

# Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) St. Charles Care Support Volunteers

Welcome to the Volunteer to Career (VtC) programme and St Charles Hospital. This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) document serves as a comprehensive guide for our valued Care Support Volunteers and staff at St Charles hospital.

It is designed to provide a clear understanding of your role, responsibilities, and the practices we uphold to ensure a safe, respectful, and effective environment for staff, volunteers and the patients we serve.

CNWL volunteers play a pivotal role in complementing the professional care provided by our staff, enriching the lives of our patients through compassionate support and engagement. As a volunteer, you are not just giving your time; you are enhancing the quality of care and contributing to a supportive community that values mental health and well-being.

The purpose of this SOP is twofold:

1. **To Guide and Inform:** This document will serve as your go-to resource for understanding the operational procedures, your roles and responsibilities, and the ethical standards we uphold. It is designed to guide you through various aspects of your volunteering experience, ensuring you feel confident and informed in your role.
2. **To Ensure Consistency and Quality of Care:** By adhering to these procedures, you help us maintain a high standard of care and ensure a consistent approach in supporting our patients. This consistency is crucial for creating a safe and therapeutic environment within St Charles hospital.

As you embark on this rewarding journey, remember that your contribution is immensely valuable. You are not only supporting individuals in their time of need but also becoming an integral part of a team that is dedicated to promoting mental health and well-being.

We encourage you to read this document thoroughly and refer back to it as needed. Your commitment to adhering to these guidelines and procedures is greatly appreciated and plays a significant role in the success of this role.

Thank you for your dedication and for choosing to be a part of CNWL and St Charles Mental Health Hospital community. Together, we can make a significant difference in the lives of those we serve.

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## 1. Purpose and Scope of this Procedure

The purpose of this SOP is to outline the operational framework for Care Support Volunteers at St. Charles Mental Health Hospital, ensuring a structured, safe, and effective environment for staff, volunteers and patients. It delineates the expected roles, boundaries, training requirements, and resources available to support the volunteers in their invaluable work.

Care Support Volunteers are a vital component in the service delivery at St. Charles Mental Health Hospital. The scope includes providing non-clinical assistance to patients, facilitating activities, and creating a supportive atmosphere within adult inpatient wards and Psychiatric Intensive Care Units.

## 2. Key Relationships

At St. Charles Mental Health Hospital, the Care Support Volunteers role is deeply integrated into the hospital's operations, relying on strong interconnections between various wards and staff members. Below is a detailed list of the key ward contacts and relationships that are pivotal for volunteers:

### 2.1 Ward Contact Information

Ward Name	Ward Manager	Contact Email	Matron	Contact Email
Ganges Ward				
Thames Ward				
Amazon Ward				
Danube Ward				
Shannon Ward				
Nile Ward				

**Main Contact Information:** For overarching inquiries or issues that span multiple wards, the main contacts will be:

- **XXXXX Email:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx
- **XXXXX Email:** xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

## 2.2 Volunteer Team Contact Information

Role	Name	Contact Email
Volunteer Service Manager		
Volunteer to Career Lead		
Volunteer Coordinator		

For all general enquires, you can contact our inbox: xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx

## 2.3 Volunteer to Career (VtC) Programme

At CNWL, we recognise the passion and dedication of our volunteers. The VtC Programme is specially designed to guide and support those of you who envision a career within the NHS

- 1. Begin Volunteering:** Firstly, you'd need to start your volunteering journey at CNWL to be a part of the VtC programme.
- 2. Achievement & Continuity:**  
**Milestone:** Complete a minimum of 30 hours of volunteering.  
**Ongoing Commitment:** It is vital to maintain an active volunteer status with CNWL even after reaching the 30 hour milestone. Should you cease volunteering after achieving the 30 hours, you will forfeit eligibility to access the VtC programme. Continued involvement provides opportunities for learning and development, which will support your job applications and interviews, as well as it underscores your dedication and alignment with the Trust's values and objectives.
- 3. Tailored Support:** After you've reached the 30 hour milestone, the programme will provide customised support to meet your individual needs. This could involve assistance with refining your CV and personal statement, exploring various career pathways, mentoring, and offering training to help you excel in your role.

Remember, the volunteer to career programme is **only open** for active volunteers. Once you finish your volunteering, you will not be able to access this support.

For more detailed information about the VtC programme, please visit our website at - xxxxxxxxxx

## 2.4 St Charles hospital Team

### Local Supervisor

[Name] acts as the primary support and guide for volunteers, facilitating communication, and ensuring a harmonious working relationship between the volunteers and the hospital staff.

Every volunteer has a named local supervisor who you can contact during your shifts and who will provide support sessions.

### Matrons and other Staff Members

As leaders in patient care, matrons play a crucial role in integrating volunteers into the healthcare delivery system, ensuring that the support provided aligns with patient needs and ward protocols.

A multidisciplinary team of healthcare professionals who collaborate with volunteers, offering guidance and support to ensure that patient care is both comprehensive and compassionate. They include psychologists, occupational therapists, health care assistants, peer support workers, between others.

### One Community

One community is a social network with open doors offering ongoing help for people leaving mental health services and anyone who would benefit from their support. They offer many projects within St Charles Hospital, including gardening and creative writing.

### Volunteers

These are Individuals who are essential to the care team, providing invaluable non-medical support to patients while working within the framework of hospital policies and procedures.

#### Operational Dynamics:

- Volunteers must maintain effective communication with their ward contacts and adhere to the guidance and instructions from their supervisors and matrons.
- Volunteers must update their shifts on the MS Teams Calendar and promptly inform their supervisor of absences
- Contact details of both the volunteer team and the St. Charles team should be used for coordinating volunteer activities, addressing any concerns, or providing necessary assistance. This ensures effective communication while respecting privacy and professional boundaries.
- Flexibility is essential for volunteers to navigate the changing environment within the hospital, such as staffing changes or temporary reassignments.

## 3. Supporting Volunteers at St. Charles

Volunteers are expected to commit to a minimum of 4 hours weekly over a 6-month period, with the flexibility of weekend involvement (once there has been a period of volunteering during the week for at least 4 weeks) paired with weekday support from the staff. This stipulation underscores the importance of sustained engagement for both service continuity and volunteer experience.

### Volunteer Support Catch-ups and Supervision

The structure of support for volunteers at St. Charles Mental Health Hospital is two-tiered, ensuring volunteers receive comprehensive guidance and mentorship throughout their service:

- **Supervisor Allocation:** Each volunteer is assigned to a supervisor which is usually the nurse in charge specific to their ward. This supervisor acts as the first point of contact for the volunteer within the ward, overseeing their activities, providing immediate support, and guiding them in their day-to-day responsibilities.
- **Volunteer to Career (VtC) Lead Mentorship:** Alongside their ward supervisor, all volunteers are mentored by the Volunteer to Career lead. This leadership role is designated to offer additional support and career guidance, however, mentorship starts after the volunteer has completed 30 hours of service, helping volunteers align their volunteering experience with their long-term career aspirations in the healthcare sector.

**Entry Survey:** Volunteers are requested to complete a confidential online entry survey. This survey is designed to capture the volunteer's experiences and perceptions from the initiation to the conclusion of their service. This survey establishes a baseline of the volunteer's expectations, motivations, and initial impressions of the volunteering environment

- **Accessibility and Communication:** Volunteers are encouraged to approach the Volunteer to Career lead for calls, and catch-up sessions. These communications serve as an opportunity to discuss progress, address any concerns, and receive valuable feedback. It is also a chance for volunteers to gain insights into career paths and professional development within the NHS. However, mentorship discussions will commence after volunteers have completed 30 hours of service, to ensure a foundational experience has been established.
- **Feedback Loop:** The insights gained from these catch-up sessions with St. Charles are vital. They inform the continuous improvement of the VtC programme and help in adapting support structures to meet the evolving needs of volunteers. This feedback loop ensures that the programme remains responsive and relevant to both the needs of the volunteers and the objectives of the organisation.

The mentorship provided by the VtC lead, in conjunction with the ward supervisor's oversight, ensures that volunteers receive a holistic support system. It empowers them to perform their roles confidently and contributes to their personal and professional growth within the hospital environment.

## Volunteering services and St Charles hospital joint work

Roles and responsibilities of CNWL Volunteer Team and St Charles Hospital Team

CNWL Volunteer Team	St Charles Hospital Team
Interview, recruit, and onboard volunteers	Organise and contact volunteers for induction
Book volunteers for Breakaway training	Provide one-to-one support and catch-ups with allocated supervisors
Request volunteer email addresses	Facilitate a seamless transition and integration process for volunteers coming into the hospital environment.
Send out Volunteer T-shirts and ID badges	Ensure alignment of volunteer roles with hospital needs
Provide general training and support for volunteers	Complete Risk Assessment with volunteers prior to first shifts
Monitor volunteer satisfaction and retention	Address any volunteer concerns or challenges
Maintain and update volunteer contact information	Share insights from catch-ups with VtC team

## 4. Role of the Volunteer, including Boundaries

Care Support Volunteers' roles encompass a spectrum of activities, such as:

- Understanding patient needs through observation and communication.
- Assisting with non-clinical errands and tasks.
- Offering companionship and supportive conversation.
- Leading or facilitating recreational and therapeutic activities.
- Volunteers must always be accompanied by a staff member when escorting patients, ensuring their safety when moving around the hospital premises or attending external appointments.

Volunteers are strictly prohibited from engaging in clinical care, accessing patient records, and performing advocacy roles. The Full role boundaries are on Appendix C.

## 4.1 Access to Clinical Systems for Volunteers

### Access to Clinical Systems for Volunteers

In alignment with our commitment to patient confidentiality and the strict adherence to Information Governance policies, it is important to outline the access protocols regarding clinical systems for volunteers within the CNWL.

#### Overview

The Trust values the immense contributions volunteers make towards patient care and the overall service delivery. However, to protect the privacy and security of patient information, direct access to clinical systems such as SystmOne or any other patient records system by volunteers is not permitted. This policy is in strict compliance with the Information Governance standards mandated by the NHS and reflected in the CNWL Volunteer Services Standard Operating Procedure (SOP), particularly the section on "Volunteers accessing clinical systems" (pages 19-21).

#### Rationale

The restrictions are set forth to safeguard sensitive patient data, which includes detailed medical histories and personal information. Ensuring the confidentiality of this information is paramount and aligns with the NHS's standards of trust and safety.

#### Volunteer Engagement with Patient Information

While volunteers do not have direct access to clinical systems, they play a critical role in patient care and support. To facilitate this role effectively:

- **Observational Access:** Volunteers may observe clinical staff using SystmOne or other systems as a part of their learning and orientation process. This is done under strict supervision and without interaction with the system, to give volunteers an insight into the operational aspects of patient care.
- **Information Sharing:** Clinical staff may share necessary and relevant information about patients with volunteers in a secure and controlled manner. This ensures that volunteers are equipped with the knowledge needed to perform their roles effectively while strictly adhering to confidentiality requirements.

#### Safeguarding Patient Information

All volunteers are required to undergo training in Data Security Awareness as a part of their mandatory training. This training emphasises the importance of:

- Maintaining the highest standards of confidentiality.
- Handling patient information securely and responsibly.
- Complying with all relevant policies and regulations regarding information governance.

Our volunteers are a vital part of the CNWL family, and their contributions are immensely valued. The trust and safety of our patients are of utmost importance. By outlining these guidelines, we ensure that volunteers can contribute positively to their roles within the framework of upholding

patient confidentiality and adhering to the legal and ethical standards set forth by the CNWL and the NHS.

## Supervision and support

You will always be supported by a nominated staff member. If they are not on shift, there will be another person to support you. The rest of the team in the unit will be able to work with and support you during your time in the service.

There are regular catch ups and support sessions for volunteers - either in person or online.

The volunteering team are also available to support with general queries, you can contact them on [cnwl.vtc@nhs.net](mailto:cnwl.vtc@nhs.net)

As a Community Wellness Volunteer Facilitator, you'll receive ongoing supervision to ensure your achievement and well-being. Our supervision structure is designed to offer you continuous support, feedback, and development opportunities. See Appendix 7.

How Supervision Works:

- **Scheduled Meetings:** Regularly scheduled meetings with your supervisor provide a platform for discussing your experiences, challenges, and successes.
- **Case Discussions:** Engage in meaningful discussions about your interactions with service users, gaining insights and guidance for future encounters.
- **Training and Development:** Supervisors will help you identify training needs and opportunities, ensuring your growth and confidence in your role.
- **Well-being Check-ins:** Regular assessments of your mental and emotional well-being are conducted, affirming our commitment to your overall health.
- **Feedback and Adaptation:** Constructive feedback is provided, fostering a learning environment where you can adapt and thrive.

Expectations from You:

- **Active Participation:** Be open and honest in your communications, sharing your experiences and areas where you seek support.
- **Apply Learning:** Utilise the guidance and training provided to enhance your volunteering experience.
- **Respect for Guidelines:** Adhere to the policies and procedures of CNWL, maintaining the high standards of our volunteering programme.

## 5. Communication Channels for Volunteers

Volunteers are provided with multiple communication channels to ensure efficient coordination, dissemination of information, and resolution of issues. It's crucial for volunteers to utilise these channels effectively and adhere to the Information Governance protocol. The available channels include:

### 1. NHS Email:

**Purpose:** Main communication channel for all volunteers.



- **Usage:**
  - Volunteers are assigned an NHS email address for all communications with supervisors and the VtC lead.
  - Essential for providing updates on patient contact and receiving official communications.

**Important Note:** Personal email addresses must not be used for sending Records of Contact or any patient-related communication to prevent breaches of Information Governance protocols.

## 2. MS Teams Channel:

**Purpose:** Used for managing rotas, schedules, communication, and sharing information.

- **Usage:**
  - Volunteers will receive training to ensure they are competent in using MS Teams.
  - Volunteers can view and book available shifts through MS Teams, accessed via their NHS email.

### Instructions:

- Detailed instructions for booking shifts on MS Teams will be sent via email following the one-to-one induction.
- These instructions are also available in Appendix D for reference.

## 3. Assemble (Volunteer Management System):

**Purpose:** To keep volunteers informed and engaged with training, events, webinars, and news.

### Usage:

- Acts as a central hub for volunteers to access resources, log volunteer hours, and stay updated.
- The “document hub” section is a resource centre where volunteers can find materials to enhance their volunteering experience.

**Recommendation:** Regular checking of Assemble is advised to stay informed about important updates and useful information.

### Note on Email Management:

- It's imperative for volunteers to manage their NHS email accounts securely.
- Regular checking of emails is crucial for staying updated on shifts, hospital communications, and training updates.

## 6. Training, Inductions, and Volunteer management meetings

Volunteers are vital to the compassionate care provided at St. Charles Mental Health Hospital, and as such, their preparation is of utmost importance. Upon joining, volunteers will be introduced to the hospital's culture and the specificities of their role through a detailed induction process:

**Mandatory Breakaway Training:** Prior to starting their first shift, all volunteers must complete the mandatory Breakaway course to equip volunteers, who may be at risk of encountering aggressive behaviour, with the skills and legal knowledge to safely withdraw from such situations. CNWL volunteer Team will book you onto it.

The VtC coordinator will be in touch to arrange your enrolment in the course. These sessions are popular and fill up quickly, so it's crucial to act swiftly once contacted.

#### **Actions to be Taken Once Booked:**

1. **Health Questionnaire:** Complete the "GSA Health Questionnaire" provided and submit it to the training team at least one week before your session at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.
2. **Preparatory Reading:** Review the "Breakaway Handout" to familiarise yourself with the training content before attending.
3. **Appropriate Attire:** Dress in comfortable clothing suitable for physical activity, and flat shoes to prevent damage to the mats and floors during breakaway technique practice.
4. **Punctuality:** Arrive on time. Attendees more than 15 minutes late will not be admitted to the training session.

#### **First Shifts and Group Orientation**

##### **Group Induction and Orientation:**

##### **Organisation and Responsibility:**

- The VtC lead will coordinate with St Charles to schedule group induction dates.
- The induction at St Charles will be led by St Charles, who offer a comprehensive 2-hour tour to familiarise volunteers with the hospital environment.

##### **During the Group Induction:**

- **Team and Demographic Acquaintance:**
  - Volunteers will be introduced to the ward's team members.
  - Volunteers will receive a briefing on the patient demographic, fostering understanding and empathy from the outset.
- **Ward Familiarisation:**
  - A guided tour during the group induction will help volunteers learn the layout of the ward.
  - Important areas such as emergency equipment, exits, and patient care zones will be highlighted.
- **Emergency Protocols and Communication:**
  - Volunteers will be informed about ward-specific emergency protocols.
  - Standard channels of communication within the ward will be clarified.

##### **Post-Induction Steps:**

- After the induction, the volunteer team will provide volunteers with an NHS email address, which is the primary mode of official communication.
- This email is crucial for booking shifts and managing schedules through MS Teams.
- A detailed guide on utilising these digital tools will be sent to the volunteers via email.
- The guide will also be available in Appendix D for easy reference.

##### **First Shift and Hands on Learning:**

- The first shift will build upon the induction foundation.
- The ward manager or Matron will pair volunteers with experienced staff members for shadowing.

- This pairing provides an opportunity for hands on learning, allowing volunteers to apply their training practically.
- It's also a time for volunteers to ask questions and gain clarity on their responsibilities.

## 7. Lone Working and Escorting Patients Out

Volunteers must comply with St. Charles Mental Health Hospital's strict protocols regarding lone working and escorting patients. While volunteers play a valuable role in supporting the mobility and engagement of patients within and outside the hospital, they must do so under the following conditions:

- Volunteers may escort patients only when accompanied by a supervisor or a member of the healthcare team. Independent escorting of patients by volunteers is **not** permitted.
- Awareness and understanding of emergency procedures and risk management strategies are essential. Volunteers should be well-versed in the appropriate actions to take in various scenarios for their safety and the safety of patients. You can see a copy of the risk assessment on Appendix G.
- Regular training and refresher courses on safety protocols will be provided by VtC lead to ensure volunteers are up-to-date on the latest procedures.
- All instances of patient escorting must be documented and communicated to St Charles supervising staff before and after the activity.

It is critical that volunteers never escort patients outside of the hospital premises without direct supervision from qualified staff. This policy is designed to ensure the highest levels of safety for both patients and volunteers.

## 8. Leaving Volunteers

When volunteers decide to conclude their service at St. Charles Mental Health Hospital, a structured off-boarding process is initiated by VtC and Volunteer Coordinator to ensure a smooth transition and to gather valuable feedback:

**Leaving Survey:** Volunteers are requested to complete a confidential online entry and exit survey. This survey is designed to capture the volunteer's experiences and perceptions from the initiation to the conclusion of their service. This survey gathers insights on the volunteer's overall experience, including the support received, training, the impact of their work, and reasons for leaving.

The information obtained from these surveys is critical. It helps the volunteer management team to:

- Understand volunteer motivations and expectations more clearly.
- Identify strengths and areas for improvement within the volunteer programme.
- Enhance the volunteer experience for current and future participants.
- Inform policy changes and program development to align with volunteer needs and hospital objectives.

**Support for Transition:** The off boarding process also includes support for the volunteers in their transition, whether moving to other roles within the NHS or pursuing opportunities elsewhere.

**Recognition:** Acknowledgment of the volunteer’s contributions is an essential part of the departure process, ensuring they leave with a sense of accomplishment and recognition for their valuable service to the hospital and its patients.

## 9. Additional Resources for Volunteers

**Trustnet:** A comprehensive platform offering access to hospital policies and procedural documents  
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**Forms in Appendixes and also on Assemble Document Hub** you will find toolkits and information to facilitate and support your volunteering, including effective patient communication.

## 10. Additional Resources for Staff

**Trustnet:** A resource hub for staff to understand and support the volunteer framework, including policies, procedures and a **Manager’s Handbook** with detailed guidance for managing and integrating volunteers within the patient care team can be found on Trustnet, under “**resources for managers**”  
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## Final thoughts

As we bring this SOP to a close, we would like to take a moment to extend our heartfelt gratitude to Care Support Volunteers and staff at St. Charles Mental Health Hospital.

We understand that volunteering in the field of mental health could be a challenging role, you are not alone in this journey. CNWL is committed to providing comprehensive support, including training, mentorship, and resources, to ensure you feel confident, valued, and equipped in your role. We are here to support, guide, and stand beside you every step of the way. Your decision to join us and contribute your time, skills, and compassion is a true reflection of your essence and commitment to making a difference in the lives of others.

Volunteering in the field of mental health is a uniquely rewarding and a profound experience. It requires not only dedication but also empathy, patience, and a deep sense of understanding. Your role is integral to the support and recovery of our patients, and your contributions create impact of positive change that resonate throughout our entire community.

We recognise that the value you bring to our hospital cannot be captured in words alone. Your interactions with patients, your participation in their journey, and your unwavering support are what truly bring warmth and light to our hospital corridors. We encourage you to embrace this opportunity with an open heart. Every day, you will have the chance to learn, to grow, and to touch lives in meaningful ways. Remember, every small act of kindness, every listening ear, and every supportive word contributes significantly to the well-being of those in our care.

As you embark on this journey with St Charles, know that your efforts are deeply appreciated. You are not just a volunteer; you are a vital member of St. Charles and CNWL volunteer team family. Together, we will strive to maintain a caring and supportive environment for both our patients and each other.

Should you have any questions, need support, or wish to share feedback, please do not hesitate to reach out to our volunteer team [email address]. We are here to support you every step of the way.

Welcome to St. Charles Mental Health Hospital and the Volunteer team, where your service makes a world of difference.

## Appendixes

### Appendix A: Tip sheet for volunteers supporting patients at a Mental Health hospital:

We hope you find this information useful to help you prepare for your volunteering. It includes guidance on the following aspects:

- Preparing for your role: both prior to your initial day and during your early visits
- Suggestions and recommendations on communication
- Taking care of your own well-being.

#### **Preparing for your role**

Before your first day: Be Prepared:

- It is good to familiarise yourself with the hospital's layout and where different departments are located.
- Read and Learn about the different mental health conditions that patients may be dealing with.
- Review the hospital's safety procedures and emergency protocols.

#### **On your first times there: Conversation starters:**

- Use a friendly greeting: Start the conversation with a warm and welcoming greeting, such as "Hi, how are you today?" or "It's nice to meet you."
- Introduce yourself: Start by introducing yourself and your role as a volunteer. For example, "Hi, my name is [your name], and I'm a new volunteer. It's nice to meet you." Tell them a bit about what your role in the ward is, as they may not know what a "volunteer" does there.
- Build rapport: Take a moment to build rapport with the patient. You can ask them how their day is going or comment on something in their environment to help put them at ease. For example, "How's your day been so far? I really like the painting in this ward."
- Show interest in their hobbies or interests: If the patient has mentioned a hobby or interest, ask them about it. This can show that you are interested in their life beyond just their mental health concerns. For example, "I remember you mentioning that you enjoy gardening. How's your garden doing?"
- Share something about yourself: Sharing something personal about yourself can help break the ice and make the patient feel more comfortable. For example, "I noticed you have a picture of a dog in your room. I'm a dog lover too! I have a golden retriever named Oreo and he is nearly a year old."
- Explain the purpose of the conversation: Let the patient know the reason for the conversation and what you hope to achieve. For example, "I'm here to talk with you about anything and this does not need to be mental health related. I'm still new to this field, but I'm eager to learn and help you in any way I can."

**Always: Maintain Confidentiality:** Avoid discussing patient cases or personal information with anyone outside of the healthcare team and report any breaches of confidentiality to hospital staff immediately.

**Be flexible:**

- Be open to feedback from hospital staff and other volunteers about how you can improve.
- Ask hospital staff for guidance if you're uncertain about how to approach a task or situation
- Be willing to take on different tasks or responsibilities to support the hospital and its patients.

**Ask for Support:**

- Don't be afraid to ask for help if you're feeling unsure or overwhelmed.
- Seek guidance from hospital staff or other volunteers if you're unsure how to handle a situation.
- Speak up if you feel you're not receiving enough support or guidance from the hospital.

**Communication hints and tips:****General communication styles and Active listening:**

- Take the time to listen to patients without interrupting or judging them.
- Practice active listening by maintaining eye contact and nodding to show you're engaged.
- Adjust your communication style to match each patient's needs and preferences.
- For a patient who is hesitant to speak, use open-ended questions that give them the opportunity to share their thoughts and feelings. For example, instead of asking "yes" or "no" questions, ask questions that begin with "how" or "what."
- For a patient who is not understanding your communication, seek feedback and adjust your approach as needed. For example, you might ask, "Is there anything I can explain more clearly?" or "How can I help you better understand this?"
- Follow up with the patient after your interaction to show that you care about their well-being and are there to support them.

**Empathy:**

- Validate patients' feelings by acknowledging them and expressing empathy.
- Offer words of encouragement and support, such as "You're doing the best you can" or "I'm here for you".
- Express gratitude for the patient's trust and openness, such as "Thank you for sharing your story with me" or "I appreciate you being so open and honest with me. It really helps us understand how we can best support you".
- Use compassionate language, such as "I'm sorry to hear that" or "That must be really difficult" or "That must be really difficult to go through. I'm here to listen if you ever need to talk" or "I'm sorry for the pain and difficulty you're experiencing. Let's work together to find a way to make things better".

**Be aware of cultural differences:**

Adapt to the different communication styles of patients with diverse backgrounds or abilities:

- Use of honorifics and titles: Some cultures place a high value on honorifics and titles when addressing individuals. For example, in some Asian cultures, it is customary to address older adults or authority figures with specific titles such as "Auntie" or "Uncle." It is important to show respect for such traditions and address patients accordingly. Always ask the person how they prefer to be called and do not make assumptions.

- Religious and spiritual beliefs: Many cultures have strong religious or spiritual beliefs that may influence their views on mental health and treatment. Be mindful of these beliefs and respect them when working with patients. For instance, a patient may prefer to incorporate prayer or meditation into their mental health treatment plan.
- Personal space and touch: Different cultures have varying norms when it comes to personal space and touch. Some cultures may be more comfortable with physical touch, while others may prefer to maintain more distance. In your role, always maintain boundaries and avoid touching people.
- Nonverbal communication: Some cultures place a greater emphasis on nonverbal cues, such as eye contact, facial expressions, and gestures. In such cases, it is important to pay attention to the patient's nonverbal communication and respond accordingly.
- Indirect communication: Some cultures may use indirect communication, such as speaking in a more subtle or circumspect manner. For instance, a patient may not directly express their mental health concerns but may hint at them through their body language or tone of voice.

### **Taking care of yourself**

- Schedule regular breaks throughout your shift to rest and recharge. Use this time to go for a walk, sit down and relax, or grab a healthy snack.
- Talk to and Seek support from hospital staff, volunteer to career coordinator, volunteer team or other volunteers if you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed. Sometimes just venting to someone can make a big difference.
- Practice stress-reducing techniques, such as deep breathing exercises, yoga, or meditation. There are many apps and resources available that can guide you through these practices and the Trust also offers regular weekly sessions.
- Make time for activities that bring you joy and help you relax. Whether it's reading a book or watching a sitcom, prioritising these activities can help you feel more balanced and fulfilled.
- Set boundaries and learn to say "no" when you need to. It's okay to prioritise your own well-being and decline requests that feel overwhelming or stressful.
- Practice self-compassion by treating yourself with kindness and understanding. Remember that you're doing important work and that it's normal to feel stressed or overwhelmed at times.
- Take advantage of any resources or support services that are available to you, such as keeping well: [email address]
- Remember that taking care of yourself isn't selfish - it's essential for being able to care for others. By prioritising your own well-being, you'll be better equipped to provide compassionate care to those in need.

### **Practice Self-Compassion:**

- Be kind to yourself and don't be too hard on yourself if you make a mistake.
- Acknowledge your accomplishments and celebrate your successes.
- Focus on your successes and the positive impact you're making on patients' lives.
- Remember that volunteering is a learning experience, and use any challenges as opportunities to grow and develop your skills.



## Appendix B: Creating Meaningful Relationships: Cultural Sensitivity

In our commitment to providing compassionate and effective care for volunteers at St. Charles Mental Health Hospital, we recognise the importance of cultural sensitivity in the interactions between our Care Support Volunteers and patients. The diverse patient population, encompassing various cultural, religious, and personal backgrounds, necessitates an understanding and respect for these differences to build trust and foster meaningful relationships.

### Key Areas of Focus:

- **Active Listening and Empathy:** Volunteers should practice active listening, showing empathy and understanding towards patients' feelings and experiences. This approach is vital in acknowledging the individuality of each patient without judgment or assumption.
- **Avoiding Assumptions:** It's crucial for volunteers to avoid making assumptions based on a patient's cultural background. Stereotypes can be harmful and misleading, and every individual's experience is unique.
- **Cultural Education and Openness:** We encourage continuous learning about different cultures and beliefs. Volunteers should approach interactions with an attitude of curiosity and a willingness to learn. This may include participating in cultural competency training sessions provided by the hospital.
- **Respectful Communication:** Volunteers must use respectful language and understand the importance of non-verbal cues in communication. They should feel comfortable asking open-ended questions to gain better understanding while being respectful and non-intrusive.
- **Understanding and Respecting Boundaries:** Recognising and respecting personal and cultural boundaries is essential. This includes being mindful of topics that might be sensitive due to cultural reasons and understanding norms around physical space and touch.
- **Support and Guidance:** Volunteers are encouraged to seek support from their supervisors or the Volunteer to Career Lead when they need clarity on cultural aspects or handling sensitive situations. This ensures that volunteers feel supported and confident in their interactions.

## Appendix C: VOLUNTEER ROLE BOUNDARIES - Clinical Services

Boundaries are important to ensure that staff and volunteers carry out their duties according to agreed expectations. Your volunteer role description sets out the main tasks that should be undertaken in the role, creating a shared understanding of what you are there to do.

The boundaries below are in place based on experience of what works well to enjoy a fulfilling volunteering placement. The boundaries provide a framework for everyone to understand what is and isn't included in the volunteering role and to protect you from being asked to do something outside your role.

Patients, carers, new staff, may not be aware of these boundaries and sometimes may ask you to carry out tasks outside of the role description. If this occurs, you should politely decline and report this to your local contact/ supervisor, or the CNWL Volunteer team as soon as possible.

In your role within the clinical team, you may be involved in:

- Group sessions
- One to one support in the service/ community
- Spending time with the patient/ service user, listening and chatting
- Helping them access information, including online resources that they may not be familiar with, activities and networks in their local area
- Helping with shopping and some errands, ensuring you adhere with handling monies procedures
- Some practical support in filling in forms, but not giving advice
- Prior agreement with your local supervisor/ contact, to meet with service users in the community and do activities such as going to cafés, the cinema or for walks together
- Having fun and enjoying each other's company!

**Some of the areas that are outside of your role are:**

- Direct care or assistance for patient's daily clinical activities, including personal or intimate nature care or cleaning up of bodily fluids
- Assisting the patient with any form of medication
- Holding, retaining and using any keys of the older person's home
- Providing assistance in the conduct of a person's own affairs e.g. acting as an advocate or being a power of attorney
- Pushing patients in wheelchairs unless wheelchair or manual handling training has been completed
- Answering any enquiries about the service users/ disclosing any information to other professionals, family, carers or friends
- Providing any kind of transport (e.g. driving the person around)
- Solving any problems which may arise, including offering counselling or therapy
- Being mindful of sharing your personal information and giving your contact details, including phone number.
- Going above and beyond your role and agreed times/ visits, including spending the night in the service user's home
- Giving or accepting individual and personal gifts, personal legacies or gifts in wills. Instead a gift can be left to the team or CNWL but not to individual volunteers.
- Promising to keep secrets – you may have to pass on any concerns to your contact/ supervisor and may not need permission to do this
- Engaging in actions, including physical contact, language or opinions that are inappropriate or offensive.

## Appendix D: Volunteer Shift Scheduling Guide

Text version:

### **Scheduling Your Volunteer Shifts with Microsoft Teams - A Simple Guide for St Charles Volunteers**

Below is a step-by-step guide on how to schedule your volunteer shifts using Microsoft Teams:

#### **Step 1: Access Microsoft Teams**

Log in to Microsoft Teams using your PC or web browser. If you're not already logged in, go to [web address] and sign in using your NHS volunteer email address.

#### **Step 2: Locate the Volunteer Area**

Once logged in, use the search bar to find "**St Charles Volunteers: General.**" This is where you'll find the Volunteer area.

#### **Step 3: Access the Volunteer Calendar**

Navigate to the top bar and click on "**Volunteer Calendar.**" This will take you to the calendar where shifts are scheduled.

#### **Step 4: Create a New Shift**

To create a new shift, click on "**+Add new event.**" Here's what you need to do:

- Fill in your name.
- Specify the location.
- Set your shift's start and end times.

#### **Step 5: Save Your Shift**

After filling in the necessary information, click "**SEND**" in the top right corner. This will save your shift details. It's important to remember to click "**SEND**" to ensure your shift is saved.

#### **Step 6: Confirm Your Shift**

To make sure your shift was saved, you can do one of two things:

- Option 1: Check for a notification on the General Posts landing page.
- Option 2: Go back to the Volunteer Calendar and confirm that your shift is visible.

Repeat the steps above for each shift you want to schedule.

#### **Step 7: Remove a Shift**

If you need to cancel a shift, here's what you need to do:

- Go to the Volunteer Calendar.
- Click on the shift you want to cancel.
- Click on "**Edit.**"
- On the next page, select "**cancel meeting.**"
- If necessary, provide a reason for the cancellation.

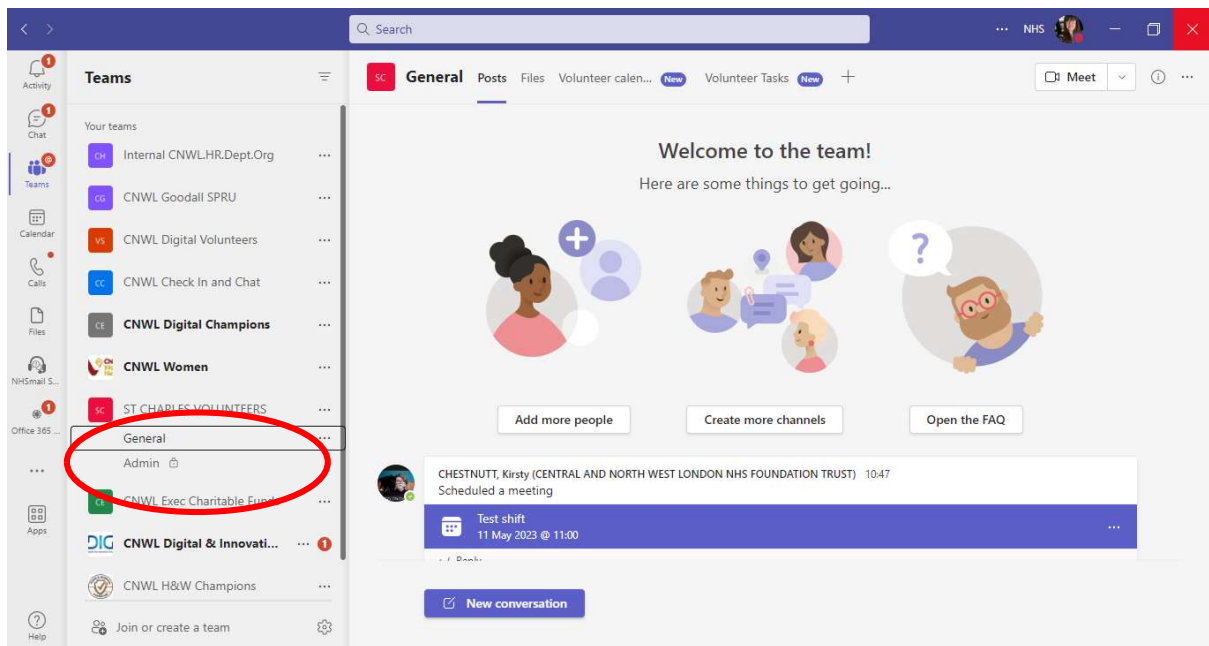
- Confirm your choice to remove the shift from the schedule.

If you come across any issues or need help scheduling your shifts, please reach out to [email address] for support.

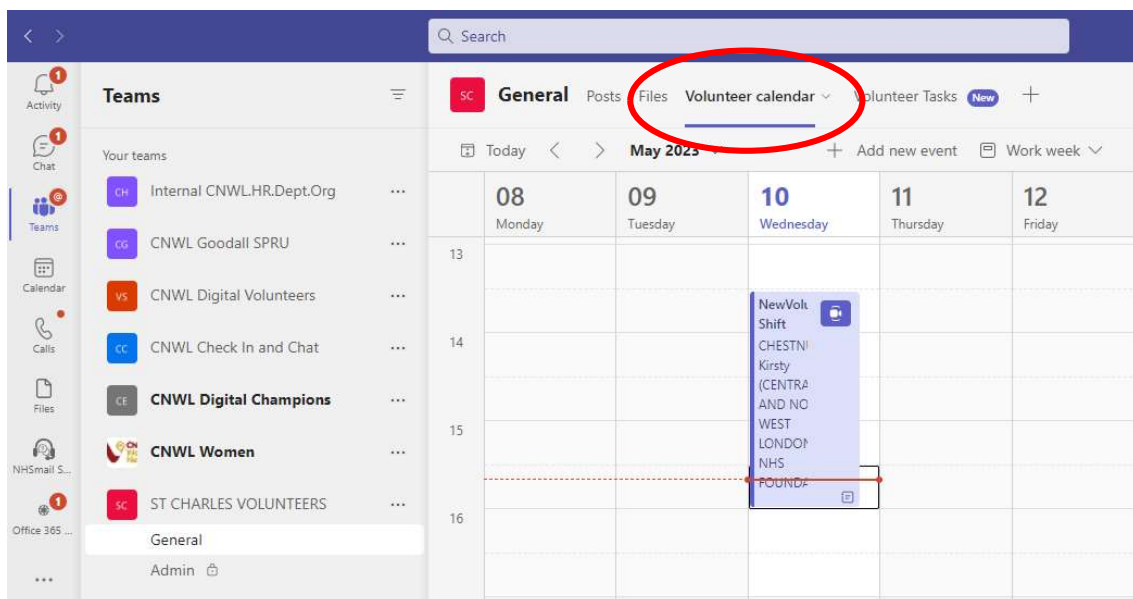
Image version:

## St Charles Volunteer Microsoft Team: Adding your shifts on the Volunteer Calendar

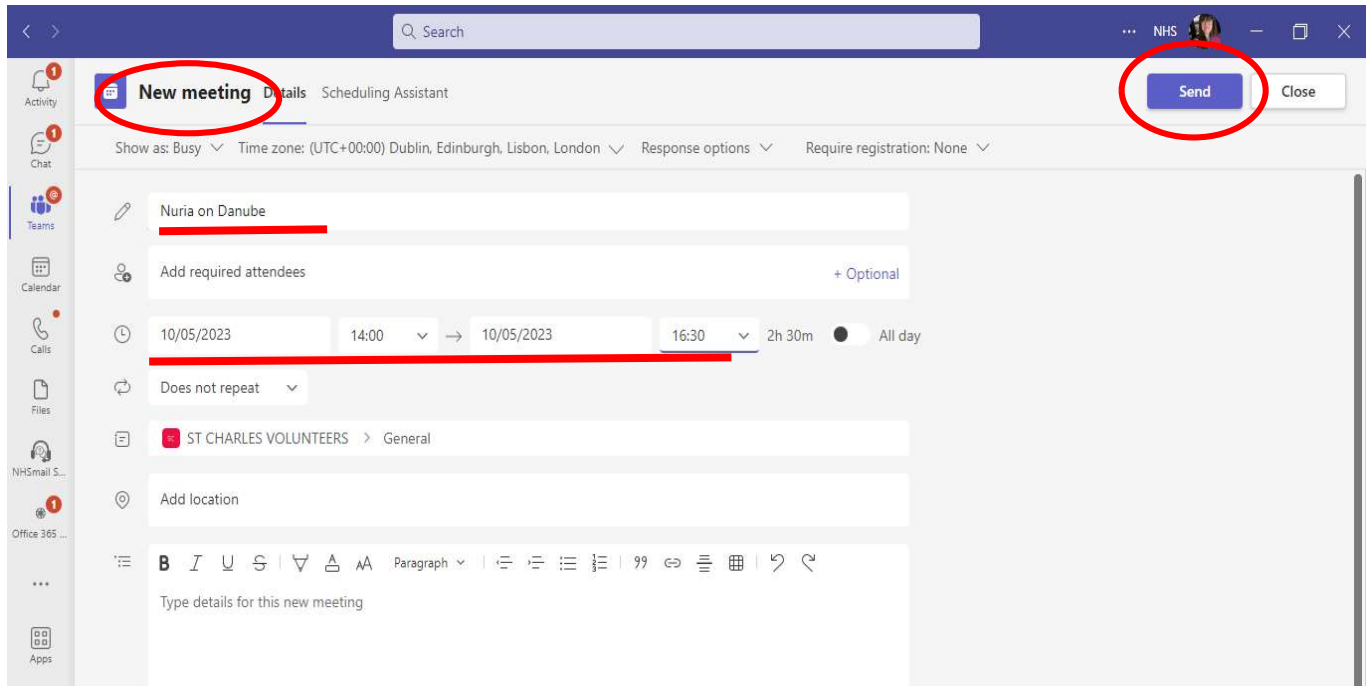
1. To find the Volunteer area, log into the Teams app on your PC, or via the web here: [web address] and search for **St Charles Volunteers: General**



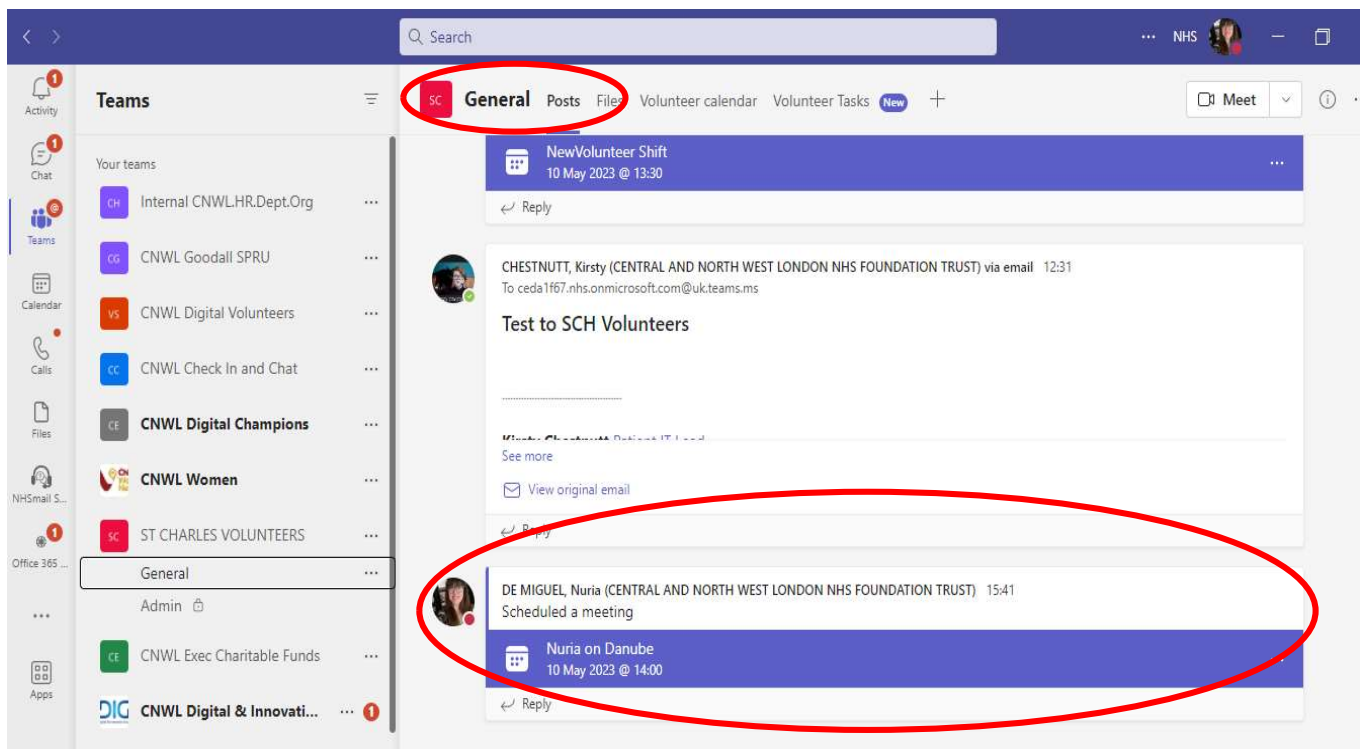
2. To book your shift on the rota, once you have logged in you need to go on the top bar and click on **“Volunteer Calendar”** and **“+Add new event”**



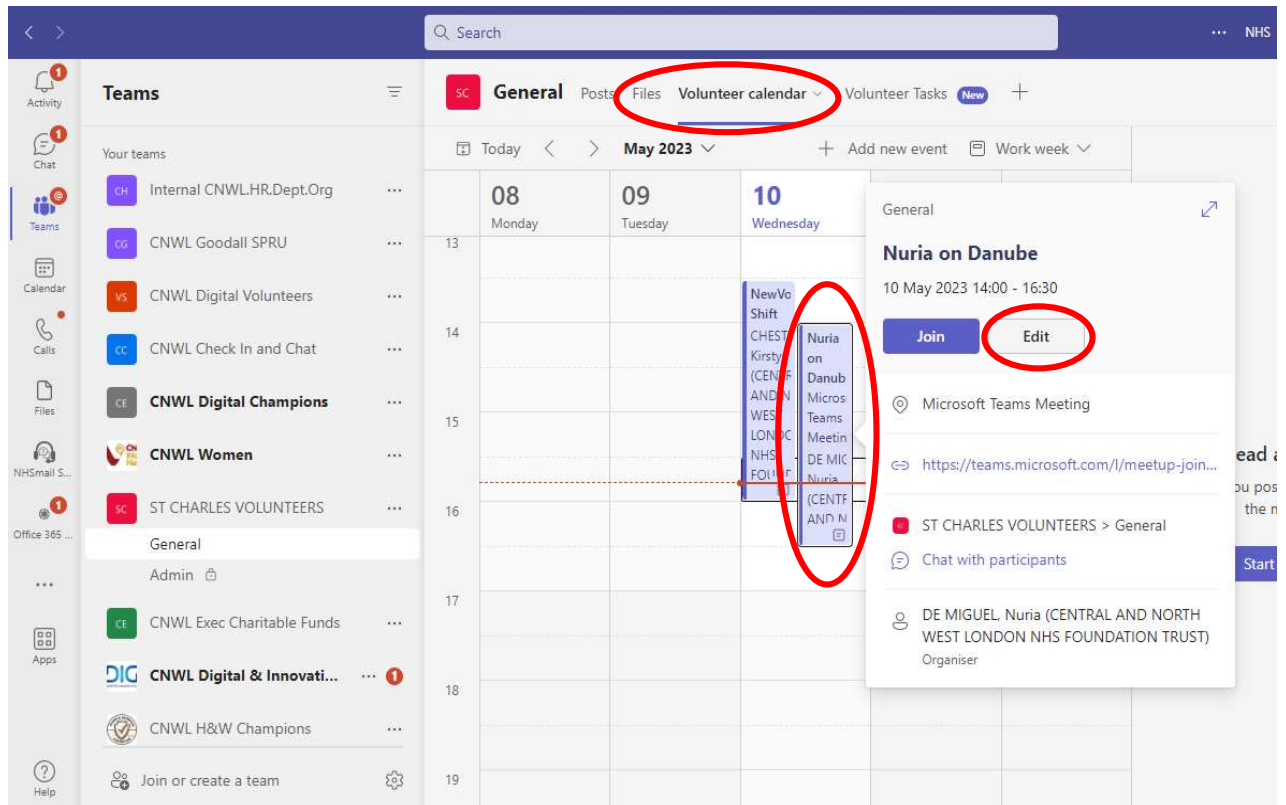
- Fill in the information in the box including:
  - You name
  - Location
  - Times you will be there from and to
  - And press **SEND** on the top right corner (otherwise the information won't be saved)



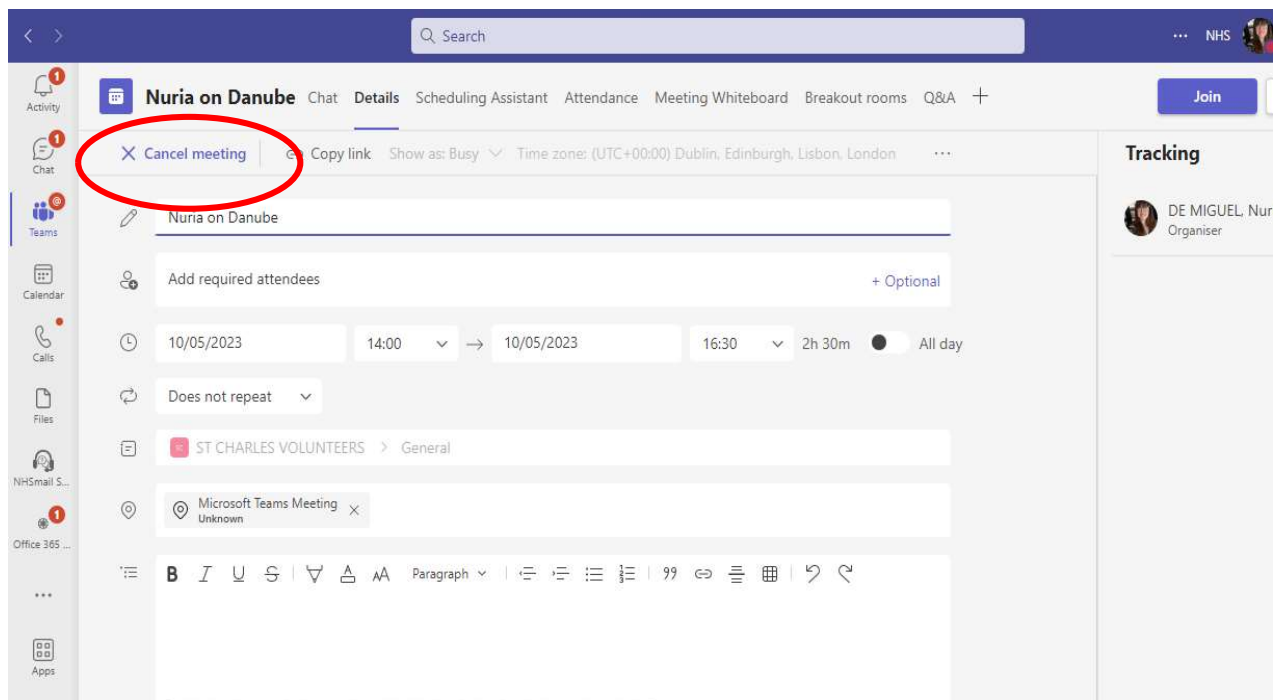
- To check the information has been saved, you can go to the landing page: **General Posts** and you will see a notification there, or go back to the calendar and check your shift is there. You will have to repeat this process for every shift



5. To **remove a shift**, go the volunteer calendar, click on the shift you'd like to remove and press Edit



This will take you to the next page with the option of: **cancel meeting**, select that option and add a reason (optional) and your shift will be removed from the rota



If you experience any issues/ problems, get in touch with: [email address]

## Appendix E: Volunteer Code of Conduct

**Conduct Guidelines:** This code of conduct establishes the standard of behaviour expected from all volunteers at St. Charles Mental Health Hospital. Volunteers are ambassadors of the hospital and are expected to uphold the highest standards of conduct, including:

- Demonstrating respect, dignity, and courtesy to patients, staff, and fellow volunteers.
- Maintaining confidentiality of all patient and hospital information.
- Adhering to hospital policies and procedures, including health and safety regulations.
- Avoiding any form of harassment, discrimination, or inappropriate behaviour.
- Reporting any concerns or incidents to their supervisor or the Volunteer to Career Lead promptly.

**Professionalism and Ethics:** Volunteers must conduct themselves professionally, ethically, and work within the boundaries of their role, understanding that there is a clear distinction between their volunteer role and the roles of trained medical professionals.

In the event of a breach of the code of conduct, we will follow CNWL **Unacceptable behaviour and Problem Solving** for Volunteers policy. This process includes meetings and gathering information to ascertain the circumstances surrounding the alleged breach.

Depending on the severity and nature of the breach, actions may include additional training, a change in volunteer placement, a suspension, or in severe cases, termination of the volunteer's role.

## Appendix F: Health and Safety Information and procedures

As a care support volunteer at St. Charles' Site, your role involves providing assistance and support to patients and healthcare professionals. Ensuring the safety and well-being of all individuals is crucial. This appendix provides specific health and safety guidelines tailored to your volunteer activities and includes instructions for reporting and responding to incidents relevant to your role.

### Safety Protocols for Care Support Volunteers

#### 1. Infection Control:

- Always follow strict infection control protocols, including proper hand hygiene and the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) such as gloves, masks, and gowns when necessary.
- Dispose of used PPE and medical waste in designated containers following hospital guidelines.

#### 2. Patient Interaction:

- Be respectful and maintain patient confidentiality at all times.
- Follow instructions provided by healthcare professionals when assisting patients with mobility or other care needs.
- Report any changes in a patient's condition or behaviour to the nursing staff or your supervisor promptly.

#### 3. Emergency Procedures:

- Familiarise yourself with the hospital's emergency procedures, including evacuation routes and the location of emergency equipment.
- In case of fire or other emergencies, assist patients and follow healthcare staff instructions for evacuation.

### **Incident Response Instructions for Care Support Volunteers**

- 1. Spills:** If you encounter a spill, particularly in a patient's room or care area:
  - Ensure the safety of the patient first.
  - If it's safe to do so and you have been trained for it, contain the spill using available materials.
  - Inform the nursing staff or a responsible healthcare professional for proper clean-up and decontamination.
- 2. Injuries or Medical Emergencies:** If a patient or colleague sustains an injury or experiences a medical emergency:
  - Call for immediate medical assistance, notifying the nursing staff immediately.
  - Ensure the patient's safety and well-being, providing support to the healthcare team if needed and safe to do so.
  - If the situation requires it, call 999 or the designated emergency number for medical assistance.
- 3. Using Panic Alarm:**
  - Care Support Volunteers have access to panic alarms for urgent situations.
  - In case of immediate danger or need for assistance, press the panic alarm button.
  - Remain calm and wait for help to arrive.
- 4. Fire and Evacuation:** In the event of a fire or evacuation:
  - Alert the nearest nursing station or healthcare professional.
  - Use the hospital's fire alarm system if necessary.
  - Assist patients in your care with evacuation, following the guidance of healthcare staff.
  - Evacuate the area using the designated routes and assembly points.
  - Do not use elevators during evacuations.
  - Account for all patients and colleagues under your care at the assembly point.
- 5. General Security Concerns:**
  - Avoid confronting individuals causing a disturbance.
  - Alert the nearest nursing station or healthcare professional.
  - Contact hospital security immediately
  - Provide clear and accurate information to security personnel.
- 6. Reporting Safety Concerns:** If you identify any safety hazards or concerns, such as damaged equipment or potential infection risks, report them to your supervisor or the nursing staff immediately.

Remember that your role as a care support volunteer involves helping to maintain a safe and caring environment for patients. Following safety protocols and promptly reporting any incidents or concerns is essential to ensure the well-being of patients and the effectiveness of your volunteer role.