



for better  
mental health

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# MindLine & MindLine Trans+ Training Information Pack

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# MindLine Training Information Pack

*Dear Prospective Applicant*

***Thank you for expressing an interest in volunteering for Bristol MindLine or Mindline Trans+***

The next volunteer training has been scheduled to take place February to March 2021, with introductory information sessions being held in January 2021.

Please take the time to read the information in this pack carefully. Included within are the following items:

- A description of the MindLine and Mindline Trans+ Volunteer role and the commitment expected of volunteers
- Information sheets and
- Training programme displaying dates, structure and content
- Changes to MindLine and MindLine Trans+ due to Covid 19

Hopefully, this should provide you enough detail to help you decide if you are interested in volunteering with us.

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## What next?

In advance of the training we are holding a number of information sessions, to provide potential trainees with an opportunity to find out more about the service and to help you make up your mind as to whether you wish to apply. Information on how to book a place on an information session is included within this pack.

***You must attend one of these information sessions in order to apply for the training.***

Places on the training are limited, so if after attending an information session you decide that you would like to apply, you will be invited to attend an interview and to bring with you a completed application form. You will be informed how to arrange this at the information session.

***Please be aware that we ask trainees to attend all of the training sessions\* in the programme below...it is therefore important that you do not book to attend an information session unless you will be able to subsequently attend every session of the full training.***

\*You only need to attend one of the information sessions.

Yours sincerely

*Liz, Kim, Hannah and Harry*

MindLine Co-ordinators & Assistant Co-ordinators

# MindLine Training Programme

The training venue is Bristol Mind, 35 Old Market Street, BS2 0EZ, please contact us for directions.

Date	Start	End	What?
<b>Training Recruitment Dates (prospective volunteers need only attend <u>one</u> Information session)</b>			
Tues 19 Jan 21	12:30pm	2:00pm	Introductory Information Session* (25 spaces)
Thu 21 Jan 21	6:30pm	8:00pm	Introductory Information Session* (25 spaces)
Mon 25 Jan 21	6:30pm	8:00pm	Introductory Information Session* (25 spaces)
<b>Training Dates (prospective volunteers must attend all sessions below)</b>			
Wed 24 Feb 21	6:45pm	9:00pm	The Essentials
Mon 1 Mar 21	9:30am	5:00pm	Counselling Skills 1
Wed 3 Nov 21	6:45pm	9:00pm	Beginnings and Endings
Mon 8 Mar 21	9:30am	5:00pm	Counselling Skills 2
Wed 10 Mar 21	AM	AM	Midway Reviews – time TBC
Wed 10 Mar 21	6:45pm	9:00pm	Self-Injury and Self-Harm
Mon 15 Mar 21	9:30am	5:00pm	Abuse
Wed 17 Mar 21	6:45pm	9:00pm	Diversity
Mon 22 Mar 21	9:30am	5:00pm	Policies
Wed 24 Mar 21	6:45pm	9:00pm	Trans+ Awareness Training
Mon 29 Mar 21	9:30am	5:00pm	Final Review and Induction for Successful Trainees
30 <sup>th</sup> Mar – 5 <sup>th</sup> Apr	6:30pm	8:30pm	Shadow Shift – date TBC (1 to be completed)

\* Each prospective volunteer need only attend one Information Session

## *Booking a place on an introductory information session*

It is essential to book a place and attend an information session if you wish to apply for the training. Please **do not** just turn up for an information session as space is limited. It is advisable to book early as places are limited.

Email [volunteering@bristolmind.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@bristolmind.org.uk) with your name, telephone number, email address, the date and time of the info session you wish to attend and the name of the service you wish to volunteer for (either MindLine or MindLine Trans+)

*Volunteers will be asked to:*

- Attend all initial and ongoing training (see training programme above).
- Staff the helpline once a fortnight for four hours for a minimum of one year after training.
- Take calls and offer support (and information when appropriate).
- Record information in line with the service's procedures.
- Participate in the monitoring of the service.
- Support fellow volunteers on the line.
- Take responsibility for covering shift if unable to work, and be open to the supervision process.
- Attend six weekly volunteer support groups.
- Receive supervision from staff during the following days of each shift worked (Volunteers without a contact landline telephone number for supervision sessions must be able to make the 45 minute call from their mobile).
- Work in accordance with all of Bristol Mind's principles and policies.
- To share in covering occasional Bank Holiday shifts including Christmas & New Year\*.
- Cover weekends\* – one shift out of three must cover a Friday, Saturday or Sunday evening

\*The exception to these rules being those volunteers who opt to exclusively work on the MindLine Trans+ Monday service.

*Note to Trans applicants*

- Trans+, Gender Fluid and Non-binary applicants are being actively sought to cover the Monday night Trans+ MindLine. If you are Trans and would also like to support the existing Mon-Sun MindLine service this option will also be available to you.

# MindLine Volunteering Commitment

*Volunteers will be asked to:*

- Respond to callers in a supportive, accepting and non-directive way.
- Ask for the support they need from co-workers on the line.
- Offer information over the line in a way that enables the caller to make their own informed choices.
- Keep up to date with information about services etc. through Bristol Mind's information system.
- Distance themselves from their own experiences and issues while working with callers.
- Have an awareness of the impact of the calls on themselves and work with these issues in supervision.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the reasons behind the policies that Bristol Mind employs.
- Respect the confidentiality rights of the caller. (Confidentiality Policy contained within this pack)
- Show a commitment to challenging all forms of oppression experienced in your involvement with Bristol Mind.

### *How and why a helpline?*

The helpline was set up by Bristol Mind in 1995 in response to research which showed that people using local mental health services wanted more 'out of hours' crisis support. The helpline is funded jointly by Bristol City Council and NHS Bristol Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). In December 2000 the helpline launched its new freephone number and became Bristol MindLine.

As of February 2017, Bristol Mind has been working with national Mind to deliver a nationwide Trans+ specific emotional support and information signposting service. This service operates on Monday nights (please read on for more information).

### *Aims and ethos of the service*

The aim of the service is to offer a space to anyone who may need to talk. Volunteers undertake rigorous training program in which they learn to listen to callers in a non-judgmental way and respond non-defensively. This kind of listening can be difficult to come by, especially if someone is in crisis, or if friends/family or other helpers feel pressured to find solutions or 'rescue' the person. Sometimes people are isolated or have no-one close to talk to. The helpline has access to a database which has information on local groups, services etc., and can provide information on aspects of mental health e.g. rights etc. which can support callers in making their own informed choices.

The helpline operates in line with the overall aims and principles of Bristol Mind to campaign for a socially just society, which promotes and sustains good mental health for all.

### *Who calls the line?*

The helpline receives calls both from people who want a one-off session, and callers who may ring back over a period of time to support themselves. Callers ring in with a variety of issues ranging from isolation, anxiety, depression or suicidal feelings. Sometimes callers want information around a diagnosis they, or someone they care for, has been given, or they may have relationship difficulties or need to talk about a bereavement. Volunteers are trained to respond to all calls.

## *Who volunteers for the helpline?*

Our team of volunteers come from the diverse communities of Bristol - people who may, or may not, have experience of mental health issues. We have volunteers who have been out of work for various reasons; MindLine training provides skills and a work experience which can help people in their recovery or just help feel connected to the wider community.

Other people want to develop new skills or may be thinking about changing direction and want experience of different kinds of work. Volunteers range in age, life experience and beliefs which make for a lively team; at the moment we are under-represented in volunteers from ethnic minorities, and so very much encourage people from these groups to apply.

We welcome applications from anyone who can work within the Bristol Mind framework, can make the commitment that we ask, and lives locally.

We are particularly keen to recruit Trans, gender fluid, non-binary volunteers for our Trans+ helpline.

## *Training*

All volunteers go through the **Bristol MindLine Telephone Counselling Skills training** which takes place over about six weeks. This initial course trains you in listening skills and helps you build up your knowledge and understanding of mental health and current issues.

The training and experience that you gain on the line can further your career or be valuable experience for a course. For many volunteers, the work is rewarding in its own right.

Applicants for the MindLine service and Mindline Trans+ service will participate in training as part of the same cohort.

Volunteers who identify as trans, non-binary, or gender-fluid, who successfully complete the training will be welcome to support both services. Non-trans applicants may on occasion have the opportunity to additionally support the trans+ service.

## *Support and Supervision*

Every volunteer receives supervision after each shift they work. A staff worker contacts the volunteer to arrange a mutually convenient time for the supervision to take place, over the telephone; the supervision session can take up to 45 minutes and is an opportunity to reflect on the work, get support and develop skills.

Volunteers are also supported through six-weekly volunteer meetings, newsletters and further training. You will always work with at least one other volunteer.

## *Expenses*

Travel expenses (depending on distance) and carer's costs (childcare etc.) will be available for those who need them during training, volunteering and meetings. Taxis home at the end of a shift are provided for those needing them.

## *Fun*

You will be training and working with a large group of people. Although the work is of a serious nature there are opportunities for socialising, getting to know people and generally having some laughs.

### *What will the training be like?*

The training is designed to be an on-going process, to provide a brief overview of the topics covered, and to enable volunteers to examine their own attitudes towards, and experience of, the issues covered.

Volunteers are assessed throughout the training to set criteria. There is a review meeting (one to one) half way through the training to discuss how it is going and to address any difficulties. A final decision is taken at the end of the training as to whether a place on the line will be offered.

The training is seen to be a two-way process so that volunteers can assess whether or not this work feels suitable for them at this time.



## *About the service*

This service started in February 2017 and funded by National Mind, initially as a 20 month pilot project. In conjunction with Taunton & West Somerset Mind (TWS) we provide emotional support and signposting to those who identify as transgender or non-binary, genderfluid or agender.

Bristol Mind deliver this service on Monday evenings, 8pm-midnight.

## *Aims and ethos of the service*

The aim of the service is to offer a space to anyone who may need to talk about their feelings to Trans+ people and their families and friends nationwide.

Volunteers undertake the same MindLine training program as the other MindLine service in which they learn to listen to callers in a non-judgmental way and respond with empathy. This kind of listening is rare and invaluable, especially if someone is distressed or anxious. Some Trans+ callers or those exploring their gender identity may be isolated or have no-one close to talk to. The helpline has access to a database which has information on local groups, services etc., and can provide information on aspects of mental health e.g. rights etc. which can support callers in making their own informed choices.

Our research and involvement with the wider Trans+ population who may use this service expressed the desire for volunteers with Trans+ lived experience to be answering the calls. We aim to have at least 1 Trans+ volunteer on the helpline every Monday night in Bristol. However, all MindLine volunteers have received Trans Awareness Training from the Diversity Trust and are Trans Allies, on occasions they will be asked to cover shifts with Trans+ volunteers.

All MindLine volunteers are referred to the Bristol Mind Confidentiality and Safeguarding Children and Vulnerable Adults Policies.

## *Key Statement*

- The primary purpose and responsibility of Bristol MindLine is to offer a confidential service to callers.
- Confidentiality is between the caller and the service (i.e. volunteers, co-ordinators and supervisors), not between a caller and an individual worker.
- We do not record calls nor callers' phone numbers. However, the emergency services are able to trace callers' numbers in the event that we need to breach confidentiality as a result of safeguarding concerns.
- There are only **5** circumstances in which information disclosed by a caller would be passed to another agency:
  1. Any information disclosed which falls under the ***Prevention of Terrorism Act*** (e.g. bomb warning) is an exception to the rules of confidentiality. The content of the call and relevant information should be passed on immediately to the police by ending the call and dialling 999.
  2. Inappropriate use of MindLine. Callers who are sexually inappropriate or threatening/aggressive and those misusing any of our policies and procedures, such as our Suicidal Callers Procedure and calling other Blue Light services on their behalf. We reserve the right to inform Police or other mental health services as appropriate.
  3. Where a volunteer believes a ***child (either the caller or another child)*** is currently at risk of physical, emotional, sexual abuse or neglect, and the caller discloses sufficient identifying information (e.g. full name and/or address). This also applies to disclosure of historical abuse to the caller but other children are currently at risk now (e.g. school/care home/foster parents). (*Refer to Safeguarding Child and Adult Policy for guidance*)
  4. When a volunteer believes an ***adult*** is at risk of significant harm to themselves or others, or in danger of a serious crime (unlawful behaviour) occurring to them and the caller offers/discloses (intentionally or unintentionally) sufficient identifying information. (*Refer to Safeguarding Children and Adult Policy for guidance*)
  5. Harm to someone else. When a caller admits intension, plan and means to (or has already) to cause significant physical

***In no other circumstances do we disclose any information about a caller to another agency.***

Confidentiality Policy continued on next page

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## *Definition of a Vulnerable Adult*

*MindLine believes any adult could be viewed as vulnerable, especially an adult (over 18) who receives care through an organisation or through a personal carer as a result of being physically disabled or incapacitated in some way. In addition, someone having a learning disability or a mental health difficulty can at times be vulnerable.*

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## *Important additional notes*

- Confidentiality is between the caller and the service, not with an individual volunteer; this should be made clear to a caller if they enquire about the service's policy on confidentiality, or if the volunteer suspects that the caller is not aware of this.
- In the case of information which falls under the Prevention of Terrorism Act and violence to others, if you have informed the police remember to get support from your co-worker and let the Coordinators know as soon as possible the next day or use the on-call system
- Apart from the exceptions listed in the key statement above, there are no circumstances in which the confidentiality of the service user would be breached or information about a caller passed to another agency; nor should a volunteer ever try to obtain information about the caller (or anyone else) that the caller does not offer freely.
- Please see the Suicidal Callers Procedure regarding people who might be considered a Vulnerable Adult due to impaired mental health capacity in terms of decision making and rational thinking. MindLine wants to provide a confidential supportive space for callers, respecting their personal wishes and feelings whilst being mindful of callers possible suicidal actions or self-neglect (the ability to care for themselves) due to momentary or persistent impaired mental capacity.
- Where a caller has self-harmed and **is not** in a life threatening state. Helpline workers need to refer the MindLine Self-Injury Procedure to be clear how to respond to a caller and the procedures to be followed.
- In no circumstances will the content of individual calls be discussed outside the service, even with friends, family or partners. This is vital to protect callers, ourselves and the reputation of the helpline.
- Information kept on calls for monitoring purposes will contain no names at all. It will be limited to gender, approximate age or, if given, ethnicity, sexuality and region. Volunteers supervision notes should be shredded after use, whether taken home or not.
- Volunteers' confidentiality and privacy must also be ensured. There will be no disclosure of personal details about ourselves or any other worker. Volunteers may identify themselves to callers by their own first name (or an alias) only.

All expenses are paid by cheque or BACS. Although every effort is made to pay expenses promptly, there can be delays. If possible, claims should be made quarterly, subject to a minimum of £10 (unless agreed otherwise).

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## *Training and Team Meetings*

### *Mileage*

The maximum mileage payable is £11.25 per round trip. This is paid at 45 pence for the first 25 miles (i.e. 25 miles at 45p = £11.25).

### *Cyclists*

20 pence per mile

### *Public Transport*

Refunded in full within the city limits. Tickets need to be included with the claim. In the case of First Bus e-tickets, proof of purchase will suffice – within city limits a bus ticket should cost no more than that of a First Day ticket (£4.50).

### *Taxis*

We cannot pay taxi fares during training or monthly meetings, except for people with mobility difficulties. The training/meetings are timed to allow people to use public transport to get home.

### *Parking Costs*

We endeavour to train/meet at venues with adequate free parking spaces. However, if this is unavailable for some reason, parking costs can be reimbursed in full after discussion with the coordinators.

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Expenses Procedure continued on next page

## *On the Helpline*

Expenses for the Helpline are paid as above. The exception to this is:

### *Taxis*

Maximum amount payable £17.00 per session (homeward bound journey only). This is based on the maximum journey distance home within the city boundaries. We have an account with a taxi company, so you will not need to pay them yourself. Please approach the co-ordinators if you feel that the total amount will be over £17.00.

Volunteers will be asked to contribute any amount over and above the maximum fee.

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### *Carers*

Bristol Mind recognises that our volunteers may have caring responsibilities and that these should not prevent them from being involved. Where you require support for children, partners or relatives, we will pay a contribution to carer's expenses. Please discuss this with the Coordinators at your interview.

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Expense Procedure continued on next page

## *Telephone*

Telephone calls from home incurred whilst carrying out volunteer duties for the helpline can be reclaimed.

Please make sure that you keep a note of all your calls so that you can itemise them on our claims sheet. Claims sheets are available in the office.

Bristol Mind will not be able to pay for costs incurred by the use of mobile phones. Please discuss any difficulties you have concerning this issue with the co-ordinators.

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## *Sundries*

If you incur any additional occasional costs that you feel Bristol MindLine is responsible for (e.g. stamps, photocopying etc.) please discuss with one of the Coordinators before submitting a claim.

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## *Submitting Claims*

All expenses claimed need to come with relevant receipts, dates etc. and need to be presented on Bristol MindLine Volunteer Expenses Claims Forms. Please address claims forms to:

***MindLine Administrator  
Bristol Mind  
35 Old Market Street  
BRISTOL  
BS2 0EZ***

If you live more than 15 miles from Bristol Mind Administrative office, please contact the co-ordinators to discuss travel.

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End of Expenses Procedure

There have been several changes to the training and service since Covid 19, which are outlined below:

- Information Sessions, Training days and evenings, Midway and Final Reviews and Shadow Shifts will all take place online via Zoom.
- The MindLine service is now open 7 nights a week (Monday to Sunday) 7pm – 11pm.
- Volunteers are taking calls from home. An app is used to receive calls via volunteers mobile or landline (callers don't know the volunteers telephone number).
- Volunteers on shift together set up a WhatsApp group to be able to support each other throughout the shift.
- A Coordinator is on call 7 nights a week to support volunteers working from home.
- MindLine Trans+ are also taking calls from home however, the service is open as usual 8pm – midnight and Bristol Mind volunteers take calls on a Monday night. The WhatsApp group and Coordinator on call support is also available to MindLine Trans+ volunteers.

If you are offered a place on the training, you will need to have sufficient internet connection and a quiet, confidential space in order to participate. This will also be required if you are offered a place on the Line (and accept) as you will be volunteering from home for the time being.

End of Information Pack