

## Mental Health Respite & Befriending Volunteer

### What is a Carer?

A Carer is someone of any age who provides unpaid support to family or friends who could not manage without this help. Carers often experience stress, loneliness and isolation, they can find it difficult to go out because they cannot leave the person they look after on their own.

### What we do

We support unpaid Carers in East Sussex to continue in their caring role by providing free, high quality, volunteer-led services that encourage independence and reduce isolation.

### Our services include

**Regular Respite Breaks:** Giving Carers the opportunity to have some time to them self, building a long-term befriending relationship with the cared for person.

**Respite for Healthcare:** Enabling Carers to attend their own healthcare appointments by sitting with the cared for person while they go.

**Telephone Support:** Providing Carers with a listening ear and the opportunity to discuss their caring role in confidence.

**Computer Help at Home:** Teaching Carers to use their computer in ways that will help them to have more time to themselves and reduce their isolation.

**Young Carers Befriending:** Giving Young Carers the opportunity to take a break from their caring role.

### What does a Mental Health Respite & Befriending volunteer do?

Are you understanding about mental health issues? Would you enjoy spending time with someone who has a mental health condition, helping them get back into an old hobby or developing the confidence to go out for a cup of tea or attend a club? Do you have a few hours to spare each week?

Our respite and befriending volunteers enable Carers to take some time out from their caring role on a regular basis by spending time with the person they look after.

We try to make sure that we match each volunteer with someone that shares similar interests, giving the relationship the best opportunity to be beneficial and long lasting.

### Skills/Qualifications needed

The Volunteer Coordinator is responsible for our volunteer' s wellbeing. Our volunteers need to be:

- Patient and understanding

- Good at communicating and listening
- Able to treat people with respect
- Confident in a crisis
- Understanding of what it means to look after someone
- Able to attend induction and training sessions

## Where does the volunteering role usually take place?

Volunteers usually spend time at the Carer's home on the same day and at the same time each week. Sometimes the role may involve taking the cared for person out for a walk or to an activity.

## What is the induction process for volunteers?

We ask our volunteers to complete an application form, provide two references and meet us for an informal chat. We also carry out a DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) check as our volunteers work with people who are considered vulnerable. Following this, volunteers attend a one day induction, which helps them to:

- Understand more about the Association and the support it provides to Carers
- Understand what it means to be a Carer and the impact caring has on people's lives
- Feel confident in a variety of situations
- Gain an awareness of health and safety
- Learn how to be safe when lone working

## What training are volunteers provided with?

We ask all our volunteers to attend Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and First Aid training. In addition to this they can also attend other relevant training throughout the year, for example;

- Mental Health Awareness Training
- Dementia/Stroke and Parkinson's Awareness
- Basic listening and counselling and bereavement skills

## What support do we offer our volunteers?

- We encourage our volunteers to call us or pop in to one of our offices if they need a chat, advice, or have any concerns
- We accompany new volunteers the first time they go to visit the cared for person
- If volunteers are unable to drive we find them a volunteer driver or arrange a taxi
- We reimburse expenses incurred while volunteering, for example, travel