



COMPANION VOLUNTEERS IN END OF LIFE CARE: POWYS THB STORY

“The project was under way before I started in post in December. The project model was built around volunteers providing virtual support to inpatients, in community hospitals. This model took into account the Covid Pandemic whereby traditional volunteer roles were not being utilised in clinical face to face settings.

Powys Teaching Health Board work in Partnership with PAVO to recruit volunteers across the county. We used this collaborative approach to recruit our End of Life volunteers. Ten volunteer companions were trained to undertake this role by Powys Teaching Health Board and Marie Curie.

Some of the challenges we faced included issues of rurality, staff pressures and winter pressures. We also found anecdotally that by the time patients were in the community hospital setting they were sometimes too poorly to benefit the most from the end of life volunteer support. As the project evolved we worked with ward areas to adjust to ensure we were making the most of the project in the short time line we had. We continue to look at the different areas within the health board to identify where the project could be upscaled.

The Health Board really values the volunteer contribution and are seeking opportunities to reintroduce clinical face to face volunteer roles.

It's a really exciting time in Powys. We are building a new health and care academy in Powys which will support volunteering and carers.

Helpforce have been a good sounding board and have provided guidance as we have developed our volunteering capacity in Powys. I am so passionate and determined to use all the information I've learned over the last year.'

Vicky Sharpe, Companion Volunteer Coordinator

October 2021