

Volunteer Group Leader Role Description

Reports to: **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 purpose of the group leader role is to be a joint leader on Back Up courses, to maximise the success of the course for all participants so that people affected by SCI are inspired to transform their lives; to challenge perceptions of disability; to aid participants to build confidence and independence and build a supportive network; to be first point of contact (jointly with a co-leader) for all individuals on a course including participants, buddies (including corporate volunteers), volunteer wheelchair skills trainers and volunteer nurses and PAs

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

- **Planning, preparing and starting the course**
 - Jointly planning and preparing for a successful course working closely with the Courses staff team and co-Group Leader (and other course volunteers as appropriate) using both phone and email
 - Beginning to build mutual understanding, trust and confidence and help reduce anxieties through:
 - pre-course telephone conversations with course participants and/or volunteers;
 - meeting and greeting people on arrival; and
 - providing a thorough welcome/briefing at the start of the course, ensuring everyone feels welcome, at ease and clear on what to expect
- **Leading the Course**
 - Supporting individuals to achieve and exceed their goals for the course:
 - taking time to get to know each group member and be available and approachable
 - helping individuals to identify problems or worries and 'nip them in the bud'

- sensitively encourage people in areas where they are less confident or have concerns
- being a role model, leading by example
- promoting learning and a positive atmosphere, through seeking and giving constructive feedback
- supporting and signposting people to other services that may help meet their needs, from Back Up or other organisations (e.g. SIA, Aspire, or SiS)
- Building a positive team that works together for everyone's benefit:
 - promoting a cohesive and inclusive group which everyone can enjoy being part of
 - promoting equality within the group; expecting, encouraging and enabling all group members to play an active role in activities and in the success of the group and the course as a whole
 - helping people to support each-other, share experiences and create shared memories
- Jointly with your co-Group Leader, ensure the smooth running of the course:
 - work in partnership with service providers and instructors where appropriate, to ensure everyone has regular guidance and information on their role, and expectations of them, including timetables and activities.
 - observing and listening, being aware of your surroundings, the people around you and the behaviour and feelings among the group
 - problem solving to deal with any issues in a timely and constructive way, listening to all parties involved. Liaising with service provider staff/volunteers and Back Up staff as needed
 - ensuring that risks are managed appropriately on the course, according to the course risk assessment, and in response to any situations that arise during the course
- **Rounding off and following up from the course**
 - With your co-Group Leader, conduct a group review meeting at the end of the course:
 - Ensuring people can reflect on their experiences and what they have learned, and consider how they can use the course to continue to create a positive impact on their life
 - Telling people about further opportunities/services to help them to maximise the impact
 - Completing corporate volunteer feedback through 121 debriefs with individual corporate volunteers
 - Jointly with your co-Group Leader, reporting back to Back Up staff on activities, facilities, group members and suggestions for future course development, to ensure the success of this and future courses
 - Work with the Courses Team Leader to review health and safety, risk and any recordable incidents (Some of which may require further reporting and follow up)

The Person

- **A 'people 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 reasoning
 - Friendly, approachable and enthusiastic with a good sense of humour
 - Respectful and able to keep information confidential

- **A team leader**
 - A confident and responsible team player **and** team leader
 - Able to share leadership and provide positive flexible support to a co-leader
 - Able to remain calm and deal with difficult situations under pressure
 - Strong organisational skills: able to delegate so group members take ownership of tasks
 - Able to manage a large group of diverse personalities
 - Good time-keeping, decisive but also flexible and adaptable
 - Assertive without being overbearing. Able to speak confidently in front of a group
 - Able to give and receive feedback and deal with concerns in a timely and sensitive way

- **A 'can do' attitude**
 - Positive and flexible: persevering when things are difficult
 - Ability to problem solve and enable others to identify solutions
 - Able to use personal experience in a helpful way for others

Experience and Knowledge (desirable)

- Previous Back Up course experience as a participant or buddy
- Sound knowledge of Back Up services, vision, mission and values

Time Commitment

- Attend a weekend training course
- Co-lead 1 course per year pending availability and opportunities

Support and opportunities provided

- Training will be given by attending a 2 day training workshop to support you as a Volunteer Group Leader 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 Courses 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 course participants, buddies and other volunteers 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.