

# Bereavement Comfort Call Volunteer

## Enhancing compassionate support in Northern Trust

A small number of esteemed volunteering opportunities have arisen within the Northern Trust known as 'Bereavement Comfort Call' Volunteers.

The Covid-19 pandemic and the complex circumstances associated with dying, death and bereavement has led to an increased demand for bereavement support.

We're looking for empathic individuals with good listening skills to join our dedicated team of volunteers to provide this new and innovative service.

Volunteers will make timely calls to the next of kin of those who die in hospital. During a Comfort Call, you will offer condolences, a listening ear and signposting, particularly to those who are not aware of support available or those who require additional support.

There are so many benefits of becoming a Comfort Call volunteer. These may include:

- giving time to others
- great satisfaction from helping others, creating positive feelings and a sense of reward
- helping you connect with other people and build a sense of belonging
- meeting new people and trying something new
- accessing online training and developing your skills
- obtaining insight into caring roles

## Bereavement Comfort Call Volunteer Role Description

### Overview

Under the supervision of the Comfort Call Coordinator, the volunteer will make contact with recently bereaved next of kin of those who have died in hospital. Volunteers should be able to commit to making 2-4 hours of calls per week, during the hours of 11AM – 7PM from Monday to Friday.

## Key duties

The volunteer will need to:

- Have the confidence to call the next of kin contacts and explain the purpose of the Bereavement Comfort Call Service.
- Express condolences on behalf of the Trust
- Act as a 'compassionate listening ear' this may be achieved through:
  - Sitting quietly, listening carefully
  - Using their initiative as to what would help the next of kin in terms of signposting
- Ensure that the next of kin receives a Bereavement Pack
- Offer future support from Cruse
- Inform the Comfort Call Coordinator of requests, unanswered questions, concerns or complaints from the next of kin. Volunteers must not give advice to the next of kin, they should signpost to sources of help and advice.
- Maintain confidentiality at all times
- Record the call record sheet and participate in facilitating feedback
- Attend regular group support and learning and development opportunities for Bereavement Comfort Call Volunteers
- Attend individual sessions with the Comfort Call Coordinator, as required

## Skills & other requirements

- Have a friendly, compassionate and sensitive nature, with the ability to be a good listener
- Have the confidence to communicate effectively with Trust staff and next of kin



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- Have good organisational skills to schedule and make calls and return required paperwork within agreed timeframes
- Have an ability to use their own initiative and work in a sensible and appropriate manner at all times under the direction of the Comfort Call Coordinator
- Demonstrate an ability to be a non-anxious, calming presence, and use silence well
- Have a willingness to learn and operate within set boundaries

- Be respectful to individuals regardless of their race, gender, culture, religion, disability, sexual orientation and marital status
- Have a mature perspective on life and death
- Be aware of own emotions and self-care needs
- Have a good level of computer literacy or the willingness to learn
- Have access to a telephone and a computer/laptop, tablet or smart phone
- Have a willingness to use the Zoom app as required for training and supervision

## General information

### Volunteers:

- Must not undertake duties outside this role description
- Can offer emotional support and empathy but must under no circumstances offer advice or a medical opinion on a patient's treatment
  - Must not provide pastoral or religious advice but signpost to relevant hospital chaplain
- Are reminded of the importance of confidentiality at all times. They must under no circumstances discuss clients' affairs with any person other than the relevant staff
- Are reminded of the importance of operating within any statute policy relevant to the NHSCT eg. Health and Safety, Safeguarding and GDPR
- Are in place to complement the work of Trust employed staff and are not used to replace roles that are usually undertaken by Trust employed staff.
- Should receive regular support, supervision and training where applicable

### Where will I be based?

The service will be provided remotely, so you will carry out the role from home. You will need a quiet room with good internet and phone signal to carry out both your training and calls.



### the time commitment?

When you volunteer will be based on your availability. We ask that you can give 2-4 hours of your time per week to make calls and return paperwork. You will also be required to attend training, Trust volunteer induction and monthly supervision meetings online or by telephone.

### Anything else – general info

Due to the sensitive nature of our work, you will need to adhere to all of our standards and policies, specifically our safeguarding, confidentiality and GDPR policies. You will also need an

Access NI check, which will be carried out free of charge. Out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed, as agreed in line with the Trust Volunteer Policy.

## **Steps to becoming a Comfort Call Volunteer:**

- Complete a registration form with two references from non-family members and other relevant documents related to the role
- Participate in a selection meeting/ informal chat
- Commit to attending group support meetings

**NHSCT is committed to being a diverse and inclusive organisation. We aim to demonstrate support for all of our volunteers, valuing each individual's contribution regardless of age, gender identity, sexual orientation, marital status, disability, nationality, race, religion, belief or caring responsibilities.**

If you are interested in this role, please register your interest by emailing [volunteer.service@northerntrust.hscni.net](mailto:volunteer.service@northerntrust.hscni.net)