

Mindline 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

The next volunteer training will take place from October to December 2026, with introductory information sessions being held in September 2026.

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

- A description of the Mindline volunteer role and the commitment expected of volunteers
- Information sheets and training programme displaying dates, structure, and content
- Practicalities and details about volunteering with us

We hope this will help you to decide whether you are interested in volunteering with us.

What next?

In advance of the training we will hold a number of information sessions, to enable potential trainees to find out about the service and to help make up your mind about whether you wish to apply.

You must attend one information session. It is essential to book a place in advance on one of the three information sessions – please see the links below.

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. Please email a completed application beforehand; 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. Please do not book 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.

Kind regards,

Helen, Elizabeth, Matt, Kate and Eliza
Mindline Staff Team

email: mindline@bristolmind.org.uk

Date	Start	End	What?
Information Session Dates (You only need to attend <u>one</u> session)			
Fri 4 th Sept ONLINE	13:00pm	14:30pm	Introductory Info Session
Monday 7 th Sept	6:30pm	8:0pm	Introductory Info Session
Tue 8 th Sept	6:30pm	8:00pm	Introductory Info Session
Interview Dates			
W/C 14 th , 21 st Sept	Individual times		One-to-one 30m interviews (online)
Training Dates (You must attend <u>all</u> sessions below)			
Saturday 3 rd October	9:30am	4:30pm	The Essentials: Core Listening Skills
Friday 9 th October	9:30am	4:30pm	Counselling Skills 1: Active Listening
Monday 12 th October	6:30pm	8:45pm	Mental Health Awareness
Saturday 17 th October	9:30am	4:30pm	Counselling Skills 2: Beginnings & Endings
Monday 19 th October	6:30pm	8:45pm	Understanding Self-Harm
Friday 23 rd October	09:30am	4:30pm	Counselling Skills 3: Abuse
Monday 26 th October	6:30pm	8:45pm	Helpline Work: Case Studies
W/C 26 th October	Individual times		Midway reviews (online) – time TBC
Friday 6 th November	9:30am	4:30pm	Counselling Skills 4: Self-Injury and Suicide
Friday 13 th November	9:30am	4:30pm	Intersectionality & Helpline Work
W/C 16 th November	Individual times		Final reviews (online) – time TBC
Monday 23 rd November	6:30pm	8:45pm	Office Induction, Policies, SharePoint etc.
W/C 23 rd and 30 th Nov [You attend one date only]	6:30pm	9:00pm	Shadow Shifts

Training Venues

Evening Information Sessions are held in-person at Bristol Mind's offices in the City Centre (Citizen's Advice Bureau building, 48 Fairfax St BS1 3BL). The lunchtime Information Session will take place online using Microsoft Teams.

All further sessions will take place in central Bristol, at either Bristol Mind's offices in the City Centre (Citizen's Advice Bureau building, 48 Fairfax St BS1 3BL) or Central Quaker Meeting House, BS2 9DB.

Interviews and reviews will take place online using Microsoft Teams.

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. Places must be booked in advance. It is advisable to book early to secure a place.



Please book your information session by clicking the link below:

Fri 4th September **(online)**, 13:00-14:00 - [Sign Up to Fri 4th September](#)

Mon 7th September, 18:30-20:00 - [Mon 7th September Sign Up](#)

Tuesday 8th September, 18:30-20:00 - [Tues 8th September Sign Up](#)

After you have booked your place using the above link, within a few days we will send you an email with confirmation and further details.

During the information session we will let you know how to apply for a place on the volunteer training.

Volunteers will be asked to:

- Attend all training (see training programme above) and ongoing quarterly training.
- Staff the helpline once per fortnight for four hours at our offices in central Bristol (near Broadmead).
- Volunteer for a minimum of 12 months after training.
- Take calls and offer emotional support.
- 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 arranging shift cover if unable to work your planned shift.
- Attend volunteer team meetings in-person at our offices.
- Receive regular one-to-one supervision over the phone from staff.
- Work in accordance with all of Bristol Mind's principles and policies, and undertake further training where required.
- Share in covering occasional Bank Holiday shifts, including New Year.
- Cover some weekends – one shift in every four must include a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday evening.

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.
- Respect the callers' autonomy and enable them to make their own informed choices.
- 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 through these issues in supervision.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the reasons behind the policies employed by Bristol Mind.
- Respect the confidentiality rights of the caller. For reference, the Confidentiality Policy is available on the Bristol Mind website.
- Show a commitment to challenging all forms of oppression experienced during your involvement with Bristol Mind.
- Keep up to date with services, policies etc. through Bristol Mind's IT system.
- Stay in touch by signing into their Bristol Mind email account regularly (at least twice per week).

How and why a helpline?

The helpline was set up by Bristol Mind in 1997 in response to research which showed that people using local mental health services wanted more “out of hours” crisis support. In December 2000, the helpline changed its name to Bristol Mindline.

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 a rigorous training programme in which they learn to listen to callers in a non-judgemental 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 nobody close to talk to. The helpline can also signpost callers to other sources of information on local groups, services, and other resources.

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, and depression to suicidal feelings. Sometimes callers want information about a diagnosis they, or someone they care for, has been given; or they may have relationship difficulties or need to talk about a bereavement. All volunteers receive extensive training to respond to these 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 people 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 makes for a lively team. At the moment we are under-represented in volunteers from marginalised communities 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.

Training

All volunteers go through the **Bristol Mindline Telephone Counselling Skills Training**, which takes place over 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.

Support and Supervision

Every volunteer receives supervision to support their work on the line. A staff worker contacts the volunteer to arrange a mutually convenient time for the supervision to take place over the phone. Supervision sessions typically take 30 minutes, and is an opportunity to reflect on the work, get support, and develop skills.

Volunteers are also supported through quarterly volunteer meetings, newsletters, and further training. On each shift you will always work with at least one other volunteer.

Fun

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

What will the training be like?

The training is designed to be an ongoing 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 against set criteria. There is a one-to-one review meeting halfway through the training programme 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.

- The induction session, evening sessions and all-day training sessions will take place in-person in a group of 12 trainees at Bristol Mind's offices (48 Fairfax St BS1 3BL) and at Central Quaker Meeting House (BS2 9DB)
- Initial interviews and ongoing reviews during the training will take place online using Microsoft Teams.
- The Mindline Service is open from 7pm – 11pm, Wednesday to Sunday.
- Mindline volunteers work from the Bristol Mind office.
- Staff are available to support volunteers during all shifts.

End of Information Pack