Volunteer role description: Dining companion

Dining companions provide assistance and company to patients at mealtimes but will not be involved in feeding patients directly. You will receive training to ensure that you understand the role and how to give encouragement and support to patients at mealtimes.

Dining Companion volunteers are allocated to a specific ward and shifts should be agreed locally with staff and other volunteers. Volunteers can help on any day of the week and normal volunteering times for Dining Companions are 12-2pm or 5-6pm.

Level 1 dining companion tasks
Level 1 volunteers do not feed patients but will encourage patients to eat and drink.

1. Liaise with staff at each session to check patient requirements in relation to diet
2. Encourage patients identified to you to eat and drink, and remind the patient if they have not finished their food
3. Assist patients with cutting food and opening packets, and assist with patient dignity, e.g. wipe the patient’s face (with their permission) or ensure they have a napkin
4. Ensure the patient has access to false teeth, glasses etc which they may need
5. Ensure food and drink is within easy range of each patient
6. Remove crockery from the bedside area and ensure the area is kept clean and tidy
7. Refresh patient water jugs as necessary (after checking with the nursing staff).
8. Support patients with completing any surveys eg the Friends and Family Test.

Level 2 dining companion tasks
When Level 1 dining companions have regularly (at least once a week for three months) volunteered on the ward, they can request to undertake Level 2 dining companion training to assist people to eat. This training will be with our dietetic and speech and language therapy team and will be delivered over 1.5 hours in a group setting.

1. Monitoring food and fluid intake by completing patient food and fluid intake charts
2. Signing off food and fluid chart following each meal
3. Encouraging patients to take their supplements as identified by staff
4. Support patients during mealtimes by helping to feed patients who identified by staff
5. Support a patient who is a slow eater by ensuring that time is taken to allow the patient to eat and drink at their pace. The patient should not feel rushed to eat.
6. Where a patient is visually impaired, the volunteer should ensure that the patient understands what the volunteer is doing at each stage of the mealtime.

Tasks not to be undertaken by the volunteer:
Dining companions should never attempt to feed a patient who is unable to close their mouth or a patient who is lying flat. Where a patient is falling asleep, the volunteer should seek advice from the person in charge of the ward.

It is expected that all Dining Companion volunteers will be able to:
1. Speak with patients from all walks of life with confidence and minimal supervision.
2. Be professional and polite with patients, carers and staff.
3. Volunteer regularly, and let someone know if unable to attend
4. Ensure absolute confidentiality of information obtained through contact with York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust.
We will support you by:
1. Delivering a Trust Induction Day which will provide mandatory training
2. Providing access to other training as appropriate
3. Linking you with a volunteer supervisor who will be your main point of contact, as well as the Volunteer Services team.
4. Listening to your feedback about your role
5. Reimbursing reasonable travel expenses incurred as a result of volunteering
6. Providing Level 1 dining companion training session, and Level 2 if/when required
7. Providing Dementia Friends training session

The Trust requires all volunteers to demonstrate the following Trust Values:
- caring about what we do
- respecting and valuing each other
- listening in order to improve
- always doing what we can to be helpful.

If and when you are ready to leave your volunteer placement, please let your ward supervisor and the volunteers service (volunteering.mailbox@york.nhs.uk) know so that we can collect your ID badge and open the place up to others.

To gain consent for use of photography, video and case studies

York Teaching Hospital NHS Foundation Trust (the Trust) uses photography, video and case studies of supporters, NHS staff and members of the public in a number of ways in order to represent the Trust in a variety of forms, including in printed information such as newsletters, displays, on websites, social media and film. The photography, video or case studies will primarily be used by the Trust, but may be shared with other NHS organisations and York Teaching Hospital Charity.

By signing this form you agree that the photography/video/case study can be used for these purposes by the Trust. We will not knowingly use the image for anything that may cause offence, embarrassment or distress. We reserve the right to continue to use the image unless you advise us otherwise.

If you wish to discontinue the use of the photography, video or case study please contact the Trust by calling 01904 725233 or by emailing commsteam@york.nhs.uk

Please sign to confirm you understand the remit of this volunteering role. Please note this does not constitute a legally binding contract of employment.

Signature ........................................................................................................

Print name ....................................................................................................

Date ........................................