

Befriender Volunteer Description

Transitive verb: to become or act as a friend

About Waverley Care

Scotland is on track to be one of the first countries in the world to achieve zero HIV transmissions, and Waverley Care will play an essential role in getting us there.

A positive HIV diagnosis still has the power to knock people off their feet and impact every part of their lives. People living with HIV still carry the burden of decades of discrimination and misinformation about HIV. HIV is treatable, but the stigma and shame surrounding HIV holds people back and makes it different to other life-long conditions. Stigma and the fear of an HIV diagnosis still prevents many people at risk getting a test and knowing their status.

Our vision is for a Scotland where no one faces HIV alone, we will achieve this by fighting stigma and empowering people living with HIV to live full and healthy lives.

Waverley Care is Scotland's leading HIV and hepatitis C charity, and everything we do is guided by the experiences of the people we work with – this ranges from shaping the services we deliver through to how we influence national policy around sexual health and blood borne viruses (BBVs).

We are at an exciting point in our history as we strive to reach the goal of zero transmissions by 2030. There is much work to be done, but as an organisation we are driven to create lasting change for everyone in Scotland living with, or at risk of HIV or hepatitis C.

You can find out more about the work we do at our website www.waverleycare.org.

About the role

Our Befriending Volunteers focus on building reliable relationships with people accessing our services who may be experiencing social isolation and/or loneliness. Responsibilities of this role include meeting up with individuals who use our services in a social setting on a regular basis and providing support and companionship. As a Befriending Volunteer, you will be a friendly face to our service users and will help combat the stigma that affects people living with a BBV.

Your friendly vibes and caring heart are all you need to bring light to someone's day - whether it's a chat over coffee, a stroll in the park, or simply lending an ear.

About the person

Befrienders are great listeners who excel at understanding and reflecting on daily challenges related to living with HIV and/or hepatitis. They are empathetic and able to offer a caring and understanding presence to those who need it. In order to provide one to one companionship, befrienders must be capable of building trust; therefore, it is important that they understand and respect confidentiality. Befrienders possess an awareness of Waverley Care's ethos and act as allies to those who access our services.

Key strengths

- **Reliable:** They build trusting relationships with service users by committing to the agreed number and frequency of meetups. They appreciate the importance of their time, as well as that of staff and service users.
- **Reflective:** They are able to reflect on their practice and experiences. This skill aids in recognising and appreciating positive moments, while also helping them navigate and process more challenging situations.
- **Professional and self-aware:** They exhibit a keen awareness of personal and professional boundaries, effectively safeguarding both themselves and the service users.

Responsibilities and duties

- Meeting with service users on a one to one basis in an informal, social setting.
- Providing an opportunity for service users to get out and engage in social activities.
- Engage in general conversation with service users.
- Listen to service users and highlight any concerns to Waverley Care support staff.
- Have the knowledge of our services and be able to signpost our service users in case they need further support.

Support and training

- Volunteers will have a designated member of staff as their back up support.
- Volunteers will receive regular one to one support to minimise the risk of secondary trauma and to discuss any concerns. This can be tailored to suit your individual needs (over coffee, phone call, in person etc.).
- Support is available via an "open door policy"; scheduled catchups will also be provided.
- Befriending Volunteers can access group support at monthly arranged meetings with the Peer Coordinator and other befrienders and peer supporters to discuss and share experiences and learn from others.
- Comprehensive volunteer training will be provided and updated appropriately.