Role Description - Patient and Staff Supporter

Responsible to: Volunteer Co-ordinator

Work with: Reception staff/ ward staff including nurses, nursing assistants, house keepers, catering staff, domestic staff, dieticians and speech therapists.

Hours/ days: Wayfinding and Befriending
Minimum 3 hours/day/week. (morning or afternoon)

Mealtimes: Lunchtime 11:30 am - 1:30pm
Dinnertime 5pm - 7pm

Location: The Royal London Hospital, St Bartholomews Hospital, Newham University Hospital, Whipps Cross University Hospital and Mile End Hospital.

Purpose of the role
Helping visitors and patients to their destination as a Wayfinder and as a Befriender on a ward to chat and listen to patients.

Wayfinding
• To be a welcoming presence to patients/visitors and complement the work of the reception staff and ward staff.
• To give general information to patients and visitors i.e. situation of exits, lifts, stairs.
• To direct patients to facilities i.e. toilets, drinks machines, telephones.
• Under instruction of reception staff, take visitors or patients to the area they wish to visit.
• Look for visitors who appear to need assistance and help them. If the volunteer is unable to help, to obtain assistance from a member of staff.

Befriending
• To chat to, listen to and befriend patients and visitors
• Shop for ward patients
• To help serve meals and refill water in patients jugs, under supervision of housekeeper and ward staff
• You can occupy patients with board games or word puzzles etc. (which you would need to provide yourself).
• Read to patients.
• Encourage visitors to wards to use alcohol rub when entering and leaving the ward
• To run errands to other wards or departments.
Mealtime assistance

- To ensure that patients have the highest level of attention at meal times by enabling them to enhance their nutritional intake.
- To help improve the mealtime experience for patients by assisting patients in choosing meals and snacks from the menus.
- To check the patient’s dietary requirements are being met including any cultural requirements.
- To help prepare the patient and their environment for food service i.e. ensuring that all patients' trays, crockery and cutlery are within easy reach and are appropriate to the patients needs.
- To ensure that patients have had the opportunity to clean their hands before eating and notify nursing staff if anyone needs assistance with positioning.
- To check that patients have received the food they have ordered and that this food is appropriate to their needs e.g. is it soft enough for them to chew. To notify nursing staff if this is not the case in order to obtain a suitable alternative and to notify domestic or nursing staff if there are any issues relating to the quality of the food e.g. temperature.
- To provide assistance with tasks such as opening special meal containers, sandwiches, and cartons, whilst checking the dates on the containers.
- To ensure the patient can reach the drinks available.
- Assist or encourage specifically identified patients with eating and drinking in line with ‘Helping people at mealtimes’ guidelines by liaising with nursing staff to identify which patients have a ‘red tray’ and the type of assistance they will require.
- To alert nursing staff if any additional problems have been identified e.g. problems with chewing, swallowing, inappropriate food choice. If there are any problems around the patient bedside such as bust light bulbs, high presence of dust. Ceiling tiles damaged or stained again please alert the nursing staff.
- To advise nursing staff when patients with red trays have finished and assist them in filling out Food Record Chart.

Skills attributes and experience

- Is a good listener
- Willing and able to communicate with anyone they may meet
- Patient and caring. Friendly and accepting. Able to get on with different types of people
- Can use initiative, reliable, attend weekly and work on their own as well as part of a team
- Is able to take instructions and follow them through
- Is presentable, clean and tidy in appearance
- Able to keep a confidence and understand confidentiality

What volunteers are not allowed to do:

- Lift or help lift patients
- Deal with body products or fluids
- Wash a patient
- Toilet a patient
- Deal with infectious materials
- Have contact with patients valuables or money, except small change for shopping

Last Updated 25/09/2014