



FAQS ABOUT VOLUNTEERING AT ST CATHERINE'S HOSPICE

Will I need to complete an application form to be able to become a volunteer?

Yes, but remember the application form is a two-way process. It enables the hospice to find out more about you, to ensure that you are suitable for the role, but also gives you the opportunity to share information about yourself which will help us find the best opportunity for you.

I have no experience - does it matter?

No. Most of our first-time volunteers have no experience either and in fact after their volunteer placement many of them tell us how nervous they were when they started. What we say to you is that if you do feel like that, don't worry; that feeling is perfectly normal and although sometimes it will be hard work, it will not feel like work – trust us. You will be given training and support to carry out your role and there will always be staff around if you need help or advice.

What age do I have to be to be able to volunteer?

You must be 16 to be able to volunteer for the hospice, including those working towards their Duke of Edinburgh certificate. There is no upper age limit.

Why volunteer for St Catherine's Hospice?

Volunteers are at the heart of the hospice and enable us to provide our essential services to the local community. We can promise a very rewarding role within a much-loved local charity which makes a real difference to the lives of local people. Not only that, it's also a very sociable activity which also offers valuable work experience for those beginning a new education or career path.

Will I need references?

Yes, we will ask you to provide details of two referees. Referees can be friends, colleagues or neighbours but not a family member. They must be at least 18 years old and should have known you for at least 2 years. Each referee should be willing to provide us with a reference and know that we will be contacting them.

I have a criminal record - can I still volunteer?

A criminal conviction doesn't necessarily mean you can't volunteer with us. We do not ask about any spent or unspent convictions for most of our volunteer roles - only those where a criminal records check is required. If you have a criminal record and would like to volunteer in a role where a criminal records check is required, we will need to speak to you about this and a decision will be made on a case-by-case basis

Can I volunteer if I am receiving benefits?

Yes, many people start volunteering when they are unemployed as a way to learn new skills and gain experience to help them find a job. You can volunteer while receiving Jobseeker's Allowance as long as you are looking for work. We do understand that you may need to attend training or interviews and will be flexible around this.

Can I be paid to cover my expenses?

The hospice will pay mileage expenses to those volunteers who are required to use their own vehicle in order to carry out their duties for the hospice. These include: befrienders; Day Therapy drivers; lottery collector drivers.

What skills do I need to be able to volunteer for the hospice?

For most of our volunteer roles you don't need any specific skills or experience, just enthusiasm to get involved and a willingness to support people. If specific skills, experience or qualifications are needed (e.g. volunteer Complementary Therapy or Driver roles) we will provide details on the role description.

What level of commitment will I have to make?

Whether you can donate two hours a week or two hours a year there is a role for you! Some roles include regular volunteering, while others can be one-off for a specific period of time. We have a range of opportunities throughout the organisation during daytimes, evenings and weekends – there's something for everyone!

Will I be interviewed? What will I be asked?

For some roles an informal discussion will take place. Remember the discussion is a two-way process. It enables the hospice to find out more about you, to ensure that you are suitable for the role, but also enables you to ensure that the volunteering opportunity meets your needs and interests.

Can I volunteer if I have a disability?

We welcome everyone. If you have a disability or additional needs that you think may affect your volunteering then please contact us and we will be glad to advise you.

Will I receive training for the volunteer role that I undertake?

All volunteers receive on-the-job training and you will be invited to the hospice induction – a half-day session where you will hear all about the hospice including its aim, vision and ethos, what services we provide and how we are funded. We hope to see there.

Some roles may require you to attend a series of training days for example, Inpatient Unit volunteers, befrienders and advisors.

How long can I volunteer for?

You can volunteer at St Catherine's Hospice as long as you feel able. The hospice does not have any restrictions on the amount of time you can volunteer for us.

Can I volunteer and work at the same time?

Yes, you can be working full time or part time, retired or not in work. Some voluntary work takes place during evenings or at weekends and provides a welcome change from the normal demands of your working life.

I'd like to support patients in the hospice and at home but I have recently been bereaved. Can I still volunteer?

Everyone is different and the reality of being in an environment supporting individuals living with a life-shortening illness - whether in someone's home or a hospice - after you've been bereaved may be different to what you imagine. This is something to consider before you apply and you can discuss this with a member of the volunteer team. There are a range of roles available at the hospice and you might want to think about volunteering in a different environment initially, for example volunteering in fundraising or one of our charity shops.

What volunteering opportunities are there for students?

Many students (e.g. potential nurses and doctors) find volunteering at the hospice complements their course and provides them with valuable work skills for the future. You can read more about clinical placements on our website under the Education and Conferencing tab.

What do I do if I am not happy in the role?

Most people find a role to suit their skills and availability and get a great deal of satisfaction in contributing to volunteering at the hospice. If you aren't happy, or if your circumstances change, you are free to leave your voluntary position at any time. You might want to discuss this with a member of the volunteer team first.

How do I find out about the roles that are available?

You can search the hospice website volunteer section for all the current vacancies and role descriptions at www.stcatherines.co.uk. If you would like to volunteer in one of our shops, search for a shop near you and get in touch with them. You can also get in touch with us at volunteerdepartment@stcatherines.co.uk or [01772 629171](tel:01772629171) to discuss what you are interested in.

Will you provide me with a reference?

Once you've been volunteering with us for six months, we'd be happy to provide you with a character reference. We'll also provide you with a reference for up to three years after you leave.

None of these FAQs answer my question - what do I do now?

Please contact a member of the volunteer department on [01772 629171](tel:01772629171) or volunteerdepartment@stcatherines.co.uk to discuss further the query that you have.