

Brain and Spine Foundation Volunteer Role description Regional Neuro Social

May 2022



Volunteer Role Title: Peer Support Group volunteer (*Using your experience to support others living with a neurological condition*)

Location: Online.

Regions: Scotland, Midlands, North East, North West & South East

Responsible to: Direct Services Manager

Hours: Minimum commitment of 2.00 hour per month of group delivery (including de-brief timings and any time spent attending 1:1 or group supervisions)

About The Brain & Spine Foundation

One in six people in the UK is affected by a neurological condition. This includes dementia, stroke, motor neurone disease, neuromuscular diseases, brain cancers, Parkinson's, multiple sclerosis and epilepsy to name just a few. That is over 12 million individuals who have experienced or are living with a condition or symptom that may have life-changing, and often life-long effects. The Brain & Spine Foundation is a national charity working to improve the quality of life of people affected by a neurological condition.

About our peer support work

We believe in bringing people together to share experiences and support one another. By joining us to shape and deliver our peer support work, you will be helping to make a positive difference to people's lives. Our Peer Support group is volunteer-led and staff coordinated. This means that sessions and groups are run by people with lived experience of neurological conditions, with support from the charity's staff.

Purpose of the role

These volunteer roles are to ensure the successful delivery of Regional Neuro Social, the peer support service for people diagnosed with a neurological condition. Our community has said that they would be benefited by a monthly regional Neuro Social and we have taken their needs on board.

Key Tasks & Responsibilities

- To work with the Manager of Direct Services to run the online peer support group as agreed in the 1:1 meetings
- Acting as Host for the events.
- Support participants to agree on ground rules, and to abide by these as well as general standards of acceptable behaviour.
- Ensure that the group is safe and welcoming, and works within the Brain and Spine Foundation Policies and Guidelines.

- Ensure that everyone in the group has the opportunity to participate, without undue pressure to do so.
- Support the on boarding of new participants by welcoming them and supporting them to get started.
- Help to steer discussion and maintain a positive atmosphere, inviting a supportive response when difficult topics are introduced.
- Protect the safety of participants, escalating any concerns to the Manager of Direct Services where there is a safeguarding concern, or where there is an issue that cannot be managed within the group.
- Agree a calendar of discussion topics with the group, researching ideas or information resources to support the sessions.
- Identify external speakers for sessions when needed or requested by the group and share with the Manager of Direct Services.
- Keep records as needed and share with the Manager of Direct Services at the end of each session (de-brief)
- Attend regular supervision:
 - group clinical supervision every quarter (once every 3 months)
 - 1:1 supervision twice per month with your appointed supervisor

Skills & experience

- Lived (own) experience of a neurological condition
- Active listening skills
- Careful observation
- Sensitivity to overall group dynamics
- Excellent communication (written and verbal) and interpersonal skills
- A non-judgemental, person centred approach to group members and positive manner
- Ability to work with people from diverse communities and with differing needs
- 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

Neuro Social groups are currently being delivered via Zoom, you will need to have the equipment at home to access it.

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

Ideally, minimum commitment after completing training is six months, but we would like you to remain with the project for longer if possible. However, the project team fully appreciate that your mental wellbeing and physical health may change and will be at hand to support you and discuss the best way forward.

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 the Brain and Spine Foundation are being met.

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

As a volunteer for our charity, you will need to develop a good understanding of our relevant policies and procedures – in particular for this role, our Safeguarding practices and Data Protection and Privacy. We will provide training to support you with this. Other policies that you will be familiar with include Health and Safety , Equal Opportunities, Confidentiality, Social media and Complaints policy.

What this role offers

As a member of the peer volunteers' network, you will learn to deal tactfully and sensitively with people's experiences, and to manage complex situations skilfully. You will have an opportunity to share the knowledge and insight you have built from your neuro condition experience, while connecting with others in a meaningful and constructive way. You will gain access to ongoing training opportunities and obtain a reference after 6 months of active volunteering.

Equal opportunities

The Brain & Spine Foundation has an equal opportunities policy that extends to volunteers. We recognise the positive benefits a diverse volunteer group can bring to our charity and are committed to ensuring our recruitment and selection procedure reflects this. In engaging volunteers, the Foundation recognises the rights of volunteers to be free from discrimination and expect volunteers not to discriminate against other volunteers, staff, users and others associated with the Foundation.

Contact information

For further information about the role, please contact Eva Favva

Eva.favva@brainandspine.org.uk