

Southend Hospital Radio

Unless you have been a patient in Southend Hospital, you may not be aware that the Hospital has its own radio station, serviced by voluntary and provided solely to patients in the hospital. Some Wards have "Premier Bedside", a system providing national TV and radio stations as well as Hospital Radio and also a direct dial telephone. This service is being rolled-out but some Wards still have only the facility to listen to radio. All radio stations are free, but patients with "Premier Bedside" have to purchase a card to enable them to watch TV and use the telephone.



Southend Hospital actually broadcasts on two channels. Hospital Radio 1 has live programmes between 6 p.m. and 10 p.m. on weekdays nights, provides live commentary from Southend United Football Club when they are playing at home on Saturday, and various other live programmes during the day on Saturday and Sunday. At all other times HR1 plays continuous music on a loop system. Hospital Radio 2 plays continuous music but has no live programmes.

There are programmes to suit all tastes, from Country to Jazz to Chart No 1's. However, every weekday evening between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. there is a patients request show. Volunteers visit a number of wards between 7 p.m. and 8 p.m., chatting to patients, giving out our magazine and collecting requests. The team then goes back to the studio for the programme. There is usually one Presenter/Technician, plus one co-presenter, an eagle-eyed Programme Controller to jump into action if something goes wrong with the equipment and a volunteer to help out generally. From the patients point of view, it's just like real radio ! At 10 p.m. we tune in to Independent Radio News and then, if we haven't played all the requests, we simply continue the programme until we have, so no one is disappointed. The Presenters chat, read out announcements and, of course, introduce the music. The studio is very professional and computerised but we still have a huge number of vinyls and CDs too, about 20,000 tunes in all.

No particular skills are needed. Not every volunteer wishes to be a Presenter, some simply enjoy visiting the Wards. However, all volunteers are required to help with fundraising, tin shakes and other events to raise funds to run the service.

If you would like further information, please ring Southend Hospital Radio 01702 338181 between 8 p.m. and 10 p.m. any Thursday or Friday evening and speak to Joan who will arrange for you to visit the studio.