

Involve Volunteering Projects

Wassup: Children and young people who are “Looked After”, often experience a lot of disruption in their lives. An Independent Visitor (a statutory volunteering opportunity) is a volunteer who is a consistent figure in the child, or young person’s life. Building a positive relationship with them, by being friendly, reliable and providing a listening ear. We would generally hope that volunteers could offer longer periods of time (1 year+) for this opportunity due to the length of time it may take for a young person volunteer to build a trusting befriending relationship – some of our volunteers have supported the same young person for up to 10 years! Not all of the young people are in Swansea so please talk to a staff member if you would consider travel out of county.

Special Guardianship Order (SGO) Scheme: Is a scheme for children, young people and their carers. Some children who are looked after, are fortunate that their kinship (relative/friend) or foster carer will take on parental responsibilities for them in the form of an SGO. At that point, the child/young person is no longer looked after. However, the children, young people and carers still deal with the issues they have faced prior to and during their time in the care system. This can at times mean the carer or the child/young person or both need the support of a volunteer to stabilise the family, offer a listening ear, emotional support and an opportunity to spend time with an independent volunteer and access support or activities as required. We would generally hope that volunteers could offer longer periods of time (1 year+) for this opportunity due to the length of time it may take for a young person volunteer to build a trusting befriending relationship.

Interact: Our Interact scheme supports adults referred by Social Workers from the Adult Services team. Our volunteers are matched with individuals with a variety of support needs and aim to reduce isolation and loneliness and increase confidence. We would hope that volunteers could offer 6+ months to this opportunity but please speak to staff if this is not possible, we often have clients who need shorter or longer befriending support.

The Swansea Dementia and Carers Project: This project provides people living with dementia, and their carers, an opportunity to engage socially in the community, access community resources with the support of a volunteer; as well as reducing isolation and offering a listening ear to those it supports.

Mental Health and Wellbeing Project: Our MHWB project supports people who have experienced acute mental health illness either by providing support to patients on the psychiatric wards in Cefn Coed and Neath Port Talbot hospital or upon a patients discharge from the hospital, through a hospital to home discharge project. We also run a weekly coffee group in the community for people with lived experience of mental health illness. We would hope that volunteers could offer 6+ months to this opportunity but please speak to staff if this is not possible, we often have clients who need shorter or longer befriending support.

Transcend Mental Health Peer Mentoring: Transcend is a mental health peer mentoring project that is funded by Swansea Bay University Health Board. It provides volunteering opportunities for individuals with lived experience of mental health problems to mentor others with mental ill health. We hope that volunteers will be available to support their mentees for 1 year or more because it can take quite a while for volunteers to form trusting mentoring relationships.

A Better Welcome to Swansea: 'A Better Welcome to Swansea' Project helps to welcome and support asylum seekers and refugees in Swansea to reduce isolation, encourage active participation, promote wellbeing and enhance integration. This project is ideal for people interested in supporting people from around the world. Speakers of other languages are welcomed although this is not essential because we can all support people to feel more welcome in our city. If you do speak another language however, we are always seeking new translators. The amount of time we would hope volunteers might offer varies hugely for this project as our participants have extreme or varied needs, from weeks to months – in this project you could support up to 5 individuals or fewer depending on your availability.

Telephone Befriending: Is a flexible opportunity for the volunteer, as this project enables you to volunteer from your own home at a time that is convenient for you. We receive referrals from Social Services/GP's/Hospital Discharge/tenancy support workers or people may refer themselves. Those in need of support are aged 18+yrs and may be in a variety of situations or have needs such as loneliness, be isolated, have been diagnosed with a terminal illness, suffer with depression, or just find it difficult to meet others, have lost their friends due to their older age etc. Volunteering with this scheme would involve making a call to one or more people once a week for a chat, you will be surprised the difference this makes! You may decide to volunteer with this scheme in addition to one of the other schemes above to gather that little more experience or give something more to those in need.

What you'll need to volunteer, and how to find out more:

- We don't ask for formal qualifications, just a caring, outgoing nature, and to have a general respect for all individuals.
- To become a volunteer, you would firstly need have an informal interview via zoom or in person. We then provide you with full volunteer induction training. Finally, we would complete a DBS check and a check against Social Services records if required by the role.
- Volunteers will only be asked to commit 2-3 hours per week, but we would like this to be a regular commitment as much as is possible. You will see in each project description how long we hope you will volunteer with us. –
- Volunteer induction training covers safeguarding, maintaining boundaries and some case studies giving you an idea some of the issues you might come across as a volunteer.

If you would like to start the process of becoming an involve volunteer please email us at involve@scvs.org.uk and we will book you in for an interview and discuss the next steps.³¹