Womankind Befriending Volunteer Role Description

**Responsible to: Volunteer Service Coordinator**

**Location:** **Bristol and South Gloucestershire**

**Hours:** **Up to 3 hours per week during weekdays – this includes travel to and from your befriendees home address.**

**(There are some limited opportunities for volunteering during evenings and weekends as the majority of our service users prefer befriending visits during weekday daytimes).**

About Womankind

**Womankind** is an established charity run by women for women. We provide a range of confidential and accessible services in Bristol and the surrounding area. Every year we help hundreds of women to improve their mental health and well-being so they can experience a better quality of life.

Womankind’s befriending service provides consistent support to women experiencing mental health issues and social isolation. Women may have faced difficulties including childhood abuse, trauma, sexual and domestic abuse, rape and sexual violence. Befrienders help women to gain in confidence, self-esteem and to increase their circle of contacts by engaging in community activities and creating social support networks.

What will I be doing in this befriending role?

* Helping women open their doors to the world, go out, enjoy new experiences and feel more alive.
* Provide emotional support offering non-judgemental listening
* Helping women achieve their goals and become empowered and independent.
* Offering ordinary friendship, having fun, providing, and promoting positive, safe and healthy relationships.
* Getting out and about to do everyday things such as going for a walk, having a coffee or visiting shops.
* Supporting women to join groups that help improve their confidence and self-esteem and introduce them to new people who they can become friends with.
* Supporting and gently encouraging women to make changes to improve their lives.

What experience do I need?

Womankind provides comprehensive training and supervision, but it is helpful if you have some of the following skills and qualities:

* To be non-judgmental, reliable and patient.
* To be a good listener.
* To be enthusiastic and interested in helping someone regain confidence in doing things, such as going to the shops or joining an activity class.
* To be honest and friendly with good communication skills.
* To be confident in social situations.
* To be able to calmly respond to the needs of the woman you are befriending, including managing a crisis situation.
* The befriending role can be challenging and emotionally overwhelming at times, therefore we need befrienders to be at a point in their lives where they feel emotionally robust enough to take on the role and feel that they have the resources necessary to cope with the challenges.

What commitment do I need to give?

* To volunteer for one year once you are matched. (Of course, it’s ok to have time off for holidays during that year).
* A willingness to travel anywhere in Bristol or South Gloucestershire for befriending visits. Womankind will make every effort to accommodate your travel requirements, however if we are unable to match you to a befriendee in the vicinity that you stipulate, there is an expectation that you will travel anywhere in Bristol or South Gloucestershire for up to 30 minutes each way per week. We ask for a total commitment time per week of 3 hours including travel.
* To attend and complete all 3 sessions of the Befriending Volunteering Training Program which amounts to 18 hours over 3 Saturdays. Additionally, there will be up to 5 hours of home study to complete prior to each training session.
* To attend individual and group monthly supervision. Individual supervision is for 30 minutes every 4 weeks and group supervision is held on the first Monday or Tuesday of the month from 6-7.30pm via zoom/teams.
* To follow Womankind’s guidelines, policies and procedures including Safeguarding, Equalities and Confidentiality policies.

What you will gain as a volunteer

* A really rewarding experience and opportunity to make a positive difference in the life of another woman.
* Comprehensive in-house training that has been developed over 28 years that will enable you to gain new skills and broaden your knowledge.
* Out of pocket expenses. We refund travel and any parking expenses for your befriending visits and carers/childcare expenses if applicable. Expenses are claimed on a monthly basis.
* Support and supervision.
* Initial training includes active listening skills and looks at specific issues such as mental health, sexual and domestic abuse, boundaries and endings. The training is trauma informed. Training also covers essential organisational and befriending policies, procedures and guidelines.
* We offer on-going training and opportunities for personal development and progression.
* Valuable experience of providing face to face support and using active listening skills in a mental health or specialist sexual violence setting.
* The chance to meet new people and attend volunteer social events.

Recruitment process

Online application form > Interview > accepted onto Womankind Befriending Training program > references taken up > Completed Befriending Training program > post-training interview with service coordinator > Final decision made between service coordinator and trainee to continue into role > DBS check > matched to a befriendee once a suitable befriendee has been found (please note we may not be able to match you straight after the training).

**We welcome volunteers with personal experience of mental health and other relevant issues. We will require you to have at least a one-year period of stability before taking on this role and ideally to have received professional help like counselling in your recovery.**