**Peer researcher role description**

Do you have a lived experience of substance use and want to use this experience to help others?

Scottish Drugs Forum (SDF) are looking for people with lived experience to become peer researchers in East Dunbartonshire.

People with a history of substance use understand the issues that those currently using substances face. We aim to involve people with lived experience in all of our work, one of the ways we do this is through our peer research. Peer research is a key area of our volunteering programme.

Peer research is research carried out by people who have a history of substance use. Service users feel more comfortable with peer researchers, as they know they are understood, and are more likely to participate in research.

Peer research can involve a number of different activities, including running focus groups, designing questionnaires, mystery shopping and interviewing service users.

SDF peer researchers are involved in every step of the research, from designing the research tools, collecting data, analysing data, to reporting on the findings to decision makers.

Full training and support is provided to give you the skills and confidence needed to carry out the research role.

**Peer Researcher Role Qualities:**

Applicants for peer research roles are expected to possess the following qualities:

* A desire to help others
* Good listening skills
* Non judgemental
* Motivated to learn new skills
* Lived experience of substance use
* An interest in improving or influencing service provision
* Able to maintain a commitment to the group
* Good time keeping

**What you could gain:**

You’ll be trained in peer research and gain knowledge and skills on how to design and run research projects. You will gain skills in data analysis, and have opportunities to present the findings of the projects to decision makers. By being involved as a Peer Researcher you’ll attend a variety of events and meet lots of new people. You’ll also have the satisfaction of knowing that you are helping to improve services for people who use substances across Scotland.

You will also have access to other training opportunities with SDF such as:

Naloxone, Harm Reduction, Hepatitis C, Sexual and Reproductive Health, New Psychoactive Substances, Emergency Responses and Work Force Development modules.

Volunteers may also be given the opportunity to carry out training through other organisations and to attend SDF conferences and events as a member of SDF.

**Recruitment:**

The recruitment process will give you an opportunity to learn more about the role and decide whether it is the type of opportunity you are looking for.

*Recruitment Stages:*

1. Speak to SDF staff for an informal chat about the role – or come along to our information day on Wednesday 13th December 10am-1pm at the East Dunbartonshire Voluntary Action offices in Kirkintilloch
2. Complete and return a short application form (we are happy to provide assistance with this).
3. Attend an individual or group interview
4. After the interview, you will be informed if you have been successful in becoming a volunteer peer researcher. If we feel that your skills and experiences would be suited more to a different role with SDF we will discuss this with you.
5. PVG discussion and references sent away for
6. Induction and training

**Training and support:**

Allour volunteers will receive a standard induction which introduces you to Scottish Drugs Forum, our values, and how we work. The induction also covers information about substance use and introduces topics such as confidentiality and boundaries.

Induction and training will take place in January 2018.

You will then go on to undertake specific peer research training, covering topics such as research methods, group work skills, data analysis, listening skills, boundaries, questionnaire design, interview techniques.

You will also have access to other internal and external training opportunities.

You will be given a named person in SDF who will provide you with regular support.

**Expenses:**

Activities related to this role will usually take place either during the day, or in the early evening, and travel may be required. SDF wants to make sure that you are not left out of pocket through volunteering with us so all reasonable expenses will be reimbursed. Travel, food costs etc. should be agreed in advance with your main contact at SDF in line with the SDF expenses policy.

**Time Commitment:**

This role will require regular activity, approximately one day a week**.** This could be less during some times of the year and more during data collection periods and in the run up to deadlines for reports. Again, this will be flexible to your needs and availability.

**Location:**

As a Peer researcher you will be mainly active in your local area and you and your named contact will discuss how far you are willing to travel. There may also be national events or meeting that you will be invited to, this is likely to be only a few times a year. You may also be asked if you are interested in other projects in different localities, this is completely for you to decide if this is something you want to do.

**Protection of Vulnerable Groups:**

The role of a peer researcher sometimes involves working 1-1 with vulnerable adults. To keep volunteers and people we are working with safe, we require all our peer researchers to go through a Protection of Vulnerable Groups check (PVG).

We have a lot of experience of guiding people through the PVG system who have previous convictions and dealing with this sensitively and discreetly. Having a criminal record will not necessarily bar an individual from volunteering with us. This will depend on the nature of the position / role and the circumstances and background of the offences. If you are concerned about obtaining a PVG please speak to us.

If you do not wish to go through the PVG process then this role may not be suitable for you – please speak to us and we will help guide you to other roles.

**For general information about volunteering with SDF please contact the Volunteer Coordinator, Rebekah Moore, 0141 211 1175, rebekahm@sdf.org.uk**