



Frequently asked questions (FAQ) for a role as volunteer patient

What is a volunteer patient?

Volunteers agree to be interviewed and/or examined, for educational purposes by a health care professional. This might include:

- Students who are training to be doctors or physician associates
- Postgraduate doctors, nurses or allied health care professionals who are already qualified doing extra training or developing skills.

Who can be a volunteer patient?

People of all ages, genders, physical condition and backgrounds can participate. No previous experience is necessary. Some clinical skills exams require people in generally good health, while other sessions require specific symptoms or conditions. Here is a list of some of the common conditions we are looking for:

- **Neurological problems:** for example, Parkinson's disease, previous stroke, previous spine or brain surgery, peripheral neuropathies.
- **Heart problems:** for example, heart murmur, heart failure, valve disease.
- **Chest/breathing problems:** for example, previous TB, COPD, pulmonary fibrosis, restrictive lung disease or anything related.
- **Abdominal problems:** stoma, liver problems, palpable (you can feel it touching the abdomen) liver, spleen or kidney including transplant
- **Joint problems** for example: for example, rheumatoid arthritis, severe osteoarthritis.
- **Dermatological problems:** for example, psoriasis, eczema.

What happens during an interview or examination for educational purposes?

We may ask you to change into a hospital gown to allow students to examine different areas of the body (such as knees, feet, shoulders, upper abdomen, chest). Sensitive areas are excluded from examinations. Some sessions involve interviews and medical histories only, for which you will remain fully clothed.

Depending on the type of session, students may ask questions regarding health history, daily routine, psychosocial aspects of your life or family background. There is no obligation to share. The RCP are bound by the health professional's Code of Ethics, therefore any information shared is kept within the strictest of confidence.

There will always be at least one examiner, an experienced doctor or healthcare practitioner, present during the whole session and they will brief you before the session begins.

What to bring and what to wear?

It is a good idea to wear loose comfortable clothing and to wear separate tops and bottom rather than dresses. Where necessary gowns will be provided.

It is useful to bring reading material with you as there may be gaps in between students.

What is the time commitment?

Typically, clinical skills sessions can last either all day or half day. It is entirely voluntary and there is no minimum number of sessions you must do in a year. Clinical exams run all year and we will email approximately a month before each exam to see if you are free. We cater scheduling to your availability and the best suited.

We sometimes ask volunteers to wait on standby either at home or at the centre in case a volunteer cannot make it on the day. You will still receive vouchers in this instance.

We also sometimes ask volunteers to come in before exam days for an orientation visit. and/or for our medical team to review certain signs and symptoms to see if they are suitable for some exams.

How will I know when you need volunteer patients?

As a volunteer patient you will receive regular email bulletins from the RCP to inform you of forthcoming opportunities. If you don't have an email address let us know and we can keep you informed by post or telephone

Where will the interviews or examinations be held?

They will usually be held at the Royal College of Physicians, The Spine, Paddington Village, Liverpool L7 8SZ.

Sometimes we may share opportunities to participate as a volunteer patient for other institutes in Liverpool such as The University of Liverpool Medical School and School of dentistry. These exams may be in another location in Liverpool.

What will I get out of the day?

Volunteers feedback is that they enjoy helping healthcare professionals develop their skills.

A taxi will be provided to collect you from your home and take you back again.

Lunch and refreshments will be provided throughout the day for you.

As a thank you we will give you Love2shop vouchers. Love2shop Vouchers are the UK's leading multi-retailer gift voucher. They can be redeemed in over 20,000 stores, restaurants and attractions, with over 150 top brands to choose from such as Argos, Boots, Halfords, Iceland, Matalan, New Look, Pizza Express, River Island, Marks and Spencer and TK Maxx.

Will I receive medical advice?

Participation as a Volunteer Patient does not substitute for medical care, advice or treatment. You will not receive prescriptions nor participate in invasive or diagnostic procedures.

What information will you keep?

We will ask for your consent to keep the following details on a computerised database:

- Name, address, email address and telephone number
- Next of kin and phone number.
- Date of birth
- Diagnosis and symptoms (if relevant)

We will ask you at approximately every two years if we can continue to keep information about you on the database. You can withdraw this consent at any time.

You can withdraw your consent to keep your data at any time by email, post or telephone.

Do I need to live in Liverpool?

We prefer our healthy volunteers to live in Liverpool/Wirral. For those with certain conditions they can live anywhere in the North West as long as you are within approximately an hours travelling distance of the RCP Spine Liverpool.

How can I apply?

You can apply online at www.rcplondon.ac.uk/VPB or contact the Patient Bank and Surrogate Coordinator by phone on **0151 318 2020**