

Dementia Helpline

Volunteer Profile



Why We Need You...

Alzheimer Scotland is Scotland's national dementia charity.

Our aim is to make sure nobody faces dementia alone. We provide support and information to people with dementia, their carers and families, we campaign for the rights of people with dementia and fund vital dementia research.

We are very proud of our 24 hour Freephone Dementia Helpline which provides information and emotional support to people with dementia, carers, families, friends and professionals.

Could you be part of our team?

Are you

- Emotionally resilient?
- Honest and empathetic?
- Flexible and adaptable?
- Keen to learn something new?
- Aged 18 or over and can commit to a minimum of 8 hours per month, Alzheimer Scotland wants to hear from you!

What the role involves

- This vital role can include telephone and online support.
- Offering person-centred emotional support and information to people affected by dementia.
- Developing and maintaining knowledge on health and social care issues that relate to people living with dementia, including statutory services and welfare rights.
- Maintaining knowledge of other organisations and services that can help people living with dementia and sign post when appropriate.
- Recording information about enquiries in line with our data protection policy.
- Participate in online group learning sessions.
- Keep up to date with Alzheimer Scotland news and our work across Scotland.

Dementia doesn't discriminate, neither does Alzheimer Scotland

Regardless of age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, faith or belief, race or ethnicity, people are at the heart of what we do. We can support you to develop the skills you need for this role, including an introduction into all the areas outlined. You will have the chance to discuss your role and any additional needs with us.

What you need for this role

- Empathy, excellent listening and communication skills.
- A reliable internet connection and phone line.
- Confident and/or willing to use a computer/tablet, including Microsoft TEAMS and Outlook.
- Ability to recognise and respect the rich diversity that exists within our communities, views, attitudes and lifestyles.
- Committed to Alzheimer Scotland's values.
- Willing to develop skills and experience.
- Participate in our Volunteer Preparation Programme and any refresher updates or ongoing learning.
- Ability to honestly reflect on practice.
- Willing to follow our guidance, feedback and implement changes to practice where necessary.
- Able to keep sensitive data safe and secure at home.
- Willing to follow our policies, procedures and guidelines.

Commitments

Whether your volunteering journey with us is long or short, we all make these commitments so we all know what to expect.

Our Commitment:

- Welcome you as an individual.
- Offer you a role that fits with you and your life.
- Help you learn your role and support you to learn as you go.
- Value your personal contribution.
- Listen to your feedback and welcome your ideas.
- Keep you and everyone safe.
- Keep you connected and up to date.
- Reimburse your out of pocket expenses.
- Thank you for the impact you deliver.

Your Commitment:

- Contribute positively to the Helpline and Alzheimer Scotland's vision for change.
- Value the diverse contribution of others.
- Respect the boundaries of your role and our code of conduct.
- Complete the necessary learning pathway for your role.
- Share your success and learning.
- Express your ideas.
- Recognise and be open about the limits of your experience and expertise.
- Keep yourself and others safe.
- Stay connected and up to date.

****NB**** All volunteers are subject to PVG disclosure.



A day in the life of the Dementia Helpline...



A 24-hour freephone service, staffed by around 60 trained volunteers

1.02am – Mrs A calls. Her husband has finally fallen asleep beside her. This is her first opportunity to offload the worries of the day. She speaks without stopping for over half an hour. She bears the sole burden of her 82-year-old husband's care - he is doubly incontinent and neither of them wants to involve statutory services. Now her own health is breaking down and they have no family. What can they do?

Our Helpline volunteer has heard the desperation in Mrs A's voice. She asks if there is contact with their GP or social work department. Mrs A says it has been some time since she had contact with any services, and Mr A has markedly deteriorated. The volunteer and Mrs A discuss how she can best access a range of support services aimed at improving life for both of them.

"I felt I couldn't continue with caring when I came on, but if I can get some help maybe I can"

7.15am – A young woman calls; she's a student and is doing an essay on dementia. The Helpline volunteer tells her about our website and sign posts her to other relevant sources of information.

9.00am – Another volunteer takes over the first part of the day shift. All of our volunteers are based at home, and live all over Scotland, from Peebles to Orkney.

9.24am – Mr B needs to arrange a care home placement for his mother who has dementia. He doesn't know where to begin, but saw Helpline contact details in an article in his local paper. Our volunteer determines what sort of care is needed and in which Local Authority area, so that care home details can be sent out. Mr B is put in touch with his local Alzheimer Scotland service, and offered reading material on caring, choosing a care home and financial information. Mr B can't thank us enough.

Between 9am and 1pm there are 8 calls, ranging from emotional support, information on dementia, caring, legal/financial/ benefits, community care, long stay care and drug treatments for dementia.

At 1pm Helpline calls are re-routed to another home based volunteer.

1.05pm – Our volunteer's first call is from Mr C, who has dementia. He seems in good spirits and describes how he is getting on with his day-to-day life. He is determined to stay at home for as long as possible, and says that being able to call our Helpline is an important part of his support system. He finds being reassured by someone who understands the illness and is empathic helps him not to feel quite so alone.

"Anonymity is the great thing - I don't know you, you don't know me. I feel you are a friend without knowing you personally. Thank you for being there for us."

Throughout the afternoon and evening volunteers deal with 15 more calls. The Helpline's ethos is to empower callers by providing them with the information they need, such as whom to speak to, what they might expect from an agency and contact numbers. Callers are then able to take their own decisions, and have the choice of when and how to make contact. The Helpline does not give advice or act on behalf of callers.

Throughout the year we send out a large number of feedback forms to people who have used the Helpline service. Here are some of the things they say:

'So friendly and helpful - wasn't sure what to expect or what to say - wasn't rushed or made to feel silly re questions asked - will definitely use it again when I need to'

'I felt that the person who answered the call did not rush me at all and let me talk about the problems I was facing. That alone was a great help to me. She also sent more information very quickly, and I was able to contact others who could help in a practical way, as well as making me feel less alone'

'Helped family by passing information on - used information to assist me in my work as a home carer'

The issues our volunteers cope with can be harrowing - anger, frustration, lack of information, isolation, loss. Why then do so many give so much of their time? Here are some of the things the volunteers say about their Helpline work:

'As a volunteer it's good to be part of an organisation which gives a quality service to people dealing with challenging situations who may otherwise not know where to go for help'

'The caller often works out the best way forward themselves; just having someone to act as a sounding board with no personal bias can be so helpful'

'The service isn't perfect, but if it wasn't well run and didn't seem worthwhile, I wouldn't stay on as a volunteer'

Alzheimer Scotland's Freephone 24hr Dementia Helpline is exclusively delivered by our team of dedicated, highly skilled volunteers. For over 30 years this service has been making sure that nobody faces dementia alone.

The Helpline Manager organises training, support and reflection for the volunteers. New volunteers are expected to attend a four day Volunteer Preparation Programme, followed by a 6 month probationary period. There are also regular learning opportunities arranged throughout the year for all volunteers. ****All of this is now done remotely due to Covid-19 restrictions.**

Our volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds. Many have been carers, others have a professional interest in dementia and some simply relish the challenge of this volunteering opportunity. If you are interested in volunteering, call Jennifer Hall, Helpline Manager on 0782 355 6795. Thank you to our volunteers, who make this invaluable service possible.

Alzheimer Scotland Freephone Dementia Helpline is a 24-hour service which is always there for people with dementia, their carers, relatives, friends and neighbours, as well as for professionals working in the field of dementia care. This is only possible due to fundraised income.

All personal details have been changed, and the 'calls' recorded here are based on a combination of real calls to preserve confidentiality.

Volunteer Application Form

Dementia Helpline



Please complete this form in type or write clearly in black ink

Title First Name Surname

Address

Postcode

Email

Home telephone

Mobile telephone

How did you hear about Alzheimer Scotland?

Previous work experience (paid or voluntary)

Do you have any other life experience or interests you would consider relevant to voluntary work for Alzheimer Scotland (for example, caring for someone with dementia, other caring experience, other voluntary work)?

Please say briefly why you are interested in volunteering for the Helpline

Days and times you could potentially be available (please tick all that apply)

	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Morning (9am - 1pm)							
Afternoon (1pm - 5pm)							
Evening (5pm - 10pm)							
Overnight (10pm - 9am)							

All volunteers are required to undertake training. Are you willing to participate in training?

References

Please give the names of two referees who are not relatives

Name		Name	
Address		Address	
Telephone		Telephone	
Email		Email	
In what capacity are you known to the referee?		In what capacity are you known to the referee?	

Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974

The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 allows people who have been convicted of certain criminal offences to regard their conviction as "spent" after a period of years. This means that, in general, no reference need be made to the conviction or any circumstances relating to it.

Because of the nature of the voluntary work for which you are applying, however, this post may be excepted from the provision of the Act. You are therefore required not to withhold information about convictions which for other purposes are "spent" under the provision of the Act. In the event of recruitment as a volunteer, any failure to disclose such convictions could result in Alzheimer Scotland ending your voluntary involvement.

Any information given will be considered only in relation to applications to become a volunteer where such an exception is appropriate.

I have read and understood the above and have the following convictions to disclose:

Tick if none

Please note that all successful candidates will be subject to a criminal conviction check through Disclosure Scotland.

The information in this application is a true record of my personal situation.

Signature:

Date:

Thank you for applying to be an Alzheimer Scotland volunteer. We will be in contact with you as soon as possible.

Please return this form to:

Jennifer Hall

Helpline Manager

Email: jhall@alzscot.org

Tel: 07823 556 795