



'Healthy Alternatives' Social Prescribing Service

Group Facilitator Volunteer Role Description

About The Southmead Development Trust

The Southmead Development Trust exists to serve the community of Southmead and primarily does this by running the Southmead Youth Centre and a large centre called The Greenway Centre. The centre shares the site with a GP surgery and we see ourselves as a healthy living centre, social enterprise hub and community centre.

The Southmead Development Trust has a board of dedicated trustees that shape the vision and how it works towards serving Southmead.

The Vision for Southmead Development Trust is to be regarded and valued as the leading catalyst for improving and enhancing opportunities within the local community. As a healthy living centre we have a number of partnerships and projects to support health and wellbeing.

We aim to be an equal opportunities organisation and welcome applications from all sectors of the community. The Greenway Centre is fully accessible for disabled people.

About 'Healthy Alternatives'

'Healthy Alternatives' is a social prescribing model which enables residents of Southmead to access social or community activities and resources within the local area. We work alongside local GP surgeries to help patients address the social and practical issues that may have affected their health (isolation, debt, employment, depression, family etc.). It includes supporting people to:

- Take the first steps to starting a new hobby or activity
- Join a new group or class
- Access and take up support offered by a community organisation
- Address practical support needs relating to debt, housing etc.
- Develop confidence and improve self-esteem
- Make contact with other people

We strive to empower residents and equip them with increased confidence and opportunities to take control of their own health and wellbeing, promote non-medical sources of support within the community, offer increased choices including a supported pathway for their own self-care and strengthen the relationship between primary care and the VCSE.

What is the role of a group facilitator within 'Healthy Alternatives'?

Supervised by the service co-ordinator, group facilitators will help to run existing groups that form part of the social prescribing service. These include a mental health peer support group, a baking group, a cooking group and an activity/social group. There is scope to develop and coordinate new groups should the need or skills be present.

The group facilitator will help with publicising the group that they run, and will be present on the day to guide the participants through the chosen activity. This could be helping with a baking recipe and ensuring that all participants feel safe and comfortable, or helping to facilitate a mental health peer

support group. It would be fantastic to also be able to draw upon volunteers' creative skills to share with attendees of the activity group.

The group facilitator will also support attendees on an emotional basis, as the majority of those accessing the groups will be clients of 'Healthy Alternatives'. These groups are a 'stepping stone' for such individuals towards other community groups, and therefore extra support for individuals may be required to ensure that problems like anxiety and isolation are not a barrier to individuals feeling able to attend.

What will group facilitators be asked to do?

- Plan for each group weekly before the session e.g. sourcing ingredients, deciding how to spend the time of the session
- Be present for the whole session as a supportive/leadership figure, depending upon what is most appropriate for the nature of the group
- Ensure a welcoming, friendly and supportive environment for attendees
- Provide emotional support to attendees
- Encourage and motivate clients to take up new activities outside of the group
- Generate creative suggestions for future sessions or new groups
- Maintain client confidentiality at all times
- Keep accurate and factual case records
- Keep project coordinator updated on any issues or concerns which may arise
- Attend regular supervision meetings
- Attend regular training sessions

What skills, experience and qualities are we looking for in a group facilitator?

Someone who is:

- Able to encourage and motivate attendees
- Committed to and willing to take ownership of a project
- Able to support all kinds of people, many of whom may be very vulnerable
- Caring, sympathetic, sensitive and non-judgemental
- The ability to communicate effectively
- Ability to develop and maintain constructive relationships which value individuals' strengths and knowledge
- Excellent listening skills helping to empower service users
- Awareness of the needs of people who are socially isolated, depressed, bereaved, and who may regard accessing new groups as intimidating
- Comfortable working with others
- Able to maintain professional boundaries and maintain client confidentiality
- Reliable

How much time will group facilitators need to give?

Group leaders will be asked to commit to approximately 3-4 hours per week for a period of 6months (including preparation time) after which time a reference will be provided if requested.

Group leaders may also find that they wish to give additional time in the form of 1:1 mentoring, doing research, building networks, attending events, helping with evaluation or general administrative tasks.

What could I get from being a group facilitator?

Volunteering for Healthy Alternatives will give you the opportunity to:

- Learn new skills or develop existing skills
- Meet new people
- Be part of a team
- Gain experience in the health and social care field to boost your CV
- Actively support someone to improve their wellbeing
- Make a real difference to someone's life
- Access to a wide variety of training and support

How will I be supported?

Group facilitators will be able to attend a 2-day training course of in-house training which, as well as introducing social prescribing, will cover areas such as mental health awareness, maintaining professional boundaries, active listening and safeguarding. This will be supplemented by monthly training throughout the volunteering experience. All training will be provided free of charge.

Group facilitators will then attend a half-day induction followed by shadowing the service coordinator for as long as both parties feel is necessary before contacting and supporting clients by themselves.

Ongoing support and supervision will be offered by the service coordinator and volunteer coordinator who will both be in regular contact with you throughout your volunteering.

Agreed out-of-pocket expenses will be reimbursed.