

## **MEDIA RELEASE**

### **For immediate use**

### **Marie Curie volunteer 'Helper' service in Somerset & Companion Service at Musgrove Park Hospital**

Marie Curie are currently looking for more people to consider volunteering a few hours of their time each week to support local people with terminal illnesses and their families. The charity is looking for people who are interested in becoming a 'Marie Curie Helper', a volunteer who can visit someone with a terminal illness in their own home to provide companionship and emotional support, as well as practical help.

The Helper Service was started in Somerset in 2009 and has grown to cover 17 other areas across the country.

Marie Curie Helper volunteers give around three hours a week of their time to offer a friendly ear and the opportunity to talk through worries. Volunteers also help by providing practical support, information about local services and enabling carers and family members to take a short break.

We also are looking for volunteer Assessors for the Marie Curie Helper Service, which entails visiting terminally ill people and/or their carers either in their own home, nursing or residential care to identify their needs and determine if the Marie Curie Helper Service would be appropriate for them.

Sandra, Marie Curie Helper and Assessor, said: "I wanted to volunteer as a helper to allow myself to be there for someone in need. I thought the role would be rather hard to fulfil. This was not the case - in fact, it is like meeting a friend. Being allowed into someone's life like I have, has been a true privilege."

"I have recently started the Assessor role for Marie Curie as well. This was motivated by the fantastic experience I have had as a Helper and the hope that others will get the same experience with Marie Curie."

The Companion Service at Musgrove Park Hospital Taunton provides support to those patients who are dying in hospital. A team of volunteers provide support for this special group of patients and their families and friends who might be visiting them. There are over 30 volunteers who offer dedicated time to people and support them both emotionally and practically.

Andrew, Marie Curie Helper and Companion, said: "After many years working full time I had to adjust to part time work. Despite what some say, I could always fill my time with some activity or other, but for me these were not really fulfilling. So serendipity intervened and I saw a piece in the local paper from Marie Curie asking for volunteers to provide companionship at Musgrove Hospital. I applied, an interview was arranged, and subsequently some very good training sessions took place. I now visit the hospital about twice a week just sitting with patients who are terminally ill. Some are very conscious others not so much, but every visit is different and it is indeed a privilege to be with them at what is a very important time both for them and their visitors.

I also volunteered for carrying out a similar service but visiting the patients in their own home. This is a much longer contact time and so a relationship is built up maybe over many months.

Catching up with bereaved relations/carers is another aspect of my volunteering work for Marie Curie as is a new initiative to visit patients in their home and talk about themselves and any wishes or aspirations they have concerning the future.

Throughout my time with Marie Curie I have felt very supported by the organisation, and there has been plenty of time to discuss with other volunteers any issues that have arisen. It is a rewarding experience and hopefully contributes to the wellbeing of those that take advantage of the excellent services that Marie Curie provides.”

To find out more about the Marie Curie Helper Service in Somerset or the Companion Service at Musgrove Park Hospital please email [somersethelper@mariecurie.org.uk](mailto:somersethelper@mariecurie.org.uk) or call free 0800 304 7412 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm).

You can also apply online for:

Helper Service <https://roles.mariecurie.org.uk/VacancyInformation.aspx?VId=53847>

Companion Service <https://roles.mariecurie.org.uk/VacancyInformation.aspx?VId=58595>

For more information about Marie Curie Helper visit [www.mariecurie.org.uk/helper](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk/helper).

#### **Notes to Editor**

##### **For more information please contact:**

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#### **About Marie Curie**

Please note – we are now called ‘Marie Curie’ (not Marie Curie Cancer Care)

##### **Marie Curie – care and support through terminal illness**

Marie Curie is the UK’s leading charity for people with any terminal illness. The charity helps people living with a terminal illness and their families make the most of the time they have together by delivering expert hands-on care, emotional support, research and guidance.

Marie Curie employs more than 2,700 nurses, doctors and other healthcare professionals, and with its nine hospices around the UK, is the largest provider of hospice beds outside the NHS.

For more information visit [www.mariecurie.org.uk](http://www.mariecurie.org.uk)

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