



THE PRICELESS HELP

BEST PRACTICES ON HOW TO MANAGE
VOLUNTEERS IN CANCER ORGANISATIONS



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ABOUT THE ECL PATIENT SUPPORT WORKING GROUP

Since 2007, the ECL Patient Support Working Group (PSWG) connects experts in cancer care who work together to raise awareness and share knowledge in order to improve the quality of cancer care in Europe. PSWG develops best practice guides and provides trainings in areas of patient support, such as access to insurance and financial services, return to work, caregiver support, sexuality and relationship issues, cancer rehabilitation, and palliative care. PSWG members further seek to empower the patient voice in national and European policy-making.

AUTHORS OF THIS GUIDE

Monick Leal, Head of Volunteer Department, Portuguese League Against Cancer
Susanna Kiuru, National Coordinator, Cancer Society of Finland
Patricia Martí, Psychologist, Catalan Federation of Cancer Organisations (FECEC)
Maria Vila, Volunteer Manager, Catalan Federation of Cancer Organisations (FECEC)

This guide was reviewed by the following organisations:

European Volunteer Centre
Cancer Focus Northern Ireland
Danish Cancer Society
French League Against Cancer
Stand up to Cancer Flanders
Members of the Cancer Society of Finland

Coordinated by:

Anna Prokůpková, Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)

Edited by:

Anna Prokůpková, Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)
Ginevra Papi, Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)

Designed by:

Katie Greybe

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I. INTRODUCTION

Every year, volunteers throughout Europe donate millions of hours of service to cancer patients, often supporting community-based initiatives and activities of non-profit organisations. By offering quality companionship, comfort, information, caregiver respite and many other support services, volunteers enrich the lives of patients and their families.

Volunteers play an important complementary role in patient care and fill in the gaps that often arise between professional care on the one hand and family care on the other. Volunteers add significant value to the work of paid workers, and are indispensable in improving patient experience, addressing health inequalities, supporting integrated care and building a closer relationship between services and communities. The real added value of volunteering is not only what the volunteer brings in terms of skills and new ideas, but also how they interact with people, bringing kindness, solidarity and transfer of knowledge.

Volunteers can:

- i. Increase the quality of life and care of cancer patients and their families, by offering practical, emotional and social support that is needed to cope with the diagnosis and treatment journey;
- ii. Advocate for cancer issues to influence decision-makers and raise awareness among the general public, e.g., regarding the importance of prevention and healthy lifestyles or access to treatments and rehabilitation, through information sharing on social media or participating in campaigns;
- iii. Raise funds needed for the fight against cancer and share messages about the life-saving work of cancer organisations, assist with events planning and fundraising activities;
- iv. Supplement services and support the day-to-day operations of hospitals, hospices, counselling and rehabilitation centres, cancer societies etc., including administration and transportation support.

Thanks to the effort, time and skills of volunteers, cancer organisations and health services are able to maximise efficiency and better support patients and their loved ones. Even when not assisting patients directly, volunteers contribute to overall patient satisfaction by helping healthcare providers, allowing them more hands-on time with patients and their families. Volunteers are as valuable to cancer organisations as financial donors or medical professionals.

Cancer leagues should take a strategic approach towards volunteering, with a clear vision of how volunteers will help meet the objectives of the organisation and how patients and the local community will benefit from the service. Leagues should set up a formal structure which will help both the organisation and the volunteers understand their relationship and mutual benefit.

I. INTRODUCTION

It is important that cancer organisations think strategically about the role of volunteers, face complex questions (including relationships between paid workers and volunteers) and invest in support structures for their volunteer services (including day-to-day support and supervision, induction, training and a reward system).

Cancer organisations should treat volunteers with respect. They should focus on volunteering as a means of improving quality of service rather than cutting costs. They should ensure sufficient resources are allocated to volunteer management, support and training. Volunteers should be seen as an integral part of the team rather than an 'add on'. Similarly, they should supplement rather than substitute paid staff and healthcare professionals. In addition, volunteers should be included in the relevant decisions related to the role and tasks of volunteers in cancer societies, e.g., through volunteer advisory boards.

Volunteers' unique talents and experience can make a real difference and their interests and motivation should match specific volunteer roles and responsibilities. Volunteering is also beneficial for volunteers themselves. Volunteering offers a possibility to contribute to a meaningful cause, be a part of a community, meet new friends or gain new skills and experience. Cancer societies should offer numerous ways for volunteers to join the fight against cancer, while ensuring flexible scheduling and learning opportunities.

With this guide, the ECL Patient Support Working Group (PSWG) wishes to encourage national and regional cancer organisations across Europe to streamline and formalise their volunteering services. Keeping in mind that different national practices and legal requirements should be taken into account.

This guide offers best practices on how to attract, recruit and retain a broad range of volunteers to add value to the existing patient care services. At the end, the guide provides practical tools for volunteer coordinators to support their day-to-day management of volunteers. The information in this guide can be used by both cancer organisations with well-established volunteer structure who wish to formalise or update their existing practice, as well as by organisations who wish to establish new volunteer services.

II. VOLUNTEER POLICY

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Effective coordination of volunteers requires well-designed structure and planned processes. Before recruiting volunteers, it is important to review what are the objectives you wish volunteers to contribute to, and the volunteer roles available. It is also necessary to analyse the potential risks and benefits which each volunteer role can bring. The PSWG further advises to have a stable recruitment process in place, answering questions regarding the outreach of potential volunteers, interview process, legal aspects of hiring volunteers and necessary support, supervision, training and reward system.

The PSWG recommends setting descriptions for the different volunteer roles you wish to offer (see examples in the toolkit). These descriptions shall be complemented by a tailored booklet for each type of volunteer, providing key information about the cancer organisation, explaining the volunteers' roles and responsibilities, including what they can expect from the facilitating organisation and gain from the volunteering experience.

How to reach potential volunteers

First, it is necessary to decide which target group you wish to reach and where these potential candidates spend their time. For younger volunteers, the internet and social media provide an effective platform to spread the word about the position your organisation is offering. For others, the traditional ways such as local newspapers, leaflets and handouts are useful tools. Alternatively, you can reach potential volunteers through different groups, such as the local student unions, scouts, partner organisations etc., who can reach out to their members and networks. Word of mouth is also an effective method to inform people about your activities - the current volunteers are likely to tell their peers about their volunteering experience and potentially encourage them to volunteer at your organisation.

Leagues should make sure all information about volunteering opportunities with their organisation and how to apply can be easily found on their website.

Motivation is the key

Each volunteer has their own motivation to engage. Many volunteers want to make a difference and dedicate their time to an important cause. Leagues should clarify why volunteering is important and explain the added value volunteering brings to people living with cancer. They should also take time to elaborate on how volunteering can be personally enriching for volunteers.

In addition to the feeling of giving, volunteering can be seen as a meaningful way to use personal and professional competences, gain new skills, as well as a possibility to meet new and interesting people. Using the feedback you received from your previous volunteers can serve as a useful tool for motivating the new ones.

RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION

Matching volunteers with tasks

Different volunteering tasks require different levels of commitment. It is important to decide whether the league intends to offer positions for volunteers who wish to engage only occasionally and what could their tasks be (e.g., fundraising).

Some tasks require longer-term commitment, as well as training. Leagues should ensure volunteers have a clear understanding about what their role requires in terms of time availability and training. The choice of the volunteer's appropriate placement should take into account the availability, competences, motivation and psychological state of the volunteer. The organisation should have processes in place to regularly check with volunteers if there have been any changes in this regard and be able to adjust roles accordingly. In this way, the leagues should ensure volunteers have the freedom to change their tasks, in case they can no longer perform their service in the same way (for any reason) or if their interests changed.

Leagues should not shy away from developing new roles together with volunteers, to best match their profile and needs with the objectives of the organisation.

Hiring a volunteer with professional training

In some countries, cancer organisations may recruit volunteers to perform functions in the area of healthcare. Volunteers who have professional training as healthcare professionals (HCP volunteers) should be recruited through the volunteer section of your society, in cooperation with an appropriate medical/care department. HCP volunteers should fulfil the criteria for the relevant healthcare profession (e.g., nurse, psychologist). The contract between HCP volunteer and the league should specify the tasks, time commitment, as well as the related liability on both the side of the volunteer and the organisation. Any employment or trade union legislation that might have an impact on volunteers taking on these types of roles should be consulted.

Legal matters

The organisation needs to assess which volunteer roles require the signing of an agreement. If so, below you can find aspects that should be added in the agreement, taking into account national or regional legislation or local practices:

- Confidentiality: volunteers might learn things about cancer patients and their caregivers which are private and personal. Volunteers are expected to keep these issues confidential;
- Personal information: Ask for the volunteers' consent to add their personal information to your database and ask their consent for using their photos and videos in your communication materials;
- Health and safety procedures;
- Criminal record checks: these are often required for volunteers coming into contact with vulnerable people (e.g., children).

In the EU, the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) puts some requirements on how information about volunteers is collected and used. Leagues should ensure their organisation complies with the GDPR while managing their volunteer contacts in their registry. In addition, leagues shall ensure they are aware of and follow the rules set in other national legislation, such as on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. If an organisation engages volunteers younger than 18 years old, it may be necessary to obtain parental permission before taking on the voluntary role.

Leagues should further provide volunteers with liability insurance as well as personal accident insurance, and accredit their volunteers with a volunteer card.¹

For more information, do not hesitate to contact local, regional or national volunteer centres who can provide up to date information about legal requirements for the kinds of volunteer services you wish to offer.

¹ Leagues can create their own volunteer identification card. You can also choose to promote a European Volunteer Card. Such a card would recognise and support the contribution of volunteers and highlight the potential for the cross-border nature of volunteering. It could be developed following the models of euro26 and ISIC. Though this is not yet a common practice.

SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

A volunteer is a person who undertakes voluntary activities which are coordinated by a facilitating organisation.² Volunteers act according to their own abilities, in their spare time, in a responsible manner. In order to be able to efficiently carry out their activities, volunteers need to:

- have specific and well defined tasks;
- be informed about the objectives, duration and place of the assigned activities;
- receive training to perform the assigned task (appropriate to the role);
- have access to initial and continuous training programs to improve their skills and impact;
- be suitably managed and have access to regular evaluation and feedback opportunities.

An induction should be provided to the volunteers after their specific tasks have been assigned. Induction should cover key information about the organisation, its principles, values and objectives, organisational structure, what does it mean to be a volunteer at the organisation, what are the expectations, benefits and general principles. It is also useful to provide volunteers with an induction booklet which they can always refer to.

New volunteers could be accompanied by a more experienced volunteer, to learn from their past experience and to assist when necessary with adaptation to, and understanding of, the volunteering context in which they have chosen to engage. A supervisor shall be assigned to all volunteer roles.

Supervision of volunteers

A Volunteer Coordinator³ is responsible for the development and day-to-day management of volunteers. The Coordinator is responsible for:

- addressing the need for volunteers within the organisation (across departments);
- creating volunteer role descriptions;
- undertaking a risk assessment for each role;
- development of a comprehensive volunteer recruitment programme;
- matching the needs and skills of volunteers with their tasks;
- developing and carrying out training and evaluation/feedback programmes; and
- maintenance of the volunteer database.

The Volunteer Coordinator should also be responsible for the supervision of volunteers. These tasks include:

- tracking and reporting on the projects that volunteers contributed to, including their impact and time commitments;
- training staff members and other volunteers on the key aspects of working with and supervising groups of volunteers;
- developing volunteer evaluation procedures and a related reward system.

The Volunteer Coordinator is further responsible for:

- keeping up-to-date with good practice volunteer management, processes, procedures and legal requirements;
- the development and implementation of policies, procedures and relevant quality assurance systems;
- representation of the service and promotion of its work both locally and within the wider community;
- liaising, developing and maintaining links with other agencies in the voluntary, private and public sectors, in order to raise awareness, promote volunteering and develop new initiatives;

² This may not be a common practice in every country, but in some countries you are only considered a volunteer under an umbrella of a facilitating organisation.

³ Or an equivalent role such as Volunteer Manager or any person responsible for the management of volunteers at your society.

SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION

Training

It is both your duty to provide and the volunteer's right to receive training. Volunteers should have access to initial and continuous training programmes in order to improve their skills set and the positive impact of their voluntary activities.

The initial training should include:

- Institutional presentation about the organisation (mission, vision, structure, objectives);
- Importance of volunteering service for your society;
- Rules of the voluntary service and the rights of volunteers;
- Legal framework for volunteering;
- Basic notions of oncology and cancer prevention;
- Psychological, social and emotional impact of cancer;
- How to deal with personal emotional impact, stress, overload, burnout etc.;
- The importance of communication in the daily life of the volunteer; and
- Work induction by a more experienced volunteer;


Some volunteer roles require continuous training while in other cases an induction or a very brief introduction to the specific role may suffice. Where necessary, in regard to the specific role, volunteers should be obliged to attend continuous training as proposed by the league (for longer-term volunteer roles, the PSWG recommends to provide training at least twice per year).

Volunteer support

The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for volunteer support. There exist several established structures and best practices that can provide support for volunteers. Apart from providing the volunteer with the necessary skills and training, volunteer support should include:

Regular (group and individual) meetings with volunteers and their supervisors (Volunteer Coordinator and other relevant staff members and volunteers) to gather feedback and listen to volunteers' ideas and experience;

Some volunteer roles may require regular de-briefing organised by the league or an external counselor, to provide the necessary psycho-social support (this is particularly important for roles which require confidentiality, such as peer support volunteers working with cancer patients who have been recently diagnosed or volunteers supporting patients in late stages of cancer).



Volunteers should have the opportunity to individually discuss matters related to their volunteering, including possibilities of changing to different tasks or expressing their intention to leave the service.

Gathering feedback and ideas from volunteers can be done during face-to-face meetings, organised workshops or via an online questionnaire. Feedback and suggestions from volunteers should serve as an important tool to further develop and improve volunteer services your league facilitates.

Providing opportunities for volunteers to meet each other outside of their voluntary service, to create a sense of community and enable them to exchange experiences about their voluntary activities.

Compensation

Volunteers are not entitled to a salary compensation for their services. However, volunteers shall be compensated for costs related to their voluntary activities. These may include reimbursements of food during volunteering hours, fuel, public transport tickets, or other out of pocket expenses. The PSWG recommends that all facilitating organisations have reimbursement policies and a user-friendly system in place.

Dealing with conflicts

Having appropriate structure and guidelines related to volunteer support and supervision in place can also help the Volunteer Coordinator and other staff members and volunteers to deal with any possible conflicts. It is the responsibility of the organisation to discuss any possible problems with the volunteer and seek a resolution.

For example, in some cases, the expectations of the volunteers and the given tasks do not match. Therefore, it might be necessary to switch the volunteer to another role. The Volunteer Coordinator should also act as a mediator in case of any personal conflicts between different volunteers or volunteers and the league's staff members. If a conflict cannot be resolved informally, volunteers shall be referred to the organisation's formal complaints procedure.

REWARD AND APPRECIATION

Recognising their value and rewarding volunteers is vital for the sustainability of the voluntary service. It is important to keep your volunteers motivated. Every volunteer is unique and how their contribution is recognised should be connected to individual needs and achievements. Some volunteers are driven by personal satisfaction of their contribution to society or the sense of belonging, while others primarily value the new knowledge and skills they can get while volunteering. There are many different practices in different countries on how to show your gratitude to your volunteers. In this chapter, we highlight some of these practices which your league can implement.

International Volunteer Day

International Volunteer Day (IVD), set by the UN General Assembly, is held on 5 December each year. It is viewed as a unique opportunity for volunteers and organisations to celebrate their efforts, share their values and promote their work in their communities, among other NGOs, UN agencies, governmental authorities, as well as in the private sector.

IVD events usually include celebrations dedicated to volunteers, giving out certificates and pins related to the years of service and awarding volunteers for their service.

Promotion of volunteering via the organisation's communication channels

The PSWG advises organisations to support the motivation of volunteers by showing that their activities are appreciated and that they have a real and significant impact. According to each organisation's resources, the dissemination of volunteering activities and accomplishments can be done through the league's website, newsletter, information leaflets, social media and communication campaigns (both internal and external).

Events participation

Volunteers should be invited/have access to various events organised by the league and/or their partner organisations. This will give volunteers the opportunity to broaden their knowledge and skills during seminars, workshops and conferences, or to network with their peers, stakeholders active in the cancer field and the leagues' staff members.

Volunteer networking events

Volunteers should have the possibility to get to know each other outside of the volunteering activities and have space to share their experiences with each other. The PSWG recommends to organise field trips, regular lunches, dinners or networking receptions to boost the team spirit among volunteers. For instance, Christmas and other holidays offer a great opportunity to organise a little party or a trip.

Personalised goodies

Surprise pins, t-shirts, mugs and other goodies that are limited and personalised so only volunteers can get them can be a good way of showing that volunteers are of special importance to your organisation.

III. TOOLKIT

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR'S CHECKLIST

TASK	STATUS	PERSON RESPONSIBLE
GENERAL MANAGEMENT		
Have a comprehensive volunteer policy and procedures in place		
Promote the league's volunteering service		
Maintain relationships with other agencies in both public and private sectors		
RECRUITMENT AND SELECTION		
Create volunteer role descriptions		
Create volunteer application form		
Advertise volunteer position: Website Social Media Newsletter Traditional media/Leaflets Partner Organisations Student Associations		
Prepare questions for the interview		
Create volunteer agreement		
Maintain volunteer database		
Provide liability and accident insurance		
Issue a volunteer card		



SUPPORT AND SUPERVISION		
Undertake risk assessment for each volunteer role		
Design induction training programme		
Design specific continuous training programmes for different volunteer roles		
Develop volunteer evaluation procedure and a way of giving volunteer feedback		
Develop a structure of individual meetings with volunteers and supervisors		
Develop a structure of group meetings with volunteers and supervisors		
Develop an evaluation structure and feedback forms for volunteers to share experiences and provide suggestions		
REWARD AND RECOGNITION		
International Volunteer Day celebration		
Volunteer certificates		
Promotion of volunteers' activities: Website Social Media Newsletter		
Access to seminars, workshop and conferences for volunteers		
Access to social and cultural events for volunteers		
Personalised goodies		



SAMPLE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED DURING AN INTERVIEW

At the beginning of an interview, remember to:

- Give the volunteer an introduction about your society
- Explain what different roles there are available for volunteers

Interviews should not be conducted in a formal manner such as regular staff interviews. Volunteers should feel welcomed and the tone of the meeting should be relaxed and conversational.

Sample Questions:⁴

- 1 Tell us a little bit about you...
What do you do in your daily/professional life?
What do you like to do in your free time?
- 2 What is your motivation to be a volunteer?
- 3 Why choose a cancer league to do your volunteer engagement?
How did you hear about volunteering opportunities at our society?
- 4 Has anyone in your family or friendship circle had cancer?
Would you be willing to share how it may affect your volunteering experience?
- 5 What kind of volunteering would you like to do?
Do you prefer to work in a team or alone?
- 6 Do you have any special skills you would like to use while volunteering?
- 7 Are there any health issues (physical or mental) that could affect your volunteering?
- 8 Are you available for the volunteer induction training?
Are you willing to do continuous training while volunteering?
What is your time/place availability for volunteering?
Are you willing to engage during the weekend?
Do you prefer to engage in the mornings/afternoons?
How often would you like to volunteer?
How many hours per week do you think you would be able to dedicate to volunteering?
Where would you like to volunteer? Do you have any geographical preferences?

After the interview:

- Explain the next steps
- Remember to thank them for coming to the interview

⁴ These are general questions that can be used for interviews of any kind of volunteer. The society should prepare specific questions for other roles that require them (e.g., interviews of peer support volunteers shall include questions about their cancer experience).

VOLUNTEERING APPLICATION FORM

Personal Identification Data

Name: _____ Birth date: ____/____/____
Address: _____ Zip code: _____
Phone number _____ E-mail: _____
Relevant skills and information: _____

Information about volunteering

Why do you want to be a volunteer in a cancer organisation?

What type of activities do you wish to participate in as a volunteer?

What does being a volunteer mean for you?

How did you find out about our volunteering services?

☐ Website ☐ Social Media ☐ Newsletter ☐ News Advert ☐ Hospital ☐ Other _____

Previous experience with volunteering

Are you/have you ever been a volunteer at another initiative or organisation?

☐ No ☐ Yes - where? _____

For how long? _____

What tasks have you undertaken?

Time availability and commitment

What is your time availability and desired time commitment you wish to dedicate to volunteering?

I, _____ authorise the collection, use and processing of my personal data by the league for the purposes of the volunteering position and related projects.

Signature: _____ Date: ____/____/____

VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT

Name of organisation:

Name of volunteer:

Date and place of birth:

Address:

As a volunteer with the **Cancer Society**, my role is to:

- ☐ provide peer-support for people with cancer
- ☐ volunteer at a hospital
- ☐ support the society in organising various events and activities
- ☐ other, please specify _____

As a volunteer, I will act according to the volunteering guidelines and practices of the **Cancer Society**.

I will receive guidance and support, and follow the necessary training required by the **Cancer Society** to be able to carry out my role as a volunteer.

I understand that as a volunteer, I am not entitled to receive financial compensation or benefits for volunteering. Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses and other costs related to my volunteering activities will be processed according to the rules of the **Cancer Society**.

While providing volunteer services, I will be covered by the **Cancer Society's** volunteer insurance. In the event of any possible accident, I will contact the Volunteer Coordinator as soon as possible.

I give my permission to the **Cancer Society** to add my contact details and other relevant information in the **Cancer Society's** Volunteer Database/Register for coordination purposes. I allow the Society to publish photos and videos of my volunteering activities in the **Society's** communication channels. I also allow the **Cancer Society** to send me information about the **Society's** work and information relevant to my volunteering activities.

I understand that as a volunteer at the **Cancer Society**, I might hear confidential information about the health status of patients and caregivers. I respect that I cannot disclose this information to others and agree to keep it confidential.

I am entitled to contact the Volunteer Coordinator in case I have any thoughts, concerns and feedback I wish to share about my volunteering.

I am entitled to cease my voluntary service when I wish, and I will inform the Volunteer Coordinator about this decision. The **Cancer Society** has the right to terminate my volunteering, if I will not follow the volunteering rules and procedures, including those on confidentiality.

Signatures

Time and place

Name (Volunteer)

Name (Volunteer Coordinator)

VOLUNTEER REPORTING AND FEEDBACK FORM

In order to conduct monitoring and evaluation, as well as to further develop your volunteering services, the PSWG recommends to regularly gather feedback from volunteers.

For some volunteer roles, it might be a good idea to collect a short report immediately after each volunteer activity. This practice will serve as a useful tool for gathering data needed for reporting purposes. In other roles, gathering feedback can be done on less frequent basis, e.g., via an annual survey. Anonymous surveys are a good way of gathering feedback and ideas for new activities. Collecting questionnaires with different sets of questions (open, multiple choice, rating etc.) sets a baseline for future comparisons of progress made during the years of voluntary services your organisation facilitates. Examples can be found below.

Peer Support Volunteer Reporting Form (example from the Cancer Society of Finland)

Peer Support Volunteer Form to be filled after each activity			
Name			
Volunteering task/role			
Date		Location	
How many hours did you volunteer?		How many people did you meet?	
What else would you like to share?			

Anonymous Annual Volunteer Survey (example from the Cancer Society of Finland)

1. Year of birth _____
2. Gender: ☐ male ☐ female ☐ other/I don't want to say
3. Volunteer role/task: _____
4. How often do you volunteer?
☐ Several times a week ☐ Once a week ☐ Once a month ☐ Few times a year
☐ Other, please specify: _____


5. How would you rate your volunteering experience?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly agree
My volunteering is meaningful					
Volunteering brings me joy					
The Cancer Society provides many interesting opportunities for volunteering					
I have received enough training for my volunteering					
I have received enough support from the staff for my volunteering					
I feel the Cancer Society respects and values their volunteers					
I know my rights and responsibilities as a volunteer					
Volunteering with the Cancer Society met/ exceeded my expectations					
I have a clear understanding of the impact of my volunteering					

6. What was your biggest achievement while volunteering? What did you value the most?

7. Were there any disappointments or times when the volunteering activity did not meet your expectations?

8. Share your ideas! How would you improve volunteering at the Cancer Society? What sort of volunteers should we have and what activities should we undertake?



EXAMPLES OF TYPES OF VOLUNTEERS IN CANCER ORGANISATIONS

HOSPITAL VOLUNTEER (Example from the Portuguese League Against Cancer)

Purpose of the role

Hospital volunteers in oncology departments aim to provide practical and/or emotional support to patients. They aim to make hospital stays more pleasant and take patients' minds off their disease. Hospital volunteers do not provide health or treatment advice.

What does it involve?

In the hospital context, volunteers establish direct contact with patients and their families, offering emotional and practical support, which is essential to improving patient care and keeping a positive approach towards fighting cancer.

What can I expect from the role?

To improve the reception and hospitalisation of cancer patients and contributing to the alleviation of their suffering and improvement of their quality of life. Providing emotional and practical support to cancer patients and their caregivers.

What skills or experience do I need?

Solidarity and altruism; sense of responsibility and commitment; ease of communication; empathy, sensitivity, respect and tolerance; spirit of initiative and enthusiasm; ability to work in a team; emotional stability and good physical condition.

Location

Hospital, Department of Oncology.

Time commitment

Minimum 3 hours, one day a week.

Training and Support

First, there will be an interview with a volunteer coordinator and a psychologist. After that, you will attend a 3-day training before starting the position. The initial training includes a brief introduction about the cancer league's history, mission and services, and introduction about the hospital where their volunteering activity will take place. Then, a brief overview on oncological diseases and their treatments will be presented. Psychological and emotional effects of the disease on both patients and their caregivers will be explained. Social effects and rights of patients should also be part of the training. Last but not least, the volunteer services and their norms and rules shall be explained. At the end of the first training session, volunteers will choose which services they wish to perform.

Continuous training containing necessary information to be given to patients and their loved ones will be provided by the society. Continuous training could include: i. best practices in communications with patients, families or healthcare professionals; ii. a course guiding patients through the hospital's administration processes; iii. caretaking and stress relieve; or iv. hygiene and infection control. Volunteers are also expected to attend biannual volunteer meetings. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss your experience, and give feedback to the volunteer coordinator.

Other Details

The admission and further detail related to the position will depend on the agreement between the volunteer and the cancer society, and will be achieved through co-signing of the Voluntary Agreement.

HOME SUPPORT VOLUNTEER (Example from the Catalan Federation of Cancer Organisations)

Purpose of role

Home volunteers offer entertainment and companionship to cancer patients in their homes. Home volunteers provide support on a daily basis and help with practical aspects of a daily life, trying to encourage personal autonomy of patients, while allowing caregivers and other family members to take time out and relax. Home volunteers actively listen to patients' concerns and provide emotional support. They do not provide health or treatment advice.

What does it involve?

Home volunteers encourage patients to deal with their diagnosis and offer practical and/or emotional support to cancer patients and their family caregivers.

What can I expect from the role?

At their discretion, home volunteers are asked to listen to patients and their caregivers, provide practical and/or emotional support. Home volunteers will develop skills related to active listening and emotional management.

What skill or experience do I need?

No previous experience is required. However, empathy and discretion are a must. As every home is different, volunteers have to be able to swiftly adapt to the circumstances.

Location

Patients' homes and other places such as cafés, stores or parks, depending on whether the patient is well enough and willing to go out.

Time commitment

The continuity of time is essential for this role. There is no official time engagement, but it is necessary to come see the patient frequently. Timing can range from 10 minutes to 2 hours. Frequency of the service should be adapted to the patients' needs.

Training and support

Full support will be provided by the leagues with any necessary training required to help to fulfil this role. The initial training consists of a two-hour informative session for volunteers working with cancer patients. This includes information about the cancer organisation and key aspects of cancer diseases, treatments and patient issues. Then, a two-hour session where the support and resources available to volunteers are explained will follow. Alternatively, a two-day course with more in-depth information can be organised. The initial training, as well as the supervision meetings with other volunteers and the volunteer coordinator are mandatory.

Volunteers have the option to follow continuous training programmes which include advanced oncology training, specific service training (e.g., in palliative care, home volunteering etc.), trainings provided externally, or attend different conferences and seminars. Out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed by the leagues.



Other Details

In order to participate in a Home Volunteer programme it is recommended to co-sign a voluntary agreement which includes a confidentiality clause. A background check on the volunteer might be necessary, particularly when children and vulnerable persons are involved.

PEER SUPPORT VOLUNTEER (Example from the Cancer Society of Finland)

Purpose of the role

As a peer support volunteer, you provide valuable support and companionship for people living with cancer and for their loved ones. Your role is to provide support and opportunities for discussion and reflection, and to bring hope. Peer support volunteers use their own experience and bring added value to the lives of people affected by cancer. They do not provide health or treatment advice.

What does it involve?

Your local cancer society matches volunteers with cancer patients. As a peer support volunteer, your role is to meet with the person in need, either face-to-face or via a phone call. You are a trustworthy volunteer who listens, encourages the patient and their caregivers and provides companionship for someone who is in a difficult situation. Typically, you will meet with the same person 1-5 times, but sometimes a longer process is needed.

What can I expect from the role?

Peer support volunteers are of a great importance to cancer patients. You will meet different people and have meaningful conversations which will help patients and their loved ones to cope with the situation. Given that you have experience with a similar situation, you will be a trustworthy source of comfort for patients and their caregivers.

What skills or experience do I need?

You are someone with first-hand experience with cancer. Your own situation is stable, and cancer no longer challenges your life. You are sociable, interested in meeting new people and able to be encouraging and calm. As a peer support volunteer, you are expected to make a commitment to the principles, guidelines and values of activities.

Location


You will meet with people in different locations in your area. Sometimes it is their homes, sometimes cafes, hospitals or other public places. If possible, why not go for a walk together? Meetings with a peer support volunteer can take place in private or in small groups. Groups can be organised on different themes, such as for people of different ages, and for people with different types of cancer. Peer support can be given in person, over the phone or online.

Time commitment

The times vary according to patients' needs. However, you are expected to be available for 2-3 meetings a month.

Training and Support

All peer support volunteers attend a 2-day initial training. During the training, you will acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable you to encounter a person with cancer or their loved ones. The aim is that people receiving support would be able to make use of their own resources and live the best possible life in view of the situation. Twice a year, you are expected to attend volunteer meetings organised by the



cancer society. These meetings provide an opportunity to discuss your experience, and to give feedback to your manager. The cancer organisation provides additional training for peer support volunteers. For example, you can learn how to organise peer-support group activities. Peer support groups are led by a volunteer, who is a trained peer support group instructor.

Other details

For peer support volunteers who are meeting with underage patients/families, a background check will be done. Please note that a confidentiality agreement will be signed concerning any information said by the people you meet with as a volunteer.

FUNDRAISING VOLUNTEER (Example from the Cancer Focus Northern Ireland)

Purpose of role

This role enables cancer societies to raise funds at various events throughout the year. Locations might include shopping centres, supermarkets, sporting events, music concerts etc.

What does it involve?

Fundraising volunteer will be collecting donations from the general public during planned events and in pre-arranged locations. Fundraising volunteer will talk to the public, trying to engage people in the particular issue and raise awareness about the activities of the cancer society.

What skill or experience do I need?

No particular fundraising experience is required. Fundraising volunteer should be responsible, friendly, approachable and comfortable talking to the public. Excellent presentation skills will be needed.

What can I expect from the role?

As a fundraising volunteer, you will be a vital part of functioning of the cancer society. Not only you will raise the profile of the organisation and raise awareness about many cancer related issues, you will also help the charity to get funding for their day-to-day operations.

Location

Various venues such as shopping malls, town centres or fundraising and public events.

Time commitment

You will be helping as part of a team and with an ad hoc agreed schedule for each fundraising event. Each volunteer will help for 2-3 hours within the day according to availability. Longer-term commitment is not required for this role.

Training and support

You will be provided with induction training to ensure you are fully aware of the charity's work and understand what is expected when working with the public. Each event will have a specific instructions which will be provided to the volunteer in advance. Out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed.

Other Details

This position is primarily targeted for young adults (16-30 years old).



SERVICE USER REPRESENTATIVE (Example from the French League Against Cancer)

Purpose of the role

The aim of this role is to improve quality of the health system by making it more suitable for its users: patients, disabled people and caregivers. Service user representatives are involved in the planning, development and delivery of the service (i.e., patient care). They further act as the spokespersons for cancer patients and caregivers, and ensure patients' interests are taken into account and their rights are respected.

What does it involve?

Service user representatives meet with patients and caregivers (i.e., service users), gather their impressions and issues with the service. They then meet with healthcare professionals (i.e., service providers) in order to give feedback and recommendations on how to improve their patient services.

What can I expect from the role?

Service user representatives contribute to the improvement of the healthcare practice. They can also help patients better understand the treatment process and functioning of hospital services.

What skills or experience do I need?

Service user representatives have the capacity to question and understand the different aspects of patient care. They shall be perceptive to patients' needs and able to recommend effective and feasible solutions. They are able to constantly search common interests and solutions through a dialogue with healthcare professionals. They dare to assert their message and have the ability to adapt to different situations.

Location

Service user representatives operate within health facilities (e.g., hospitals) and in different public health authorities, both at local and national level.

Time commitment

Service user representatives agree on their mandate and time commitment with the facilitating organisation. Participation in board meetings, commissions or working groups at a local, regional or national level is expected to require a larger amount of time.

Training and Support

Service user representative benefit from an initial mandatory training as well as further specific training sessions during their mandate which allows them to fulfil their specific duties. The training is mostly organised in two-day sessions, focusing on a three-layer learning process: knowledge, critical thinking and action. It is essential to facilitate group meetings with service user representatives from other associations, in order to share knowledge and experiences and build a comprehensive discourse.

Other Details

In order to become service user representative, volunteers shall be authorised by a facilitating organisation and a national or regional public health authority.



TYPE OF VOLUNTEER:

Purpose of role _____

What does it involve? _____

What skill or experience do I need? _____

What can I expect from the role? _____

Location _____

Time commitment _____

Training and support _____





















Other Details _____

NOTES

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VOLUNTEERING AT CANCER SOCIETIES

 Foundation Against Cancer Belgium	https://www.cancer.be/nous-soutenir/devenez-volontaire
 Stand Up To Cancer Flanders	https://www.komoptegenkanker.be/help-mee/help-mee-als-vrijwilliger
 Cyprus Anti-Cancer Society	https://www.anticancersociety.org.cy/en/page/volunteers
 Cyprus Association of Cancer Patients and Friends (PASYKAF)	https://pasykaf.org/volunteer-form-gr/
 League Against Cancer Prague	https://www.lpr.cz/dobrovolnictvi
 Danish Cancer Society	https://www.cancer.dk/stoet-os/bliv-frivillig/
 Cancer Society of Finland	https://www.cancersociety.fi/get-involved/volunteering/
 French League Against Cancer	https://www.ligue-cancer.net/article/26017_etre-benevole-la-ligue-contre-le-cancer
 Hungarian League Against Cancer	https://rakliga.hu/te-is-segithetsz/#Onkentes_munkaval
 Irish Cancer Society	https://www.cancer.ie/ways-to-help/volunteer
 Italian Cancer League	http://www.lilt.it/oldportal/volontari_lilt5494.html?area=1035
 Cancer Foundation Luxembourg	http://www.cancer.lu/fr/devenir-benevole
 Dutch Cancer Society	https://www.kwf.nl/help-jij-ons/doe-mee-als-vrijwilliger/vrijwilligersfuncties-bij-kwf
 Portuguese League Against Cancer	https://www.ligacontracancro.pt/como-voluntario/
 League Against Cancer Slovakia	https://www.lpr.sk/dobrovolnictvo/
 Spanish Association Against Cancer	https://www.aecc.es/es/colabora/voluntariado
 Catalan Federation Against Cancer (FECEC)	https://www.juntscontraelcancer.cat/voluntaris/com-ser-voluntari-oncologic/
 Swiss Cancer League	https://www.krebsliga.ch/helfen-sie/goenner-werden/
 Cancer Research UK	https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/get-involved/volunteer
 Cancer Focus Northern Ireland	https://cancerfocusni.org/about-us/volunteer/volunteer-roles/

OTHER SOURCES

Inclusive Volunteering Toolkit, European Volunteer Centre (2019)
https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/3ec99c_38b45efe3d4c42a98e8e994da6ba4068.pdf

Policy Agenda for Volunteering in Europe - PAVE (2011)
https://docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/3ec99c_6dbf4ce9d33c43ccae976cd69c10d1bd.pdf

European Charter on the Rights and Responsibilities of Volunteers:
http://ec.europa.eu/citizenship/pdf/volunteering_charter_en.pdf



Association of European Cancer Leagues (ECL)
Chaussée de Louvain 479, 1030 Brussels, Belgium

☎ +32 2 256 2000 ✉ ECL@europeancancerleagues.org

🏠 www.cancer.eu 📘 🐦 @cancerleagues

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