

## Volunteer Telephone Befriender

Our mission is to provide information and support for anyone affected by cancer, offering practical ways of enhancing physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing.

The Mulberry Centre is an award-winning charity which relies heavily on donations from individuals and organisations to support people through their cancer journey from diagnosis, through treatment and then post-discharge. We help them to start rebuilding their lives and promote self-management. We also support carers and family members to deal with these changes and bereaved relatives. We do this by providing counselling, complementary therapies, wellbeing classes, and supporting information, tailored to the needs of our users at, and around, our purpose-built centre in Isleworth. Our services are free of charge, but donations are always welcome.

This is a new volunteering opportunity, initially developed in response to Covid19. The role aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness by making regular, friendly telephone or facetime contact calls over a time limited period engaging with our older clients age 65+. Befrienders will encourage clients to talk about day-to-day safe topics of interest, enable them to unburden their feelings and share their worries, raise awareness of our remote online services and resources and support clients to view and access these, and introduce them to the opportunity to take part in social group chats/activity events with other clients.

Befrienders are crucially important in being a trusted, empathetic ear who will make regular calls to a number of clients affected by cancer over the length of the project (initially six months) ensuring these calls are always a warm and positive experience. This is an ideal role for people with a friendly telephone manner, excellent communication and listening skills, an ability to explain our support services in a clear manner and assist older people with the necessary information to enable them to view and access these online. This role may also suit those who want to reduce any feelings of isolation and loneliness they themselves may have.

**Time commitment:** Telephone contact during the daytime or evening for up to an hour per client per week, taking on two clients at a time every six weeks plus basic admin/reporting back time.

### Main Duties

- Calling existing and newly referred clients age 65+ who have expressed an interest in the befriending project by agreed appointment. It is envisaged that each call will last 30-60 minutes and take place approximately every seven days for a time limited period per client.
- Being a good, active listener, with an understanding of people affected by cancer, providing them with the opportunity to talk and share their feelings whilst maintaining boundaries.
- Becoming familiar with the Centre's website in order to assist clients who do not feel safe to access face to face services to find our online and remote support information.
- Encouraging and assisting clients to gain access to our remote resources, including talking through how to use new technology to view and book online.
- Enquiring as to whether clients would like the opportunity to engage in group chats with other clients and assisting the Centre to organise these.
- Informing the appropriate staff member if you become concerned about the welfare or safeguarding of a client.
- Encouraging clients to provide feedback at the end of each befriending relationship.
- Respecting the privacy of each client, ensuring confidentiality at all times.
- Adhering to all our policies.

## Volunteer Specification

- Must have access to a phonenumber and quiet space at home, or be able to come to the Centre, to be able to make calls during the daytime.
- Must possess excellent communication skills – especially listening skills and empathy.
- Must be able to listen without giving any personal views/opinions nor discuss or ‘self-disclose’ any personal information about themselves or others.
- Must be able to familiarise themselves with our current services, including those on our website being delivered remotely/online and how to access these.
- Must be able to help organise or contribute to any group chat process.
- Must be flexible and be able to work as part of a team.
- Must be able to carry out tasks as requested and follow any guidance provided.
- Must be open-minded and non-judgmental about the choices made by clients.
- Must be sensitive and able to cope with a wide range of emotions expressed by clients.
- Must be able to commit to calling clients at agreed times each week for 30-60 minutes.
- Must have an enhanced DBS check or be prepared to undergo one.
- Must not have been bereaved or had personal experience of cancer either themselves or a close family member within the preceding two years.

## Support and Training

- All befrienders must read the guidance notes and view the training videos provided.
- All befrienders must take part in an individual or group induction to reflect on the learning gained from the guidance and videos.
- All befrienders will have an opportunity to feedback on their experience of volunteering in this role, be offered regular team meetings.
- You will be provided with an induction covering the objective of the role, the work of The Mulberry Centre, and its procedures and policies relevant for your volunteering role.
- We will do our best to assist your volunteering role with us. This will include evaluation sessions and keeping you updated with all the relevant information on what support The Mulberry Centre offers.
- There will be an initial 3 months, then annual review with your Lead.
- Expenses are reimbursed for travel incurred to carry out your volunteering duties. The reimbursement of any other ‘out of pocket’ expenses is subject to prior approval by your Lead. Out of pocket expenses for phone calls made will be paid subject to proof of costs incurred.

## Next Steps

- All applicants will be asked to complete a Volunteer Application Form and confidentiality agreement and provide two referees.
- Candidates with the appropriate experience/skills for the role for which they have applied will be interviewed by the Lead associated to the role.
- References will be taken up on successful candidates.
- All new volunteers will be given role specific induction/training by their Lead and the Mulberry Macmillan Volunteer Lead will provide general induction to the Centre, the general handbook and relevant information pertaining to policies and procedures, and will be asked to sign the Volunteer Agreement, confirming their commitment to the Centre.
- Subject to satisfactory references, and completion of professional documentation an individual may start volunteering and a review will be carried out by their Lead after three months.



**Further information:** Email: [volunteer@themulberrycentre.co.uk](mailto:volunteer@themulberrycentre.co.uk)

**Responsible to:** Mulberry Macmillan Volunteer Lead