

Activity Buddy Volunteer - Task Outline

Background

Loneliness affects millions of people in the UK every year and sadly many older people in East London live alone or feel alone with little or no social contact with anyone resulting in social isolation and loneliness.

The Foundation’s Mental Health in the Pandemic research found that loneliness has been exacerbated by the Covid pandemic, with many facing multiple challenges such as bereavement, voluntary shielding, deterioration in physical health, mobility issues, challenges accessing public transport and a huge reduction in confidence.

Many are still recovering, but we’ve identified that a connection to other people and our community has been fundamental to protecting their mental health and wellbeing. Activity Buddy volunteers are playing a key role in doing this.

Activity Buddies are offering the lending hand isolated people need by providing support and company for people who may need that extra confidence to attend a local activity in Tower Hamlets. You could be escorting someone to a local lunch group or activity or even just going with them to a park for a nice walk. They build relationships in the process, which enable meaningful conversations and help to identify support needs and other services and activities that will help maintain their clients’ mental health. A key aim of the role is to signpost or refer clients to other services and activities, initially accompany them, and build their confidence back to get out into the community and to ultimate feel independent again.

Commitment	Minimum of 6 months from start of Activity Buddy match, includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-minute informal interview (in person or MS Teams) • Willing to undertake an enhanced DBS check. • 2-hour core training session • Up to 1-2 hours a week engagement with your client • 30-minute per month peer group supervision • 1-hour Deep Dive training session (<i>optional</i>)
Purpose of Role	Staff will assess the client and you will be given their profile and a support plan. Core tasks will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weekly contact in person. • Encouraging and accompanying to visits to other social events and activities in the local area e.g., a walk, GP, an IT class. • Spotting additional needs and identifying services and activities to address these. • Submitting a weekly report on the contact to include contact type, mood score, signposting and any concerns.
Support Provided	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full remote training and induction provided. • We will complete the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) application with you. • Supervision and direct contact with the Volunteering Co-ordinator/Manager. • Join and participate in peer support groups and meet other volunteers to share experiences and good practice.
Skills and attributes Required	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good communication with a friendly approachable manner • Solution focused.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good listening skills • Reliable and committed to do at least 1 call a week for the committed period. • Applicants must be over the age of 18. • Basic IT skills may be required depending on client's needs.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn new skills. • Meet people. • Make a difference. • Gain confidence • Social and celebration events • Exclusive invites to join and support community projects. • Monthly volunteer newsletter

Activity Buddy – Volunteer Journey

Please note: Below may vary depending on your DBS application status, available upcoming core training and residents.

Week 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You return an application form to the Volunteering Team (volunteering@ageukeastlondon.org.uk).
Week 2 - 3	You are contacted by the Volunteering Manager to arrange an informal interview in person or on MS Teams
Week 3 - 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Obtain references • Undertake Adult Safeguarding Training • Your DBS certificate arrives in the post to your home address. An induction plan is created
Week 4 – 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You send a photo/scanned copy of your DBS certificate to the Volunteer Coordinator. • You will be introduced to your line manager who will provide you with core training on your role • You are matched to a client and receive the client profile.
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engagement as per 'purpose of role' above • You can attend monthly peer-supervision sessions, facilitated by your Volunteering Manager, via MS Teams to meet other volunteers, resolve issues or questions and share good practice. • Join and participate in peer support groups and meet other volunteers to share experiences and good practice. • Social and celebration events.

Interested?

- Go to our Age UK East London website and complete an online application form: <https://www.ageuk.org.uk/eastlondon/get-involved/volunteer/application-form/>
- Alternatively, you can also email us volunteering@ageukeastlondon.org.uk