

# Volunteer Handbook



Your Volunteer Role			
Your local ward/department supervisor is:		Contact number	
Ward/department of Volunteer Placement			



Proud To **Care**  
Make It **Happen**  
We Value **Respect**  
Together We **Achieve**

# Welcome

## Dear Volunteer

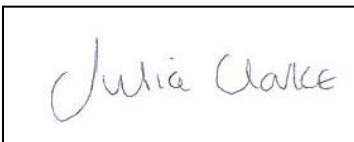
I am pleased to issue you with the volunteer handbook and extend a warm welcome to you, and hope that you find volunteering with The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust both rewarding and enjoyable.

Volunteers play an important role within our hospitals, working in a variety of departments alongside our staff. The purpose of the volunteer handbook is to answer some of the questions often asked by volunteers. The handbook contains guidance about volunteering within the Trust.

If you require any further information that is not contained in this handbook or the volunteer policy then please contact your area supervisor or Hannah Roy, the Governance and Membership Manager (the Trust's Volunteer lead).

Thank you for choosing to volunteer with The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust and we hope you enjoy your placement with us.

**Yours sincerely**

A rectangular box containing a handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Julia Clarke".

***Julia Clarke***  
***Director of Corporate Governance***



## **Equality and Diversity**

The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust is committed to equal opportunities and diversity. We accept volunteers based on their suitability for the role. We will not discriminate against our volunteers because of their gender, sexual orientation, disability or impairment, age, race, nationality, marital status, religion or belief.



As an organisation we value difference and recognise the value that different backgrounds, skills, outlooks and experiences our volunteers bring to the organisation.

## **Dignity and Respect**

All volunteers are expected to treat patients, carers, visitors and staff with courtesy, care and compassion at all times, treating each person as an individual and adopt behaviours and attitudes that promote, support and respect privacy and dignity.

## **Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults**

All individuals have the right to live a life free from fear, to be treated with dignity and have their choices respected. Prior to starting your voluntary placement you must complete your mandatory training which covers the safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults. If you do have any concerns whilst on your voluntary placement please escalate these to a senior member of staff immediately.

Should you be approached by a patient, carer, family member, visitor or member of staff to sign any form of legal document such as Power of Attorney forms or a Will, you must decline and immediately inform a senior member of ward/department staff.

# Who are we?

The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust is the main provider of acute hospital services to over half a million people in Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and mid-Wales. The majority of our services are provided at the Princess Royal Hospital in Telford and the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital. About 99% of our patient appointments take place at these hospitals. We also provide services in a range of community settings including Telford's Wrekin Community Clinic and Midwife-led maternity units in Bridgnorth, Ludlow and Oswestry.

The Trust has over 5,000 members of staff providing and supporting frontline care. Our staff are supported by a wide range of volunteers and students. Our central organising principle is Putting Patients First. This guides our decisions, ensuring that we use our resources wisely and provide timely care that meets the standards of quality and safety that our patients and communities expect and deserve.

## Our services

### Princess Royal Hospital (PRH)

The Princess Royal Hospital opened in 1989. It provides medical assessment and inpatient services, surgical day case, children's inpatient services, a midwife-led maternity unit, A&E services, renal dialysis stations and outpatient & diagnostic facilities. From 2014 it will be the county's main centre for inpatient women and children's services.



### Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

The Royal Shrewsbury Hospital opened in 1977. It provides medical assessment and inpatient services, women and children's inpatient services, a midwife led maternity unit, surgical, inpatient and day case services, cancer services including chemotherapy and radiotherapy, A&E services, designated trauma unit, renal dialysis stations and outpatient and diagnostic facilities. In 2012 it became the county's main centre for acute inpatient surgery.



## Services at other locations

Alongside our services at PRH and RSH, we also run midwife-led maternity units at Ludlow Hospital, Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic and District Hospital in Gobowen and Bridgnorth Hospital. We also provide a range of consultant and specialist nurse outreach services across the area.

# Expectations

## What you can expect from us

We hope that you enjoy your role volunteering with us. Our commitment to all volunteers is:

- Respect your skills, dignity and individual wishes and to do our best to meet them.
- Provide relevant training, support and information for you to carry out your volunteering role.
- Provide support and supervision within your volunteering role.
- Communicate with you and keep you informed of possible changes.
- Offer you fair, honest and open feedback about your volunteering
- Provide insurance to cover you whilst volunteering within the duties of your role description
- Provide a safe workplace.

## What we can expect from you

We also have expectations and standards which we expect from all our volunteers. To get the most out of your volunteer placement we ask that you commit to the following:

- To perform your volunteering role to the best of your ability
- Maintain the confidential information of the organisation and of its patients
- Always wear your volunteer ID badge whilst on Trust premises.
- Adhere to the dress code whilst volunteering, including wearing any uniform that you have been provided with.
- Not perform tasks which are outside of your role description, without seeking the approval of the placement supervisor or the Governance and Membership Manager.
- Attend any training relevant to your duties.
- For the safety and wellbeing of yourself and patients you will not lift, handle or lower patients. You will also not carry out any manual handling activities that you have not been trained to undertake.
- Inform the most senior member of staff immediately, of any concerns that you may have regarding a patient, a child, member of the public or member(s) of staff.
- To only carry out duties that are within your role description and to raise any concerns you have relating to my role with my supervisor
- To always show respect to patients, carers/relatives and members of the public and treat them with dignity, and always maintain confidentiality.
- To provide as much notice as possible if you are unable to attend your volunteer placement or if you no longer wish to volunteer for the Trust.

# General Information

## Volunteer Roles

For all volunteering roles there is a role description. As a volunteer it is important that you only carry out tasks that are outlined within your role description. You should be given a copy of your role description prior to starting your volunteer placement. If you feel that you are being asked to carry out duties that go beyond those outlined in your role description then it is important that you discuss this with either your ward/department supervisor or the Governance and Membership Manager. **If you would like a copy of your role description then please contact the Governance and Membership Office.**

## Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

When applying to become a volunteer at the Trust you must have a DBS check (formally known as a Criminal Record Bureau or CRB check). It is a requirement that your DBS check is repeated every 3 years and the Governance and Membership Office will contact you when your DBS needs renewing. **If you have any subsequent cautions or convictions after starting your volunteer placement, you are required to declare these to the Governance and Membership Manager.**

## Identification (ID) badge

Prior to beginning your voluntary placement you will be issued with an ID badge. You should wear your ID badge at all times whilst volunteering. If your ID badge is lost or stolen please notify your ward/department supervisor or the Governance and Membership Office immediately.

## Car parking

Volunteers are offered the opportunity to apply for a car parking permit to allowing you to park your vehicle at no cost within the designated staff parking areas. The Trust will not refund the cost of parking in other areas of the hospital grounds or reimburse the cost of parking fines. You should only use your parking permit for volunteering purposes. **All ID badges, parking permits and uniform items must be returned to the Governance and Membership Office once you have ceased volunteering.**

## Smoking

Smoking is not allowed on NHS premises although there are designated smoking 'shelter' areas in the hospital grounds which volunteers are entitled to use.

# General Information

## **Change of Circumstances/Health Status**

Please notify the Governance and Membership Office of any of the following changes:

- Your name
- Your address
- Your next of kin
- Emergency contact detail
- The state of your health
- Please also notify us if you will not be attending your placement due to an anticipated long period of absence or illness.

## **Confidentiality**

As a volunteer you may be party to confidential and sensitive information about patients, carers, public and the Trust. You are responsible for maintaining confidentiality and must not disclose information outside of the Trust. Further information is detailed in the Confidentiality Agreement which all volunteers must sign prior to beginning their placement. If you have any concerns regarding confidentiality please contact your ward/department manager to discuss further.

## **Data Protection**

The Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust has a duty to protect the confidentiality of volunteers involved in our work. We will only collect and retain personal information that is relevant to your volunteering placement. In accordance with the Data Protection Act, personal information about volunteers is kept securely and no personal information will be shared with other organisations/individuals without the consent of the volunteer, unless we are legally obliged to do so. Volunteer files will be destroyed 3 years after an individual's volunteer placement has ended.

## **Public Relations**

Volunteers may be featured in Trust public relations activities and consent will be sought from volunteers prior to publication of any material in which an individual may be identified. Volunteers are requested not to make any statement to the media without prior consultation with the Trust's Communication Team. The Communications Team are always willing to answer and enquires you may have regarding the media, and can be contacted via the Governance and Membership Office.

## **Volunteer Policy**

This handbook is designed to be a quick reference guide for volunteers. For more information please refer to the Trust's Volunteer Policy and other related policies and guidance. If you have a query about this or would like further advice please contact the Governance and Membership Office.

# Attendance

We ask all volunteers to make an initial commitment to volunteer with the Trust for 6 months (or 50 hours), however as a volunteer you are under no legal obligation and a volunteer placement can be cancelled at any time at the discretion of either party.

Some volunteers work irregular intervals, as and when they are needed, however most volunteers will commit to a specific day and time. It is important that once a volunteer placement has been organised that you are committed to the arrangement that has been agreed. Please notify the Governance and Membership Office if you need to change the day or time that you volunteer.

## **Reliability, Illness and Holidays**

It is important that you keep to the volunteering arrangements you have made with your ward/department. If your circumstances change and you are unable to attend your placement due to illness or unforeseen circumstances, then please let your department/ward know at the earliest opportunity.

If you are planning on going on holiday then please let your ward/department know that you will be unavailable for certain dates and when you plan to return.

## **Change of Placement**

If you wish to change your voluntary placement for any reason please contact the Governance and Membership Office. Where possible we try to accommodate changes in placements, but this will be on the basis of availability of an alternative placement and the volunteer's suitability for a role.

## **Unsuitability**

Suitability of an individual to carry out a volunteer role is assessed within the first 12 weeks by the department/ward supervisor. A volunteer, who is unsuitable for a role, fails to abide by the Trust's policies or procedures, or who does not attend their placement regularly may be asked to leave at anytime.

At anytime during a volunteer placement and for relevant reasons the Trust may decide to terminate a volunteer's placement at the Trust. This will follow on from discussions with all parties. As a volunteer you may also feel that your placement is no longer suitable and you should advise the Governance and Membership Office of your intention to leave.

## **Notice of Departure**

Volunteering is a mutual arrangement between the volunteer and the Trust which can be terminated at anytime by either party. Where possible the Trust asks that you should give as much notice as possible, ideally this should be a minimum of 4 weeks in order that the Trust can make suitable arrangements to ensure there is no impact on the continuity of the service. At the end of your placement you will be asked to complete an exit questionnaire which will include the reason for leaving and any comments and suggestions you have. This will allow the service to be evaluated on a regular basis and where possible, to make improvements.



# Expenses

As a volunteer you can claim for travel expenses and reasonable reimbursement of out of pocket expenses. The Trust will only reimburse actual expenses and the amount claimed should never be rounded up. Claims for reimbursement need to be submitted on a volunteer claim form which must be signed by the appropriate manager and then payment should be authorised by the Governance and Membership Office. It is Trust policy that claims for expenses will be invalid after three months. We advise that all claims are submitted within two months of the expense being incurred.

It is expected that in travelling to the site of your volunteer placement, you will use the cheapest and most practical form of transport available to you. Travel expenses should only be claimed from the individual's home to the place of volunteering, unless a diversion in relation to the volunteering activity has been authorised.

Any travel claims not supported by receipts cannot be reimbursed, with the exception of mileage costs.

Those not eligible for reimbursement include:

- Individuals attending public meetings or meetings open to the public
- Individuals giving views through a public consultation or survey
- Individuals attending health programmes as part of their treatment regime
- Individuals mandated to undertake a volunteer placement as part of a course or work-based training to obtain a qualification
- Individuals receiving payment from any other organisation for volunteering

## **Volunteering and Benefits**

If you are claiming benefits in accordance with Government guidelines, then volunteering should not affect your right to claim benefits, as long as the money you claim is to cover your volunteer expenses. It is your responsibility to ensure that you meet the conditions of your benefits and/or tax credits (where applicable) whilst volunteering, hence we strongly recommend that you discuss your choice of voluntary work with your benefit advisor prior to starting your placement. If you are in receipt of more than one type of benefit, please ensure that you discuss your voluntary placement with each of the relevant advisors. The Trust cannot offer advice regarding volunteering and benefits and shall not be liable for individuals who do not meet their benefit conditions.

## **Offers of Gifts**

In the event that you are offered a personal gift or inducement whilst volunteering, you should:

- Refuse the gift unless it is of low intrinsic value i.e. chocolates
- Inform the Governance and Membership Manager who will determine what action should be taken

# Infection Prevention

It is important for the health of our patients, public and staff that you do not attend your voluntary placement if you:

- Are suffering from diarrhoea and/or sickness (you need to be symptom free for at least 48 hours before coming into the hospital).
- Have a viral infection e.g. cold, flu, sore throat.
- Have a contagious infection e.g. chicken pox



Healthcare-related infections are costly in both human and financial terms. Body secretions and skin surfaces can carry bacteria, viruses and fungi that are potentially infectious. Effective hand hygiene is the single most important procedure for significantly reducing/preventing the spread of infection, and is an essential practice for patient safety. Volunteers are required to abide by the Trust's hand hygiene policies and protocols; this topic is covered within the volunteer mandatory training video.

## **Infection Prevention on the Wards (where applicable)**

On the first day of a ward-based placement, you will be required to spend time with a trained member of staff from the department to go through the Trust's hand hygiene technique as part of your induction. Within the first month of your placement a trained member of nursing staff will meet with you to complete a formal assessment. This is in line with the Trust's Hand Hygiene Policy.

If an outbreak is declared (such as *Norovirus*) on a ward where you volunteer, the Governance and Membership Office will contact you to advise you not to attend your placement as the area will be closed to all volunteers. Occasionally it may not be possible to contact you prior to you arriving at the hospital, in this situation the ward will send you away.

You should never be expected to go into a side room or bay where there are infectious patients requiring barrier nursing.

# Dress Code

For some voluntary roles you may be required to wear a uniform such as a tabard. To meet infection prevention standards please adhere to the following uniform requirements:

- Uniforms should be washed in a washing machine at the temperature stated on the care label
- Use laundry detergent in the quantities advised by the manufacturer (type such as biological or non biological is not important)
- Dried as quickly as possible, or tumble dried
- Uniforms must be ironed
- Uniforms must be changed daily and volunteers should pay attention to their personal hygiene.
- Uniforms should be changed immediately in the event of contamination with blood or bodily fluids



Uniforms will be provided by the Governance and Membership Office and should be returned when you cease volunteering with the Trust.

If you are not required to wear a uniform, then you should wear clothing suitable for carrying out the role such as smart trousers or skirts and sensible shoes (please note that shoes should be non-slip and have enclosed toes and heel).

All volunteers must also adhere to the following requirements:

- Adopt the 'bare below the elbow' policy
- Wrist watches and hand jewellery are removed. The wearing of one plain banded ring is permitted
- Long hair must be tied back
- Discreet make up can be worn
- Do not wear jeans, trainers, nail varnish or false nails
- Ensure that your clothes are well laundered and ironed
- Cuts and skin abrasions must be covered up with a waterproof dressing (if you are handling food or drink this must be a blue waterproof plaster)
- Whilst volunteering you should not chew gum
- Do not use your mobile phone whilst in a patient area including wards

# Security

Security in hospitals is very important but can be very difficult to manage. By virtue of what we do, many areas of the hospital are effectively public spaces. When starting your volunteer placement, your ward/department supervisor will inform you of security arrangements. The Trust's first priority in terms of security is the personal safety of our patients, volunteers and staff. It is vital that you take care of your own safety and that of colleagues and patients. If you



have concerns about an individual's right to be where they are please alert a member of staff immediately. Never be afraid to ask for an identity card if you need to verify someone's identity. Likewise never be offended if you are asked to produce your ID card for verification purposes. If you need emergency security assistance place dial **3333** from any hospital phone.

## Security codes

Access to many areas of the hospital is controlled by security coded key pads. As a volunteer, you may be given these codes and it is important that you follow these guidelines to help to maintain protection within these areas:

- Never give out codes to strangers, members of the public, patients or anyone who has no apparent or unverified need to know them
- Never display codes in uncontrolled or public areas or where unauthorised individuals may see them. If possible, memorise the codes
- When using key pad codes make sure your actions are not being viewed or watched
- When gaining entry through doorways, do not allow anyone else access unless they are wearing a Trust photo-identity card. Ask for identity and verify the individuals' need for access. If they cannot provide identity, politely refuse access and seek advice from your manager or a senior person in the area you are entering
- If you have any concerns about anyone's attempts to gain access, alert your ward/department supervisor or Security immediately (via Switchboard – dial '0') to what has happened and where the individual(s) has gone

## Valuables

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The Trust will not be held responsible for the loss of any personal items and it is recommended that you do not bring any personal and/or high value items in to the hospital.

# Health and Safety

As a volunteer you need to be aware of health and safety issues when undertaking your voluntary role. Your ward/department supervisor is responsible for your immediate supervision and support. Should you have any doubt about a health and safety matter then you should discuss this with your supervisor in the first instance.

You have a responsibility as a volunteer to:

- Only carry out tasks which are outlined within your role description
- Take responsibility for the health and safety of yourself and of others who may be affected by your actions whilst volunteering
- Immediately report any accidents, hazards or injuries sustained by yourself or others immediately, to a member of staff

You must notify your ward/department supervisor and the Governance and Membership Office if:

- You have an accident whilst volunteering
- You fall ill prior to, or whilst volunteering

## **Incidents**

Sometimes things happen or almost happen to patients, relatives, public or staff that should not happen. An incident could be the use of inappropriate language, someone falling over or someone leaving a ward area without staff knowing they have gone.

When an incident occurs, then a DATIX form should be completed by a member of staff and in serious cases, an investigation into what happened may be required. Volunteers may be asked to take part in an investigation if it affects the area where they are volunteering. In such cases, volunteers will have the same rights as staff and will be supported throughout the investigation. If you witness or are involved in an incident whilst volunteering you should report it immediately to your ward/department supervisor as well as the Governance and Membership Manager.

## **Moving and Handling**

For the majority of volunteering roles you are not required to undertake any moving and handling or heavy lifting. If your role requires any moving and handling then you will receive additional training. You should never move or lift a patient as this could cause injury to you or the patient.

## **Pregnancy**

There are certain areas of the hospital in which it is inadvisable for pregnant women to volunteer. If you are pregnant or become pregnant please inform your placement supervisor and the Governance and Membership Manager who will ensure you are adequately safeguarded whilst volunteering.

# Training and Support

## Local Induction, Support and Supervision

The Trust believes it is important to recognise volunteer's contribution through regular support and supervision. When you start your voluntary placement you will be introduced to a local ward/department supervisor. Your supervisor will be responsible for ensuring that you have a local induction and will complete the induction checklist with you

Your supervisor will also be available to meet with you regularly to see how your placement is going and discuss any concerns or queries you may have. Please contact your supervisor directly to arrange a meeting.

All new volunteers have a six-month trial period. This allows the volunteer an opportunity to try out their role and the Trust to assess the suitability of the volunteer placement.

At the end of the three-month trial period your supervisor will have a review meeting with you and if you do not wish to continue the volunteer role after this time or it is felt that the role is not considered suitable then an alternative volunteer opportunity may be offered or the volunteer placement may be terminated.

## Training

Prior to starting your volunteer placement you will have to watch the online volunteer mandatory training video. As the training video is part of the volunteer induction process, you will not be able to commence your role until this has been completed. The video covers topics such as fire safety, safeguarding of children and vulnerable adults, infection prevention and control etc. As a volunteer you will be required to undertake refresher training every 3 years. The Governance and Membership Office will send you a reminder when your training is due.

For some volunteer roles you will be required to undertake additional training so that you can carry out your role. The Governance and Membership Office will advise you of any additional training you will need to complete.



# Problem Solving

## Problems within your role

If you have a complaint about a member of staff or volunteer, then in the first instance you should raise it with your ward/department manager. If you feel the issue has not been satisfactorily resolved then you can take the complaint to the Governance and Membership Manager. You may be required to put any such grievance in writing and assistance can be provided if appropriate and necessary. The complaint will be investigated and a decision reached usually within 14 days.

## A Complaint Made Against a Volunteer

The Trust aims to identify and solve problems at the earliest opportunity and seeks to ensure fairness and equality in the management of volunteers. The purpose of the procedure outlined here is to inform volunteers of the process the Governance and Membership Office will follow if there has been a complaint made about a volunteer or an alleged breach of conduct raised concerning a volunteer. We aim to deal with all complaints quickly and fairly, where possible within 14 working days.

If a complaint is made about a volunteer regarding their behaviour or ability to carry out their volunteer role, the Governance and Membership Manager will contact the volunteer as soon as possible, either by telephone, letter or face-to-face. When a volunteer has been accused of serious misconduct, it may be deemed in the best interest of the volunteer, patients and staff that they are asked not to attend their placement pending the outcome of the investigation.

The Governance and Membership Manager will meet with the volunteer to discuss details of the complaint and to gain the volunteer's views. The volunteer may choose to be accompanied at this meeting. All discussions from the meeting will be recorded in writing and a copy of these notes will be given to the volunteer.

The Governance and Membership Manager will decide from the meeting whether one or more of the following actions is needed:

- Further investigation
- No further action
- Further training and support
- Further action

If it is necessary to take further action then this could be:

- Informal advice (valid for 12 months)
- Formal counselling (valid for 12 months)
- Termination of volunteer agreement

Any decision will be confirmed in writing with a full explanation. A copy will also remain on the volunteer file for the period of time outlined above. The volunteer has the right to appeal any against any formal action.

# Thank you

## Your Contribution

The time, energy and commitment you give to our hospitals, patients and staff means a lot to us. If you have any feedback, concerns or queries relating to your volunteer role, then please contact the Governance and Membership Office.

Each year we celebrate the amazing work of our volunteers by holding annual 'thank you' events at both hospital sites. As a volunteer we would be delighted for you to attend these events and you will be given details of these through your supervisor.

You can also continue to show your support as a member of our Foundation Trust. Being a member is free and you will receive a newsletter ('A Healthier Future') every quarter which will provide updates on things going on in our hospitals as well as volunteering news. If you are not already a member then please contact the Governance and Membership Office for more information.

Additionally if you require a written reference please contact the Governance and Membership Office.



If you have any questions or concerns in relation to this handbook or your volunteer placement, please contact the Governance and Membership Office on:

**Telephone:** 01743 261473

**Email:** [members@sath.nhs.uk](mailto:members@sath.nhs.uk)

**Write to:** Governance and Membership Office, Royal Shrewsbury Hospital, Mytton Oak Road, Shrewsbury, SY3 8XQ