



Best Start Project Peer Support Volunteers

Volunteer Role Description

About VODA

VODA is a registered charity that believes volunteers and community organisations change people's lives for the better. We provide support to volunteers and community organisations operating in North Tyneside.

About the 0 – 19 Childrens Public Health Service

A team of fully qualified, professional staff supporting and working with children, young people and families around a range of health topics, including infant feeding, growth, development, emotional and social wellbeing.

About the project

This is a project in North Tyneside led by VODA and supported by the 0 – 19 Childrens' Public Health Service and Public Health. When deciding whether to breastfeed or are considering stopping, mothers tend to talk over concerns with close friends or family. Unfortunately, due to a culture in the UK where few women breastfeed, social networks often lack positive breastfeeding experience.

The project aims to fill this gap by linking mothers who have parenting experience (peer supporters) to new mothers who may need the support, not just with breastfeeding, but with support around safe sleep, feeding, normal infant behavior and responsive parenting. The peer support will help to reduce parental isolation and give new parents an opportunity to meet other parents in their own community.

About This Role

Peer support is when people use their own experiences to help others with the aims to:

- Bring together people with shared experiences to support each other
- Provide a space where a person feels accepted and understood
- Treat everyone's experiences as being equally important
- Involve both giving and receiving support

In peer support everyone's views and experiences are equally valued, rather than anyone being seen as more of an expert.

Volunteer peer supporters for the Best Start Project will work closely with the 0 – 19 team and the infant feeding co-ordinator. They will volunteer in community venues supporting families with basic information sharing and support around:

- Infant feeding
- Safe sleep
- Coping with crying
- Normal newborn behaviour
- Emotional health
- Transition to parenthood

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- Signposting.

What we ask of you:

- a mother who has breastfeeding experience and who has a positive attitude towards breastfeeding OR have experience or knowledge supporting families with young babies or children
- willing to complete 12 modules of e learning on google classroom
- willing to have a DBS check done, in line with all staff and volunteers who work with, or have access to children and babies.
- Willing to complete safeguarding training
- Willing to attend regular peer support networking/up-date sessions
- Willing to commit to ongoing progression training

It would be great if you could also be:

- Enthusiastic about supporting families in the antenatal period
- Be caring
- Able to work well as part of a team
- Be a good communicator
- Accepting and understanding towards people from different social, religious and cultural backgrounds
- Be reliable and adaptable

Support for you

Volunteers will be able to access the following support from VODA and the 0-19 team:

- Training, mostly online with classroom support
- Telephone and email support at all times during your volunteering
- Reimbursement of any travel expenses incurred whilst volunteering
- Access to online guidance on Safeguarding and staying safe

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- All volunteers will be covered by VODA and North Tyneside Council's policies and procedures.
- Supervisions with the North Tyneside Infant Feeding Co-ordinator
- Group supervisions to review activities

COVID-19 Volunteering Guidance

We want all volunteers to feel safe and enjoy making a positive contribution. We ask all volunteers to follow these simple steps to ensure their safety and the safety of others.

Look After Yourself

- If you, or any members of your household, have any coronavirus symptoms you should not do any volunteering. Instead you should call or email us as soon as possible so we can cancel your volunteering and offer you any support you might need.
- Please wash your hands thoroughly (for at least 20 seconds) before and after carrying out your volunteering activity to help minimise any risk of infection. We can provide you with anti-bacterial hand wash.
- Only carry out tasks that have been agreed by VODA.
- Make sure someone knows your whereabouts at all times - ideally a friend or family member. Ask them to contact VODA if they have any concerns about your safety.
- Don't take on too much. Every little helps. If you find that you are no longer able to continue your volunteering please just let us know!
- If you need any help - just ask!

Look After Others

- If you have any concerns about someone's welfare don't try to handle the situation yourself. Pass on any concerns to VODA as soon as you can so we can take the appropriate action.
- If a situation feels risky, it probably is. Call off your volunteering and contact VODA straight away.

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- Keep people's personal information and circumstances confidential so as not to compromise their safety. Do not share people's details with friends and family or on social media.
- Do not offer advice unless you are trained to do so. Sometimes well-meaning advice can lead to negative consequences.
- If someone offers you a gift please politely decline it informing them that VODA has instructed you to do so.

Appendix:

Training course outline:

1. Attachment, brain development and responsive parenting
2. Human milk and the early days
3. Positioning and attachment
4. Common challenges, medications and when to refer
5. Safeguarding
6. Expressing milk and safe bottle feeding
7. Introducing solid foods
8. Safe sleep and perinatal mental health
9. Extended feeding and weaning
10. International code of marketing breastmilk substitutes

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