

Volunteer Role Description

Volunteer Role Title: Befriending Volunteer

Location: Face to face across Leeds district, online, telephone

Responsible to: Befriending Project Coordinator

Hours: Minimum commitment of 1 hour per week for 6 months

About the service

Leeds Mind is a progressive mental health organisation that supports people experiencing mental health difficulties to flourish. The aim of our work is to help people build on their strengths, overcome obstacles, and become more in control of their lives. We have faith and optimism in our clients and so the services we deliver are built around their needs. We support the people of Leeds to discover their own resources to 'recover' from periods of poor mental health, and to live life independently with their mental health condition.

The Leeds Mindful Befriending service works with people over 50 in and around Leeds, who may be struggling with mental health difficulties, loneliness and social isolation.

Befrienders and befriendees are matched based on mutual interests, to create positive and successful partnerships. Support is provided either face to face, via phone or online, based on what the individual would prefer. Sessions are weekly on an agreed day and time and last for up to one hour for 6 months.

Studies show 15% of older people in Leeds are socially isolated – this is around 37,000 people. This can have a negative impact on our mental health. The Befriending service promotes better mental health by working to reduce this loneliness and social isolation.

Purpose of the role

Befriending volunteers provide a 'befriending service' to older people with mental health problems, focusing on relieving social isolation and building relationship skills through enjoying leisure time.

Befrienders can support people by:

- Building confidence and self-esteem through social interactions and conversation skills

- Helping people to get out of the house
- Accompanying people on public transport
- Attending social groups and leisure activities
- Facilitating social groups

Key tasks & responsibilities

- Help to raise self-esteem through a positive befriending relationship, gradually extending comfort zones.
- Help to build confidence by increasing the range, the nature of activities and the potential for independent social interaction.
- Help to build independence by empowerment through social and leisure activities.
- Attend regular 1:1 meetings with supervisor.
- Enter into a partnership agreement to meet socially at an agreed time and frequency and participate in social/leisure activities of mutual interest.
- Assist in the building of relationship skills through guidance from the Befriending Project Coordinator and direct involvement in the befriending relationship.

Skills and experience

- An awareness of what we do within our Befriending service and Leeds Mind in general
- Supporting others in a formal/informal environment
- Sensitive communicator
- Ability to remain calm in stressful situations
- The ability to motivate others
- Insight of own mental health issues where relevant
- Ability to form supportive enabling relationships with people experiencing mental health difficulties
- Ability to work in a way which will empower clients
- Good social skills
- A commitment to the aims and values of the organisation
- A commitment to equality and diversity in the workplace
- A commitment to safeguarding clients and others you may come into contact with as part of your role

Other requirements

All volunteers are expected to attend an induction and training and will receive regular supervision.

We hope that the volunteer will advance their skills so that they are able to move on to other volunteer or work opportunities. We ask for a minimum commitment of 6 months.

This role is subject to a trial period of 3 months. This allows us to review whether the role is suitable and if expectations of both the volunteer and Leeds Mind are being met.

You will be required to provide to references and undergo an Enhanced DBS check for this role.

Contact information

For further information about the role please contact Anna Ridley

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