



Medical Volunteers – What to Expect

At Kiwoko Hospital we welcome several medical volunteers each year. We provide a great setting in which to ‘taste’ Medical Mission. The clinical input provided by volunteers keeps our overstretched medical team supported.

Working here has rather less supervision than is normal in most ‘developed world’ settings. There are however several senior and very experienced UK and Ugandan doctors on the team. Finding the right balance between clinically stretching yourself and knowing when to seek assistance is an important skill to master. We encourage and support one another. The differences in diseases encountered along with the limited availability of investigations and treatments means a heavy reliance on basic clinical skills and some adjustment is required to work in this setting. Opportunities are available to work in neonatology, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, adult medicine (including HIV medicine), surgery, general practice, emergency medicine, radiology, dentistry and anaesthesia.

Experience/qualifications

- All doctors post-F2 training (or equivalent) are welcome to apply.
- Doctors with at least 8 -10 years’ post-qualification experience are especially helpful (Consultant / SpR level in the UK)
- Speciality interest in the following areas - neonatology, obstetrics and gynaecology, paediatrics, adult medicine (including HIV medicine), surgery, general practice, emergency medicine, radiology, dentistry and anaesthesia.

Work Requirements

- To deliver inpatient and outpatient care to patients, and if appropriate solely within your speciality area.
- To encourage/support/teach/mentor Ugandan Doctors, foreign medical students in training.
- You will not be required to be on the hospital out-of-hours on-call rota but you may be asked to help out-of-hours especially if there is a case in your area of expertise, and if you are available.
- You will not be required to carry out any procedures which you are not fully familiar with or have no prior experience of.
- After a brief period of induction you will be expected to have similar responsibilities and work patterns to the Ugandan doctors.
 - The hospital day begins with staff prayers at 8am but the doctor’s day commences at 7:30am.



- The doctors' meeting then takes place from 9am to 10am. This is an opportunity for hand over from the doctor-on-call the night before, for requesting team input into difficult clinical cases, and for CME.
- Contributions in the form of teaching on topical issues you encounter, interesting cases, updates, drafting protocols (where needed), audits, mortality review etc. for the CME session are more than welcome.
- Ward rounds and follow-up work begin after the doctors' meeting and the duration of ward work depends on the busyness of the wards. All ward work should be completed by 5pm then the on-call doctor takes over.
- You will be assigned to a ward or an outpatient unit with or without a junior Ugandan Doctor. This will allow for opportunities for the junior to learn but also to share experiences.
- Once you are working on your own, you will be directly responsible for your ward and speciality area.
- You may be contacted whenever needed using the phone at your residence or personal cell phone by your ward.
- Consultations are through direct communication with your colleague face-to-face or via telephone.

Visa & Accommodation

You will need to be registered with the Uganda Medical Council and then apply for a work permit before you come. This costs several hundred dollars and can be a little slow and inefficient, so a few months' notice is needed for this to be organised.

Volunteers are normally given a room in a large shared, furnished house within the hospital compound. The house is basic but comfortable – water and gas are supplied and electricity is almost always available. Usually three but up to six volunteers can be living there at once. Since the hospital maintains the house and provides appliances, furniture, mosquito nets, bedding etc. – we request a minimum donation of £10 per week toward the house running costs.

House residents are responsible for other costs e.g. the housekeeper's salary, food. These costs can be split with others staying in the house. If you live simply, costs for living in Kiwoko can be fairly low. Western food items from Kampala can be relatively expensive. However, when budgeting, you should probably plan on travelling to game parks, white water rafting on the Nile, etc. to see some more of beautiful Uganda, and costs for such activities can quickly escalate.

Time off

There is no set number of leave days – you are an un-paid volunteer and we are happy to have you. However, it is generally assumed that you would have similar time off as your



Ugandan colleagues. If you are planning to be away for significant periods of time during your placement at Kiwoko, please inform the Clinical Director well in advance.

As a guideline, Ugandan staff members have an annual leave allowance of 22 working days. When you are planning to take time away please give plenty of notice. The medical team try to organise themselves in advance so that not more than 2 doctors are away at one time to allow for reasonable workload for those left behind.

Cultural sensitivities

Kiwoko Hospital is a Christian Hospital in rural Uganda. We are pleased if volunteers have a keen personal Christian faith and many opportunities for service beyond strictly medical roles exist for volunteers. Although volunteers do not need to be active Christians, all staff and volunteers need to be able to work within the hospital ethos. In addition, non-Ugandan visitors need to be aware of and respectful of local cultural sensitivities.

Culture is heterogeneous but many of our clients have conservative opinions, and we seek to respect them. Ladies should generally wear skirts to below the knee, which is especially the case when dealing with patients. Drinking of alcohol or smoking cigarettes is strongly disapproved of. Only legally married people should sleep together.

If you have any questions, please get in touch with the Volunteer Co-ordinator on visitors@kiwokohospital.org

We can put you in contact with current and past volunteers if you wish.

More information is available in the '*Kiwoko Hospital Volunteer Guidelines*' document which is available on request.
