

Respite for Healthcare 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 person with support needs.

Respite for Healthcare: Enabling Carers to attend their own healthcare appointments by sitting with the person with support needs 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.

What does a Respite for Healthcare volunteer do?

Carers can find it difficult to attend healthcare appointments because they cannot leave the person they care for on their own, or find it difficult to take them with them.

Our Respite for Healthcare volunteers enable Carers to attend their healthcare appointments, by spending time with the person with support needs while they go. We ask Carers to give us a minimum of one week's notice that they have a healthcare appointment booked. Then we contact our Respite for Healthcare volunteers to see who is available. We let them know a bit about the person they will be spending time with, e.g. whether they like listening to music, watching sport, doing jigsaws, playing cards or chatting.

Skills/Qualifications needed

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

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

Where does the volunteering role usually take place?

The volunteer goes to the home of the Carer that needs to attend a healthcare appointment, usually for around 2 hours. They can specify which areas they are happy to volunteer in and the day's and times they are available. We ask for a minimum commitment of providing one Carer a fortnight with the opportunity to attend a healthcare appointment.

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;

- Dementia awareness
- Positive endings
- Basic listening and bereavement skills

What support do we offer our volunteers?

- We encourage our volunteers to call us or pop into our office if they need a chat, advice, or have any concerns
- We accompany new volunteers the first time they go to visit a Carer

- If volunteers are unable to drive we find them a volunteer driver or arrange a taxi
- We reimburse expenses incurred while volunteering
- We hold regular group supervision meetings throughout the year
- We have an emergency on-call system in place for those volunteering out of office hours