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## **Volunteer Policy**

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### Version control

<b>Approved/amended date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>By</b>	<b>Issue</b>
May 2016		Trustee Board	New policy
May 2017	1	Trustee Board	Reviewed
May 2020	2	Trustee Board	Reviewed

# Volunteer Policy

## 1. Our Mission: Improving Patients' Experience

Traditionally, local communities have supported their hospitals and this support continues today in the York area through the work of the Friends of York Hospitals (also referred to below as 'the Friends' and 'FOYH').

Our mission is to improve the experience of patients during their hospital stay. We do this by providing supportive and non-clinical volunteers to help the NHS staff meet patient needs. And we also raise funds to buy equipment and facilities which are not otherwise provided by the NHS Trust.

## 2. Our Values

All our activities are informed by the needs of patients. In meeting those needs we particularly value the qualities of compassion and commitment in our volunteers. We aim to be inclusive and encourage people from diverse backgrounds to get involved and help improve our services. We believe that people who enjoy their volunteering are likely to deliver a better service and we are committed to supporting our volunteers. We never work as substitutes for paid NHS staff; our aim is to complement the essential work that they do.

## 3. The Friends is an organisation of volunteers

Everyone involved with the Friends is a volunteer – except one paid member of staff. As volunteers ourselves, we recognise the value of the contribution to the local community that volunteers make. We encourage our volunteers to get involved in social activities with other volunteers, to take on new responsibilities and to develop their skills and knowledge through relevant training. In addition, we require our volunteers need to work within agreed hospital policies on confidentiality and health and safety, so that the NHS staff can have confidence in working alongside them.

All volunteers are members of FOYH which is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

## 4. Volunteers' key responsibilities

- **Confidentiality** – This is essential in a hospital setting and all our volunteers must sign the FOYH Confidentiality Statement. The Confidentiality Statement also covers holding information on our volunteers in paper and electronic form, in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998/2003 and the General Data Protection Regulations 2018. We retain each volunteer's file for 6 years after they cease volunteering with us.
- **Trust** – While FOYH is responsible for volunteers while they are on hospital property, we recognise that the nature of the work means that many volunteers work independently. Volunteers need to respect this trust by keeping in contact, signing in on arrival and out on departure, and informing

the Volunteer Manager and Administrator ('VMA') when they need to take a break or are no longer able to continue volunteering.

- **Respect** – Everyone who comes into contact with FOYH volunteers has the right to be respected as an individual and feel they are being treated fairly. Volunteers are allowed access to patients on the understanding that they will treat them with dignity and report any abuse, molestation or mistreatment witnessed. FOYH volunteers themselves also have the right to be treated with respect and have access to the VMA for support if this is not the case.
- **Maintaining the reputation of the Friends of York Hospitals** – FOYH has worked consistently since 1953 to build its reputation as a valued partner in local health provision in York. Volunteers should keep the need to retain this good standing in mind and avoid any behaviour that could be seen as bringing the organisation into disrepute.

## 5. Volunteer roles

New volunteers are given a copy of the relevant role description for the service that they are joining. Both electronic and paper copies of role descriptions for all our current volunteer roles, linked to the relevant risk assessments, are kept in the FOYH Office and may also be accessed from the documents section of the Friends' website ([www.foyh.org.uk](http://www.foyh.org.uk)). It is the responsibility of the VMA to make sure that these are up to date (reviewed on at least an annual basis) and made use of in new volunteers' induction briefings.

## 6. Volunteer recruitment

The Friends advertise for volunteers in a variety of ways in an attempt to attract as diverse a group of volunteers as possible. While FOYH volunteers do not make clinical decisions or perform clinical procedures, our volunteer roles are not without their challenges. Many (but not all) of our volunteer roles require a reasonable level of physical mobility. Our volunteers always have the support of NHS Trust staff, but nonetheless many roles require the ability to work independently, sometimes where patients are in difficulties or distress. Other FOYH volunteer roles are less demanding. We aim to find a role appropriate to their interests and capabilities for as many prospective volunteers as we can.

The minimum age for volunteering with the Friends is 16. Where a volunteer under the age of 18 wishes to be involved in one-to-one contact with patients (such as work with stroke recovery patients) they will be considered on an individual basis by the VMA and the staff of the ward in question as to suitability for the role.

Each new applicant needs to complete an application form.

The VMA interviews the applicant, with the support of an experienced volunteer or trustee. A Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) criminal record check is carried out at the appropriate level for the role. Our hospital Trust's HR department is also involved with the DBS check process. Further information on the FOYH volunteer recruitment process can be found in the **FOYH Volunteer Handbook**.

## **7. Insurance**

FOYH has a public liability insurance policy which covers all eventualities likely to affect hospital volunteers. If a volunteer or prospective volunteer has a specific query about our insurance cover, they should contact the VMA.

## **8. Volunteer Induction and Training**

The core induction and training programme for new volunteers consists of:

- a Volunteer Handbook. This includes information about the Friends organisation, expectations about reliability and time commitment (we normally ask for at least 6 months), claiming expenses, accident reporting, hospital dress code, tabard/lanyard, security ID pass, health and safety precautions, storage of personal belongings, staff benefits, the volunteer's role and several other relevant topics
- an Induction briefing delivered by the VMA prior to their first day of volunteering within the hospital
- a Mentor session where the newcomer works alongside an experienced volunteer or member of staff, preferably in the location where the newcomer is due to start a regular volunteer time slot

Some additional training is required, for example Safeguarding level 1 for those volunteering with children. Another example would be information on the effect of strokes and possible strategies to encourage communication, for those who volunteer with the stroke rehabilitation patients.

Training sessions of wider relevance - such as on dementia, hygiene, manual handling or fire safety – are organised by the hospital as and when this is required and / or is available.

## **9. The trial period**

We treat volunteers' first twelve weeks after induction as a trial period. During this time new volunteers can let us know whether the role they have started to carry out is suitable, whether they want to ask for a different role, or whether hospital volunteering is not for them after all. Likewise, when major problems crop up with a new volunteer – with reliability, for example, or consistently inappropriate behaviour - we can decide that the issues are unlikely to be easily resolved, that he or she has not proved suitable for a hospital volunteering role and ask them to leave.

At the end of the trial period, the VMA will send a letter to the volunteer confirming the placement, if successful, to the volunteer. If the placement has not been successful, the VMA will notify the volunteer by letter and retrieve and deactivate the ID badge immediately.

## **10. Volunteers' input**

We want our volunteers to be involved in the development of FOYH. Volunteers have the right, and are encouraged, to have their say about their experience while volunteering with the Friends. This could be anything from observations about working practices, to suggestions about the development of their volunteer role, concerns about being discriminated against or queries about what to do if they are not happy with how things are going. Such suggestions and concerns should be fed back in person or sent to the VMA initially. However, where volunteers' input relates to the VMA's role they should contact the Chairman of FOYH in accordance with the "Problem solving procedure procedures relating to volunteers" (see below)

## **11. Problem solving procedures**

Occasionally an established volunteer will have a persistent problem or complaint that cannot be resolved through an informal contact or meeting as outlined above. Very occasionally an established volunteer might themselves not meet the standards expected by FOYH. Their behaviour might be causing problems for patients, hospital staff, or their fellow volunteers.

We have Problem Solving Procedures in place to resolve both types of problem. These procedures can be accessed via the Friends' website <http://www.foyh.org.uk> . Paper copies are also available in the Friends' Office.

Naturally, we hope these procedures will not be required. We aim to offer an enjoyable and positive experience to all our volunteers at all times and to recruit motivated, committed people with the right skills and personal qualities for their role.

## **12. Supporting our volunteers**

The VMA is normally the first point of contact for new volunteers. The VMA organises volunteer recruitment and induction and is available to answer volunteering queries in the Friends' Office. The VMA may be contacted with comments, queries, suggestions and complaints which s/he will pass to the relevant person.

If the volunteer would prefer a face-to-face meeting the VMA can book a room to ensure privacy if required and make meeting notes to record what is discussed. Volunteers are welcome to bring a friend with them to meetings of this kind.

Our VMA is available in the office from Monday to Friday, 9.15am to 4.30pm. His telephone number is 01904-726762 and his email address is [andy.white@foyh.org.uk](mailto:andy.white@foyh.org.uk)

## **13. Reporting to the Board of Trustees**

The VMA will provide the Board of Trustees with a monthly report on volunteers, which will include the number and location of volunteers and any developments/issues.

#### **14. Review of policy**

This volunteer policy is reviewed annually or sooner in the event of changes in legislation. This is done by the VMA, prior to being authorised by a meeting of the Board of Trustees.