**Volunteering Case Study 2018**

**Introduction**

72 year old female patient admitted to hospital with multiple medical conditions and registered blind. Due to the nature of her medical condition she was temporarily confined to bed. She did not have any family and her only friend, a neighbour, had to take numerous buses to get to the hospital and was not feeling able to make a lengthy journey.

**Background / Baseline**

It was noted that the patient may benefit from daily volunteer visits as she appeared to be very isolated. She was visited by the volunteer co-ordinator and despite her communication being limited due a shortness of breath and receiving oxygen she was keen to engage. She was in agreement that her information could be passed onto volunteers from other wards so they could come in and chat with her.

**What happened - Intervention/activity**

Volunteers noted that building rapport was not difficult as the patient was a friendly, welcoming and good humoured woman. She felt comfortable to express concerns and share her life story with the Volunteer Co-ordinator (VC).

The patient was often feeling very down and expressed that the daily visits were keeping her going. During her stay on the ward, the patient was feeling unsure and confused about her personal things (i.e. where her key to her safe at home was, how much money she had with her, where her handbag was located). Volunteers were, with her permission, able to try and resolve these issues faced by the patient. This involved communicating with ward staff and listening to the patient’s concerns and find out what solution would be best.

With the sensitive nature of this individual case the VC asked for volunteers to feed back after every visit anything they wanted to highlight or they were concerned about and this would be followed up with the VC on the ward. During her second week on the ward the patient was visited by 5 different volunteers and the VC numerous times.

**What changed?**

The patient herself expressed that the daily visits were ‘keeping her going’ and staff remarked that the patient was more polite and less anxious after a visit from a volunteer. The patient said she felt “spoilt by the kindest people” and “I can’t believe there are still people like you in the world” when asked her thoughts on the volunteering service.
As of April 2018 she continues to be inpatient, receiving regular visits from volunteers.

**Lessons Learned and Actions Taken**

This has demonstrated the importance of volunteers and the vital support communication social contact plays in patients well being.

The development of a case study to share with staff colleagues and future volunteers.