



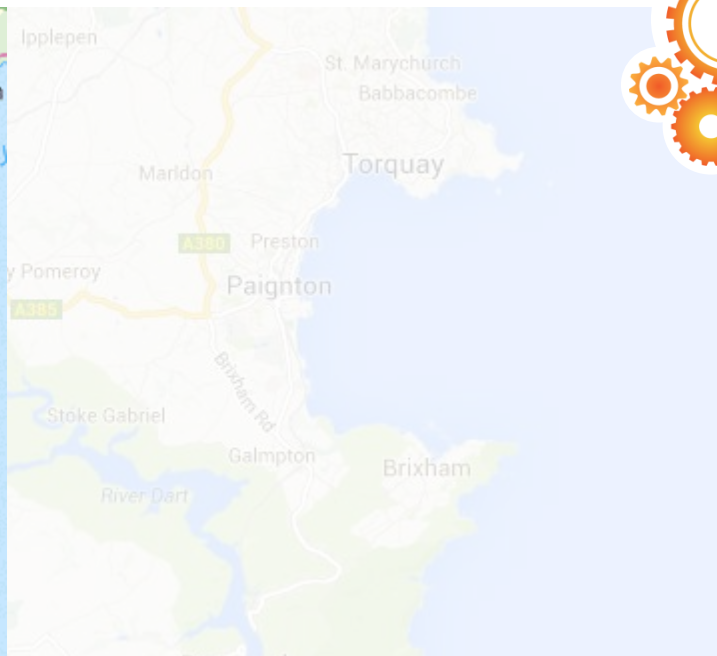
Pay Back from the Mealtime Companions Partnership

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Torbay Hospital

- A medium sized acute hospital which serves South Devon
- 300 square miles - from South Dartmoor to the length of coastline which stretches from Dawlish, at the mouth of the River Exe, past the Teign and Dart estuaries and up to Dartmouth





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Torbay Hospital

- Serves a resident population of 300,000 people, with 100,000 visitors at any one time during the summer holiday season
- 300 Beds
- 60 Care of the Elderly inpatients mainly on 2 wards, Cheetham Hill and Simpson
- Additional elderly patients across all wards in the hospital



Background

- A greater understanding in the importance of the patient meal experience and nutritional requirements are increasing within the wider healthcare team
- Food and the service of food is now regarded by many as an essential part of treatment
- Up to 40% of adults show signs of malnutrition on admission to hospital and often their stay exacerbates the condition

Malnourished Patient



Malnutrition

BAPEN (2009) reported:



3 million people in the UK are malnourished or at risk of malnutrition

Of those:

- A third are over the age of 65 - more than 1 million older people are malnourished
- NICE identifies better nutritional care as the **fourth largest** potential source of cost savings to the NHS



Why the need to change practice?

- Efforts are made to ensure that patients receive adequate support at meal times but this is often a challenge in such a busy environment
- Studies have highlighted that care provided by the MDT often encroaches on the patients' mealtimes



What are we doing to change practice?

We have embarked on a number of changes:

- to improve the **support** provided to the patients,
- to improve the patients' mealtime **experiences** on the ward, and
- to ensure that **patient's nutrition and hydration** needs are met



Aim of the Mealtime Companion Scheme:

- The successful recruitment and training of volunteers who will attend wards at meal times and assist patients
- Currently recruited approximately 80
- About 60 already working on the 2 Care of the Elderly Wards & 1 Orthopaedic Ward



Meal Time Companion Volunteer

- The **purpose** of the role is to improve patient nutrition by providing feeding support and social care at mealtimes resulting in **better nourished and hydrated patients**



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Meal Time Companion Training includes contributions from:



- Ward Manager/Matron
- Dietitian
- Catering Manager
- Speech & Language Therapist
- Occupational Therapist
- Specialist Dementia Nurse
- Voluntary Services Manager
- Mandatory Training Staff
- Environmental Health Officer
(Food Hygiene Level 1)



Meal Time Companion Volunteer

Duties & Responsibilities:

- Report to nurse prior to meal
- Liaise with nurse (HCA) who will direct them to the patients requiring help or support
- Prepare bedside tables for mealtime
- Sit and chat with patients as appropriate



Duties & Responsibilities:

- Help with access to refreshments
- Create a social atmosphere to encourage eating and drinking
- Be willing to consider feeding patients who require it (following appropriate training)



Duties & Responsibilities NOT Undertaken

- Giving medical advice
- Giving personal opinions
- Moving patients
- Helping patients to the toilet
- Disclosing personal information
- Accepting payments/gifts from patients
- Feeding Dysphagic Patients



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Meal Time Companions are given:

- Interview
- DBS Check
- Certificate of Attendance at Training Day
- SALT Competency Certificate
- Food Hygiene Certificate
- Mandatory Training Certificate
- Hospital ID Badge
- Red MTC Tabard
- Induction to Ward
- Starter Pack
- Feeding Competency Sign Off
- Access to Ward MTC Tool Kit



Meal Time Companions are given the opportunity:

- to feel fulfilled
- to meet new people
- to make new friends
- to claim back their expenses
- to feel useful again
- to help others
- to add value
- to learn new skills
- to gain good experience
- to improve the patient experience
- **to improve nutritional intake**



Meal Time Companions are:

- Asked to communicate directly with the wards if they can't attend
- Asked to commit to volunteering at one mealtime per week.
Either breakfast, lunch or supper
- Given huge flexibility with the understanding that they help when they can and they don't when they can't!



What do you like about the MTC role?

“spending time with older people, listening and chatting, giving reassurance feels worthwhile”

“chatting to patients whilst getting them to eat!”

“satisfaction in helping others”

“feels worthwhile – contact with others worse off –hopefully lifts their spirits too when we give our time and attention and care”

“spending time with patients, engaging them and encouraging them to eat through conversation – seems to work!”

“everything!”

Email from Volunteer MTC:



"I met the most amazing 82 year old man in ? ward on Wednesday. He had Parkinson's, had very little speech, very little mobility and was unbelievably slow at everything. However, when I left the ward some three hours later (!) I felt I had had the opportunity to actually make a meaningful difference to someone's hospital stay.

He had a laptop-type thing which allowed him to type in (VERY slowly) words which could either be read or "spoken" out loud. We were able to build up a rapport and some of the "comments" he made were "I love that smile, it is better than any therapy", "I can't thank you enough" and "thank you X". Needless to say I was shedding the odd tear now and again, as was he!

I know I will never be that lucky again but THAT is what it's all about..."



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Conclusion:

- Simple but effective idea...
- Recent re-audit revealed MTC are treasured and more patients are being helped



Conclusion:

“So never lose an opportunity of urging a practical beginning, however small, for it is wonderful how often in such matters the mustard-seed germinates and roots itself”

Florence Nightingale

