and return this questionnaire with your application form. The information you provide will **only** be used for monitoring purposes.

Title: Dr/Mr/Mrs/Miss

Surname

Forename

Are you currently employed by this Trust? YES/NO

1 I would describe my ethnic origin as:-

A WHITE

- British
- Irish
- Any Other White Background

B MIXED

- White & Black Caribbean
- White & Black African
- White & Asian
- Any Other Mixed Background

C ASIAN OR ASIAN BRITISH

- Indian
- Bangladeshi
- Pakistani
- Any Other Asian Background Within (C)

D BLACK OR BLACK BRITISH

- Caribbean
- African
- Any Other Black Background Within (D)

E OTHER ETHNIC GROUPS

- Chinese
- Any Other Ethnic Group

2 MALE / FEMALE

3 Do you consider yourself as having a physical or mental disability YES / NO

NB: A Disability is defined as "a physical or mental impairment which has a substantial and long-term effect on a person's ability to carry out normal day to day activities"

If YES:-

(a) Please describe briefly your disability:-

.....
.....

(b) Does it affect:- (PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOX)

- Mobility
- Manual Dexterity
- Physical Co-ordination
- Continence
- Hearing
- Eyesight
- Speech
- Memory / Concentration
- Learning / Understanding
- Perception of Physical Danger
- Ability to lift / carry / move everyday objects

Signature Date