

Volunteer Policy

HR-P-0050

Thames Hospice is a local charity for people living in East Berkshire and South Buckinghamshire. We provide expert care to adults who have a life-limiting illness- and their families and carers. Our services include nursing and medical care in our Hospice and in the patient's homes, as well as practical and emotional support.

Volunteers are involved with the hospice in many different ways including within the Hospice, in our shops and in our community.

Thames Hospice recognises that without the support of volunteers in all roles the Hospice would not be able to operate the range of services currently on offer to patients and their families. Therefore we aim to offer volunteers the best possible experience during their time volunteering with us.

Recruitment

In order to ensure that the Hospice creates and maintains rewarding opportunities for volunteers and to ensure that volunteers are placed in the most appropriate role a formal procedure has been developed. The Volunteer Recruitment Policy & Procedure (HR-P-0042) outlines how a role is designed and advertised, how potential volunteers can apply, the screening process and all associated paperwork and ongoing arrangements for volunteering. We would not normally expect volunteers to volunteer for more than 16 hours per week.

Induction & Training

New volunteers will be issued with a Welcome Pack which includes a welcome letter, handbook, a copy of the Volunteer Agreement, a leaflet about confidentiality and a copy of the most recent Volunteer Talk.

The Volunteer will then begin their induction training which is completed with their Volunteer Manager in the place where they will be volunteering using the relevant Induction Checklist. Each volunteer will also complete mandatory training in Health & Safety, Fire Awareness and Information Governance. This is conducted in the volunteer's regular shop, if they are a Retail Assistant, or via e-learning for all other roles. Volunteers will be supported through this process by the Education & Training department.

Equal Opportunities

Thames Hospice has a commitment to providing equal opportunities and to avoid unlawful discrimination against volunteers, this is detailed in the Equal Opportunities Policy (HR-P-0034). An Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form is distributed with the Application Form which potential volunteers can choose to complete. This is then entered onto the volunteer database for monitoring and reporting purposes.

Safeguarding

Thames Hospice has a commitment to safeguarding and protecting the welfare of its service users, volunteers and staff. Our Whistleblowing Policy (HR-P-0002) outlines the procedures to follow to ensure staff and volunteers are able to raise any safeguarding concerns they may have and to ensure that they are taken seriously and investigated appropriately.

Involving Younger Volunteers

The Hospice is keen to involve volunteers from as wide an age span as possible. Currently we stipulate that volunteers must be over the age of 16 and have finished statutory school education to volunteer as a Retail Assistant and then over 18 years old for all other volunteering roles. Our Involving Younger Volunteers Policy (HR-P-0047) outlines how those under the age of 18 will be involved in volunteering opportunities in as safe a way as possible.

Data Protection & Confidentiality

All data provided by volunteers will be kept securely and destroyed in line with current legislation including the General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). Full details can be found in the Staff & Volunteers Privacy Statement. The Confidentiality Policy (IG-P-0002 point 2.3.3) also outlines the responsibility that volunteers have with regards to confidentiality and data protection. Training is provided when a volunteer starts their placement and supplemented with a leaflet included in each volunteer's Welcome Pack.

Expenses

Thames Hospice is committed to reimbursing reasonable out of pocket expenses that volunteers incur as a result of their volunteering for the organisation. Full details, including the procedure for claiming expenses can be found in the Volunteer Expenses Policy (HR-P-0045).

Support for volunteers

Volunteers will be made aware of their Volunteer Manager when they commence their volunteering placement. This person will be the primary staff member to support that volunteer and should make contact regularly, host group volunteer meetings and offer 1-to-1 support where needed.

Health & safety

All volunteers are covered by the Hospice's Public Liability Insurance and Employer's Liability Insurance. The Hospice's Health & Safety Policy (HS-P-0001) outlines the responsibilities and safety arrangements for all volunteers, staff and partner organisations, suppliers and contractors.

Working Together

Volunteers are issued with a Volunteer Agreement, which sets out what a volunteer can expect from Thames Hospice and in return, what Thames Hospice expects from the individual as a volunteer. If either party believes that the other has not abided by any part of the agreement the Problem Solving Policy & Procedure (HR-P-0040) can be referred to which sets out the procedure to follow to raise any concerns or complaints.

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