

COVID 19 Here to Talk Volunteer Remote Befriending for the isolated and lonely

Why do we need you?

As a responsive, short term Here to Talk volunteer, you will be providing low level emotional support to unpaid carers. Fortnightly regular contact, via telephone, is offered to those carers who have been identified as needing additional communication; a friendly voice to talk to, listen to their concerns and generally lift their spirits reducing feelings of loneliness at this particularly difficult time and country lockdown.

The support befriending service, put simply, is when a volunteer is provided with the contact details of a carer to help reduce social isolation within the caring role. Initially, you will call the carer to arrange a regular time to call to chat about anything. (It is NOT an information and advice service).

This role has a positive impact on the carer, and feedback confirms feelings of isolation and loneliness are reduced. Volunteers provide reassurance at difficult times.

How much time is needed for this role?

- Commit to a minimum of 30 minutes every 2 weeks per carer to call regularly and action any necessary follow up/ referral or signposting. Conversations are in confidence except when a safeguarding disclosure is made.
- Carer Support Wiltshire/Carer Support Dorset supports you as the volunteer; key contact, the Project Co-ordinator; Volunteer Manager and the Carer Support Dorset team.
- Support up to a maximum of six carers; therefore 3 hours every 2 weeks in total, to call as and when you and the carer decide.
- This role is home-based, using caller withheld facility if using personal devices.

What activities will you be involved in?

- Speaking and listening to people who are unpaid carers to family members or friends, chatting about topics of mutual interest, to be a listening ear and to give the carer an opportunity to talk
- Effectively communicate with the Project Co-ordinator; Volunteer Manager and Carer Support Dorset Manager, reporting any needs of the carer or concerns about their wellbeing

What can you gain from this opportunity?

1. Opportunities to practice and enhance your communication skills;
2. Opportunity to interact with others if you also are experiencing personal isolation yourself;
3. Gain suitable experience to support applications for University; permanent employment etc.;
4. Gain a sense of pride and self-fulfillment that can help to improve connections within your community at this unprecedented time of suffering and isolation;
5. Improved understanding of the wider carer partnerships and support services;
6. Ongoing support and supervision;
7. Reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses as defined by our volunteer policy.

Is there Induction and Training?

- During these unprecedented times, training will be all document-based with hints and tips.
- Training will be provided online with subjects such as listening skills, confidentiality, and communication.
- Personal support will be offered by the Volunteer Manager through regular telephone supervision.

What are we looking for?

- Excellent communication skills and a confident telephone manner
- Friendly approach with good listening skills
- Ability to keep within boundaries of the role with regards to friendships or giving advice
- To be non-judgmental and have respect for different lifestyles
- Be empathetic to the needs and concerns of Carers

Who should you contact?

To find out about this role at Carer Support Dorset please contact Vince Danaher (Volunteer Manager) on 01380 819626 or email vinced@carersupportwiltshire.co.uk