

Volunteer Roles



Volunteer Befriender

About Mencap Liverpool

Mencap Liverpool is a small, local charity supporting people with a learning disability, their families, friends and carers in Liverpool. We are affiliated to the national charity Mencap, but are a separately run organisation; we are completely self-governed and have to raise all our own money.

Our vision is a world where people with a learning disability are valued equally, listened to and included.

Volunteers are essential to the targets on our strategic plan, from advocacy to befriending activities. Many of our values and beliefs can only be upheld through volunteering, both in our office and out in the community.

Volunteer Befriender Role

As a volunteer befriender, your role consists of linking up and going out with a person with a learning disability. The things you would do together are always social, and include anything from going to a football match, the cinema, a swimming class, to just going to the cafe for a cup of tea or a bite to eat. The aim of Mencap Liverpool's befriending project is to:

- Reduce social isolation
- Increase the independence and confidence of individuals with a learning disability
- Enable people with a learning disability to fully access their local communities

Volunteer Requirements

As a volunteer befriender, you **MUST** display the following qualities:

- A friendly and approachable manner
- Reliability
- An interest in others
- Patience
- Ability to use initiative and work autonomously
- Acceptance of others who might be different to yourself
- A willingness to work within guidelines and to take direction where necessary

We also ask that all our volunteer befrienders are aged 19 and above. This is because the people involved in our befriending project are generally older than this, and we take to make suitable and appropriate matches.

Timing/Commitment

- Volunteer befrienders must be able to commit to a minimum of one year from when they have started in the role, so they have enough time to develop a proper relationship with their befriended.
- Volunteer befrienders should be able to commit 1 or 2 hours every week/fortnight to meet with their befriended.

Volunteer befrienders are there to be an informal source of un-paid support, but are not required or to carry out any of the responsibilities that should be undertaken by paid support staff.

Volunteer Befriender Training and Support

Each volunteer befriender provides Mencap Liverpool with two character references and we also carry out an enhanced DBS check. Volunteer Befrienders undergo three training sessions so they are aware of exactly what the role entails and feel comfortable and confident in it.

Once in the role, each volunteer befriender also has regular review sessions with the Volunteer and Befriending Manager, who will provide support to both the volunteer befriender and their befriended.

Flexibility

We welcome volunteers who are willing to be flexible within their roles. Being a small organisation, it is important that volunteers are keen to get involved with all aspects of Mencap Liverpool where applicable and appropriate.

We value our volunteers and take care to match people to suitable roles.