

Brain and Spine Foundation Peer Support Volunteer Role description

September 2023

Volunteer Role Title: Peer Support Group volunteer (3 places available) *Using your experience to support others living with a neurological condition*

Location: Online. **Responsible to:** Professional Services Manager

Hours: Minimum commitment of 2.00 hours per week or month of group delivery

About The Brain & Spine Foundation

As an independent health charity, the Brain & Spine Foundation plays a number of crucial and influential roles in supporting the health and wellbeing of people affected by a neurological problem living within the United Kingdom.

Founded in 1992, we draw from over 30 years of experience and accumulated expertise to deliver person-centred support, accessible information and research directly to those who need it.

About our peer support work

Our groups enable members of our community to share their personal experiences of neurological conditions, forge new connections and friendships, and tackle widespread loneliness and isolation.

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.

"I really enjoy the interaction with other people that don't judge me & can relate to me being with people who have neurological disorders and can therefore understand my problems." Neuro Social participant

Purpose of the role

This volunteer role is to ensure the successful delivery of Neuro Social, the peer support service for people diagnosed with a neurological condition.

Key Tasks & Responsibilities

- To work with the Professional Services Manager to run the online peer support group as agreed in the 1:1 meetings
- 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 Professional Services Manager 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.
- Keep records as needed and share with the Professional Services Manager at the end of each session (de-brief)
- Attend regular supervision

Skills & experience

- Lived (own) experience of a neurological condition
- Active listening skills
- Careful observation
- Sensitivity to overall group dynamics
- 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 values of the organisation and its policies

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 may 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.

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

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