

Help us improve
mental health and
make a difference
to someone's life...

Get involved
with

SelfHelp 

Improving mental health





A quick guide to volunteering and involvement with Self Help

How will I make a difference?

Volunteering with Self Help can be a rewarding and worthwhile experience. You can make a real difference by helping to improve mental health and giving something back to your local community.

What can I expect?

As a volunteer, you should get:

- the chance to help improve mental health
- training and support
- the opportunity to improve your skills
- reimbursement of expenses related to your volunteering

Who can volunteer?

People of all ages and backgrounds can have the opportunity to volunteer with Self Help. We welcome applications from everyone and will do our best to find a role that suits you.

What opportunities are available?

Volunteers carry out many different roles, such as:

- eTherapy support volunteer
- Peer to Peer mentors
- Administration support
- Group host

How do I get involved or volunteer?

Contact our volunteering and involvement team on 0161 226 3871 or email volunteering@selfhelpservices.org.uk. Visit www.selfhelpservices.org.uk/get-involved to download an application form and view all of the volunteering and involvement opportunities we currently have available.

Why volunteer?

If you want to...

- **give something back**
- **make a difference to the people around you**
- **learn new skills and gain useful experience**
- **meet new people**
- **improve wellbeing**
- **gain confidence and self-esteem**

... then volunteer with Self Help.

Through volunteering, you can play a valuable part in our organisation and in the lives of our service users. Help us to improve mental health and improve the day-to-day experience of people who are experiencing mental health difficulties.

Did you know?

- About a quarter of the population will experience some kind of mental health problem in the course of a year, with mixed anxiety and depression the most common mental health problem in Britain
- Women are more likely to have been treated for a mental health problem than men and about ten percent of children have a mental health problem at any one time
- Depression affects 1 in 5 older people
- Suicide rates show that British men are three times as likely to die by suicide than British women and self-harm statistics for the UK show one of the highest rates in Europe: 400 per 100,000 population

About Self Help

Self Help is a user-led mental health charity based in the North of England.

Every year, one in four of us will experience a mental health problem. Self Help believe no-one should have to face this alone. We are here to provide the support, advice, tools and techniques you need to help you take control of your life.



We believe in people having a choice in mental health care and we value the experiences of those who have had a mental health difficulty at some point in their life.

A lot of our work is funded by local health authorities, who pay us to provide high quality services across the North of England. We also raise money for special projects by applying to trusts and other grant-making bodies.

At least 60% of our staff have personal experience of mental health problems

Self Help is part of The Big Life group, the largest social enterprise group in the country. Everything Big Life does is driven by the need to help people change their lives, however small or large those changes might be. Our work is overseen by the Big Life group Board of Trustees.

Who volunteers

People of all ages and backgrounds can have the opportunity to volunteer with Self Help. We welcome applications from everyone and will do our best to find a role that suits you.

People of all ages

There is no lower or upper legal age restriction on volunteering, although you do need to be over 18 for some volunteer roles, like providing peer support.

People from all backgrounds

Self Help promotes equality and diversity and welcomes volunteers from all cultural, racial and ethnic backgrounds. Volunteers who have a disability are supported by Self Help. As a user-led organisation, many of our staff and volunteers have personal experience of mental health issues. This is what makes our charity so unique – people using their own personal experiences to help support others.

How much of my time will it take?

You don't necessarily need to give up a great deal of your time – it depends on what role you volunteer for. For some roles you may need to commit to a certain length of time, even if you only volunteer for a few hours a month. Give as little or as much time as you would like to.



Skills

The following skills and qualities are useful when volunteering:

- the ability to maintain confidentiality
- sensitivity, patience and tact
- the ability to work as part of a team
- commitment, reliability and flexibility
- a non-judgemental attitude
- enthusiasm and a positive outlook
- good communication skills

Our commitment to you

Aside from knowing that you've made a difference to improve mental health within your community, there are other benefits to volunteering and involvement.

Training

All of our volunteers, placement students and staff complete an induction in the relevant area. A wide range of training opportunities are also available. This includes our mandatory training package – Big Life Core Values - for all staff and volunteers of Self Help which covers the following topics:

- Mission and values
- Equal opportunities and diversity
- Professional boundaries
- Safeguarding
- Managing challenging behaviour

Additional training for each individual role is also provided.

Support and supervision

Regular supervision is provided across volunteering and paid opportunities at Self Help.

Additional support is also available through access to the Community Services Peer Support Group which meets on a monthly basis. We work in an

environment which at times can be demanding and stressful. The group aims to facilitate mutual emotional peer support between our staff and volunteers in a safe and supportive environment.

Expenses

Self Help are able to reimburse travel expenses for all of our volunteers. Full details about claiming for expenses are provided during induction.



What opportunities are available?

There are lots of ways to get involved and volunteer with Self Help. Take a look through the opportunities we have available below – what do you like the sound of?

eTherapy Support Volunteer

In this role, you have the opportunity to oversee eTherapy sessions and support clients as they complete an online package designed to help improve their mental health. This is an excellent opportunity to gain a valuable insight into working with clients experiencing depression and anxiety. No previous experience or qualifications are needed.

Peer Mentor

Volunteers in this role support clients of Self Help on a one-to-one basis by using their own personal knowledge and lived experience of mental health problems. Peer Mentors provide emotional and practical support to individuals who are on a journey of recovery.

Sanctuary Volunteer

Our Sanctuary Volunteer roles provide the opportunity for people to be part of a 24-hour mental health crisis support service. This is a challenging and rewarding role where volunteers can work in our Sanctuaries in Manchester, Bolton and Wigan and Leigh, or in our central office follow-up service, working alongside staff to provide support when people are at their most vulnerable. This is a great opportunity for people to use their personal experience, knowledge and listening skills to make a real difference.

Events Volunteer

This is an exciting opportunity to utilise and develop your skills in events and promotion. Events volunteers support us at promotional and celebratory events whilst also helping us to prepare and plan for these activities. Working alongside paid staff, this is a good opportunity for those who might be unable to commit to a regular role but would still like to make a difference.

Drop-in Group Volunteer

This role provides an excellent opportunity for existing drop-in group members to make the first steps towards volunteering. Volunteers in this role are invaluable as they can share their experiences with peers to improve the lives of others, whilst also developing their own skills and awareness of mental health services. Duties include welcoming new clients and explaining how the groups work, providing assistance in the preparation of refreshments as well as prepping and tidying of the group room.



Admin Volunteer

Our Admin Volunteer roles provide the opportunity to gain some valuable office-based experience at Self Help. Tasks can include dealing with telephone enquires, data input, assisting with the preparation of documents, photocopying and scanning. This is also a great opportunity for anyone wanting to return to the workplace and get familiar with working in an office environment.

Connect Volunteer

Volunteers in this role use their skills and experience to support new clients of Self Help to make the first steps towards accessing relevant and appropriate services. Our Connect Volunteers are crucial in offering support and recovery guidance to individuals experiencing common mental health problems.

All of our volunteers are given a full induction and training package tailored to each individual role. There is also plenty of support available in all of the roles including regular supervisions and access to the Community Services Peer Support Group. For more information see page 7

Placement opportunities

Volunteer Placement Shadowing opportunity

This is an opportunity for drop-in group members and new and existing volunteers to make the first steps towards paid facilitation of our drop-in groups. This placement provides an opportunity to share experience with peers and develop skills and awareness of group facilitation and mental health services. It also provides the opportunity to shadow and assist the drop-in group facilitators in the running of peer-led drop-in groups for two hours per session, up to a maximum of four sessions.

Social Work students

Working with Salford University, we provide placements for social work students across our organisation within our eTherapy and specialist services, including The Sanctuary. Students are given an excellent grounding in mental health and benefit from excellent induction and training opportunities. There is the opportunity to work on a one-to-one basis with clients, conducting reviews and assessments. By working with students in this way we facilitate participation in best practice in the field so students can take our values and ethics forward into their future careers.

Psychology placements

We work with Manchester University to provide short-term placements for students undertaking a psychology degree. Students are given induction and training and the opportunity to work within our eTherapy or Sanctuary services, supporting clients to access these services and having the opportunity to put theory into practice. Many of these short term placements turn into longer term volunteering opportunities and support students to progress in their careers.



Paid Opportunities

We also have a number of paid opportunities at entry-level which lots of our volunteers go on to secure. Take a look at the types of entry-level roles available below. We also have many other paid opportunities available to view on our website: www.selfhelpservices.org.uk.

Structured Course Facilitator

This is an exciting paid opportunity to facilitate weekly peer-led structured courses covering topics on mental wellbeing. It offers a chance to create a safe and welcoming environment for peers to share their experiences and learn tools and techniques in order to improve wellbeing. This role is available to individuals with experience of working with groups and/or delivering training. We encourage applications from those who have lived experience of a mental health problem.

Peer Support Worker

We regularly look to provide opportunities for people with lived experience to progress into paid roles as Peer Support Workers (PSWs). PSWs use their own lived experience as a template to help and inspire others to move away from distress and towards wellness. This role typically involves a combination of one-to-one peer mentoring and shorter-term connect/navigation support, as well as occasional group work. Personal history of mental distress as well as experience of getting and staying well around these challenges is essential. Experience of volunteering in a peer-based support role is also usually valuable (please see our Peer to Peer volunteering opportunities).

Drop-in Group Facilitator

An exciting paid opportunity, this role involves facilitating our weekly drop-in peer support groups. A chance to create a safe and welcoming environment for peers to share their experiences and facilitate mutual support around common mental health problems. This role is available to individuals with experience of working within a group setting who have lived experience of a mental health problem. Vacancies will be advertised on Self Help's website as they arise.



Involvement opportunities

Self Help values the involvement of service users, their friends and relatives, carers and local people. With their help, we can improve our understanding of different groups' needs, and tailor our services accordingly.

There are many ways in which individuals can become involved in the activities of Self Help.

DONUTS (Design Of New Unique Therapeutic Services) Group

A monthly "co-production" meeting that has a fairly formal structure. We discuss things around the design and development of our peer based services (Peer to Peer and Peer-led Self Help Groups), looking at how we run the services and what we might do to improve and develop them further.

The group is attended by people who are interested in how these services run – this includes service users that we have supported, volunteers, group facilitators, staff members, managers, professionals from other mental health services or public sector organisations. Attendance is optional for all who come along.

(SURF) Service User Reference Forum

Self Help is a user-led organisation and we are working to develop the SURF, a forum made up of users of our services who will work with senior managers to raise awareness and develop the profile of the Self Help and its services. This will be an exciting opportunity for users of our services to be involved with shaping and profiling the charity.

Service User Engagement Networks

As a user-led organisation, we are passionate about service user involvement in all areas. As a result, we are at times able to provide opportunities to work with a variety of external agencies to ensure that the service user voice is heard when it comes to mental health issues.

Next Steps - *How do I become a volunteer?*

If you would like to know more about the volunteering opportunities we can offer, then please contact us now.

We will send you an application form (also available on the website) so that you can register your interest and help us to find the right role for you.

Roles are dependent on location, so please let us know which area you are able to cover.

volunteering@selfhelpservices.org.uk

0161 226 3871

www.selfhelpservices.org.uk/get-involved

 [@WeAreSelfHelp](https://twitter.com/WeAreSelfHelp)

SelfHelp
Volunteering & Participation

Self Help is a registered charity (no. 1122063).. a Big Life charity.



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