

CAMBRIDGE ACORN PROJECT



Every child and young person should be able to aim for the stars

Volunteer Pack: Peer Support Volunteer

Description of Role:

At Cambridge Acorn Project we believe that people with lived experiences of mental health issues, including trauma and adverse life course experiences, have a key role to play in supporting the mental health of others.

As a result, we are looking to train and support (through ongoing supervision) a cohort of peer-to-peer volunteers. Peer volunteers will support our street-level drop ins and help to sustain and develop these vital groups. We currently have community drop ins located within Cambridge, Huntingdon, and Soham. These provide support to families, children and young people around a variety of presenting issues in a safe and confidential setting.

This role builds on our inequality work, utilising the principles of therapeutic engagement and building safe, trusting relationships with families and children to work on practical issues in the here and now. It has a dual focus on tackling inequality whilst also providing emotional support and empathy through shared experience.

In order to support our volunteers to deliver peer to peer skills, part of the training of this role is provided by an external provider as well as training provided by Cambridge Acorn Project. The training schedule involves online training, spread across three months, so this would be an important consideration in terms of your time commitment and flexibility.

The Difference YOU could make:

Through this role you will play a vital role in tackling living inequality on the frontline. By engaging with families, offering emotional support alongside key practical tasks you will be playing a vital role. This will help to combat inequality and, alongside that, support the development of a new, innovative, model of practice to help challenge deep and structural injustices.

Group information:

The role involves supporting at one of our drop-in sessions. The sessions from September are:

Huntingdon: 'Moody Mondays'- Mon 9.15am-11.30am at The Coneygear Centre PE29 1PE

Soham: 'Tea, Toast and Chat'- Tues 9.15am-10.30am at Children's Centre, CB7 5BH

Cambridge: 'Frazzled Friday'- Fri 9am-11am at The Hub, 15 Barnwell Road CB5 8RG

Cambridge Acorn Project: Future Business Centre, King's Hedges Road, Cambridge, CB4 2HY

Registered Charity Number: 1175019 Company number: 9187469

www.cambridgeacornproject.org.uk



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Please note: We also have new groups starting in September in Cambridge and South Cambs.

Person Specification:

The person specification for this role is outlined below but the right values and the right approach to working with children and families are more important to us than formal qualifications. However, some form of experience of working directly with families, children and/or other disadvantaged groups would be an advantage but not a necessity. Similarly, lived experience of the issues involved would be an advantage.

The specific interpersonal skills we will be looking for in peer to peer volunteers are:

- A commitment to the principles of equality, social justice and fairness. These will be explored through a values-based interview.
- Flexibility and commitment to the training process.
- Lived experience of mental health issues with self or others.
- Good verbal communication skills and experience of engaging with young people and families (this could be as a parent yourself, for example).
- Very high level of personal empathy and self-awareness.
- The ability to engage and work safely with vulnerable families and young people.
- Ability to work as part of a team.
- Ability to follow safeguarding procedures and report concerns using the appropriate channels. Full training will be given on this.
- An awareness of boundaries and confidentiality.
- Ability to reflect and demonstrate self-awareness.
- A non-judgmental approach.
- An understanding of, and commitment to, frontline ethical practice – namely to promote equality and fairness for children and young people whilst working in a safe way.
- A strong and evidenced commitment to safe practice.
- A willingness to participate in the learning culture of the organisation.
- An understanding of disadvantage and vulnerability and how these impact upon inequality.

In order to apply for this volunteering role please fill in an application form and send to:
hannah.chapman@cambridgeacornproject.org.uk

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Please also contact us if you would like an informal conversation regarding this role or if you would like an accessible version of this role description.

Safeguarding

Safeguarding is at the heart of Cambridge Acorn Project including our safe recruitment processes. We undertake safe recruitment checks on anyone who wants to volunteer with us as we work with children and adults at risk. This means that all our roles which have contact with services users or access to sensitive information, including this position, require an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check as well as two references. Please note, as part of our commitment to safeguarding, we include value-based questions in our interview. For more information on our approach to safeguarding please refer to: <https://www.cambridgeacornproject.org.uk/termservice>

Our commitment to diversity and inclusion

Cambridge Acorn Project believes in a world that is equitable, safe, and free from abuse and coercion and we apply these principles to every part of our organisation fostering equality and inclusion in everything we do. We promote a culture of respect and a sense of belonging for all staff, volunteers, and service users where everyone is free to be themselves. We value lived experience, and we welcome applications from people with marginalised identities or experiences. Cambridge Acorn Project is a warm, flexible, and supportive organisation, and we want to work within a diverse collegiate team where everyone's opinion and experience matters, and everyone has a voice.

We would be happy to make access adjustments as needed for interviews (and in the workplace). Please indicate your access needs for interview on the application form or, if you would prefer to speak to us directly, contact Hannah Chapman hannah.chapman@cambridgeacornproject.org.uk If you require the volunteer pack and/or application in an alternative format please contact us on the email above.

Data Protection

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Cambridge Acorn Project processes data in line with The Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR. For more information, please see our website:

<https://www.cambridgeacornproject.org.uk/termservice>