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To all Local Churches in Plymouth

An appeal – but not for money!

Dear Friend

I am writing to you as the leader of a local church or faith community, with an appeal for help. Please forgive the general nature of this letter – we are trying to reach as many people as possible. Can I also please ask you to read this letter to the end as we are in great need!

For some time we have been struggling to maintain our weekend volunteer teams who help patients attend Sunday morning worship, here in the chapel at Derriford. Whilst we have managed to stretch the current volunteer teams and cope as best we can with a few new recruits, for various good reasons we are now in a very difficult position as by the end of the year, two of our teams will only have 3-4 members each. So we really need to find enough people to bolster 2 or 3 of our weakest teams by 5-6 people per team. Can you help us?

The role involves coming into the hospital 1 weekend in every 6, firstly on a Saturday morning between 10.00am -12.00 to visit the wards and take names of those who would like to come to chapel. Then on a Sunday morning, volunteers are needed from 8.30 – 10.30am to help bring patients to chapel in a wheelchair, accompany them through the service at 9.15 which lasts approximately 45 minutes, and then take them back to the ward. The wheelchairs are then cleaned with wipes and stacked away again. It means that whoever is doing this task can be free to leave by about 10.30, and if they attend a church, get to their own service, perhaps a few minutes late. Many are happy to regard this service as their worship for the Sunday that they are volunteering.

Full training will be given and there is a need for application and DBS forms to be completed and references supplied. Some people find covering both days very difficult and opt to join a team either on a Saturday or a Sunday. However if Sundays are not well covered, we cannot fulfil all the Saturday requests. The benefit to patients is immense! It enables those who normally attend worship to continue that attendance here but it also enables others who would not normally go to church, to come along at a time when they are perhaps feeling

especially sad, lonely or in need of some kind of support and strength. For many it is the first time in months or years that they have been able to return to a worshipping congregation, having been housebound and unable to get to their own church. I'm sure you can understand the great healing benefit that this can bring.

Can I ask you to publicise this need in your local church or parish community please? We are open to anyone volunteering provided they are fit enough to do so and who are willing to offer their help as described above. They do not have to be regular church attenders – indeed several on our teams are not.

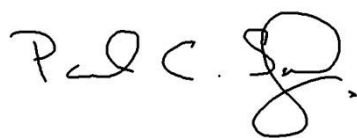
I would be most grateful if you would think about this and respond accordingly – without extra help there is a very real risk that not only will we lose the capacity to offer this facility to patients some weeks, but in consequence the whole rota could collapse, so please consider helping us and encourage your folk to get in touch as soon as possible. The commitment is only to help us one weekend in every six, and if we were inundated with responses, we could even form extra teams to make the commitment even less. Some of our existing teams are looking very tenuous for 2017 so we need to have some firm commitments as soon as possible.

If you or anyone you can suggest are able to offer help, could you please contact either myself on the email or telephone number at the top of this letter, or my colleague The Revd. Jan Collis on 01752 792313 or j.collis@nhs.net Jan manages our volunteers and will be very glad to hear from you. If you wish to simply find out more then please also phone or email us – we would be happy to talk it over without any obligation.

Could you make this need widely known please, within your own church community. I would be very happy to supply a short newsletter article or something for your website.

Many thanks for considering this appeal and we very much look forward to hearing from you, or someone you may have passed this letter to, in the very near future.

With best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P C Snell', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Paul C Snell – Lead Chaplain