

The Student Involvement Programme

Want to gain experience of a hospital environment as part of your personal and professional development? Have a chat with your tutor or careers advisor about Bedford Hospital's Student Involvement Programme.

Being involved can give you the opportunity to:

- ☺ Meet new people
- ☺ Gain new skills
- ☺ Make a difference to patients, visitors and staff
- ☺ Benefit your studies

Roles and activities

Ward helper:

Gain insight and experience of working in a busy ward with lots of patient interaction. Help patients fill out their menus, talk with them, make their beds and help out at meal times. Wards include care of the elderly and women's and children's services.

Clinic Helper:

Be involved in the running of a demanding outpatient clinic, welcoming patients and assisting reception with various tasks and activities.

Maternity Helper:

As part of our busy maternity team, you can volunteer within several areas assisting staff and ensuring a pleasant and positive stay for our patients. Collecting prescriptions from pharmacy, meeting and greeting visitors and filing are all important, helpful activities involved with this role.

Those who can, do. Those who can do more, volunteer.

For more information about the Student Involvement Programme at Bedford Hospital NHS Trust you can:

Write to:

Voluntary Services Department
Bedford Hospital NHS Trust
Kempston Road
Bedford
MK42 9DJ

Telephone: 01234 7958801

Email: Voluntary.services@bedfordhospital.nhs.uk

Voluntary Services Manager: Deborah Allman

Visit our website: www.bedfordhospital.nhs.uk

Voluntary Services

Student Involvement Programme



An information leaflet about student volunteering at Bedford Hospital NHS Trust.

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What is the Student Involvement Programme?

This programme is designed for students aged 18 or over who are considering a career within the health care profession, including medicine. The hospital will provide the opportunity for you to gain experience of working in a hospital environment through volunteering.

Students who participate in the programme will commit to a period of volunteering for six months or more. They will receive a certificate of accreditation and letter of commendation if they successfully complete the programme.

What are the benefits of this programme?

If you want to find out what working life is like in a hospital, this programme provides an ideal way to gain some experience of patient interaction, whilst showing an ongoing commitment and interest in health care. It can also be of benefit to your studies and research. Please note, we cannot offer any clinical practice as part of this programme.

Are places limited?

There is a limit to the number of students we can accept every year so your college or university will have to nominate you for this programme rather than you apply.

Is this the same as work experience?

Work experience tends to be for younger people over a shorter period of time. This programme is designed for people aged 18 or over who are prepared to commit to six months or more of volunteering.

Where will I be placed and what will I be doing?

Participants will be placed in a specific role in the same area, at the same time each week. Here you will have the opportunity to observe the day to day running of the area as well as helping us provide a positive patient experience. This may be, for example, helping patients fill out menu cards or running errands for staff.

Can I change the area I'm placed in if I do not like it?

Only under exceptional circumstances will participants be able to move from their area during the programme, so it's important that you are specific about what you want from your experience and which area will help you achieve this. Have a chat with your tutor or careers advisor at college or university, or give the voluntary services manager a ring at the hospital if you're not sure.

Can I leave during the programme?

If you are unhappy about where you have been placed it's always worth talking to somebody before you decide to leave to see if any particular problems or concerns can be rectified. Due to the amount of preparation and support participants receive on the programme we are unable to endorse or accredit participants that do not complete the whole programme.

Do I need special skills or experience and will I need training?

In order to be a volunteer at the hospital you should meet the requirements of the person specification for this role. A copy of this can be obtained from the voluntary services department at the hospital or the tutor/careers advisor that suggested this programme to you.

Volunteering in a hospital can be demanding, emotionally and physically. You will also be asked to attend mandatory training and an induction. Time and energy are important attributes for this role.

I am from a local college/university—will I automatically get a place on this scheme if I apply?

Acceptance on the scheme is subject to certain conditions. This will include being nominated by your college or university, meeting the person specification and receipt of specific clearances, like criminal records and occupational health (which we organise). Being nominated for the scheme does not guarantee a place and the voluntary services team reserve the right to refuse applicants if they are not suitable.

Do I have to be an A* student to apply?

No. We are interested in supporting applicants who have a genuine interest in the hospital, health matters and our patients. A good standard of written and oral English is required.

If I am successful how quickly can I start?

The programme runs from the beginning of the autumn term each year. Once we have received the necessary clearances, and if an opportunity is available, you will be offered a start date. Once you have been nominated, the earlier you request a place the more likely your request will be considered.

Will I be able to spend time with doctors and clinical staff?

You may meet doctors and clinical staff during the course of the programme. However, you will not be able to observe patient treatment; this is part of our commitment to patient privacy and dignity. The scope of your role is to support the department through voluntary activity and promote a positive patient experience.

What's in it for me?

At the end of the programme you will receive an official certificate recognising your achievement and, upon request, be given a written reference or letter of commendation. Participants will be offered the opportunity to become a Foundation Trust Member and receive Members Matters, a regular newsletter with news and updates about what's happening in the hospital. We also hope that in return for participating you will learn new skills, use your existing expertise, develop new interests, meet people and have the opportunity to be involved.

How can I find out more?

Speak to your tutor or careers advisor about being nominated for a place on the programme. Alternatively you can call the voluntary services office at the hospital for more information.