HOSPITAL SERVICE

**Volunteer role description**

**Please note: this is a winter service only, from January to April 2020**

Age UK Berkshire is offering a hospital visiting service to people in the older people’s wards of the Royal Berkshire Hospital in Reading.

The aim of the service is to offer companionship and support - both emotional and practical - to those in hospital.

**Main tasks**

* To visit patients on wards on a regular day and time each week.
* To spend quality time during visits listening to and talking to patients, one-to-one, offering companionship.
* If appropriate, to spend time creatively with clients during visits which might further enhance their quality of life e.g. reading to them, playing cards or Scrabble, doing crafts, etc.
* To help patients understand and prepare for leaving hospital and returning home.
* To alert the coordinator to any concerns clients may have, or any concerns you may have about clients.
* To complete brief forms detailing number of patients spoken with, timings, issues, etc.
* To maintain confidentiality and security of personal data.

*Tasks you are* ***NOT*** *expected to undertake*

* Any personal care, e.g. feeding, dressing, assisting with the toilet, etc.
* Administering or advising on the use of any medications.
* Any heavy lifting.
* Any task you feel uncomfortable with.

**Experience**
No previous experience is required, but a willingness to learn, and to participate in training, is important to enable you to best help our clients, and to help you get the most satisfaction from volunteering with this service.

Although not essential, you may find it can be an advantage if you have experience of dealing with, or caring for, older or disabled people either informally (e.g. contact with or care of older family members), or formally in employment.

**Qualities**

* A desire to make a difference to the lives of older and/or disabled people is vital.
* A kind, caring and friendly manner.
* An ability to listen to, and have empathy with, clients.

**Availability**You should be available to volunteer in this role for the whole three months, Ideally, you should have at least 2 to 4 hours a week to spare on a regular basis, normally between the hours of 2pm and 5pm. The service will operate 7 days a week. Travel and parking costs will be covered through expenses.

You will also need to be available at least once during the working week to attend an informal interview and to make an introductory visit to the hospital with a member of staff.

**Training**

Specific training for this role will be delivered in conjunction with the Royal Berkshire Hospital, which will cover:

* Safeguarding
* Infection control
* Manual Handling (e.g. using wheelchairs)
* Data protection/information governance
* Fire safety
* Dementia awareness

**Formal requirements**We require a completed application form. We also require the names of two referees who have known you for a minimum of one year. They should not be family members, and one of these referees should have known you in a formal capacity e.g. employer or tutor.

If accepted as a volunteer, you will be required to satisfactorily pass an enhanced level Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, or provide information to allow us to verify your status using the online DBS Update Service. Your disclosure of any past or spent convictions may not preclude you from volunteering with Age UK Berkshire. For more information see [www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check](http://www.gov.uk/disclosure-barring-service-check).

**In addition, you will need to complete the hospital's checks - this includes an application form, an honorary contract and an online health questionnaire. Depending on the results of your health questionnaire, you may have to supply proof of inoculations and/ or have inoculations carried out before you can volunteer.**

**Our aim**We believe that visiting and helping older people can be hugely rewarding, and want our volunteers to gain experience, and be proud of what they achieve while with us. To this end, we offer ongoing support, and hope volunteers will always feel free to contact one of our team to discuss any matter which will help them during their time with us.

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| **For further information regarding volunteering with Age UK Berkshire, please contact the Volunteering team on 0118 959 4242 or email** **info@ageukberkshire.org.uk** |