

INFORMATION FOR PROSPECTIVE VOLUNTEER BEREAVEMENT VISITORS

Thank you for your interest in the role of Bereavement Visiting at the Hospice which can be very satisfying and worthwhile. The following information is intended to help you decide whether to proceed in the application process. Most importantly we are looking for caring, good listeners so please give me a call to discuss if you are unsure whether to apply.

How are bereavement visitors selected?

Because of the sensitive nature of our work and so that we can provide a reliable service to our bereaved relatives, we need to be sure that prospective bereavement visitors have a flexible attitude, can be non-judgemental and have good listening skills. We want to be sure that if you are put forward for training you will have every chance of completing the course successfully and that you are likely to be able to stay with the Bereavement Service for at least **two** years.

Volunteers are selected via application form and one or two interviews with the Bereavement Service Co-ordinator (BSC) and another colleague. This is an opportunity for you to find out more about what is involved in Bereavement Visiting and for us to find out a bit more about you. Bereavement Visiting requires particular strengths and aptitude and is not suited to everyone. Following the interview, successful applicants are invited to join the next training course for Bereavement Visiting. Training courses are not held frequently, so your application form may be put on file until such time as a recruitment drive is undertaken and you may then be contacted.

What's involved in the training?

Volunteers are trained in small groups. The training covers basic listening skills, grief awareness and personal awareness around loss issues. Trainees who successfully complete the course will go on to join our team of Bereavement Visitors, after a series of induction sessions, on a probationary basis for the first six months. The training is held over a combination of Saturdays and evening sessions, lasting for about three months. Dates of the next training are available from the department. **You will need to be able to attend 100% of the sessions.**

What do bereavement visitors do?

Volunteer Bereavement Visitors offer emotional support to bereaved relatives either at the Hospice or in the relative's own home. We may visit once or see relatives over a period of time. We also offer Bereavement support to small groups of relatives and their children and there are opportunities for Bereavement Visitors to get involved in these activities if they wish.

Please note: bereavement visiting is not counselling, if you are planning to use this work as a placement for a Diploma level counselling course it will not be suitable.

What support will you get?

Trained bereavement visitors meet monthly in groups for supervision and support with a qualified member of staff, or sometimes meet for peer supervision. These groups currently meet on at various times during

the day and evening. You will be expected to attend the group sessions if you have visited a client that month, or if you cannot make a meeting it would be your responsibility to make sure you get supervision for that month's work. During the first six months' probationary period, you will also have supervision for each visit made. All Bereavement Visitors receive annual review sessions with the BSC to review the year and plan ahead for development.

What if you've had a recent bereavement?

It is hospice policy that we do not allow people to become bereavement visitors if they have had a close bereavement in the past two years. This is because we need to have worked through our own losses before we can begin to help others with theirs. We could discuss the type of bereavement involved if you would like the opportunity to do so.

What if you decide that bereavement visiting is not for you?

Selection and training is a two-way process, designed to help you decide whether you want to proceed and for us to assess if you would be suitable. Some people decide to go on to volunteer for the hospice in various other ways.

What commitment would be involved?

The commitment is as follows:

- 100% attendance on the training course
- 100% attendance at supervision meetings
- Attendance at FOUR training sessions each year after initial training
- To visit at least one or two bereaved relatives weekly or fortnightly (each visit lasts approximately one hour).

What do I do now?

If you are still interested, contact the Bereavement Services Co-ordinator on 0845 2255 497 for an application pack, alternatively you can download the relevant forms here <http://www.compton-hospice.org.uk/volunteers/apply-to-volunteer/>

Even if you are unsure, the interview and training process is designed to help you decide. Bereavement visiting can be rewarding, satisfying, demanding and sometimes very sad but provides the opportunity to learn new skills and to join an established team of experienced and dedicated workers.