

“Team and House Rules”

Guidelines for the BSSH LION project

Please note that these are guidelines and not immutable rules, so volunteers may approach us with requests to act out-with them which we will decide on a case-by-case basis.

The Team

We hope you enjoy your time at Benetolo house. It can be challenging living and working away from home. The BSSH team are here to support you during your time. Where there is uncertainty or difficulty in agreeing a decision or compromise, one of the following people can be contacted for support:

Jonathan Jones	Consultant Lead	iwmjones@doctors.org.uk	07960957585
Rowa Taha	Trainee Lead	r.taha@nhs.net	07984317502
Kate Owers	Educational Lead	kate.owers@gmail.com	07879458647
Martin Wood	Governance Lead	info@edmundsburyhealthcare.co.uk	07887 848040
Sue Fullilove	Operational Lead	suefullilove@doctors.org.uk	07786 910554
Sarah Mee	Therapy Lead	snjmee@btopenworld.com	07740 514921
(for therapy related decisions or therapist support)			

The House

The team accommodation is a bungalow set in its own grounds with a perimeter wall. It has 4 double bedrooms, 2 of which are ensuite, with a spare office that can be used as an additional 5th single bedroom.

Accompanying partners / spouses can be present for the full term of the volunteers visit and pay £175 per week (subject to review) to cover their costs. They must share the volunteer's room.

Visitors / companions. This should be limited to one visitor, for 1 week or 3 weekends per 4 weeks of volunteering. Rate £25 per night. Volunteers should inform the secretariat if they are to have any visitors during their time at Benetolo House.



Volunteers and other team members (e.g. medical students) have priority for rooms, such that visitors may have to share with their host. Kipping in the communal area is not acceptable.

Alcohol. This cannot be purchased as part of house groceries on the BSSH budget (not permissible under charity commission rules). It is acceptable for people to buy their own alcohol, for responsible use at the house.

Smoking – permissible but must be away from the house, veranda and barbeque area, if you are smoking outside please respect other residents in the house too.

Quiet times – Sunday to Thursday evenings. From 10.30pm to 6am.

TV- The screen dominates the communal area so its use must be restricted. The default position should be off and consideration must always be given to any individual who does not want it playing, even if they are in the minority. The suggestion is that it is on for a couple of hours, a couple of times a week by agreement of the house residents. People are always free to watch things on their own computers in their rooms with a reasonable volume level or headphones.

Music and audio - Soundtracks in bedrooms should not be audible outside the room.

Phone calls – Volunteers are welcome to have phone calls but they should not be taken in communal rooms or after quiet time. Late meetings may be held after this time if headphones are used to respect others residing in the house.

Shared bathroom – Volunteers have priority over accompanying partners and visitors at 'getting ready for work time'. If necessary, a rota will need to be put in place to cover high pressure times. The bathrooms should be left clean and tidy. If necessary, those with ensuite bathrooms will need to allow shared use of that facility, particularly at high pressure times.

Kitchen – should be left clean and tidy. The housekeeper has priority use of the kitchen whilst cooking the evening meal.

Team briefs – Any discussions about work should be taken in a separate area for data protection. Open conversations can be had but patient issues should not be discussed around non team members. Visitors may be asked to leave the communal area during team discussions.

Volunteers have priority use of the communal area for meetings, work related discussion, etc.

At all times the primacy of project / patient confidentiality must be respected



Room allocation. Volunteers always have priority for rooms over medical students, who have priority over visitors (with the exception of VIPs, e.g. visiting BSSH President). Accompanied volunteers should be given priority for the outside ensuite room. If there are 2 sets of accompanied volunteers, the second pair should have priority for the inside en-suite room, to take the pressure off the shared bathroom. After that, rooms should be allocated as fairly as possible by the residents, with any difficulties referred to the operational team above. We suggest that:

- Room allocation should not just be on a 'first come, first served' basis
- Any volunteer's special needs are taken into account
- Volunteers doing longer spells have some degree of priority for the larger / ensuite rooms regardless of their age or seniority, at least for half of their stay
- Individuals should not be asked to swap rooms during their stay more than once, unless they wish to
- If everything else is equal, older volunteers have priority
- If everything else is still equal, draw lots

House Harmony and Personal Wellbeing.

Benetolo House is your home and your sanctuary during your time in Malawi and is a place for rest and recuperation.

Whilst there will inevitably be some work-chat and some zoom meetings in the evenings and weekends, please try where possible to leave work at work, and not let it dominate the household. When work is necessary at home, please try and ensure an appropriate balance of surgery and therapy, particularly as the therapist will often be outnumbered by surgeons.

Please show respect and kindness both for other house residents and the house staff. It can be very challenging living and working closely with each other for many weeks. The work can be tough; mentally, physically and emotionally. Some volunteers will be missing home, family and friends. We all have our strengths and weakness, our irritations, and our irritants. Be tolerant, respect each other's personal space and privacy, and support one another.

It is important to be open to adjusting your usual daily schedule as there will be early starts that some volunteers may not be used to. If you find it difficult settling into the new routine, please contact one of the leadership team and they will treat any concerns or issues raised with confidentiality.

At the hospital, the consultant surgeon will co-ordinate the work of the LION Hand Unit with the support of the hand therapist, as well as supervise the trainee surgeon. At Benetolo House, none of these hierarchies should exist.



It is important to work together as a team during and outside working hours, this can be an intense period for some so it is fundamental to be there to support one another during this time.

Malawi has earned its name as 'The Warm Heart of Africa' not only for the warm climate and beautiful scenery but also from the warm hearts of its inhabitants.

So be like a Malawian during your stay and have a warm heart for all those around you.



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