

Wednesday, October 5th 2011

Blackpool Victoria Hospital is seeking new volunteers

BLACKPOOL Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust has many opportunities available for people of all ages who would like to give time back to their local hospital by doing some voluntary work.

The range is very varied from welcoming people into the hospital and showing them where they need to go, helping out on the library trolley to helping on the wards keeping the patients company, offering them tea or coffee and making their time in hospital more pleasurable.

The hospital would particularly like to hear from anyone who would like to be a Welcomer as with the opening of the new £40M Surgical Unit there is a need for more people to provide this valuable service.

Renate Scheffer, Volunteer and Communications Officer who manages the Welcomers, said: "The volunteer Welcomers are an integral part of hospital life and much appreciated by the patients, visitors and staff. They are often the first people a new patient will meet when they come to the hospital, so they have to be friendly and outgoing.

"The new Surgical Unit is a wonderful addition to the hospital and we need more people who can help patients and relatives find their way around it.

"This is a really important job for us and we would love to hear from as many people as possible. If you can give up some time and think you would like more information about the role of a Welcomer, please contact me on 01253 306875 for a chat."

There are a wide range of other volunteer roles available which will help patients while they are in our local hospitals, such as ward based helpers. Sam Woodhouse, Practice Development Sister (Continuous Improvement Projects) said: "The volunteers that we have on the wards are absolutely fantastic and a true asset to our organisation. The service they provide is invaluable and the benefit to patients is huge. It would be great if more volunteers would come forward and offer to help.

"We encourage the volunteers to be part of our team. We offer training so the volunteers can fulfil their role with confidence and help is always available from the nursing staff.

“Our ward based volunteers engage in games with patients and talking to them, often offering them company when they have no visitors coming to visit.

They also offer patients tea and coffee throughout the day and our meal mates help patients with the opening of meal packaging.

”The volunteers on the stroke ward help patients who are on the road to recovery with interactive games on computers so the opportunities are huge and versatile.”

Jane Blacker, a volunteer within the Chaplaincy Department based on A&E said: “I love being a volunteer at the hospital and I find it very rewarding. It is my way of giving something back to the community. I look forward to every day that I can volunteer and help people even if it is just in a small way.

“My role involves serving patients or family members with tea and coffee and offering an ear to listen. Many patients visiting A&E are very traumatised and need someone to talk to. A simple gesture can sometimes make a world of difference in a person’s life.”

The hospital is also recruiting for roles such as the Library Trolley service, the League of Friends sweets trolley, meal mates, taking requests on the wards for Radio Victoria and administrative helpers. Volunteers may choose to fulfil more than one role. Training is provided for most of the current volunteering roles.

If you would like to be a hospital volunteer, please call 01253 657994 or send an e-mail to volunteers@bfwhospitals.nhs.uk

For further information about this Press Release, please call Renate Scheffer, Communications Officer, on 01253 306875 or email renate.scheffer@bfwhospitals.nhs.uk