SHETLAND BEFRIENDING SCHEME

Volunteer Role

Volunteer Befriender

Accountability

Directly responsible to the Scheme's staff

Role and Task Description of a Volunteer Befriender

The role of the befriender

The role of a volunteer befriender is a consciously undertaken voluntary commitment and responsibility by an individual, who has gone through a process of recruitment, selection and training. Their role is monitored, supported and supervised within the policy framework and guidelines of the scheme.

Volunteers with the Shetland Befriending Scheme play a key role in supporting the members of the community who use the service. Volunteers are in a position of trust as they establish a one to one relationship with a service user.

In volunteering with the service user the volunteer will provide a supportive relationship that enables the person they are match to, to build their sense of self worth, their confidence and skills. Through involvement in a wide range of activities, the volunteer may be in a position to support them to achieve their goals and move forward positively in their lives.

The task of a befriender

The tasks undertaken by a volunteer will vary depending upon the needs of the individual they are supporting but will at all times be governed by the policies and procedures operated by the scheme. The following list provides the range of tasks and the approach to be adopted by a volunteer whilst working with the scheme:

- To develop and promote a positive relationship with the service user with whom the volunteer is matched

- To establish and maintain appropriate boundaries in the befriending relationship

- To agree with the service user the types of activities they wish to undertake, ensuring that these comply with the schemes safety requirements and insurance cover

- To provide input which acknowledges a persons' right to make decisions for themselves, which is non judgmental and supports the individual to achieve their goals

- To be consistent and dependable when working with a service user

- To recognise that the relationship with the service user may be challenging due to their needs and circumstances and being realistic about what can be achieved in your relationship with them

- To agree to abide by the confidentiality policy and the other policies and procedures of the scheme

- To work in conjunction with the staff of the Shetland Befriending Scheme to provide a quality service, by participating in support and supervision sessions with staff, passing on concerns about the service user where appropriate and completing monitoring forms

- To offer an accepting and understanding presence and volunteer within a non-discriminatory framework

Experience, Skills and Attitudes required

The Shetland Befriending Scheme wants to promote an inclusive project that recognises the wide range of skills and experiences that volunteers can bring to the scheme that will support the development of the service user taking part in the scheme.

The volunteer person specification outlines the range of skills, experience and attitudes that the scheme feels would be relevant to this role.

Essential Requirements

All potential volunteers prior to being accepted onto the scheme are required to successfully complete an initial training programme. In addition, as the role involves working with vulnerable individuals, volunteers will be required to complete an Application to Join the Protecting Vulnerable Groups Scheme (PVG Scheme).

Volunteer Befriender Person Specification

Volunteers will come from all walks of life, with a range of experiences and skills to offer. There are no specific educational qualifications required and the scheme aims to recruit people with potential as well as those with relevant experience or qualifications. The scheme is looking for people who will embrace the principles and values that it promotes when supporting individuals and see something of themselves in the following descriptions:

Personal Qualities

- Be able to form positive, supportive relationships with others
- Able to communicate well with other people
- Are self aware and able to reflect on how situations may affect you and the service user
- Are able to reflect on your relationship with the service user
- Are comfortable working on your own, relying on your own initiative and common sense, but also know when to seek support
- Some insight into the potential significance and importance of the relationship
- Are reliable, consistent, dependable and have an ability to handle a level of stress
- Are able to put your own needs and views to one side and focus on the needs of the service user
- Can relate to the issues and challenges facing service users
- Willingness to question own assumptions
- Can accept that being challenged or let down by other people is a natural part of life and may occur in your relationship with the service user

Personal Values

- An ability to accept people for who they are
- A respect for others as being of equal worth
- An ability not to impose your own values and beliefs on others
- An ability to appreciate and value the differences between people
- An ability to understand others choices and lifestyles and their right to make decisions for themselves
- Working with hope – being realistic about what can be achieved without becoming cynical
- A belief that we can make a difference, that no situation is hopeless

Organisational Issues

- Able to understand and volunteer within the organisations boundaries and policies
- Able to volunteer within the organisation's confidentiality policy
- Able to actively take part in support and supervision sessions
- Able to organise meetings with the service user and monitor whether these are successful
- Able to complete the record sheets for meetings with the service user
- Able to commit to weekly or fortnightly contact for a few hours at a time for a minimum 6 month period once they have met the individual they will be matched with

Probationary Period

There will be a probationary period of 6 weeks after having been matched with a service user followed by a review.