

Maintaining Skills Group Volunteer

Supported by: Branch Manager and Family Support Worker

Role purpose:

The Alzheimer's Society is a registered charity and provides information and support to people with dementia, their families and carers. The Maintaining Skills service relies on volunteers to work on a one-to-one basis with a person with dementia at the group on a monthly basis - offering specialised and social activities, and general conversation. This enables people to maintain dignity and independence, whilst promoting best quality of life, within a safe and supportive environment.

Tasks and responsibilities:

- To offer companionship and friendship to people with dementia, and to their carer where necessary
- To show empathy and understanding towards the person with dementia (and carer) and offer agreed (by the Branch Manager and/or the Family Support Worker) sources of advice and information
- To encourage and support the person with dementia to participate in specialised activities which have been agreed on by the Branch Manager and/or the Family Support worker, in a safe environment (at the group or elsewhere within the community should an outdoor activity take place)
- To liaise with the Branch Manager and/or the Family Support Worker on a regular basis
- To respect the confidential nature of the service, in accordance with the Society's confidentiality policy
- To maintain accurate and appropriate records if required
- To assist with the review of individual needs
- To understand that a matching process will take place, ensuring that volunteers and people with dementia are ideally suited
- To understand that the role will have boundaries to the number of people supported – helping to maintain quality standards and ensuring the wellbeing of each volunteer
- To volunteer as part of a committed branch team, dedicated to improving the services for people with dementia and their carers
- To understand and follow good health and safety practices at all times

- To develop a basic understanding of Alzheimer's Society activities, and other local services, so that questions/enquiries can be handled well
- To attend learning and development activities in support of the role, and to take part in occasional peer group and one-to-one support meetings
- To uphold the Society Rules and Branch Guidelines, and other policies such as the equal opportunities policy and inclusion policy.

Skills and experience:

No specific qualifications or experience are needed. The following points, however, are important:

- Knowledge of, or a willingness to learn about, dementia and how it can affect individuals, their families and carers
- Good listening and communication skills
- Ability to show empathy and understanding
- Punctuality and reliability
- Adaptability and flexibility
- Ability to complete basic records in writing
- Ability to use initiative but also to understand the boundaries of the service
- To volunteer as part of a team of people from different backgrounds
- A commitment to equal opportunities, treating all individuals with respect
- An understanding of, and commitment to, confidentiality
- A willingness to learn about, and be committed to, the Society's values and principles, therefore ensuring a high quality service
- A commitment to attend relevant learning and development workshops.

Time commitment:

- Up to 3 hours once a month on a set day and time (the number of groups offered by the Branch may increase per month. Volunteers will be notified of any changes). Initially there will be a need to attend relevant learning and development workshops covering areas such as induction, dementia awareness and the provision of activities. Other, occasional, support meetings take place throughout the year.

NB Volunteers are required to inform the Branch if they are unable to attend any of the group sessions

Society's commitment:

- To provide initial guidance and induction to the role
- To provide ongoing support and training
- To provide regular information regarding the activities of the branch and the wider Society, including further opportunities for volunteering
- To reimburse agreed expenses in accordance with Society policy.

NB All tasks undertaken to be agreed on by the Branch Manager and/or the Family Support Worker prior to all tasks being commenced