**Peer Supporter (Volunteer role)**

**Role Description**

**Background**

Together is trusted for our expertise in service user involvement. In everything we do we are inspired and guided by the hopes and wishes of those we support.

We work alongside people, supporting and facilitating service user involvement, empowermentand leadershipthat promote and support wellbeing.This includes people leading their own positive lives and supporting others to do so. Peer support is key in our philosophy and service delivery.

**Peer Support in Liaison & Diversion – London**

Our Liaison and Diversion (L&D) services work in partnership with NHS England to improve the health and justice outcomes for people who come into contact with the criminal justice system where a range of complex needs have been identified as factors in their offending behavior.

L&D aims to link service users in with appropriate services in the community such as *Peer Support*, as part of a holistic approach to promote and support better wellbeing.

**Peer Support Role**

As a Peer Supporter in within Liaison and Diversion, your lived experience of mental distress and contact with the criminal justice system will be at the heart of your role.

You will use your own lived experiences of both to empathise with and support people who have similar experiences.

This role is open to anyone with personal experience of mental distress and has come into contact with criminal justice services who feel they have the skills to support others.

You will work alongside people who use Together’s Liaison and Diversion services in London boroughs of Hackney, Tower Hamlets, Camden and Islington.

With guidance from your Peer Support Coordinator, you will support someone in a way that is led by them and suits your strengths and skills. This could include:

* Sharing your lived experience in a way that expresses empathy and hopefulness. This will involve sharing skills and techniques to help people identify their own self-management tools and ways of moving forward in life
* Supporting service users through one to one sessions, providing emotional and/or practical support and using your lived experience as described above. This can include helping people to focus on their strengths, set goals and develop action plans, drawing on your own experiences where relevant
* Providing one to one and/or group peer support drop-in sessions drawing on your lived experiences as described above
* Identifying local services and activities that someone might want to access, signposting and supporting them to access these as appropriately
* Where appropriate, supporting someone to appointments, meetings and activities, providing emotional and/or practical support using your own lived experiences;
* Facilitating peer support groups and promoting service user leadership

* Supporting and enabling less experienced Peer Supporters in their role
* Working alongside service users, other peers and staff to develop peer support in L&D services
* Providing support to someone as they prepare to move on from using the service

You are welcome as a Peer Supporter to add to this list and/or suggest other ways of providing peer support. The most important thing is that you are drawing on your own experiences of mental distress and the criminal justice system to support others.

Training will be provided to help you in your role as a Peer Supporter.

**Key Skills and Experience:**

* Personal experience of mental distress and contact with the criminal justice system i.e. arrested, cautioned, imprisoned.
* Ability to share personal experiences of mental distress, the criminal justice system and recovery as/when appropriate to demonstrate empathy and share self-management techniques
* Passionate about service user leadership, peer support and empowering people experiencing mental distress with experience of the criminal justice system
* Ability to communicate and engage in a respectful and non-judgemental way with a range of people who use mental health and criminal justice services
* Excellent active listening and interpersonal skills: empathy, kindness and patience
* Ability to problem-solve, be proactive and resourceful when supporting people
* Ability to deal with all enquiries tactfully, sensitively and on a confidential basis
* Able to maintain high standards of customer care, and adhere to Together’s policies and procedures

Whilst volunteering as a Peer Supporter in Liaison and Diversion, you will have regular support and guidance from your Peer Support Coordinator. You can go to them with any issues and/or questions about peer support, and you will work with them to develop and use your skills as a Peer Supporter in a way that benefits and empowers you and the people you are supporting.

**Expenses**

Reasonable expenses such as travel tickets for sessions and meetings with service users will be reimbursed.

If you have any questions or wish to discuss this role description further, feel free to contact your Peer Support Coordinator:

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