

Apply today and you could be... A Doctor supporting HIV services in St Francis' Hospital, Zambia

What's the context and purpose of the role?

Zambia continues to be an island of peace and stability in a conflict-ridden region. However, the country suffers from rising poverty made worse by the impact of the HIV pandemic on income-earners and their families. The disease burden is felt hardest in rural areas, where services are weak or non-existent. St Francis's is a referral mission hospital providing vital services in the rural east of the province, where HIV prevalence is about 17%, and poverty is high, with most of the population subsistence farmers. With an antiretroviral clinic providing services to 4,000 patients, one of the largest programmes in the country, St Francis' have requested extra support to build care provision for HIV positive patients.

What does the role involve?

- Managing the care of patients on antiretroviral treatment on the HIV ward
- Undertaking daily ward rounds, including teaching if students are attached to the ward
- Treating people living with HIV referred to St Francis' outpatients clinic
- Participating in clinical meetings, audit and teaching sessions
- Conducting outreach sessions at rural clinics
- Developing HIV prevention and health promotion services



What skills, experience and personal qualities are needed for the role?

You'll be a registered doctor with at least three years' post-registration experience, ideally with some previous experience of infectious diseases or HIV medicine. Experience of training or developing others, and helping to build their skills and capabilities, is essential. A diploma in tropical medicine and hygiene may be useful but is not compulsory. St Francis' has in total 330 staff and 8 doctors. A local specialist will act as your mentor and provide supervision and advice as needed. The hospital links with the Human Institute of Virology in Maryland, USA.

As with all VSO placements, you'll need to be flexible, patient and creative to work effectively with limited resources.

And the rest...

Landlocked Zambia is located between the southern rim of the Zaire Basin and the Zambesi river. The country is home to the majestic Victoria Falls as well as excellent National Parks teeming with a huge variety of wildlife. You'll be based in the quiet, beautiful Eastern province, near the rural town of Katete. You'll live in a modest house within the hospital compound, with running water, electricity and simple furniture. The hospital compound has a market for essentials, fruit and vegetables. You'll need to travel an hour to Chipata for treats such as chocolate, although the hospital organises regular shopping trips.

We'll ask you to commit to 12 months to make a sustainable contribution to HIV services at St Francis'. In return, we'll give you comprehensive financial, personal and professional support. We'll provide you with extensive training before your placement, living allowance, return flights, accommodation, insurance and more. When you return home, we'll help you to resettle and many of our returned volunteers stay involved with us long after their placement ends. www.vso.org.uk/volunteering