

VOLUNTEERING FAQ'S

Charity Shops



Our charity shops

Birmingham St Mary's Hospice operates several charity shops in Birmingham and we are still growing. We have an award winning team of volunteers who are key in ensuring that the shops income is sustained and maximised. Volunteers help us achieve our targets through sales and by ensuring our shops are as welcoming as possible. Shop profits are a significant source of income that enables the Hospice to provide services and to continue to support over 1000 local families each year.

Why volunteer?

Many of us have been touched by the heartbreak of cancer or other life threatening illness among our family and friends. People tell us that volunteering is a way of giving something back. It may be that you simply enjoy the challenge of working with others to achieve success.

What will I get out of it?

Lots - volunteering gives you the opportunity to make new friends and become part of a dedicated team raising funds to support your local community.

You will also gain experience in retail and marketing. If you have already worked or volunteered in a shop before perhaps you would like to share your knowledge and experience to help develop others or your volunteering might uncover hidden talents that you never knew you had!

In this tough economic climate, retail volunteering also provides real work experience that could help you secure paid employment enabling you to learn new skills that employers really value, including; teamwork, numeracy, communication skills, customer service and sales – you can build your CV and even complete an NVQ in retail.

Who can volunteer?

People aged 18 years and over, from all backgrounds – regardless of ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation, religious beliefs and income. Anyone who has some spare time, is energetic and enthusiastic and would like to help their local Hospice and community.

Do I need any previous volunteering experience?

No experience is necessary as we provide all the on-the-job training and support you need. We also have a shop and a Hospice induction programme. This will give you a greater understanding of the service that the Hospice provides and the role that *your* charity shop plays within the organisation. Obviously a good sense of business, previous retail experience or a creative mind to think of ways to increase shop sales and increase profits is always welcome!



How much time do I need to give?

Generally our shop volunteers work one half-day session of 4 hours per week. There are no full time volunteer roles. Our charity shops are open Monday to Saturday, so we can be flexible in fitting your volunteering hours around any other commitments you may have. We also have places available for people who are available to volunteer on a short term basis e.g. over the summer holidays.

Will I be 'out of pocket' due to volunteering?

No! Volunteers are able to claim back out of pocket expenses that are incurred through volunteering at the Hospice, i.e. for travel to and from your shop.

Will volunteering affect my benefits?

As long as you are only receiving 'out of pocket' expenses, there should not be a problem with you volunteering while on benefits. However, it is always a good idea to keep your Benefits Agency informed that you are volunteering.

How do I get started?

You will need to complete the enclosed Volunteer Enrolment Form and return it to the shop you would like to volunteer in. You will then be invited to attend an informal interview with the Shop Manager to further discuss this exciting opportunity.

What will my role involve?

Volunteers have strengths and interests in different areas – you may have a passion for fashion and can sort out the latest trends and designer labels or a creative flair and want to design eye-catching window displays or colourful shop floor displays. Are you an avid reader who can sort out our book collections or are you a collectibles enthusiast who can recognise an antique or bargain? Perhaps music is more your thing – categorise our record and DVD collections into the 60's, 70's, 80's etc or by type – R&B, classical, rock and pop or dance and hip hop. If you are good with people then customer service, assisting and helping people with their purchases may suit you or perhaps if you are house-proud you will thrive at keeping the shop pristine clean and welcoming for customers.

You of course don't have to be a specialist at anything - we will still have a volunteer role to suit you!



Birmingham's Hospice – Be involved!