

Role Description

Role Title: On Your Side Peer Advocate and Information Volunteer

Hours: Average 3-4 hours per week

Location: Community settings to meet with clients

Responsible to: On Your Side Project Coordinator

Role Summary:

On Your Side is our pioneering service to offer peer advocacy/information to navigate through the welfare and mental health systems for 80 adults (60% BME communities) experiencing multiple barriers to access the right support at the right time.

In your Peer Volunteer role you will:

- Help people to deal with the welfare benefits system, accompany them to assessment meetings or access timely mental health support.
- Empower them to understand their rights, to make informed choices and self-advocate at meetings with professionals.

Key duties

Welfare Benefits tasks include:

- Provide our Welfare Benefit/Universal Credit information factsheets and explaining how the key points affect their specific situation.
- Find specialist translation/ language support for form filling where English is not the client's first language.
- Attend PIP assessments and Work Capability Assessments with client's who find it difficult to travel alone or need to be accompanied.
- Support clients to call to re-arrange assessment appointments, locations and home visits.
- Support clients using online benefits calculators to see what benefits they can apply for and how much they will be entitled.
- Support clients to call the DWP or Universal Credit helpline to enquire about their claims, and how to reinstate payments that are stopped.
- Support clients to access help from the local Jobcentre Plus service about Universal Credit and liaise with Jobcentre Plus where necessary.

- Support the client to set up an email address and assist with process to open a bank account for Universal Credit claims.
- Help to gather supporting letter(s) of evidence for their welfare benefit/Universal Credit application.
- Support the client to obtain ID documents for claims and how these can be paid for.
- When your support is completed, facilitate referrals to specialist welfare benefits advice service if appropriate for form filling, appeals or tribunals.

Mental health advocacy tasks include:

- Accompany the client to GP appointment to support them to express the mental health support needs.
- Support the client through attendance at their Care Programme Approach (CPA) review meeting(s) with psychiatrist or community psychiatric nurse.
- Support the client through attendance at a mental health assessment meeting.
- Support the client to challenge barriers to access primary or secondary care mental health services, including where there are language or cultural barriers.
- Support the client to request or challenge their diagnosis.
- Support the client to challenge their discharge from NHS mental health services.
- Support the client to request a change of care coordinator or psychiatrist.
- Support the client to request a change/review of medication or request a treatment/support.

General:

- Offer support to the client in their preferred language as possible.
- Attend regular group and/or one-to-one support and supervision sessions.
- Actively support and implement all Mind in Harrow policies, with particular regard to the Equality & Diversity Policies.
- Attend a three-day training course and other mandatory training as necessary.
- Attend ongoing CPD sessions and training as necessary.

Essential Criteria

- Lived experience of mental health problems
- Able to provide two satisfactory references and Enhanced DBS application with documentation
- Ability to listen
- Possess a non-judgmental attitude and have capacity to learn and self-reflect
- Ability to support people from diverse cultural backgrounds
- Willing to commit a minimum of 3-4 hours per week for a period of 6-12 months
- Reliable, flexible, empathetic
- Excellent personal boundaries
- Good computer skills (email, Microsoft office, google searches)

Desirable Criteria

- Some prior understanding of mental health would be desirable

The Mind in Harrow welcomes applications from individuals who have lived experience of mental health problems and people from Harrow's diverse cultural communities.

Mind in Harrow offers:

- Four-day combined training course covering all aspects of the Mental Health and SWiSH Helpline and Peer Volunteer Roles including welfare benefits rights, how to navigate the mental health services, peer support, confidentiality, safeguarding and the boundaries of volunteering.
- A trial period for your first participant with one-to-one supervision and support.
- Group and one-to-one supervision and support by and experienced and qualified Coordinator.
- Ongoing development sessions to enhance your effectiveness in your Peer Volunteer role.
- Reimbursement of out of pocket expenses paid in accordance with Mind in Harrow's Policy.