

Total care when time is precious



**The Hospice
of St Francis**

Reg. Charity No. 280825

**Volunteer
Handbook**

Welcome

Welcome to the volunteer team at the Hospice of St Francis. Thank you for your gift of time, which will help us maintain the service we have offered in the local community for the last 30 years. Volunteers have been at the core of our service since the very beginning, so you are part of a continuing thread of care, concern and skill which lies at the very heart of everything we do.

This book gives you a brief outline of who we are and what we do. We have also tried to include some basic information to get you going, reassure you, and point you in the right direction for further information or help.

If you have any comments on this booklet or on your volunteering for the Hospice, please let us know.

Rozina Ahmad
Voluntary Services Manager

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The Hospice of St Francis

The Hospice of St Francis provides free specialist care for people with terminal illness in North West Herts and the Chiltern area of Bucks. Our expert medical and support team help patients holistically to combat pain and chronic symptoms resulting from illness. In 2008, the Hospice helped over 700 patients.

It costs over £3million to run the Hospice services each year. We receive just 20% of this from the NHS – for the rest, we are dependent upon the goodwill of our local community. The Hospice is grateful to all those who support it through donations of goods, time or money.

What services do we provide?

The Hospice of St Francis provides:

- In Patient care for patients in beds at the Hospice
- Day Hospice care on Tuesdays and Thursdays
- Care for patients in their own homes through our team of nurses
- Counselling support for patients, and for their carers both before and after the patient has died
- Education in palliative and end-of-life matters

Where do Volunteers fit in?

In the beginning, everyone was a volunteer! By the beginning of 2009, there were almost 140 full and part-time paid staff at the Hospice, complemented by almost 1000 volunteers. Funding for staff is concentrated on healthcare professionals. Volunteers work alongside paid staff – and independently of them – in a wide variety of roles at the hospice. There is no area of hospice work in which a volunteer is not involved in some way.

How do we support you?

Clear role

You will be given a written **role profile**, giving clear details of what you have agreed to do and who you are responsible to.

Initial and on-going training

Every new Volunteer is invited to the **Hospice Induction**; please make every effort to attend this session. It will give you a chance to find out more about hospices generally, St Francis in particular, and the care we offer. It will help you feel more confident when asked by friends or family about the work of St Francis. You will have a chance to meet the Hospice Director and a Trustee, and other new staff (paid and unpaid). There is also an opportunity to ask questions. You will receive an invitation for this.

You should also attend **Mandatory Training** as soon as you can. This covers Health and Safety, Fire Safety, Moving and Handling, infection control and working with vulnerable people as part of your

initial induction. Details of these sessions will come through your Team Leader.

We will endeavour to make training available at flexible times.

You will also be given a **Role Induction** by your Team Leader, so that you are clear about how to do what is expected of you.

You should receive **training** in the use of any equipment or in any particular skills you need in the course of your volunteering. If you have any questions or concerns, please talk to your Team Leader.

Other, more general, training and education sessions are available from the Education Department, and details of courses can be obtained from them or the Volunteer Information Folders.

Will it cost me anything?

Volunteering should cost you nothing. If you would like to claim your **travel expenses** or reclaim **incidental expenses**, please speak to your Team Leader **before** incurring expense. Your Team Leader can give you a form to complete.

What happens if there is a complaint?

We hope that if anything is wrong, you will raise it with your Team Leader in the first instance, and that matters can be resolved informally. However, the Hospice has policy for dealing **with complaints about volunteers** and **complaints by volunteers**. This is intended to ensure that all get a fair hearing, and includes an appeal procedure. A copy of the policy is available in the Volunteer Information Folders (see below). Ask your Team Leader if you would like a copy.

The Hospice also has a general policy for dealing with complaints about its services; if you have received a **complaint about the Hospice**, please pass it to your Team Leader as soon as you have received it.

I'm finding it a bit upsetting

Working in a Hospice brings volunteers face to face with patients or their stories. Everyone is affected by this at some point or another. If you would like to talk to someone about something you have seen or heard, please contact your **Team Leader**, a member of the **Supportive Care Team**, the **Chaplain**, or **Voluntary Services**.

What do we expect of you?

Philosophy of Care

The Hospice has a **Philosophy of Care**, copies of which are held in the Volunteer Information Folders, or you may wish to keep a copy for yourself. We ask all volunteers to bear this philosophy in mind when volunteering at the Hospice.

Ambassador for Hospice

All volunteers are **ambassadors** for the Hospice of St Francis, and may find themselves, consciously or unconsciously, talking about the Hospice to friends, family, or strangers. Please use your discretion, and be aware that others may judge the Hospice by what you say or do.

Dress code

The Hospice's public image is of great importance. We do not enforce a formal dress code, but volunteers are asked to make sure that they are dressed appropriately for their role within a Hospice environment. Some volunteers (e.g. on IPU) may be asked to wear a particular uniform. Your Team Leader can advise you on this.

Communication channels

We would like to keep you updated with news and developments at the Hospice. You can help us to do this cost-effectively by providing us with your **e-mail address**. Alternatively, you will find **Volunteer Information Folders** throughout the Hospice and our Shops, which contain information for volunteers including copies of all e-mails and are updated regularly. Please take a little time to read through these whenever you visit the Hospice or a shop. We also use **noticeboards** within the Hospice and our shops. Communication within individual teams will be done by your Team Leader.

Responsibility re rota

Many roles involve a commitment to a rota. Please bear this in mind when you start, and try to ensure, as far as possible, that you are always free for your 'slot'. If you are unable to fulfil your commitment, please check with your Team Leader about notice of absence, and whether you need to arrange cover.

What to do if you are ill

Because of the nature of the work that we do, our patients are particularly vulnerable. We are also mindful of the risks of infection to other staff members. If you are suffering from **sickness**, **diarrhoea** or you are **infectious**, please do not come in, but ring your Team Leader to advise them. If you are unsure whether you should come in, please ring your Team Leader to check at the earliest opportunity.

Confidentiality

During your time at the Hospice you may have access to confidential information. All volunteers sign a **confidentiality agreement**, which covers patient, financial and commercial information. Please ensure that you do not discuss any of this information with anyone outside the Hospice, without clear permission.

Name badges

All volunteers should wear **name badges** or carry Hospice ID or a Hospice Authorisation Card while on duty; this helps members of the public to identify them outside the Hospice, and helps identify strangers within the Hospice. A badge or appropriate ID will be supplied when you start your volunteering; please look after this, but let your Team Leader know if you need a replacement.

First Aid while on Hospice Premises

If you are injured or feel unwell while on Hospice premises, please let your Team Leader or another member of staff know as soon as possible.

What else do I need to know?

Whistleblowing

The Hospice takes all forms of malpractice very seriously. If you see anything that concerns you, please speak to your Team Leader, the Voluntary Services Manager or any member of the Senior Management Team at the earliest available opportunity.

Data Protection

We hold your details on our Volunteers Database, and a copy of your application form and other supporting paperwork will be held on our paper files. These are stored confidentially. If you would like to see these at any time, please ask Voluntary Services.

Acceptance of gifts

The Hospice's general policy is that volunteers must not give the impression to anyone that they may be influenced by any inducement or reward, and if in any doubt they should consult their Team Leader for advice. There is a distinction between personal gifts, and donations to the Hospice. Please refer to the 'Offering and Acceptance of Gifts Policy and Guidelines' for further guidance.

Refreshments

The Hospice offers hot and cold drinks to volunteers free of charge. Meals are offered to volunteers at cost, and should be purchased using the existing voucher system. Meals may be offered to volunteers free of charge if their volunteering takes them across a mealtime, and they would otherwise be unable to eat.

When you fancy a change

We recognise that from time to time you may wish to move from your existing role, or take on an additional role. Details of current vacancies for volunteers are available from Voluntary Services, and are also circulated with the Team Brief. Please ask Voluntary Services for more details.

When you leave

If you would like to give up volunteering for us, please talk to your Team Leader or Voluntary Services. It is helpful for us to know why you are leaving, in case there is anything we can change to improve the experience for other volunteers.

Personal property

All personal property should be safely stored away, out of sight and locked if possible while on Hospice premises. If lockers are provided, please use them but make sure you return the key when you go home, as someone else may need to use the locker after you. Loss of property or theft should be reported to your Team Leader as soon as possible.

Volunteers Forum

The Hospice has a Volunteer Forum, which has two roles: to facilitate a 2-way flow of communication with volunteers, and to provide an opportunity for volunteers to contribute positively, using their breadth of knowledge and experience, to the workings of the Hospice in relation to Volunteers and their roles.

Membership of the Forum is drawn from all groups of volunteers within the Hospice, and meets about 3 times a year. There is a list of members in the Volunteer Information Folders, and minutes are sent out to all volunteers on e-mail and placed in the folders.

If you are interested in joining the Forum please let your Team Leader know.