



FAQs for Hand in Hand Peer Buddies

Thank you for your interest in volunteering to be a Hand in Hand Peer Buddy. You will be helping local people who are struggling to get out and about (to appointments, to courses, to events, to green spaces) because of mental health and sometimes physical health challenges. They are likely to have some fears about these things so having someone alongside to accompany them as an emotional support may make it easier for them to go along. This is the role of a peer buddy.

Q. How many hours a week will it be?

A. We need you to commit to at least one day per week (7 hours) but if you can do more we would welcome that. Let us know how much you are able to reliably do and if you have any restrictions on this such as being on Permitted Work scheme, studying or have caring responsibilities. It is important to know that your one day a week commitment doesn't all have to be on the same day e.g you could do a half a day twice a week. What is important is that your days and times of commitment are known.

Q. How many clients will I have?

A. This will vary according to the number of people who need to be accompanied by a Peer Buddy who we can safely match with you. We will try to work with the hours you are looking for and give you as many as you can safely manage but we also cannot guarantee any particular number in any particular week. We expect it will start slowly and become busier as Peer Buddy's get known.

Q. How often will I see them, and where?

A. Generally you will be given an address you can meet up with your client and an address you are traveling to (and from). You will be often meeting them at home though you will not be expected to go in. It will be up to you to manage your diary and text in once you have completed your travel. You can also call in if you need to discuss your session urgently.

Q. Will I be waiting for the client to take them home again?

A. Often (but not always) you will be asked to wait for the client to finish their appointment/visit. You can wait at the venue or make arrangements with the client to come back at a certain time (or agree on a text at the right time).

Q. Will I be paid travel or other expenses and how?

A. Volunteers will be reimbursed their travel expenses against receipts and if volunteering for 7 hours, offered an allowance for lunch against receipts of up to £5.

Q. Will I be using my own phone?

A. You will get a very basic phone in order to ring or text clients. If you use your own phone, you would be expected to block your number when making contact.

Q. I receive benefits. Can I still be a peer buddy?

A. It is best to get direct advice from a specialist as benefits rules can be complicated. As this is a voluntary role you will not be getting an income that will affect your benefits. If any of your benefits are for incapacity to work then doing this job may influence that status. If you are on JSA and ready to move back into work then this could be a good opportunity. Please take independent advice about your personal situation. We are unable to offer personal benefits advice to you, but we can link you up with the Income Maximisation Team at the Council, Help On Your Doorstep, Islington Peoples Rights or CAB. What is important is that you get personalised advice if you have any worries about this area.

These sites might answer some of your questions:

<https://www.ncvo.org.uk/ncvo-volunteering/volunteering-and-benefits>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/volunteering-and-claiming-benefits>

<https://www.benefitsandwork.co.uk/>

Q. When will I get training?

A. The training consists of 4 full days, provided by With-You who are providing high quality training to peer workers around the UK. They will be providing the first 4 introductory sessions of their 8 session National Competency Training and completing it means you will have advanced standing for a later time. The training will be online, so you will need access to WiFi and a suitable device, but we may be able to help with this.

Q. Will I be paid to attend training?

A. You won't be paid to attend training, however it is an investment in you, and will ensure you are ready for peer buddying, help future employment prospects and give you personal development skills.

Q. Once I am volunteering is it essential to attend the group and individual Supervision sessions?

A. Yes we would expect you to attend 70% of supervision sessions. By sharing our experiences of volunteering as peer buddies we all learn from each other and we can help each other get clear about any challenging work situations. It's a great way to learn and to ensure you feel confident with this volunteering role.

Q. If I have further questions, who do I ask?

A. On Monday, Tuesday & Wednesdays you can contact Satoko.fujishiro@islingtonmind.org.uk 07526 692 507.

If you have not registered your interest in becoming a buddy yet you can do that here and we will notify you when the next training is planned: <https://tinyurl.com/peerbud>