

I got free training, really valuable skills for my caring career, and a whole bunch of new friends with *COMPANIONS*...



free training

When I retired I had so much time I didn't know what to do with it all, *COMPANIONS* lets me use my experience of life in a useful, valuable way...



my time to help

When my kids started school I wanted to find a way back to work, and *COMPANIONS* let me gain working experience and confidence...



new confidence

Volunteering with *COMPANIONS* means you give a little, but you get a lot more back.

Why not give it a try?

Benefits of being a *COMPANIONS* volunteer

- A worthwhile rewarding experience
- Stepping stone to paid employment
- Free, valuable training for job seekers
- Useful skills for those in caring careers
- Active help to the local community
- Out of pocket expenses reimbursed
- New friends in fellow *COMPANIONS*

What we expect of *COMPANIONS* volunteers

- Be available for at least 1 hour a week
- Meet with the Co-ordinator regularly
- Be a caring, reliable and honest person
- Complete the induction training
- Be a volunteer for at least 6 months
- Provide two references
- Complete an Enhanced Disclosure
- Attend the Support Group Meetings

COMPANIONS is committed to Equal Opportunities and welcomes applications from all people regardless of age, social background, religion, gender, sexual orientation, race or disability.

COMPANIONS is based on the principles of recovery and social inclusion.

This leaflet is available in large print, and on computer disc. Other formats can be supplied on request.

www.companions.org.uk

Mha

Mental Health Aberdeen

Registered Office: 1 Alford Place Aberdeen AB10 1YD
Scottish Charity No. SCO 12306 A Company Limited by Guarantee No.SC 100864

www.mhaberdeen.org.uk

May 2008



Changing the
face
of Mental Health

Information for
Volunteers

Peterhead / Fraserburgh
51 King Street,
PETERHEAD,
AB42 1TA
Phone: 01779 470122

Banff / Turriff
Arches Centre,
Anderson House,
44-46 Ardanes Brae
BANFF, AB45 1FG
Phone: 01261 818330

Mha

Mental Health Aberdeen

What is Befriending?

Loneliness, anxiety, fear, and a loss of self esteem are some of the feelings reported by people with mental health problems. These difficulties can often lead to them being unable to deal with situations which might seem just part of everyday life to many.

Getting out, making friends, enjoying activities and sports, attending college classes are part of recovery, but can be difficult especially when faced with the stigma which is often attached to mental illness.

COMPANIONS Befriending Scheme, with your help, can change all that. It matches caring, reliable and well trained volunteers with people who need support and encouragement to lead a fuller, happier social life.

Volunteering with *COMPANIONS*

Our volunteers come from all ages and backgrounds, and once you express an interest you will meet with one of our Co-ordinators who will explain fully how the scheme works, and answer any questions you may have. What we expect from our volunteers and the benefits you can expect is outlined on the back of this leaflet.

Training

Volunteers accepted for training attend four sessions which cover important aspects such as confidentiality, listening and communication skills, empowerment, and boundaries. When you complete the course you receive a certificate which some have found useful when attending interviews for paid employment in the caring professions.



Could you listen, and encourage someone for just **one hour** a week?

What will I do?

The people we help, benefit most from short but regular visits. Some might just enjoy a chat and a cup of tea, others prefer to do something, such as an outdoor activity, a walk in the park, or a sport. We try and match volunteers to people with similar interests so that visits are rewarding for you too.

Support

As a volunteer you can expect support from your Co-ordinator as and when you need it, but they will make a special arrangement to talk to you each month to see how your visits are going, and to ask if you need help. Support Group Meetings and volunteer activity events happen on a regular basis and can include visits, pampering sessions, or just an opportunity to meet with fellow volunteers.

How can I volunteer?

Please contact our staff in the areas you can see on the front of this leaflet, they will be very pleased to hear from you. If you just want to ask questions please feel free to contact us without any obligation.

We greatly appreciate our volunteers because without them we couldn't provide this service, so please, give just a little time, it will really make a difference to someone.

Who can benefit from volunteering with *COMPANIONS*?

Students

"I wanted to gain work experience, which along with my qualification would help me get a good job"

Unemployed

"The free training was excellent, the work didn't affect my benefits, and I got all my out of pocket expenses paid."

Retired

"It's really good to feel that I'm appreciated, and that I can do something so worthwhile with all the spare time I've got now"

Full Time Workers

"Most people can spare an hour or two each week, and it's so different from the job I do, I feel less stressed"

Life has changed

"When I divorced I wanted to do something valuable with my life. I wanted to volunteer to really help people not just serve in a charity shop"