



NON-RELIGIOUS PASTORAL SUPPORT VOLUNTEER APPLICATION PACK



Thank you for your interest in applying to be a non-religious pastoral support volunteer. This application pack provides you with all you need to know to decide whether you want to go ahead and apply, as well as details of the selection process.

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If, having read these notes, you would like to attend the training and you are not already on our list of potential applicants please email training@humanistcare.org.uk and ask to be included.

OVERVIEW

The Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network (NRPSN) wishes to create a network of volunteers to provide pastoral support to the non-religious in hospitals, hospices, prisons, and other institutions.

WHO ARE WE?

We are a network of people who provide non-religious pastoral support. We aim to grow our network of accredited non-religious pastoral support providers and foster it as a mutually supportive community of practice. We encourage and support our volunteers, whilst engaging with relevant bodies to ensure the equal provision of care for the non-religious in institutions throughout the UK.

WHAT DO WE WANT?

We want everyone engaging with and working in public institutions to have equal access to pastoral, emotional, moral, and spiritual support regardless of their religion or beliefs. This support must be provided by likeminded individuals, who can provide the empathy and compassion needed at the most challenging of times. We believe in the necessity of increasing the availability of non-religious pastoral carers to ensure the availability of this provision across all sectors and services.

WHAT DO WE DO?

We train and accredit a growing national network of highly skilled providers. We support the network by increasing awareness, monitoring quality, and encouraging continued professional development.

We engage with strategic bodies like the NHS and the Her Majesty's Prison and Probation Service (HMPPS), to ensure that the pastoral support needs of the non-religious are catered for by likeminded individuals.



SELECTION PROCESS

You can apply to participate in our training at any time by submitting an application form, which you can request by emailing training@humanistcare.org.uk. Please complete and return the form to training@humanistcare.org.uk, and you will be contacted as a priority when new course dates become available. Please ensure that your Humanists UK membership is up to date, as those who have been Humanists UK members for over one year, will have their course fees and accreditation costs covered by Humanists UK. If you do not wish to become a Humanists UK member, you can alternatively pay the £250 training cost and £25 annual accreditation fee to be an NRPSN member.

The Head of Humanist Care will review all applications and inform you if you are shortlisted for a telephone interview. Once you are shortlisted your referees will be contacted and asked to provide a short statement as to why they think you would be a good pastoral support volunteer.

Telephone interviews will be with the Head of Humanist Care.

While the NRPSN applies its equal opportunity policy to its volunteers, it will be the equivalent policies of the institutions in which volunteers intend to work that will determine whether they can be considered to provide pastoral support. You may wish to investigate these before applying.

If you are not accepted onto training or do not successfully complete training, and would like further explanation or to appeal the decision, you can send a request by email to training@humanistcare.org.uk. You will receive an acknowledgement within one week and may be asked for further information. The Head of Humanist Care will gather all relevant details and provide a response (or, as the case may be, a decision) within a further three weeks.

WHAT HAPPENS AFTERWARDS?

You will be advised within two days of the telephone interview whether you have been selected (subject to receipt of satisfactory references if not already received), and you will be invited to attend an induction training programme, if a space is available. In the event that no space is available you will be advised that you are on the waiting list for the next available course.

The objectives of the induction training are:

- to prepare participants for the world of pastoral support
- to have participants reflect on the contribution of non-religious providers in pastoral support settings
- to form a view as to the suitability of participants to represent the NRPSN as pastoral support volunteers

The training programme will consist of:

- Self-study material and tasks
- An online webinar (requiring the use of an Apple/PC with internet access and a telephone line)
- A two-day classroom course held over a weekend
- Further self-study tasks to be completed shortly after the classroom course

Provided that you complete the training programme satisfactorily you will be accredited by the NRPSN as a pastoral support volunteer.



PERSON SPECIFICATION

JOB TITLE: Non-Religious Pastoral Support Volunteer

CHARACTERISTICS	ESSENTIAL	POTENTIALLY USEFUL
QUALIFICATIONS	Membership of the NRPSN. No other qualifications required	Any qualification in counselling, coaching, mental health work, social work, caring profession, advisory work, education
EXPERIENCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No specific experience is essential, although relevant experience may make it easier for volunteers to become effective quickly• Skills, personal attributes and other characteristics are more important	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Previous pastoral work• Volunteer experience• Experience of hospitals, hospices, prisons or any institution where pastoral support is offered• Inter-faith work• For prison work: experience dealing with substance abuse, physical/emotional abuse• Samaritans, counselling, coaching, mental health work, social work, caring profession, advisory work, education
KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have a cohesive system of naturalistic values or beliefs but do not self-classify as religious. These should be serious, genuinely and sincerely held, and worthy of respect in a democratic society• General awareness of the role of chaplaincy/ pastoral support in institutions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness of cultural diversity issues• Knowledge of human psychology and group dynamics• Awareness of human response to illness, loss, bereavement, incarceration, rehabilitation

<p>SKILLS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An ability to articulate the values or beliefs, above • Excellent interpersonal skills, particularly building rapport through conversation, active listening, communication with a wide range of people • Ability to accompany people through times of transition (e.g. return to health, end of life for self or others, prisoner rehabilitation) • Ability to recognise one's own limitations and if necessary to refer a person to a more appropriate resource • Understanding of appropriate boundaries and ability to work within them • Counselling-type skills e.g. showing empathy, unconditional positive regard, attentive listening, questioning, reflecting, interpreting, summarising, giving affirmation, using intuition • Mindfulness: paying attention in a particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally • Reflective thought about beliefs and actions in difficult situations • Foreign languages could be useful in some institutions
<p>PERSONAL ATTRIBUTES (All essential)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Real interest in and commitment to pastoral support as a means of improving the wellbeing of people in institutions • Capacity to give full attention to someone in need of support, to see beneath the surface situation and engage more deeply with the humanity and spirituality within • Ability to be non-judgemental, empathetic and compassionate in dealings with people • Awareness of one's own humanity and spirituality in order to accompany someone exploring deep questions of meaning and identity • Willingness to work with a diverse range of people • Willingness to accept advice and criticism • Understanding and respect for the need for confidentiality in dealings with people • Perseverance to overcome adversity • Robustness in unfamiliar environments e.g. prison; not easily shocked



**OTHER
(All essential)**

- Willingness to work closely and constructively within a team with colleagues holding very different views
- Willingness to undertake training to get an understanding of the institution, any training the institution considers necessary and where appropriate further training in topics such as non-religious beliefs e.g. Humanism, Diversity & Equality
- Willingness to work according to the policies and practices of the institution
- Willingness to work under the general guidance of NRPSN and abide by their Code of Conduct
- Willingness to undertake regular reflective practice and seek opportunities for development of skills and knowledge
- Willingness to support the development of the volunteer network

ROLE TITLE PASTORAL SUPPORT VOLUNTEER	
REPORTING TO	This is a volunteer role with no formal reporting line within the NRPSN but the role-holder normally reports to a Head Chaplain in any institution where they are working
ROLE CONTEXT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NRPSN is building a network of volunteers to provide pastoral support for the non-religious across the United Kingdom • Within most sectors, particularly healthcare, volunteers work in a “generic chaplaincy” role, supporting all people, but with special responsibility for the non-religious where more in-depth support is required equivalent to religious support • Volunteers can exercise a preference for one or more sectors in which to offer pastoral support • Normally each volunteer is responsible for creating their own opportunities to provide pastoral support, in collaboration with other members of the network • A system of support for volunteers provides opportunities for them to seek support and guidance from colleagues
MAIN PURPOSE	<p>Use one’s cohesive system of values or beliefs and pastoral support skills to offer support to the non-religious within specified institutions, including any of the following services provided in a safe and confidential environment and without judgement:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping people within an institution to make sense of what is happening to them • Ensuring each person is valued as a human being • Providing the opportunity to be understood, explore beliefs and values, express feelings honestly, deal with unresolved personal issues, express belief, and find meaning and purpose in life • Acting as an advocate for someone who is unable to deal with an issue themselves, making connections with the appropriate resources • Offering practical and emotional support for the bereaved and those undergoing other major life changes
KEY ACTIVITIES & ASPIRATIONAL AREAS	<p>Pastoral Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make oneself available to support the non-religious in line with the norms for pastoral support volunteers in each institution, usually on a regular basis as agreed with the Head Chaplain. The mode of operation will vary depending on the type of institution • Work within the requirements of each institution e.g. for security, health & safety and confidentiality • Provide support to the community of the institution e.g. patients, prisoners, students, their families and carers and to institution staff as necessary



KEY ACTIVITIES & ASPIRATIONAL AREAS	Pastoral Support <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Collaborate with chaplains of all religions and beliefs to ensure that the needs of all people are met, by referring to and receiving from chaplains' cases requiring a specific religion or belief. Be familiar with the needs of religions and other beliefs in the context of the activity of the institution• Ensure that, in particular, the needs of the non-religious for pastoral support are met, by identifying with the help of the institution those people who have humanist or non-religious beliefs and would welcome the opportunity to receive pastoral support from someone with the same beliefs
	Working with institutions <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify institutions in which to operate, in liaison with other volunteers in the network and in consideration of any priorities set by NRPSN. In the case of the NRPSN the initial focus is on healthcare institutions and prisons• Campaign to be accepted within institutions as a provider of pastoral support. This may require each volunteer to identify the Managing/Head Chaplain and initiate a dialogue to offer pastoral support as a member of the NRPSN. If this does not result in a positive outcome it may be possible to take the matter higher up the management chain within the institution. If successful, the volunteer will normally go through the institution's selection and training process• Promote one's pastoral support service within the institution once established. This activity will vary significantly between institutions, but will involve identifying stakeholders and influencers among staff, and making them aware of the service provided, for example by speaking at staff meetings• Wherever possible work within the existing pastoral, spiritual and religious care operation (or equivalent), with their support and guidance, including attendance at team meetings and training events• Ideally, if time and interest allows, seek opportunities to represent the NRPSN on bodies run by institutions. Many hospital trusts run spiritual care groups and universities and colleges may have multi-faith committees, and there are often opportunities to influence policy to ensure that the needs of humanists and the non-religious are better met

	<p>Supporting the NRPSN volunteer network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operate within the terms of the Volunteer Handbook, which covers topics such as the rules of accreditation, Code of Conduct and the procedures for the management of the volunteer network • Take steps to prepare oneself for pastoral work, undertaking any required training or CPD and fully understanding the responsibilities and tasks of the role in relation to a specific institution • Reflect on one’s own practice and identify areas for improvement. Be mindful of one’s own emotional state and seek support from colleagues as appropriate • Conform to the standards of behaviour laid down in the NRPSN Code of Conduct • Achieve and maintain accreditation according to the terms laid down by NRPSN • Record and report activities on a confidential basis as required by each institution, and at a summary level to NRPSN • Contribute to the development of the volunteer network by participating in dialogue with NRPSN and fellow volunteers. Help to form and develop local volunteer groups to support the development of skills and knowledge in the network • Support colleagues who seek help with any aspect of their volunteer work, meeting by phone, online or in person at an agreed time and listening, questioning and giving feedback in a non-judgemental fashion
<p>TENURE</p>	<p>This is an open-ended role, but requires a commitment to a minimum tenure to be set by NRPSN, and is subject to periodic review to ensure that both NRPSN and the volunteer are happy with the work being done. Each volunteer will agree with an institution their hours/days of work depending on how much time the volunteer wishes to contribute. Typically, this is something like one half-day per week or fortnight</p>
<p>REMUNERATION</p>	<p>This is a volunteer role and no remuneration is expected</p>

If you have any questions about the content of this Application Pack, please email info@nrpsn.org.uk

