**Volunteer Role Description**

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with Sight Support West of England! We rely on the help and dedication of volunteers to support the wide range of services that we provide, and we recognise the huge contribution our volunteers make to the effectiveness of our organisation.

**Role:** Volunteer Telephone Befriender

**Location:** Bristol, BANES, South Glos., Swindon and Wiltshire

**Purpose:** Telephonebefrienders provide crucial social interaction for our clients with sight loss who are particularly isolated during the COVID-19 lockdown. By having a friendly chat on a regular basis at an agreed time, tele-befrienders can make all the difference to a person’s life.

**What will you be doing?**

- Calling a client on an agreed regular basis for a friendly and supportive chat and making sure that they have everything they need

- Listening actively to your client and getting to know them whilst sharing your own interests and experiences

- Treating what you hear as confidential and sensitive

- Keeping us up to date on how your volunteering is going at regular telephone support sessions and referring any queries and concerns back to the Volunteer Coordinator

- Reading and following our policies and procedures - designed to

keep you and the people we support safe and happy

**What skills and experience are needed?**

- Good listening and communication skills

- Empathy / understanding towards others and an interest in what others have to say

- A non-judgmental and positive approach and the desire to motivate and encourage others

- Confidence when using the telephone

- An ability to work independently but also stay within the role’s boundaries – recognising what should and shouldn’t be done and when to seek advice or report concerns

- A good understanding of confidentiality

**What will you gain from the role?**

* The knowledge that you are helping to make a real difference to the lives of people living with sight loss at this challenging time
* Experience of working with a variety of people
* A greater understanding of sight loss
* Useful new skills

**What support will be given?**

* Induction and training (telephone/online)
* Regular support and supervision from the Volunteer Coordinator

**When will you be needed?**

A mutually convenient day and time will be agreed between the client and yourself.

**How often will you be needed?**

- We ask for a minimum contribution of 30 minutes per week.  
- A minimum of three months’ commitment is required.

**References**

We will ask for two references from someone you have known for at least two years and are aged 18 or over. They must not be a family member/partner or live in the same household as you but can be a friend. References can be given by email or over the phone.

**Disclosure and Barring Service Information**

This role usually requires a DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) check. During this period of social distancing, we are prepared to accept proof of your identity and residence using video calling and in-date DBS checks from other organisations where available.