

## Volunteer Nurse/PA Role Description

Reports to: **Courses Team Leader**

On the course reports to Lead Carer then Group Leaders then Courses Team Leader

### Purpose

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. The aim of our volunteer nurses and PAs is to encourage and support Back Up course participants to increase their confidence and independence by:

- meeting any personal care needs, enabling participants to feel well, comfortable, and fully able to participate
- providing a safe and supportive environment for people to develop their skills, to make life easier at home

### Our values

Volunteering with Back Up, as with everything we do, takes place in the context of our values:

- We embrace challenge
- We have fun
- We build inclusive communities
- We are ambitious for each other

### Key tasks

- **Meeting personal care needs**
  - Offer support and encouragement prior to and during the course to help participant(s) feel reassured and comfortable about using assistance.
  - Be someone to turn to on the course if participants need a listening ear or have a medical or care issue (be on call around the clock for emergencies).
  - Assist individual participant(s) with all aspects of care as needed: bathing, toileting, dressing, skin checks, transfers. This may involve morning/evening routines as well as ad hoc assistance during the day. Ensure that you have any kit you may need available at all times.
  - Support participants to take responsibility and be in control of their care as well as general safety/wellbeing (e.g. body temperature, skin condition).
  - Work in partnership with participants to look out for any problems such as infections, Autonomic Dysreflexia, marks on skin.
  - Support participants with other tasks as needed, e.g. medication/organising kit/meals, ensuring that this is always under their direction (do not take overall control/responsibility).

Encourage and support them to use help from others (e.g. buddies/each-other) wherever possible

- **Supporting participants to develop their skills**

- Use your skills and experience to help support and advise people about ways they could be more independent, either physically or verbally. This may mean trying things for themselves and/or getting more comfortable with instructing others to help them – you and others.
- Encourage problem solving & discuss new approaches to their activities of daily living where appropriate (e.g. transfers), working in partnership with the participant and maybe Wheelchair Skills Trainers / other members of the group, to find solutions in a safe and empowering way
- Use your skills and experience to provide care-related hints and tips to make life easier at home.

- **Contributing to the positive experience of the group as a whole**

- Work as part of a team – work together with others, communicate, help out and muck in generally, to help things run smoother on the course
- Contribute to a positive atmosphere/experience for ALL participants and the wider group
- Look after your own health & safety and wellbeing and that of others. For manual handling in particular, be prepared to give practical demonstrations and use your experience to look out for everybody - safety first!
- Work within your training & capabilities; liaise with participant and Lead Carer to get advice and regarding any potential concerns.
- Be a part of the group and participate in general activities. You, like all group members, are there to get involved, learn, stretch yourself, and have fun!
- Be a source of information; share your knowledge about SCI / care with other group members as appropriate.
- (Nurses) – be on call in case of medical emergency for the whole group including possible catheter changes

## The Person

- Able to empathise with others – patient, sensitive and considerate
- Encouraging, supportive and perceptive - able to identify the needs of others, help individuals identify, achieve and exceed their own goals
- Excellent interpersonal skills including communication, listening and problem solving
- Team player: able to work with others including people from all walks of life. Keen to ‘muck in’ and participate. Able to work with, support and respect the authority of the Group Leaders

- Friendly, approachable, encouraging and enthusiastic with a good sense of humour
- Honest and open
- Highly organised, a good time-keeper, reliable.
- Keen to learn, flexible and adaptable to new environments and ways of working.
- Respectful and able to keep information confidential (but willing to share information as appropriate to get the support you need)
- Understanding of equal opportunities, confidentiality and data protection

## Experience and Knowledge

- **Care skills:** Either: Registered Nurse – spinal cord injury experience and knowledge is preferable.  
Or: Trained PA/HCA able to recognise and deal with spinal cord injury-related care.
- **Essential skills:** (which have been practised within the last 12 months):
  - Bowel management: digital evacuation / insertion of suppositories / digital stimulation / Peristeen
  - Bladder management
  - Skin care/checks
  - Moving and Handling
  - Autonomic Dysreflexia: awareness and knowledge of how to respond
  - Assistance in activities of daily living
- **Desirable skills:** (which have been practised within the last 12 months):
  - Catheter changes: male urethral / female urethral / suprapubic
  - Working with children / young people (for Under 18s courses)
  - Ventilator Management
- **Interests** - If you are interested in developing yourself (both personally and professionally), are prepared to work hard, enjoy meeting new people, sharing experiences, experiencing new challenges, and are passionate about making a difference to people's lives, then you would love being a volunteer nurse or PA on a Back Up course!

## Time Commitment

- Attending a Back Up course as available

## Support and opportunities provided

- Agreed expenses paid by Back Up
- Support and guidance from Courses Team, other course volunteers and other Back Up staff as applicable

- The chance to work as part of a dynamic team and to have a real impact on the lives of Course attendees at any stage after their injury, and to link them in with a lifelong network of support.

### Other information

Back Up has safer recruitment procedures in place to manage risk when staff and volunteers are working with children, young people and vulnerable adults. This role is subject to an enhanced DBS check and reference checks.