

Introduction

University Hospital Birmingham manages the Queen Elizabeth and Selly Oak Hospitals and could not function without the dedication and commitment of our volunteers. There are over 300 volunteers who carry out many different roles to support patient care. They also provide a valuable contribution to the thousands of patients and members of the public who attend our hospitals each year.

Who can volunteer?

We welcome volunteers from all sections of the community. Our volunteers come from a variety of different cultural groups and backgrounds. The volunteer team is currently made up of former patients, retired staff, fundraisers and members of the local community. For health and safety reasons we are unable to accept volunteers under the age of 18 years, however, there is no upper age limit.

What about qualifications?

The great thing about volunteering is that anyone can take part, you don't need qualifications. Our volunteers' programme provides support and training, therefore, you will receive guidance and assistance from the hospital staff.

What do volunteers do?

They do almost anything you can think of! However, it's important to reiterate that volunteers are not there to do the work of a paid member of staff, but to enhance the services already provided.

We have a wide variety of placements; here are just a few of the areas where volunteers are placed :-

- Assistance on wards
- Assistance in the gym
- Tea bars
- Chaplaincy
- Information Service
- Welcoming and way-finding
- Bereavement services
- The Discharge lounge
- Outpatients' department

What's welcoming and way-finding?

This is an exciting new service that we plan to introduce towards the end of 2006. Hospitals can be daunting places which leave people feeling anxious and worried, therefore, we're keen to enhance our welcoming team and introduce a way-finding service where

volunteers would meet and greet patients and take them to the correct department.

Where will I be placed?

Once you've registered an interest in becoming a volunteer you'll be invited to come in to the hospital for an informal chat. We need to find out a bit more about your interests and will ask a few questions about your aims and life experiences – you may already have a particular area in mind. Your views will then help us to match you to the most suitable placement.

Why do people volunteer?

People volunteer for different reasons. For some it's an opportunity to give something back to the community, whilst for others it gives them the opportunity to develop their confidence and skills.

“Doing good” can give you a sense of well-being, it also enables you to try out a planned career to see if it is right for you before making any commitments. If English is not your first language, volunteering can help you improve your English-speaking skills, learn more about other people and help you develop more self-confidence.

Some people volunteer as they may be interested in pursuing a career in healthcare. We offer a future employer reference service for people who have carried out over 100 hours of voluntary service.

How much of my time will I have to give?

This is flexible and will be discussed during your informal chat.

Did you know...

In a survey of employers, over 70% said they would hire a candidate with volunteering experience over someone who had never volunteered.

What plans are there for volunteers?

We're keen to grow our team of volunteers and have ambitions to have over 1000 volunteers by 2011.

I am interested in becoming a volunteer so what do I do next?

For further information please contact Bernadette Aucott, Voluntary Services Co-ordinator:

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Thank you for your interest, we look forward to hearing from you.

Please be aware that volunteers at University Hospital Birmingham NHS Foundation Trust may be subject to a Criminal Records Bureau check.

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Make the difference

Become a volunteer at the
Queen Elizabeth Hospital
or Selly Oak Hospital

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