Information for People Interested in Administration Volunteering at BDP

1 What work are Administration volunteers involved in?

Administration Volunteers are based in the Engagement team office at our central office in Brunswick Square. It can be a busy environment where staff and volunteers are in and out of the office and phones are ringing.

Tasks include:

- Data entry onto databases and Excel spreadsheets particularly around recording our work on Blood Borne Virus Testing and the delivery and use of Naloxone.
- Using Word, Excel and Outlook
- Photocopying when necessary

In this friendly shared office there will be plenty of support.

Administration volunteers are expected to attend training as and when necessary and to attend supervision sessions with the volunteer manager. We request a commitment of one 4 – 6 hour shift a week (which day to be arranged between you and the team) for at least 3 months.

2 Who can volunteer at BDP?

Anyone who would like to develop their administration skills and has an interest in issues surrounding drugs and alcohol. BDP is fully committed to the active promotion of equality of opportunity and to anti-discriminatory practice both as an employer and a service provider. We aim to have a volunteer workforce from a wide range of backgrounds, ages and experience.

We welcome people from diverse communities, applicants over 50 and disabled people as these groups are under-represented in our project. However, unfortunately we do not have full disabled access to all floors of the building (as it is listed).

If people have had experience of dependency issues we would welcome applications from them providing that they have had a significant period of stability. Individuals may still be vulnerable during this time and being exposed to actively ‘using or drinking’ service users can be uncomfortable or a relapse trigger. If you have been in treatment, prison or on probation or any substitute prescribing during the previous 6 months we would need to explore this with you. Similarly, if someone close to you is experiencing problematic drug or alcohol use, or you have been receiving services from BDP, this could create a conflict

in volunteering at the project. We ask for a period of 6 months without using our services prior to applying. Please discuss this with us if you are unsure.

3 What abilities and commitment do we look for in Administration Volunteers?

We are looking for:

- A good level of literacy, spelling and being comfortable with phone and computer use.
- Willingness and ability to learn about the issues surrounding drug and alcohol use.
- A non-judgemental approach
- Reliability
- Ability to respond appropriately in a crisis
- Ability to work as part of a team

We invest a great deal in our volunteers and therefore need people who can offer a shift every week for at least 2 months, so candidates must be committed.

BDP has always benefited from having a wide and diverse team of volunteers and workers. Experience of drug or alcohol misuse yourself, or up-to-date knowledge is not essential as full training is given and experienced workers will always be at hand. We hope that our volunteers will be interested in expanding their knowledge and be willing to learn.

We look for volunteers who have, or have the potential to develop attitudes to drug use that are compatible with BDP's operational philosophy of harm reduction.

4 What do Volunteers get from BDP?

BDP has gained a great deal of experience in working with volunteers over many years. You will learn about working in a team, in a harm reduction service, about issues effecting drug and alcohol users and communities.

Volunteering at BDP is also a chance to develop inter-personal skills and make a positive contribution to the community at large. Volunteers receive on-going support throughout their time at the project amidst a friendly and considerate team.

5 What is it like being a Volunteer?

Volunteers come to work at the project for a variety of reasons and gain many benefits. Here are some of their experiences of the project in their own words.

"With childcare and transport expenses covered it meant I could explore new ways of working and new skills without being financially compromised. It felt good to move from feeling isolated from the work routine to being a valued member of a busy team and to have regular commitment."

“It felt good to feel confidence in myself grow with increasing confidence in my work at BDP. It’s been an important and hugely enjoyable step in a change in lifestyle.”

“When I first started working as a volunteer I had only lived in Bristol for a few months. I had managed to find a job in a pub, but I was still very pleased to be able to gain some experience in a social care setting. I had no preconceptions as to where this work might lead me, but was correct in my assumption that it would be challenging, rewarding and valuable.”

“When I recently reviewed my first year at BDP I realised just how much I had gained. The most obvious benefit was that I had managed to get my first “proper” job - as the development worker of a small community drug project - because of my involvement with BDP.

“Being a volunteer at the project is to be involved in one of the cornerstones of BDP. The responsibilities that all volunteers carry are considerable and it’s definitely working at the sharp end. I think there will be always misconceptions of what voluntary work is, but I guess I’m almost proud to be involved with an organisation whose attitude to volunteers is so well defined and executed. Volunteers do the same work as paid staff and are expected to do it well. That is how it should be.”

“The support network running throughout BDP is another of the cornerstones of the project. When I first started I found it a lifeline, feeling so anxious and nervous about, well, everything I guess. It didn’t take me too long to settle in and feel that I could give that support as well as receive it. Being able to give and feel comfortable with it is something I’ve learnt since I’ve been here.”

“I feel I’ve only scratched the surface of what being a volunteer at BDP means to me. I still feel I do good work, I still want a paid job here and the people I work with are my friends as well as my colleagues. That sums it up really.”

6 What expenses are covered?

BDP will contribute towards travel, lunch and childcare expenses during the sessions you are working at the Project:

Lunch Expenses
If you work a full 6 hour session or all day you can claim for lunch – up to £4.50 per day.

Travelling Expenses
Your reasonable travel costs from home to BDP work place and return can be claimed (including petrol and bus fare). We can only pay travel costs within the Bristol area. If you need to travel from further a field, please discuss this at interview. We do not pay car-parking fees.

Childcare Expenses
If the child/children is/are attending a registered childminder, nursery or after school club, BDP will pay a maximum of £5 per hour per child, up to a maximum of £10 if there is more than one child.

7 How to fill in the application form

- Ask yourself why you are interested in becoming a volunteer for BDP.
- Consider all the relevant experience you have gained and show how you have the skills, knowledge and experience to do the job. Remember that unpaid work and work at home can be as valuable as paid work.
- When completing the section headed 'Personal Statement', please write about the abilities mentioned in Section 3 of this document.
- Please do not substitute your CV for a completed application form - only completed forms will be considered.
- It is a good idea to take a photocopy of the form and do a rough draft first, in order to avoid mistakes and repetitions.
- Check that all the dates are correct and in the right order.
- Make sure you complete the form clearly, typing it or using black ink
- Make sure you send your application in before the closing date and time
- If you are unsure about anything on the form, please do phone any of the volunteer managers for help.

8 What happens at the interview stage?

After the closing date the application forms are read carefully to see how each person's skills and experience relate to the skills and experience we are looking for. Applicants who meet these requirements are then invited for interview.

The interview panel is normally made up of two people who will be asking set questions covering key aspects of the job. The questions are intended to allow you to expand on your application and to show us how far you meet the requirements of the post. The panel has to keep a record of their assessment of each candidate so that the reasons for their decision are clear, consistent and justifiable. You should not, therefore, be worried about the panel taking notes.

You will have the opportunity at the end of the interview to ask questions about the job, conditions of service, etc.

If you have any further questions about voluntary work at BDP please do ring or call in and ask to speak to the volunteer manager.