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**Volunteer Role Description**

**OPAL (Older People Active Lives)**

**Befriender**

**Time Commitment:** We offer support which can last up to 9 months and ask volunteers to commit to a few hours per week/fortnight for 6 months minimum.

**Location:** West Lothian wide

**Contact:** 27 George St, Bathgate, EH48 1PG. 01506 815815, [opal@cyrenians.scot](mailto:opal@cyrenians.scot)

**Overview**

OPAL (Older People Active Lives) aims to maintain or increase the independence and well-being of older people across the West Lothian area. Our service is delivered by dedicated, trained volunteers who offer encouragement, companionship and support to engage in social, leisure and community activities.

We support anyone of age 60+ who is looking to re-connect socially either on a one-to-one basis or in a group setting. People can either self-refer or be referred by a health professional.

**Why we need you and what activities are involved**

You will be carefully matched with a client, and will encourage and support the client to get out and about and identify activities which they would like to focus on. Your support and encouragement could help them to:

* Remain independent at home, socially connected and engaged
* Reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation
* Increase self-confidence
* Create links with the local community
* Develop informal local support networks

Examples of activities include:

* Taking up a new hobby or interest
* Joining a local club or group e.g. activity groups, local walking group, dementia cafe
* Visiting a library, church, local gallery or exhibition
* Attending an event e.g. gala, open day, taster session, tea dance
* Going for short walks

**Skills we’re looking for**

* Good listening and communication skills
* Friendly personality / approachable
* Reliable with good time keeping
* Patience and empathy
* Non-judgemental
* Respectful of confidentiality
* Able to work within set boundaries
* Keep accurate visit records and feed back to the team regularly
* An understanding of current Coronavirus regulations/recommendations

**What you can gain from this opportunity**

* Rewarding experience making a positive contribution to an older person’s quality of life, health, and sense of well-being.
* Develop empathy and listening skills
* Connect with new people and make new friends
* Gain work or study experience or try new things for retirement
* Personal development with training and ongoing support provided

**Essential Criteria**

* 18+
* PVG Scheme Membership (organised by Cyrenians, no fee)

**Further Info**

**Expenses**

We cover local travel costs at public transport rate or mileage (45p per mile) and out of pocket expenses.

**About us**

At Cyrenians, we tackle the causes and consequences of homelessness.

Everybody deserves the opportunity to lead valued, fulfilling lives. The support we offer is person-centred and relationship-based – meaning that we work alongside people towards the change they would like to see. Our core values are Compassion, Respect, Integrity and Innovation.

Cyrenians’ head office is based in Edinburgh, with smaller offices in other areas, including Falkirk and West Lothian. Cyrenians is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), registered charity SC011052