

Date: 27/03/2015

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 - Ref: FOI/012160

With reference to your FOI in connection with 'Hospital volunteers' please see response below.

1) How many volunteers work at Russells Hall hospital and other hospitals in the Dudley borough and what charities do they represent?

There are currently 330 individuals signed up to volunteer at The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust (Russells Hall Hospital, Corbett Outpatient Centre, Guest Outpatient Centre, Ladies Walk Clinic). In the main they are engaged directly by the Trust's Hospital Volunteer Service. This number also includes representatives from Dudley Stroke Association, Dudley Hospital Radio, Rheumatoid Arthritis Support, Pain Support, Carers Support, Leukaemia Unit, Action Heart, Red Cross Hospital from Home, Breastfeeding Buddies, Dudley College Hair & Beauty and Wishing Well.

2) Which departments do they work in and how do they help with the hospitals' work?

Volunteers work across all departments and wards and perform many tasks that help improve patient experience including taking enquires from members of the public, performing way finding tasks, helping with general enquires and escorting patients to wards and departments.

On wards they provide mealtime assistance, nutrition and hydration support, chat to patients and take the library book trolley from ward to ward. In maternity they help the breast feeding buddies and with collating information packs. They provide emotional and spiritual support to patients and relatives in Chaplaincy.

They undertake patient feedback surveys for service improvement, admin and clerical support, and help at public events including the Annual Members' Meetings and Board of Governors' meetings.

A number of charities also come on site to either fundraise or offer social support to patients including:

- Dudley Stroke Association: volunteers help on the acute stroke unit and stroke rehabilitation ward.
- Dudley Hospital Radio: visit wards for music requests to be broadcast from offsite studio
- Rheumatoid Arthritis Support: hold monthly social support group for patients
- Carers Support: offer advice and support to carers as well as a weekly tea and chat service for visitors.
- Action Heart: offer onsite health clinic and gymnasium to patients and staff.
- Red Cross Hospital from Home: a project run separately by the Red Cross offering

support to patients on discharge from hospital.

- Breastfeeding Buddies: trained by Public Health buddy programme - maternity unit
- Dudley College Hair & Beauty: volunteers provide weekly hair styling, manicure and nail painting for patients.
- Wishing Well Charity: a volunteer reads wishes to patients on the paediatric ward.

3) What checks are carried out on the volunteers before they start working at the hospitals and what checks are carried out on the volunteers while they are working at the hospital?

People apply to volunteer for the Trust via a formal application process. Recruitment, formal interview and shortlisting are undertaken by our volunteer coordinator with the help of trained volunteer mentors. Offers and acceptance are made with two satisfactory references, health clearance checking, immunisation history, DBS check (police check) to the appropriate level.

Prior to starting they undergo the Trust's mandatory training and volunteers' induction programme. Training is then provided in health and safety, information governance, infection control, safeguarding adults and children and rights and responsibilities. They then sign a volunteer agreement and confidentiality statement.

For a copy of the 'Volunteer mandatory training handbook' please contact FOI@dgh.nhs.uk quoting reference FOI/012160 and a copy will be sent to you.

On starting they are provided with orientation and customer care training followed by buddying with a volunteer mentor. They are subject to a four-week probationary period resulting in a discussion with the volunteer coordinator about future placement.

Other charities/voluntary organisations: sign a formal agreement that interview process and references were completed appropriately. Trust DBS check, health clearance and mandatory training performed is also performed by the volunteer coordinator. Red Cross do all their own checks due to staff on site.

4) How regularly are these checks performed?

DBS checks are redone in the event of a change in role or a gap in service.

All volunteers are subject to a four-week probationary period and regular supervision meetings. Trained volunteer mentors support other volunteers and meet regularly (both as a group and as individuals) with the volunteer coordinator to feedback any issues.

5) Have any instances of impropriety involving volunteers been uncovered as a result of these checks and what was the nature of the impropriety?

DBS certificates have arrived with undeclared convictions in the past which amounts to fewer than 10 instances in the past 11 years.

6) What action was taken to deal with the impropriety? Such as were they dismissed as a result of the checks?

Applications were discontinued in the event of undeclared convictions