

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of 6 months from start of Activity Buddy match • Willing to undertake an enhanced DBS check. • Up to 1-2 hours a week engagement with your client
Purpose of Role	<p>Staff will assess the client and you will be given their profile and a support plan. Core tasks will include:</p> <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 • Good listening skills • 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"> • Making a Difference: Volunteering allows you to have a tangible impact on someone's life, particularly those in vulnerable situations. Helping older people can provide a strong sense of accomplishment and purpose. • Emotional Rewards • Intergenerational Connections • Learning and Skill Development • Enhancing Career Prospects • Building Empathy and Compassion • Giving Back to the Community • Social and celebration events • Exclusive invites to join and support community projects • Monthly volunteer newsletter
How to apply	<p>Online</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply through our website: https://www.ageuk.org.uk/eastlondon/get-involved/volunteer2/application-form/ • Contact us via email at volunteering@ageukeastlondon.org.uk or on 0208 981 7124 <p>In person: You can drop off your CV or leave your contact details at one of our offices below and the Volunteering team will be in touch with you.</p> <p>Tower Hamlets Head Office 82 Russia Lane London, E2 9LU</p> <p>Tower Hamlets Activities Centre Merchant Street Hub Tower Hamlets Methodist Church 1 Merchant Street E3 4LY</p> <p>Newham Office 655 Barking Road Plaistow, London, E13 9EX</p> <p>Hackney Office and Activities Centre (Marie Lloyd Day Centre) 29 Queensbridge Road E8 3LA</p>

Volunteer Journey:

Embark on your volunteer journey with us in just a few simple steps:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Application received
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Week 1	
Week 2 - 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange an interview: Our Volunteering Manager will contact you to arrange interview, either in person or via MS Teams. This is a chance for us to find out more about you and for you to learn about the role. • Undertake Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check, we will arrange this for you. Once it's been processed, your DBS certificate will be posted to your home address. • Provide references: We will ask you to provide two references to support your application.
Week 3 - 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete online training: You'll need to complete some online training, including Adult Safeguarding and any other relevant courses for your role. • Induction plan: We will put together an induction plan to help you settle into your role.
Week 4 – 8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet your project lead/supervisor: You'll be introduced to your project lead or supervisor, who will guide you through your role. They will provide you with an induction, explain your tasks, and answer any questions you may have. Your project lead/supervisor will continue to support you while you volunteer with us.
Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get started in your role: You'll begin volunteering as outlined in your role description. • Monthly volunteer catch-ups: We offer monthly group sessions via MS Teams, led by the Volunteering Manager. These sessions are a space to meet other volunteers, ask questions, share experiences, and discuss any challenges. • Ongoing support: Your line manager and the Volunteering Team are always available if you need any support or have questions. • Take part in social and celebration events.

Do you have any questions

Feel free to reach out with any questions by email at volunteering@ageukeastlondon.org.uk or on 02089817124 or pop into any of our offices (listed above) to chat with a member of our team.