

Mealtime Support Volunteer

Could you support with the nutrition and hydration of patients for outstanding care?

As a Mealtime Support Volunteer you will support patients on wards in an acute setting through a variety of specific meal time tasks. You will play a crucial role in the hospital in helping to support the wellbeing of patients and reduce the risk of malnutrition/dehydration, which is a vital part of a patient's recovery.

To be successful for the role, the following is required:

- Completed online volunteering application form
- An informal volunteering interview
- X 2 references
- Enhanced Level DBS with Adults' Barred List
- Completion of core and local volunteer induction training and Food hygiene enhanced training

What does the role involve?

The volunteer role will prioritise support to patients with a 'red tray' in place, but can provide support and encouragement to all patients on the ward.

Preparation for mealtimes:

- Offering patients the chance to wash / wipe their hands
- Clearing tables and wiping them
- Talking through the menu and supporting patients with appropriate choices of meal.
- Ensuring the patient is in a comfortable position to eat, and seeking support from the ward team, if necessary to help a patient to sit up.
- Making sure that the patient has the correct utensils, including adapted cutlery, non-slip mats and plate guards if necessary.

During mealtimes:

- Positioning food next to the patient.
- Opening packets, removing lids etc. if needed
- Cutting food into manageable chunks if needed
- Positioning the food on the plate in a way that helps the patient / turning the plate round during the mealtime.

This role outline is binding in honour only, and is not intended to be legally binding

- Explaining where the food is situated on the plate for patients that are partially sighted.
- Placing food on utensils.
- Giving verbal encouragement to patients to eat and drink.
- Assisted feeding of patients, including modified diets and fluids

Being an advocate:

- Ensuring that patients have the correct meal, in line with dietary or cultural needs or ethical preferences.
- Ensuring that patients receive the correct meal and informing the ward team if they would like an alternative meal / snack.
- Passing on any questions or concerns to the ward team.
- Communicate effectively with the most vulnerable patients e.g. those with cognitive issues.

At the end of mealtime:

- If a patient is unable to finish their meal, ask why there is food left (i.e. tiredness, visual problems, denture problems or taste preferences) and inform nursing staff.
- Giving feedback to the ward team, providing information about how much patients have had to eat / drink.
- Informing the ward team when a patient with a 'Red Tray' has finished their meal, so that a record can be made on food / fluid charts.

Other:

- Adhere to the relevant policies and procedures of the Trust, including Infection control, Health and Safety, Safeguarding, Equality and Diversity, Data Protection and Confidentiality policies
- Opportunities to get involved in other areas of the Trust's work, including our NHS careers

Volunteers are not expected to be involved in any of the following:

- Clinical or medical treatments of any kind
- Psychological interventions

What skills and qualities do you need?

West London NHS Trust is committed to equal opportunities and welcomes applications from all sections of the community.

- Ability to comply with the organisational and departmental policies and procedures
- Ability to gain consent and, as far as possible, involving people in all decision making
- Understanding of providing services to a diverse patient group
- Have good interpersonal skills

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- Be reliable
- Able to work as part of a team
- Able to complete tasks effectively and efficiently
- Committed to uphold [Trust core values](#) (**Togetherness, Responsibility, Excellence, Caring**) and NHS policies

What we can offer you

- A full induction, training or brief to your role
- On-going support and guidance from a member of staff
- Dedicated Volunteers to Careers career development support from a clinical professional towards our health and social care career pathways
- The opportunity to develop your personal and professional skills
- The opportunity to get involved in other areas of The Trust's work, including NHS careers
- Provide you with a uniform
- Reimbursement of reasonable expenses
- The opportunity to contribute to our mission supporting outstanding patient care.

Time commitment

There is an expected minimum commitment once a week for at least 6 months for this role

The general time options activities could occur (these are not specific scheduled shifts). Activities are coincided with breakfast, lunch and dinner mealtimes. **There is a current need for volunteer support during weekdays during lunchtime (12:30 to 2pm)**

	Morning	Afternoon	Evenings	Nights
Monday		X		
Tuesday		X		
Wednesday		X		
Thursday		X		
Friday		X		
Saturday				
Sunday				

Number of volunteers needed

We will need up to 5 volunteer(s) for this role

'West London NHS Trust is committed to safeguarding all children and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.'