

PATIENT ADVOCATE ROLE DESCRIPTION

Are you interested in helping to make patient voices heard? We are looking for volunteers who can support breast cancer patients to represent the patient voice and help improve breast cancer services and care for all.

What is the Service Pledge?

The Service Pledge is a programme dedicated to improving breast cancer services. It brings patients, healthcare professionals and Cancer Alliances together to work in partnership to design and deliver a concrete action plan of improvements, for everybody's experience of breast cancer.

Breast Cancer Now helps hospitals gather patient and staff feedback on their breast care service through surveys and focus groups. The feedback gathered is discussed to find practical ways of making meaningful improvements. Through listening and learning from each other, patients and healthcare professionals work in a true partnership.

From May 2022 the Service Pledge is working hospitals in the South Yorkshire region.

The role of Patient Advocate

As a Patient Advocate, you will be helping improve services for breast cancer patients by supporting local patients to work with healthcare professionals. You will also act as an experienced sounding board during discussions around service improvement suggestions and implementation. To enable you to provide a truly objective expert opinion, you will be allocated to a service where you have not been treated. The majority of activities relating to the Service Pledge will take place virtually, although there may be some face-to-face meetings.

The role of Patient Advocate may include:

- Attending patient focus groups to assist with note taking
- Remotely reviewing patient and staff feedback for a service and working with Breast Cancer Now staff to provide insight and advice via phone and email of where the hospital is doing well and suggestions for areas that may be improved.
- Attending the Hospital Feedback Meeting to provide a patient perspective on being involved in the Service Pledge.
- Meeting patient representatives to provide support and to further understand the views and experiences of local patients.
- Attending improvement discussion with hospital staff, local patient representatives, other Patient Advocates and Breast Cancer Now staff to facilitate discussions around the areas for improvement.
- Providing expert impartial advice, acting as a sounding board for services developing improvements.
- Attending the Progress-sharing Event where services report back successes of the programme, share best practice across Cancer Alliance hospitals and help identify practical solutions to any challenges

What experience do I need to have had to apply?

- To have experience of representing the patient voice or experience of advocating for others, ideally within a healthcare/NHS setting; and
- To have had a diagnosis of primary breast cancer in the last six years and be at least six months past the finish of active (hospital based) treatment. If you were

diagnosed more than six years ago we would ask that you have up to date knowledge of current breast cancer treatment and care; or

- To have a diagnosis of secondary breast cancer and be at least 6 months from your diagnosis
- Ideally, experience of using Microsoft Teams and/or Zoom, although training and support will be provided

What skills and qualities do I need?

- To have an interest in patient involvement
- To be a strong communicator and confident speaking during meetings with healthcare professionals and patients
- Attention to detail when taking notes for meetings and when reading and analysing feedback to understand the local patient views
- Empathy and great listening skills to be able to support local patient representatives
- Ability to facilitate discussions between healthcare professionals and local patient representative and be able to identify improvements in standards of care
- To be willing and able to refer to your own experiences when necessary whilst remaining objective
- Clear understanding of the boundaries of your role within the Service Pledge
- To read and review information relating to the project and take part in meetings
- Able to work within Breast Cancer Now's policies and guidelines, including respecting confidentiality, safeguarding, and data protection.

What commitment is required?

- The Service Pledge will run from approximately May 2022 – March 2023. There are certain points of the project that will be busier than others but on average we estimate that this role will involve approximately 4 - 5 hours a month for the duration of the project
- This will be made up of attending meetings, and reviewing and feedback on information relating to the project

What training and support will I receive?

- Volunteers will be asked to complete online training which will give more information about the Service Pledge project, what is involved, and some exercises to help you prepare for the role
- Volunteers will attend a virtual welcome meeting where you will have the chance to meet other Patient Advocates involved in the project and ask any questions
- Breast Cancer Now staff will also be on hand throughout the project if you have any questions or concerns

What will I gain from volunteering as a Patient Advocate?

- You will gain further experience of advocacy work
- You will gain a greater understanding of how patient involvement can improve health care services
- You will have the chance to develop your communication and influencing skills