



## **Volunteer Befrienders**

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with DISC. Volunteers play a valuable role in our organisation and your contribution is greatly appreciated. In return for your time skills, attitude, and experience, DISC can offer you clearly defined work, supervision, training and expenses. Also as a volunteer you will have the opportunity to meet new people, gain new experiences and get real job satisfaction.

### **The organisation:**

Disability in Camden (DISC) is an organisation controlled by, and accountable to, disabled people in Camden.

- We believe in the establishment of a society in which there are equal opportunities for all.
- We believe each individual has the right to control their own life.
- We are determined to overcome the barriers faced by disabled people.
- We will achieve this by bringing together the strengths, experiences and knowledge of disabled people.
- We will represent the interests of disabled people, work with others to initiate change and promote equality of opportunity.

### **Our main activities are:**

- Providing advice, information and guidance
- Enabling people to make their own informed choices through advocacy
- Campaigning
- Working in partnership with local groups and government.
- Providing training to our members
- Consultancy

### **The Role:**

Befriending is the simple act of giving your time to someone who needs support and companionship. We may have all been befrienders at some time in our life on an informal level; keeping an eye on an elderly relative, collecting a friend's children from school with our own, or popping in to see a lonely neighbour. However, the route to befriending is slightly more complicated than the informal act of being a good neighbour – befriending is a service.

DISC's befriending service users are disabled people living within the Borough of Camden who may be vulnerable or isolated, with little contact or support to access activities others take for granted. Your role is to help your client become more confident and independent. The position will vary according to what the client's needs are but it is likely to be out in the

community, perhaps supporting someone to access leisure activities, visit the library, or simply to provide some company and someone to have a friendly chat with.

You don't need any special skills or experience to be a befriender with DISC. If you like meeting people and getting to know them, and you are reliable and that you have an open minded approach to different types of people you will probably be suited to befriending. All we ask is that you are able to respect the boundaries of the befriending relationship, you understand the importance of privacy and confidentiality, and you are a good communicator with the ability to understand and be sensitive to others needs.

If you have some time to spare to spend with a vulnerable or isolated disabled person in Camden and can make a commitment of at least 6 months, then we would love to hear from you. (Please note, we ask for a minimum commitment as we feel this is the minimum time necessary to establish a relationship between service user and befriender).

### **Commitment**

The amount of contact which you have with the person you are befriending is something which you will work out between yourselves. You may meet them once a week for a cup of tea and a chat, you may accompany them to some regular activity or you may support them in something different each week. The main thing is that you are reliable about the arrangements you have made. An hour or two each week is all that is needed. However we do ask that once we have found a 'good match' for you, we would like you to act as a befriender for a minimum of 6 months.

### **Volunteering with DISC**

Regular volunteers with DISC will be inducted into the organisation and provided with training as necessary. You will receive an induction pack as well as regular supervision and a named contact person for ongoing support.

You will be required to undergo a full CRB check before starting to volunteer. DISC will arrange for this.

As a volunteer you will be reimbursed for any travel costs, and if you are volunteering for a whole day you can also claim expenses for your lunch.

We want you to feel like part of our team and hope that you enjoy your time volunteering with us. If you have any questions please contact Emma Catlow on Tel: 020 3317 5072 or email [projects@discnwl.org.uk](mailto:projects@discnwl.org.uk)

### **Applying**

If you are interested in becoming a befriender with DISC, please complete and return the application form. Once returned, the service co-ordinator will contact you to arrange an initial meeting at DISC's office. You will then receive induction training before being introduced to a potential client.

## DISC Volunteer Befriender Application Form

Please complete and return to Emma Catlow by email [projects@discnwl.org.uk](mailto:projects@discnwl.org.uk), fax 020 7424 9996 or post DISC, The Peckwater Centre, 6 Peckwater St, NW5 2TX

Use additional sheets as necessary.

Name	
Volunteer role applied for:	Befriender
Address	
Phone	
Mobile	
Email	
Date	

*Please note the following can be completed at initial meeting if preferred:*

**Why are you interested in becoming a befriender?**

**What do you think you will bring to the role (any qualifications, skills, personal attributes etc)**

**Have you got any hobbies or interests?**

**Have you got any experience of other cultures which might be relevant?**

**What days/times are you available?**

**Access requirements? (large print, hearing loop, wheelchair access etc)**

**Where did you hear about volunteering at DISC?**