Over 100 000 volunteers are currently within the hospice movement – contributing more than 18 million hours of work to their services each year yet they remain a largely under-researched group.

**Aims**
- This study hopes to give this under researched group the opportunity to share their experiences with the Hospice and prospective volunteers
- To understand the motivating factors for patient contact volunteers
- To explore the experiences of those volunteers
- To understand the profile of the volunteers, to aid future recruitment of new volunteers and target training and support.

**Methods**
- Qualitative study of the experiences of patient contact volunteers using semi structured interviews
- Ethics approval granted from Edge Hill University Ethics committee and the Integrated Hospice Governance Group
- Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was used.

**Results**
- 8 semi structured interviews conducted
- Volunteers are drawn to hospice work to make a difference
- Primary motivation is to discover more about themselves and others
- Relatively few negative challenges encountered
- Any negatives are cancelled out by the positive benefits gained
- Capacity for personal growth is strengthened
- Generic knowledge of symptoms would benefit the support they give.

**Conclusions**
- Volunteering is a two way process
- The ‘Psychological Contract’ between the Hospice and its volunteers is very healthy
- The organisation has good role deployment, shared values and good levels of communication.

**Further developments**
- Volunteer inductions adapted to meet the training needs of individuals (e.g., boundaries of care, consideration of first aid training for drivers)
- Development of individual ‘Psychological Contracts’ between the hospice and volunteers.