



Peer Support Volunteer Description

'Peer': Noun; a person of the same age, status, or ability as another specified person

'Support': Noun; To give assistance to

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.

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 Peer supporters are volunteers at Waverley Care. Peer Support at Waverley Care focuses on connecting people to someone who has 'walked the walk' and knows personally what it's like to live with HIV. Peer support can take many forms, like an informal telephone call, group get-togethers, online forums or structured training offered by paid peers in partnership with professionals.

At Waverley Care, we believe it's a cornerstone of living-well with HIV. For those involved in our befriending program, we see an increase in engaging with treatment, positive mental health and integration into social situations.

Befriending is a vital cog in normalising HIV, reducing the stigma surrounding the virus and dispelling the myths and misinformation which cause many of the hurdles to living well with HIV.

About the person

A Peer Supporter Volunteer is considerate and understanding, they are enthusiastic about making new connections and maintaining existing ones. They can use their own life experience to support others in a positive and appropriate way. They have a deep understanding of the barriers to accessing support and the stigma people face to support others experiencing similar situations. A Peer Supporter Volunteer is self-aware and self-regulated, they should be familiar with additional support services and groups that can be recommended to service users, has a good understanding and personal interest in sexual health topics and feels at ease discussing them.

Key strengths

- **Informality:** Peer Supporters can offer a more informal type of support than workers. Due to this, they support the emotional and social growth of the people we work with.
- **Problem-solvers:** Because of their lived-experience, they have great problem-solving skills. Peer support workers can guide and support people to the best option for them by reflecting the possibilities available to them.
- **Positive Impact:** Peer Supporters get involved because they want to make positive social change and ensure people have better experiences with services and support. They want to build a better future for people living with a blood borne virus.

Responsibilities and duties

- Meeting with Service users on a one to one basis in an informal, neutral social setting, or in a private setting.
- Providing an opportunity for service users to get out and engage in social interaction.
- Engage in general conversation with service users.
- Have a good knowledge of the relevant blood borne viruses and are able to discuss various issues surrounding it, such as diagnosis, disclosure, treatment options etc.
- Engage in discussion from the perspective of mutual experiences of living with a blood borne viruses.
- Have knowledge of other support services and groups which can be signposted to service users.
- Listen to service users and highlight any concerns to Waverley Care support staff.
- Have the knowledge to understand and support service users.

Support and training.

- Peer Supporters will have a designated member of staff as their back up support.
- Peer Supporters will receive regular one to one support. 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.
- Peer Supporters 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.