

names are mentioned. We talk about any issues we might have with our patients and chat about how we might deal with things, so **we get a lot of support ourselves**. The support groups are great because they help you to understand why you're feeling the way you do or why you're saying certain things or acting in a certain way. You get feedback not only from your support group leader but also from your peer volunteers.

If anyone is interested in taking up a volunteering role at Phyllis Tuckwell - in whatever form, because there are many roles - **Home Support is very rewarding and you don't have to come from a medical background**, which I think is worth knowing, because it frightens some people to think you need to know about that sort of thing. You don't - you just have to be a good listener and be able to support people."

We are privileged to care for our patients and their families, at probably the most difficult time in their lives, but we can only do this with the help of people like Kath and the generosity of our local community.

We have to raise over £20,000 every day in order to provide care, free of charge, to our patients and their relatives.

For further information about how to support Phyllis Tuckwell Hospice Care, contact our Fundraising team on:

01252 729446
support@pth.org.uk

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Our volunteers are inspiring...

**"It's about just
being there."**



Kath's Story
Volunteering in Home Support.

Phyllis Tuckwell[®]
Hospice Care 
...because every day is precious

Kath's Story



Retired nurse Kath started volunteering for Phyllis Tuckwell two years ago.

"As a practise nurse, I was aware of Phyllis Tuckwell and the referral of patients for end of life care," she says, "and when I retired I decided that's

what I was going to do, I was going to volunteer for them in some way. I wasn't sure what role I would have, I thought maybe just making teas and coffees!"

Kath applied to Phyllis Tuckwell and was invited in to meet Karen, who works in our Voluntary Services team, to discuss possible roles. *"Karen suggested that Home Support (HS) would be an excellent way for me to use my experience of 40 years of nursing, and arranged for me to meet Nicola, the HS Co-ordinator,"* says Kath.

Phyllis Tuckwell's HS volunteers visit patients for three hours a week, providing practical and emotional support and companionship at a difficult time. Being seriously ill can cause anxiety and stress, and can be lonely too. Taking patients out shopping or to medical appointments, going on outings with them, or simply sitting and listening to them talk, over a cup of tea, can make a huge difference to them, and the volunteers themselves enjoy the sense of purpose and of giving back to the community which HS gives them.

Nicola explained more about HS to Kath, and Kath agreed that it would be something she would like to do. She went along to the training sessions, which take place over six weeks, on Saturdays. *"They covered all sorts of different areas to do with palliative care,"* says

Kath, *"including training on listening well and being able to support people through their lives, as well as through death."*



Once she had completed her training, Kath started visiting patients. Each volunteer visits one patient at a time, for three hours a week. Kath initially saw one patient who was near the end of her life, and after that saw two other similar patients, both also near the end of life. *"And then I was referred to meet Paula,"* she says, *"which was about six months ago now. I didn't visit her weekly at first, as she was busy, she had a lot of hospital appointments, but since February, since her surgery, I've been coming every week. **Mostly we sit and chat, and have cups of tea!** We watch television and talk about television programmes, because we're both really interested in that. I've taken her to hospital appointments in Guildford, which saves her from getting hospital transport because she doesn't drive, and I've sat with her when she's gone to appointments. I offered to be there and she said yes she'd like me to be*

*there, so I went in with her when she went to see her consultant. I also took her down to a Phyllis Tuckwell Open House session at the Hospice a few weeks ago, and we sat and had a cup of tea in the Day Hospice and learnt all about what was available for her - but mostly we just sit and chat and drink tea! **Being able to talk through her issues with me is a great emotional support for her.** We talk about everything. We talk about her illness, about the hospital, her treatment, her family and friends and what's going on in her life. It's about just being there, helping and supporting. For her to be able to offload onto me and for me to listen is very important."*



*"**I get a lot of satisfaction from being a HS volunteer,**"* continues Kath. *"To just stop working, after being a nurse for 40 years, was quite hard. I missed my colleagues, I missed my patients. With this I get a huge amount of satisfaction, to know that I'm helping Paula. As volunteers we also have monthly support group meetings where we meet up and talk about any issues we might have. It's all in confidence, no*