



Volunteer with us!

- **Would you like to help bereaved people?**
- **Would you like to gain experience as a counsellor?**
- **Would you like to be involved in a local charity?**
- **Would you like to be supported while doing all of this?**

Then read this leaflet

Caris
ISLINGTON
[Christian Action & Response in Society]



How to apply to be a Volunteer

Application to attend the training course is by interview – please ring on a Monday morning to arrange one or send us a self-addressed envelope for more information. The initial interview looks for basic listening and interpersonal skills.

Applicants are also asked about themselves, their reasons for applying (including what they would gain by volunteering), previous experience of listening or visiting, and about personal bereavements and other life events which have affected them. Applicants are asked to confirm that they will be able to offer at least a year of weekly visits and will be able to attend supervision regularly. We do not offer places to anyone recently bereaved.

Volunteer Training Course

All volunteers must attend a twelve week training course before being allocated clients. The training course looks at basic listening skills, the grieving process and personal experience of loss. Following training, a final interview establishes whether we are able to offer a place on our team of visitors.

Placements

Many of our volunteers are training as counsellors and use their work with the Bereavement Service to add to their experience of one-to-one work, or to count towards practice hours. We are keen to support volunteers who are in training although new do not have the resources to establish strong links with training institutions. Some volunteers ask us to sign logs of practice hours and attendance at supervision and we are happy to do that. We prefer not to write reports about our volunteers for training institutions but are prepared to help volunteers with brief end of term reports if necessary, and are happy to discuss with volunteers their development as a counsellor. When a written report is going to be requested we expect to know, and to have a copy of the relevant documents in advance. We are only able to write references for volunteers who have been with us for a year.

Ongoing Training

We arrange additional training for our volunteers four times a year. Recent topics have included: the beginning phase of counselling; sudden death; working with suicidal clients; and how bereavement affects children. We also regularly train our volunteers in dealing with endings.

The Bereavement Service

The CARIS Bereavement Service helps people in Islington who are experiencing bereavement. We will visit anyone who has been bereaved, regardless of religion, race, gender or sexuality or whether the bereavement was recent or a long time ago. Our service is free for people who live, work or worship in Islington, and is confidential

How we work

After a first meeting with one of the coordinators, we either offer clients a trained bereavement visitor for weekly meetings for as long as it's necessary, or, if we are not the most appropriate service, we will offer advice about other services and agencies which would be better able to help.

Training

The Bereavement Service staff offer training on issues related to bereavement.

What do volunteers do ?

- **Attend training**
- **Work confidentially**
- **Visit at least one client a week**
- **Attend supervision**
- **Enjoy peer support**
- **Complete required**
- **paperwork**
- **Gain valuable experience**

What do we do ?

- **We assess clients to ensure volunteer safety**
- **We offer ongoing support, training and supervision**
- **We offer access to a wide range of resources e.g. library and archive materials**
- **We can help you gain expertise in this specialist field**

Supervision

All volunteers *must* attend supervision. Supervision takes place in groups which meet fortnightly. The groups include up to four volunteers plus the Co-ordinator or Assistant Co-ordinator. Each group meeting is for two hours.

Many of our volunteers seek additional supervision e.g. at their training institution. If volunteers choose to do this we do not object but in this case in particular we discuss confidentiality, direction of the work and the possibility of splitting arising from two parallel supervisory experiences.

Please read the Bereavement Service Volunteers Supervision and Support Policy for further details (this can be obtained from the CARIS office, telephone 020 7281 5200).