

## SANE Services Volunteer Role Description



**Title:** SANE Services Volunteer

**Supported by:** SANE Co-ordinators/Supervisors/Volunteer Welfare Officer

**Main purpose:** Respond empathically and supportively to the needs of SANE service users. Provide emotional support and information. Explore options for action and/or sources of relevant support. Record details of contact on appropriate database.

### Relating to service users - skills required

- Ability to 'listen' to service users; via telephone, text, social media, Support Forum
- Ability to identify and respond to the explicit and implicit content of a presentation, eg the difference between the factual content ('story') and the emotional content
- Ability to respond to service users with warmth, understanding, respect and empathy
- Ability to explore realistic options and constructive steps with service user
- Ability to respond to service users without making assumptions or being directive
- Ability to understand whether a response needs to be focused clearly, summarised and contained, or opened up to exploration, depending on the needs of the service user
- Ability to understand and apply appropriate boundaries to interaction with service users
- Ability to communicate clearly in plain understandable and grammatically correct English
- Ability to provide relevant information to service users based on needs identified

### Assessment and development of practice – skills required

- Ability to use the support of SANE staff as appropriate
- Ability to receive and utilise feedback from SANE staff
- Ability to utilise self-assessment to complement feedback from SANE staff and contribute to self-development and practice development
- Ability to communicate with the Volunteer Welfare Officer or other appropriate staff re changes to rota in a timely and flexible way and/or to discuss changes in circumstances that may affect practice or attendance at shifts

### Use of databases – skills required

- Ability to use the SANE Information Database confidently where appropriate to provide information about local services
- Ability to record contact with service users on the relevant database

## **Knowledge and understanding**

- A basic working knowledge and understanding of the mental health system and the roles and functions of different organisations and professionals
- A basic working knowledge and understanding of mental illnesses and treatment options, both medical and non-medical
- A basic working knowledge of mental health legislation as it applies to day-to-day practice
- To have a clear understanding of the principle of confidentiality and all of SANE's policies and procedures

## **Personal qualities**

- Ability to convey warmth and empathy
- Ability to be aware of one's own emotional needs and responses, ie self-awareness and insight into one's own processes
- Ability to identify and empathise with the emotional needs and responses of others
- Ability to understand how one's own emotions and responses may influence reaction/response to service users
- Personal stability and robustness, with the ability to identify one's own support needs as necessary in order to provide the quality of service and response required by service users
- Reliability, flexibility and punctuality

## **Times and commitment**

Experience demonstrates that SANE, SANE's services users and SANE volunteers gain most from the volunteering experience when it extends over a period of time.

Volunteers who remain with SANE for a year or more gain more experience, learn most from the range of service users and circumstances encountered and provide very valuable feedback about SANE's training, development and support procedures.

SANE's service users in turn gain enormously from responses provided by experienced and committed volunteers.

## **Training**

Full training and ongoing support is provided.