

## Talk & Support 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 are out.

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

**SCIPRR:** Service for Carers to Identify and Plan Residential Respite

**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 Talk & Support volunteer do?

Do you enjoy listening and being supportive? Do you have around half an hour to spare once a week? Our Talk & Support volunteers are matched with a Carer who they call on a regular basis (weekly, fortnightly or monthly) for around 30 minutes each time reducing down to monthly over a 6 month period. This gives the Carer the opportunity to discuss their caring role in confidence, with someone independent of their family and friends. They are required to write up brief notes after each phone call and let a member of staff know if there are any changes to the Carer's circumstances. Support sessions are held every 8 weeks, in a variety of venues around the county, which gives Talk & Support volunteers the opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have in confidence.

Our Talk and Support volunteers also help Carers needing a break to identify and plan

## Skills/Qualifications needed

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

- A former Carer or someone with empathy for the caring role
- Good at communicating and listening, patient and understanding
- Able to maintain confidentiality (unless overridden by our Safe Guarding Vulnerable Adults policy)
- Able to treat people with respect and be 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 are able to call the Carer from their own home and can specify which days and times they are available.

## 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 our Talk & Support volunteers to attend Active Listening, Bereavement Skills, Signposting and Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults training. In addition to this they can also attend other relevant training throughout the year, for example;
- Dementia awareness
- Positive endings

## 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 person with support needs
- 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