About this role:
The Patient Affairs Service provides the practical and emotional support needed to guide grieving relatives through the first few days following the death of a loved one at Kingston Hospital. As a busy service, especially after weekends and in the winter months, the Patient Affairs Volunteer is a front-of-house role. You will play an integral role in providing information and reassurance to people recently bereaved by telephone and in person to help them understand how and when they can access support.

What is the commitment?
This is a highly specialised volunteer role at Kingston Hospital and volunteers will receive a great deal of on-the-job training and supervision to help them to carry out their role. As such, we expect a minimum 12 month commitment with at least 1 day per week (in total – this can be split, see below) from volunteers interested in this position.

Volunteers are needed most on Mondays and Tuesdays between 8.30am – 10.30am when the service is busiest. The timings of this role can be flexible, however some coverage of these needs is preferred and will be taken into consideration when recruiting new volunteers.

What will I be doing?
This is a varied role which will be led by the different needs of the service and people using it each day. However there are a number of tasks and responsibilities that volunteers will be regularly asked to help with:

- Preparing Appointment Packs – this is a packet of forms and information which guide the bereaved person through the necessary steps to deal with authorities and arrange a funeral.
- Answering the phone and taking messages to a high standard of accuracy and customer service
- Giving out maps of the hospital and local registry office and providing directions; occasionally, volunteers may accompany patients to the local registry office if they are alone or distressed.
- Checking people in for appointments, confirming that they have brought all the necessary documentation with them and answering basic questions they may have about what will be involved in their appointment.
- Protecting the privacy of people using the service by providing information about how to make an appointment to people who may arrive without one.
- Being available to support people before and after a viewing of a loved one. This may involve accompanying people for a walk if there are other people booked in to use the viewing room.
- Helping to maintain the tidiness and pleasant appearance of the Patient Affairs waiting area, e.g. ensuring people are asked to wipe their feet in winter months or storage of umbrellas. This may involve occasional manual tasks such as picking up larger pieces of litter and disposing of them in domestic waste bins, or contacting the domestic facilities contractor ISS where large quantities of litter need removing from the Patient Affairs building and surrounding paths and gardens.
Volunteers may be involved in maintaining the tidiness and cataloguing of property belonging to people who have died at Kingston Hospital, and general lost-property which finds its way to the Patient Affairs Office.

What Skills, Knowledge and Experience is helpful in this role?
This role requires someone with the maturity, sensitivity and discretion to help people who are newly bereaved. The role involves volunteering in an environment that is connected to a mortuary. The volunteer must be prepared in the course of this role, they should be prepared to see deceased persons being cared for in the mortuary, being delivered/collected by funeral directors etc. and those that have been prepared for viewing by loved ones.

However, it is a highly rewarding role for someone who understands the difference that good customer service and a calm, dignified and private environment can make to help people at one of the most difficult times of life – the death of a loved one. Please consider the following and think about how they might apply to you. This list suggests the key skills, personal attributes, knowledge and experience that may be helpful. However, if you are a kind, caring person and interested in this role, please apply as much of this role depends upon these qualities.

Skills and Attributes:
- Excellent customer service skills, e.g. confident and calm telephone manner
- Excellent active listening skills
- Highly organised with good attention to detail
- Empathic and non-judgemental approach
- Confidence to handle sensitive personal information with discretion and confidentiality
- Ability to maintain accurate records of your actions as a volunteer and provide comprehensive handover to hospital staff
- Confident approach to dealing with conflict
- Good personal boundaries and sign-posting skills
- Willing to welcome and apply equal opportunities to people of all faiths and no faith who access Patient Affairs.

Knowledge:
- Awareness of the principles of confidentiality in a hospital environment. The ability to maintain patient and service-users’ confidentiality is paramount to this role.
- Basic understanding and insight into how people may feel after bereavement
- Basic understanding and/or willingness to learn the death-related faith requirements and rituals of various religions.

Experience:
- A background or volunteering experience in a customer-service role is beneficial, but not essential.

How to express your interest in this role
As this is a specialist volunteering role, there are some additional steps for recruitment to ensure a good fit for both the volunteer and the Patient Affairs Office. These are:

- Enhanced Disclosure and Baring Service Check (if required)
- Informal interview with the Patient Affairs Officer and visit to the Patient Experience Office. This is an opportunity to see the Patient Affairs Office where this role is based and check out in a frank and open way whether both Kingston Hospital and you, the volunteer are confident to progress.

How will I be supported?

The Patient Affairs Volunteer(s) will have regular meetings with the Patient Affairs Officer to review systems, de-brief from difficult or challenging encounters and agree ways to develop the role of volunteers in Patient Affairs.

A brief handover to a member of staff will be expected to be communicated in person, or in writing, after each day or session of volunteering.

Training Plan

Much of the training for this role will be done ‘on-the-job’ by observing and learning how things are done in Patient Affairs. However, on your first day or soon after, the Patient Affairs Office provide a local orientation with lots of essential information to get started:

- Required reading “What to do when someone dies” and “What to do after a death in England or Wales”
- Patient Affairs Office – systems that volunteers need to know about e.g. how to prepare Appointments Packs, how to answer the phone and respond to frequently made enquiries
- Orientation to the building, route to the Registry Office and local parking arrangements.
- Health & Safety – unique to Patient Affairs
- Infection Control – unique to Patient Affairs (and what to advise visitors to the service)
- Information Governance & Confidentiality

To apply or for more information, please contact the Head of Volunteering, Laura Shaley Greene via email, laura.shaleygreene@kingstonhospital.nhs.uk or by telephone 0208 934 2959.