

VOLUNTEERING

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

APPLYING TO BE A VOLUNTEER

Will I need a CV?

CV's are a useful way of providing information about your studies and work history, but they are not essential when applying for a volunteer role. However, you will be required to complete an application form.

Do I have to come for an interview and what will it involve?

Yes, all applicants for volunteer work are required to attend an information event and an interview. The interview is very informal and will give us the chance to get to know you a little bit better. It will also give you the chance to get to know us and to ask any questions about volunteering. You will be able to discuss the various volunteer roles and we will help you decide what you would like to do.

I'm not sure what I want to do, how will this be decided?

When you attend for interview, you will have the chance to discuss the various volunteer roles and what's involved. It's a good idea to jot down what you think you might like to do and what you enjoy doing as this will be a good starting point.

If I am successful at interview, what happens next?

You will receive a conditional offer of a volunteering letter. The letter will invite you to attend the Human Resources Department to commence pre-placement checks. Please read the letter carefully as we will not be able to complete checks without the correct documentation.

What are pre-placement checks?

These are checks undertaken before anyone can start work (paid or unpaid) to ensure the safety of you as a volunteer, as well as our patients, staff and visitors.

For volunteers these checks include:

- Verification of identification
Because we need to check that you are who you say you are!
- Right to Work
Some work permits carry restrictions for voluntary work and the Trust is legally obliged to ensure we remain within UK Visas and Immigration regulations
- Criminal Record Check (Disclosure & Barring Scheme – DBS)
A DBS check is a police check that looks into your past to see if you have a criminal record. It is required for all volunteer roles within a healthcare setting. Each person is considered on an individual basis so, if you are concerned about having a DBS check carried out, you can discuss this confidentially, with a member of the Voluntary Services Team. You will need to provide three forms of Identification (ID). This usually includes a form of photo ID such as a passport or driving license, and two other forms of address ID such as a utility bill or bank statement. Don't worry

if you don't have these documents, we will advise you of what alternatives can be used. You will not be charged for the DBS check.

- **Occupational Health**

All volunteers are required to complete a paper health screen form. The Occupational Health team will assess the information you have provided about your health, to determine if you are fit and well enough to carry out your chosen role. Sometimes, they advise minor changes to the role, which will make it more appropriate to a volunteer's level of fitness. Where a volunteer is deemed not fit enough at all to carry out their chosen role, we will do our best to find an alternative role that will be more appropriate.

- **Employment History (References)**

You must ensure that you provide details of referees who can confirm your work history, also including any education if you have attended school, college or university in the last 3 years. If you have been unemployed you will need to provide evidence of benefits e.g. job seekers. If you are retired, again you will need to provide evidence of your retirement status.

If you are not able to provide referees and/or evidence to confirm a 3 year employment and/or education history then you will need to provide details of someone who can provide a character reference for you. This needs to be someone of good standing – the same as if you were applying for a passport.

Referees must not however, be related to you in any way.

What skills/qualifications will I need to be a volunteer?

Generally, volunteers need to have good communication skills and to have a genuine interest in volunteering and helping others. Good volunteers demonstrate kindness and compassion but it's also essential to have a good sense of humour too! It will help a lot, if you are a little outgoing and have worked with people before, but, it's not essential. So, if you are a little shy and reserved at first, don't worry, we'll soon help you to feel at home and gain more confidence. Most of all, we want you to enjoy your volunteer work and to feel part of the team!

STARTING AT THE TRUST AS A VOLUNTEER

How will I know when I can start volunteering?

You will only be able to start volunteering once you have completed pre-placement checks to the Trust's satisfaction. You will then be contacted by a member of the Volunteer Services Team to arrange a start date.

Will I receive an induction and any training?

You will receive all the necessary training for your role and you will be given a thorough induction you will have to attend these before your voluntary work can commence.

What support will I get?

Where possible, we will try to 'buddy' you up with an experienced volunteer to support you through your first few sessions. Staff on the wards and in the departments will also help you settle in. Everyone settles in at a different pace so, and some people require more support than others. This will be discussed with you before you start and then reviewed a few weeks after your first session. The Voluntary Services Department has an 'open door'

policy, which means that you can call in if you have a problem or a query. You will also receive the necessary induction and training for your chosen volunteer role.

Will I have to wear a uniform?

At the hospital we consider our volunteers to be representatives of the Foundation Trust and therefore ask that our volunteers follow a dress code. This usually means that you are dressed smartly and look professional. Some volunteer roles, such as Tea-bar roles require you to wear protective aprons or tabards and these will be provided for you. For security reasons, all volunteers must wear an identification badge at all times and this will be provided for you.

Can I volunteer at the weekends?

Some volunteer roles are available at the weekends, such as helping on the wards or hospital radio. Other roles such as guiding are limited to Monday to Friday shifts.

How much time will I need to give and how often will I need to come?

Everyone has different personal commitments and we will try to find a role that fits in with your personal circumstances. Most volunteers give between 2-4 hours of their time, one day each week. Others come in two to three times each week. Some people come in once a month. How much time you give is really up to you.

I have a disability, can I still volunteer?

City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Trust welcomes people with disabilities. If you tell us about your disability, we will work together with you to find a role that suits you and your personal circumstances.

I have a paid job, can I still volunteer?

Yes. If you have a paid job, we will try our best to find a volunteer role that fits around your paid work.

I'm claiming job-seeker's allowance, can I still volunteer?

When claiming job-seeker's allowance, you must be able to prove to the authorities that you are available for work at all times. We advise that you check with your job-seeker advisors, before undertaking volunteer work.

If I don't like my volunteer role, can I change it?

It can take a little while to settle in, as in any new role. We do ask however, that you persevere for a few weeks – once you get to know everyone and can find your way around, it will be much more fun! If you don't like the volunteer role you have chosen, or you are still finding it hard to settle in, this can be discussed and we will try to arrange more support or find you an alternative placement.

If I have to leave, can I come back later?

If you have to leave and then decide you would like to come back to volunteer at a later date, provided it is within twelve months of you leaving you will be able to return. All you will need to do is arrange to call in for a chat and we will arrange for your return. If it is over twelve months since you have left, then you will need to re-apply.