

Advice Centre Volunteer

Role description & Person Specification

About us

Possability People is a disability charity based in Brighton & Hove with services across the city and into East and West Sussex. We are a user led organisation that promotes independent living for all and works toward equality by inspiring disabled people to identify barriers and define solutions.

The Advice Centre offers a wide range of support and advice to disabled people, their families, friends, and carers. The team are experts, and most of them have a lived experience of being disabled or living with a long-term health condition

What we need

We need volunteers to support a frontline advisory service to clients in one or more of the roles below. Volunteers give information and advice on a range of disability matters and signpost people to more specialised agencies when appropriate.

Skills you will gain

- ✓ Written communication skills
- ✓ Verbal communication skills
- ✓ Professional phone etiquette
- ✓ Customer service skills
- ✓ Team-working skills
- ✓ Multitasking and prioritising
- ✓ Familiarity with Microsoft Office
- ✓ Knowledge of current benefits
- ✓ Problem-solving skills
- ✓ Ability to work under pressure
- ✓ Attention to detail
- ✓ Adaptability

What we offer

Before starting with us you will attend a Group Induction Day to familiarise you with our culture, ethos and working practices and to prepare you for your role.

All volunteers have a full induction into the role with ongoing training and support from their volunteer lead, including day-to-day supervision and quarterly one-to-ones. Volunteers are invited to attend team meetings and social events throughout the year.

You will have access to a range of free courses, including confidence building, computer skills, disability equality, customer services, and more.

If you are looking to get back into work we can offer additional resources and tool kits, whether that's around explaining a health condition to an employer, how to write a brilliant CV, or ways to build your confidence in the work place; after 6 months we can provide an employment reference for you.

Volunteering for us will give you the opportunity to meet new people and work alongside them to do things which you wouldn't or couldn't do alone e.g. challenging discrimination, reviewing services, delivering training.

Volunteers are made to feel welcome as part of the Possability People Team.

Role description

All volunteers:

- Provide a welcoming and accessible service.
- Take the necessary time to build trust and confidence with clients.
- Signpost clients to other relevant services where appropriate.
- Carry out administrative tasks such as updating client records, database entry, scanning, filing, uploading documents, and correspondence.
- Attend relevant internal and external training in line with role requirements and development needs.

Specialist volunteer roles:

Volunteers can then choose to specialise in one or more of the following roles:

1. Appointments Volunteer

- Support clients to complete applications for disability-related benefits, ensuring information is accurate and complete
- Provide one-to-one appointments in person, by phone or online (e.g. Zoom)
- Support clients to engage with external agencies (e.g. DWP), where appropriate and with the client present

2. Short Appointments Volunteer

- Provide short one-to-one appointments in person, by phone or online (e.g. Zoom)
- Offer information and guidance on what to expect at medical assessments
- Support clients with benefit checks using online calculators
- Assist with applications for Blue Badge, Disabled Persons Bus Pass and similar
- Support contact with external agencies (e.g. DWP) where appropriate and with the client present

3. Desk Volunteer

- Respond to telephone, email and face-to-face enquiries, taking accurate messages and referring more complex issues to colleagues
- Provide clear information about benefit application processes
- Help clients understand options so they can make informed choices
- Carry out basic research to support responses to enquiries
- Share relevant or unusual case information with the Advice Centre team
- Manage appointments and update calendars (e.g. Outlook)
- Support administrative tasks including client records, database entry, scanning, filing, document upload and correspondence

Context

This role is based at our Head Office in Kemp Town, Brighton.

Desk volunteers - Shifts are 10 to 1 or 1 to 4, Tuesday or Thursday. We can usually be flexible with days and times if needed, but a commitment to regular slots each week is essential.

Appointment volunteers – 1 appointment of approximately 2.5 hours per week, between 10 and 4pm, Tuesday or Thursday. Time for this can be variable.

We ask for a minimum commitment of 1 shift or appointment per week for 6 months.

We are happy to discuss reasonable adjustments with you; for example, changes to shift times, provision of equipment, additional support needs.

This role is supported by the Advice Centre Volunteer Co-ordinator.

All volunteer appointments are subject to satisfactory references and DBS Clearance.

Person Specification

These are some skills, knowledge and experience we are looking for. However, if you don't have all of these don't worry as we can offer training and development within these areas:

Essential skills and experience

- Lived experience of disability, or an interest in and understanding of disability
- Understanding of, or willingness to learn about, the social model of disability
- Ability to commit to a regular and reliable volunteering schedule
- Good communication and interpersonal skills
- Confident and effective telephone communication, with the ability to listen and accurately relay information
- Basic IT skills, including email and Microsoft Word
- Ability to use initiative and good organisational skills

Approach and behaviours

- Able to work in a respectful, non-judgemental way when dealing with confidential and sensitive issues
- Able to maintain confidentiality and handle sensitive information appropriately
- Able to manage occasional challenging situations or behaviours

Values and commitment

- Commitment to providing quality services and support for disabled people
- Commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion, and treating all service users fairly

Desirable skills and experience

- Experience of working with the public or people with complex needs
- Knowledge of disability-related benefits and/or experience supporting benefit applications or appeals
- Knowledge of local services and support provision
- Experience of researching information online or by telephone

Name:

Signed:

Date:

For more information on volunteering with us:

Web www.possabilitypeople.org.uk/volunteer

Email volunteer@possabilitypeople.org.uk

Phone 01273 89 40 40



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