

Volunteer Befriender

Nature of the volunteering opportunity

Gateshead Carers offer a befriending service which aims to;

- Provide adult unpaid carers in Gateshead a break from their caring role

We do this by;

- Matching a volunteer befriender with the person being cared for

Why do we offer this service?

Caring for a family member or friend who is disabled or has a long term health condition (eg Dementia, Parkinson's, Cancer) is hugely rewarding but it can impact on the lives of those providing unpaid care.

Those caring for family members and friends often experience;

- Social isolation
- A poorer quality of life (50% of the carers we support are caring for someone for over 50 hours per week)
- Financial difficulties (around 20% of carers have to give up employment to provide care to a loved one)
- High levels of stress, anxiety and worry

Purpose of the role

The befriending service aims to improve the wellbeing of:

- Carers by providing them with time for themselves
- The cared for person by him / her spending time with someone else

Tasks and Responsibilities

The role of the volunteer is **not** to provide personal care to the cared for person eg administering medicines, wound dressings, lifting and moving, clothes dressing, bathing, washing, toileting

The role of volunteer befriender is to;

- To meet with the befriender on a regular at an agreed place and time. This may be at the person's home.

- To develop positive relationships with that person (training provided)
- To manage the befriending relationship and maintain appropriate boundaries (training provided)
- To maintain regular contact with the Volunteer Co-ordinator and report any issues or concerns (training provided)
- To adhere to Gateshead Carers policies and procedures appropriate to the role
- To attend any relevant training arranged by Gateshead Carers.

Skills and qualities required

- Friendly and caring
- General awareness of issues facing carers and the people they care for (Awareness raising training)
- Good communication skills, including listening skills (training provided)
- Commitment to the role
- Reliable and trustworthy
- Non-judgemental
- Have a flexible approach to the role
- Be 18 years and above

Gateshead Carers responsibilities

- To provide a full induction and relevant training
- Ongoing support available from the Volunteer Coordinator
- Reimburse all reasonable out of pocket expenses

Time commitment

This will be flexible and will depend on the individual needs of the people we work with and your availability but will usually be a minimum of 2-3 hours a week for a maximum of 16 weeks for each cared for person, to avoid creating dependency on the Befriender. A befriender can be matched with more than one person during the same period depending on their availability.

Contact

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