



Capital Volunteering: Supported Volunteering Project

Background to the project

Capital Volunteering tackles issues of mental health and social exclusion by increasing the number and range of supported volunteering opportunities in London. It aims to help people with serious mental health issues to volunteer in a wide range of settings, thereby increasing their confidence, skills, social networks and employability. It also aims to support volunteers to act as social sponsors or buddies to people with serious mental health issues.

As part of the North East London Mental Health Trust (NELMHT) Waltham Forest mental health services offer mental health care to approximately 2600 people who are cared for on the enhanced or standard level of the Care Programme Approach (CPA), meaning that they have complex needs and a range of professionals are involved in their care.

Capital Volunteering is a 3 year pan-London programme in partnership with Community Service Volunteers, the National Institute for Mental Health and four London Mental Health Trusts including NELMHT. This project aims to reduce the reliance of people with mental health problems on intensive acute and secondary mental health services by creating a new skills foundation, strengthening the preventative and self-help elements of mental health service delivery, by engaging with communities and through the active involvement of volunteers. The ultimate goal is to give every person cared for under the Care Programme Approach the choice and opportunity to volunteer or to be matched with a volunteer.

Key Aims of the Project

The key aims of this project are to increase the capacity and opportunities of people with mental health problems to volunteer and be supported in their volunteering. The aims of the Supported Volunteering Project is to develop a supported volunteering scheme at VCWF getting people with severe mental health problems to volunteer and then supporting them into, and in, their volunteering

Local Objectives

Developing opportunities

- Build upon the existing VCWF database to develop a diverse range of voluntary opportunities
- Assist VCWF project staff to develop the capacity of voluntary sector to involve and support volunteers with mental health problems
- Increase volunteer opportunities for all people to help within organisations that work with mental health problems

Promoting Volunteering (Organisations)

- Hold outreach sessions at different mental health service venues for one to one advice/introduction to volunteering training
- Attend Step4ward meetings to promote Capital Volunteering where the project is promoted as part of care packages. (depending upon frequency of meetings)
- Ensure that accurate up to date information on volunteering opportunities is available at Step4ward meetings

Supported Volunteering & Brokerage (Individuals)

- Provide one to one advice sessions to give advice about volunteering opportunities
- Offer additional support to help volunteers start their volunteering e.g. accompany to first meeting, offering a volunteer 'buddy'
- Offer support throughout the person's time as a volunteer either through one to one advice, or promoting other support initiatives
- Promote and support group support sessions

Good Practice Work

- Identify and address barriers people with mental health problems may face in accessing volunteering opportunities
- Support and develop systems of supporting people with mental health problems into their placements and for follow up e.g. advice sessions, coffee mornings, user led volunteer support groups

Training and Development

- Develop and promote training schemes for volunteers

Promoting Partnership

- Promote the services offered to volunteer involving organisations by the Volunteer Centre Waltham Forest through a Volunteer Managers Forum
- Actively promote the work of Capital Volunteering partner agencies and voluntary sector mental health projects with particular emphasis on those supporting BME communities