



# The Friends of St Cross

We support The Hospital of St Cross, Rugby  
and the local community and mental health services



## **Role Description: Mealtime Companion Service Volunteer**

**Responsible to:** Mealtime Companion Service Co-Ordinator

**Accountable to:** Board of Trustees

### **Role Outline**

The Mealtime Companion Volunteer role is a supportive role for our in-patients during busy mealtimes. As some of our patients experience difficulty with eating and drinking, they require help with packaging or cutting of food or just a bit of company whilst eating and drinking. The Mealtime Companions will be able to aid patients with all aspects whilst encouraging patients to maintain their nutritional and hydration intake. The Mealtime Companion will be an active member of the team and join in the mealtime experience.

### **Learning and development**

To ensure you have the skills and knowledge required for this role, you will need to complete induction training plus 5 hours of mealtime companion Training. This additional training is provided for this role and will cover topics such as organisation of mealtimes, ward etiquette, recognising swallowing difficulties and feeding patients with dementia.

At the induction you will receive a copy of the Volunteers Handbook which contains a summary of UHCW Policies and procedures.

### **Desired Skills/Experience required**

- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Ability to work with others as well as independently
- A helpful, patient, calm and friendly manner
- Ability to follow role guidelines and work within them
- A flexible approach and a willingness to get involved as required

### **Time Commitment**

The meal hours are from 11.30am to 1pm for Lunch and from 4.30pm to 6pm - Supper Shifts are available across these times. We would prefer volunteers to commit to at least one shift per week or fortnight, with a minimum commitment to the role of 6 months

Always ensure you are aware of your shift time and arrive in good time. If you are unable to attend, please try to obtain a replacement by swapping with a colleague on the rota. If this is not possible, inform the Mealtime Companion Service Co-ordinator as soon as possible

Please advise the Mealtime Service Co-ordinator of any planned long-term absences



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## **General Volunteer Responsibilities:**

- All volunteers will be required to attend mandatory training sessions together with an induction programme and role specific training and comply with this training. We will provide on-going updates and information at regular intervals whilst you are volunteering with us
- Always sign in and out of your shift for Health and Safety requirements and to ensure attendance records are accurate
- Volunteers must certify that there has been no change, or advise of any change there has been, to their DBS or health status on an annual basis
- You must ALWAYS wear an identity badge
- Volunteers must conform to all Trust policies and procedures that they are made aware of
- Report any accident or issues arising on duty to a member of hospital staff
- Be accountable for upholding the values of Friends of St Cross and be responsible for your own attitude and behaviour
- Respect patient confidentiality at all times.

## **Key Tasks**

- To help assist staff and patients on the wards in preparation for mealtimes
- To assist patients to make meal choices from our hospital menu where appropriate
- Handing out meals to patients – collecting from hostess and taking the meal to the patient
- Cutting up food, opening packets and lids where appropriate whilst encouraging the patient to be independent
- Setting up utensils, condiments, sauces and appropriate feeding aids as required
- Have allocated patients to assist and /or feed
- Complete nutrition charts with food intake as required and report to the nurse intake
- Help clear environment after mealtimes and participate in the after-meal process
- Report any issues identified to nursing staff immediately

## **Diversity**

Everyone has the opportunity to be treated with dignity and respect at work and has a clear responsibility to comply with the detail and the spirit of the Dignity at Work Policy

## **Safeguarding**

The Trust is committed to ensuring the safeguarding of vulnerable adults/children in our care. All employees/volunteers are required to be familiar with their responsibilities in this area and to raise any concerns as appropriate

## **What can you expect from us?**



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You will be fully supported by the Board of trustees and other service coordinators.

## Operations Procedure

- Wash your hands upon arrival in the ward and then use alcohol gel when moving from one patient to another and before you leave.
- Ensure that long hair is tied back, and that you adhere to the “bare below the elbows” policy at all times
- Upon arrival at the ward, please report to the nurse in charge and introduce yourself as a Meal Companion Volunteer (Please note, there may be a short wait to speak to the nurse in charge, so we would ask for your patience)
- Please ask the nurse in charge which patients are appropriate for you to be with.
- Check with the nurse in charge about priorities and any issues the volunteer should be briefed about
- DON'T enter any side room of a ward that displays a RED HAND/BLUE HAND/PURPLE HAND on the door without first checking with a nurse if it's ok to enter
- If a patient has closed the curtains around their bed, respect their privacy and don't enter or disturb them
- Never assume that a person will automatically want to engage in conversation but introduce yourself and explain you are a Mealtime Companion Volunteer helping in the ward
- Any spillages should always be cleaned up and the floor mopped if required
- Do not lift or carry patients, accompany patients to the toilet or help patients in and out of bed
- Don't offer medical advice if asked and don't answer any medical question, instead, refer them to a member of staff in the Suite
- Maintain patient confidentiality at all times.
- Don't share your personal contact details
- Report and share any concerns/feedback from patients about risks to themselves or others.