

Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service

Questions and Answers about Volunteering On The Connect Telephone Helpline

What kind of place is Dial House?

Leeds Survivor Led Crisis Service is based at Dial House. It is a welcoming, friendly house for people in times of mental health crisis.

What kind of work will I be doing?

You will support people by offering telephone support on our helpline, Connect.

The Connect helpline supports people who are in emotional distress, in crisis, lonely and need to talk or needing information about other sources of support.

Do I need special qualifications?

No. We are looking for people who are good at listening and who can support others through difficult times, and who share our commitment to survivor-led services. Experience of supporting people in distress would be an advantage but is not essential.

What training will I receive?

You need to successfully complete a 24-hour induction training program in order to start giving telephone support. The training provides in depth training on supporting callers who are in distress. Self awareness, boundaries and a learning journal are also part of the course. .

Will I work on my own?

All Connect volunteers will work alongside a shift supervisor and other volunteers on shift.

What support will I get?

You will have space to talk about every call you take with the shift supervisor and there will be a team debrief at the end of shift. All volunteers are required to attend group supervision meetings where you can talk in detail about any concerns you have. These take place for 1 ½ hours every 6 weeks. This is an opportunity for you to meet other volunteers and discuss your practice and development in a reflective and supportive space.

What hours would I work?

Connect is open 7 evenings a week. We need volunteers to commit to one evening a week. You can choose which shift you would like to work on either the early shift 5.30 – 8.30pm (taking calls from 6pm – 8.15) or 8pm – 11pm (taking calls from 8.30pm – 10.30pm). A debrief takes place before and after calls.

Can I still be a volunteer if I have had mental health problems of my own?

Yes. We are keen to recruit people who have their own experiences of crisis to bring to their work.

Anything you choose to tell us about your own experience of crisis will be kept confidential. We do not recount our own experiences to people using the service, as we are here to support their experiences.

We do ask people who are applying who have current mental health problems to think about how they might cope with distressing stories from callers or visitors, and would this affect their capacity to support others.

Is Dial House accessible to people with a disability?

The house is on three levels. Connect can be run from the ground floor on weekday evenings if a volunteer or shift supervisor is unable to use the stairs.

Will I be given travel expenses?

Yes. Public transport fares within the Leeds area will be refunded, as will mileage for car drivers. We can also give you travel expenses for walking/cycling to the service! In winter after both the early and late shifts we can offer a taxi home on our account for those who need it; in summer this is available after only the late shift.

For more information please contact the service on 0113 2609328 or visit our website on www.lslcs.org.uk.