**Face-to-Face Drug and Alcohol Carer (D&A) Group Volunteers CSWS**

At Carers Support we are committed to creating an environment where you can make a difference. No carer group will be the same and your role as D&A carer group volunteer will be varied, enjoyable, and supportive. You will be working within your local community, where your time will be used to help carers in need of a helping hand.

You can also join our volunteer events, connecting with others, making new relationships and work with a team of passionate, empathetic and understanding individuals.

**D&A Carer Groups**

Carers often have challenging experiences with people’s attitudes towards their caring role and can feel that they cannot talk to family members, friends, or other organisations. The D&A groups offer carers a safe space to talk through their concerns and really be heard. Carers can talk in confidence about any issues and know they will not be judged, having an understanding from others in the groups, and feel like they are not alone.

**The role of the volunteer:**

The D&A carer group volunteer will support the group alongside another volunteer or a CSWS staff member, creating a non-judgemental safe environment, for carers to talk about their caring roles and not feel stigmatized.

The D&A volunteer will:

* Welcome and support new and regular attendees to the groups.
* Assist in preparing and closing the meeting space. (This may include moving chairs and tables, depending on the venue).
* Support with tea and coffee.
* listen and respond to issues and concerns raised by carers at the group, where possible, with information and signposting to local and national resources. Arrange support with a CSWS member of staff for more complex issues and concerns.
* Have pre- and post-group ‘briefings’ with the other volunteer and CSWS staff member. If you have any concerns, you will be able to discuss with the D&A specialist or a member of the community team.
* Support the D&A specialist with planning the group where needed.
* Complete volunteer records and upload receipts for any expenses.
* Attend regular check-ins with a Volunteer Mentor.

**The Difference You Will Make:**

You will help ensure carers feel supported and heard in the group sessions.

Below is some feedback from carers who have attended the groups:

*‘The group has been of enormous support and value to me as well as all the other members that attend’.*

*‘I don’t feel judged or alone, and in a much better place, it took me a very long time to reach out’.*

*‘Sometimes I feel so lost, but I always feel at ease after being listened to and having the reassurance and peer support from other`s in the group’.*

*‘The groups are such a lifeline, I have made a friend here and feel I am moving forward, my caring role has not changed much, but I do care more about me now’.*

**Skills and qualities you will need:**

* To be a good listener, and be confident in groups of people
* Caring and empathetic, and non-judgemental.
* To be able to keep your own boundaries with people.
* To be able to take advice and direction from a member of CSWS staff
* You will get full training; however, it would be desirable if you had an understanding of addiction, mental health, and autism (mental health and autism can also be an issue identified by carers at our D&A groups).
* Basic IT skills (support is available if necessary).

**Training and support that you will get from us:**

* Volunteer Induction including full D&A induction and training, including mental health and autism training, and ‘shadowing’ an experienced member of staff (see below).
* Online training including children and adult safeguarding, data protection, and health and safety.
* Volunteer expenses as agreed (e.g. travel expenses).
* Regular check-ins with a named staff member (a Volunteer Mentor) to ensure your volunteer experience with us remains positive. You will also have the opportunity to attend our Monthly wellbeing hub.
* Invitations to relevant training sessions and volunteer events.
* We ask you to engage twice a year in a Volunteering Engagement Survey for us to get feedback from you.
* Access to our Employee Assistance Programme.

**Shadowing at a D&A carer group:**

As part of your training, you will ‘shadow’ a D&A group with a member of staff and then have a period where you assist the other volunteer/member of staff before you support carers yourself, to build your skills, knowledge and confidence.

**Equipment Needed:**

The role is partly home based, and you will need:

* Access to a computer, laptop, or iPad/tablet to attend meetings and training
* Internet access within your home
* Access to a phone

**Locations, Timings, and Commitment:**

Three individual posts are available however we would also be happy for one person to attend both groups, subject to their availability.

Worthing

* Location: Quaker Meeting House, Mill Road, Worthing BN11 5DR
* Time: Monthly on the 3rd Tuesday, 17.30 - 19.00 pm.
* Commitment: 2 - 3 hours per month, minimum 6-month commitment.

Chichester

* Location: Chichester children & family centre, St James Road, PO19 7WX
* Time: Monthly on the last Monday, 10.30 - 12.00 pm.
* Commitment: 2 - 3 hours per month,

**To apply, please visit** [**https://www.carerssupport.org.uk/volunteer-with-us/**](https://www.carerssupport.org.uk/volunteer-with-us/) **or contact the team by email:** **volunteering@carerssupport.org.uk** **for an application link.**

**Please note we require two references and completion of a DBS check after completing the application process.**