

Family Support Volunteer

Role Description

Reports to: Family Support Service Manager, Team Leader or Coordinator

At Back Up we understand that spinal cord injury can be devastating but we believe it needn't prevent anyone from getting the most out of life. Volunteering with Back Up is centred around our values: **We embrace challenge, we have fun, we build inclusive communities and we are ambitious for each other.**

Purpose

The aim of this role is to help relatives (of newly injured people in particular) to feel understood and supported and to begin to see possibilities of a more positive, hopeful future after spinal cord injury.

Key tasks

- Support relatives' events through talking and participating in group sessions, talking to relatives about your own experiences, listening if they want to talk within the session, and outlining support available from Back Up and other organisations as appropriate.
- Work closely with, and provide regular feedback, to assist the Family Support Team to develop resources and support services.
- Be a role model and an ambassador for Back Up.

The person

- Empathetic – patient, sensitive and considerate of other's needs.
- Rapport builder: able to build encouraging and supportive connections, friendly, approachable & enthusiastic
- Strong communicator: Excellent interpersonal skills including communication, listening and reasoning, confident in speaking in front of a group.
- Inclusive: able to identify the needs of others, understanding of the range of issues that may come up, aware of group dynamics e.g. different injury levels, family roles,
- Respectful: maintains confidentiality adhering to data protection, equal opportunities and safeguarding policies and procedures.

- Self-aware: able to use personal experience in a helpful way for others, positive, comfortable handling emotionally sensitive information, able to manage potential risks and discuss concerns about someone's welfare or safeguarding straightaway, manages their own wellbeing knowing when to ask for support.

Experience and knowledge (desirable)

- Personal experience of/or has a family member who is a minimum of two years post injury.
- Knowledge and experience of the wide variety of ways that people react to and cope with spinal cord injury; together with understanding of how to establish boundaries and build rapport with other relatives.
- A close family member of someone with a spinal cord injury. (Previous or current experience as a Back Up Family Mentor is not a pre-requisite, but beneficial).
- Sound knowledge of Back Up services, vision, mission and values.

Time commitment

- Attend a 1-day training workshop with an overnight stay.
- Attending family support sessions, in person and/or virtually, for 3-4 hours per session, 1-8 times per year.

Support and opportunities provided

- Training will be given by attending a volunteer workshop, to support you as a Family Support Volunteer and to develop your skills to fulfil the role. Further development and training opportunities are offered annually
- Agreed expenses paid by Back Up
- Support and guidance from Family Support Team and other Back Up staff where applicable
- The chance to work as part of a dynamic team and to have a real impact on family members at an early stage, and to link them in with a lifelong network of support.

Safer recruitment

Back Up has safer recruitment procedures in place to manage risk when volunteers are working with children, young people and/or vulnerable adults. This role is subject to a compulsory standard regional criminal records check and reference checks.

Spinal Cord Injury Centres may have their own volunteer onboarding processes to be completed prior to volunteering on behalf of Back Up.



Please note you will not be providing any individual support to people outside of a family support session and will not be sharing your personal contact details with attendees.