



## ACTION CANCER PEER MENTORS CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS

### *THE PEER MENTORING PROGRAMME*

Action Cancer offer this unique support service to anyone affected by a cancer diagnosis. It allows trained volunteers to support someone on a 1to1 basis through their cancer journey and is available throughout Northern Ireland.

The Peer Mentoring programme aims to:

- reduce feelings of anxiety and isolation;
- encourage and motivate clients;
- establish coping strategies suited to clients; and
- signpost clients to other support/agencies as applicable.

Peer Mentors, having experienced a cancer diagnosis themselves, are in a good position to provide support by listening, normalising thoughts and feelings and providing information to help with decision-making. Peer Mentoring is a really positive way to provide first line support and to 'give something back' following treatment.

### *WHO WE ARE LOOKING FOR*

We are currently expanding our service and are looking for new Peer Mentors who have experienced a diagnosis of particular cancer types or particular treatments including:

- Colorectal - particularly with stoma/colostomy bag experience
- Breast - particularly with mastectomy experience or a Triple Negative diagnoses
- Head and Neck
- Gynae
- Prostate
- Blood (inc Lymphoma and Leukaemia) - particularly a male

New Peer Mentors should:

- have personal experience of a cancer diagnosis
- generally, be at least **one year out of treatment**
- be committed to providing support to individuals during a difficult time
- be available to attend training (details below) and successfully complete assessment
- have and be keen to develop skills and attributes such as:
  - empathy and sympathy
  - communication
  - motivation and goal-setting

Work or voluntary experience in a similar coaching/mentoring/supporting role could be useful but isn't essential as full training will be provided.

## THE ROLE

- Mentors will be matched with a client who is dealing with a cancer diagnosis/on a treatment pathway similar to their own, and where possible is based in a similar geographical area.
- The mentoring relationship will be contractually agreed from the start in terms of confidentiality, commitment and expectations.
- The mentor will provide support to the client by phone, text message and by face-to-face meetings in public venues (such as coffee shops, hospital lobbies etc), if convenient for both client and mentor.
- Support can be provided to a client for up to 12 months - ranging from eg 1 contact a week initially to 1 a month as needed.
- To meet the programme aims, the Peer Mentors' role will include:
  - listening to and supporting the client to reduce feelings of anxiety and isolation
  - listening to and supporting the client to help "normalise" thoughts and feelings
  - supporting the client to establish suitable coping strategies
  - providing factual information and signposting to other agencies to help with decision making
  - setting goals and outcomes to encourage and motivating the client.

## WHAT WE OFFER

- A great opportunity to use your experience to help others
- A supportive team environment
- Two formal supervision sessions per year (in a face-to-face group or by Zoom as required)
- 1to1 supervision/support as needed
- Formal training specifically designed and tailored for the role
- Access to Action Cancer's Therapeutic Services
- Ongoing development and training

## WHAT'S NEXT?

If you wish to be considered to become a Peer Mentor please complete and return an **Expression of Interest from by Wed 21 Feb**.

I will then arrange a face-to-face meeting with you, at Action Cancer House, Belfast or via Zoom, to take place in Feb. The purpose of the meeting is to get to discuss your application, get to know one another, ask questions and run through likely scenarios faced by Mentors.

Following this, the most suitable applicants will be invited to attend 3 training days which are currently scheduled for **Fri 8 Mar, Sat 9 Mar and Sat 23 Mar** (approx 10am to 4pm, tbc) in Belfast. A short, written assessment will then be requested.

All training and assessment must be successfully completed in order to become an Action Cancer Peer Mentor. Taking part in the application and assessment process does not guarantee that you will be selected to be a Peer Mentor. Depending on the number of responses, you may be deferred to the next training intake.

Please contact me if you would like to discuss the Peer Mentoring Programme or any aspect of volunteering with Action Cancer. I look forward to hearing from you.

Leigh White

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*THANK YOU*