

# *Role Description for Hospice Biographer Applicants (Hbs)*

## **Work Context**

After training, volunteer biographers will interview and record the memories or life stories of hospice patients, creating a lasting legacy, enhancing well-being and providing a treasured spoken record for family and friends.

This volunteering role is unique, exciting and brand new. No other position quite like this has existed in UK hospices before now. You will become part of a highly sought after and growing population of loyal Hospice Biographers across the UK. This is an extremely privileged role; but it is also challenging and demanding both personally and professionally. Please consider your suitability against the role requirements, below, before deciding to apply. We offer training and ongoing support; in return we ask that volunteers pledge a minimum of one year's commitment to our charity.

## **Role and Responsibilities - what you will do**

- Volunteer at your local hospice for a minimum of 1 day per fortnight (approx. 10-3pm). Two hospice biographers will be attached to each hospice, offering the HB service one day each week.
- Offer patients attending hospice day care a private, confidential and sensitive one to one life story recording - each session will last approximately 60-90 minutes although it may be less. You may record up to 2 biographies per day.
- Liaise with hospice staff, assist with day care activities, mingle and chat with patients, make tea etc. whilst gently enquiring if they wish to have their life story recorded at some point during the day.
- At the end of each recording, provide each patient with 2 copies of an unedited copy of it on memory sticks.
- Comply with the hospices volunteering code of practice, the HB's interviewing protocol, data protection and safeguarding procedures.
- Communicate on an ongoing basis with your hospice supervisor and other hospice staff, getting involved in hospice initiatives etc.
- Complete feedback forms and return them to the HB charity (for evaluation purposes), submit monitoring data and other paperwork as required by the charity.
- Maintain ongoing communication with us via your personal mentor and raise issues /ideas about how we might improve our HB service

## **About you - Who would be suitable for this role?**

### **Your personal qualities:**

- Engaging personality - able to put people at ease, be empathic and non-judgemental
- A good listener, who is sensitive, tactful and emotionally intelligent
- Sociable, outgoing and interested in peoples' lives and stories
- Enthusiastic, energetic and tenacious, committed to recording audio life stories for the benefit of hospice patients and their families
- Emotionally resilient and professional - able to deal with difficult situations and maintain their focus on the patient's well being

### **Your skills, abilities and experience**

- Volunteering or paid experience of working with vulnerable people, in the caring professions, health care or hospice environment
- Understanding or experience of active listening, communication skills, interviewing, bereavement care, social work, counselling, or similar
- Understanding of good practice and ethics - the importance of following protocols, maintaining confidentiality, safeguarding issues
- Ability to undertake basic audio recording and computing and administrative tasks such as downloading and uploading files (after training), form filling, sending emails with attachments etc.

## **About Us - What we offer you**

- Full professional training - If you are selected, you will be enrolled on our free two-day training course. You will be taught the art of chronological interviewing, listening techniques, privacy, boundaries, safeguarding and much more
- The course will include training on using the audio equipment and downloading onto USB's from hospice computers, data collection and data protection issues
- We will loan your hospice a free broadcast quality audio recorder
- We provide you with ongoing support and debriefing from a hospice supervisor, support and mentoring from a regional coordinator and possible peer network of other Hospice Biographers
- We will ask for and listen to your feedback and ideas for improving our service