



RED BALLOONS WALK LEADER ROLE DESCRIPTION

Red Balloons exists to support people to use physical activity to improve their mental and physical wellbeing.

Volunteers are the lifeblood of our organisation, without whom we would be unable to function. Walk and Talk sessions are integral to our overall mission, aims and objectives. The role of Walk Leader is therefore an essential one that underpins a large part of the activity of the Organisation.

As a volunteer walk leader you will be providing support and a listening ear, as well as providing an inclusive, safe, friendly and welcoming environment. You will play an integral part in supporting members of the community to become active but will also facilitate peer support amongst members of your groups. You may also run 1-1 sessions for those who are unable to attend group sessions. Amongst the outcomes we see in our groups and from those who attend 1-1 sessions are:-

1. Peer support – members keeping in touch with each other outside of the group and supporting each other
2. Confidence building – members who regularly attend sessions report feeling more confident in their communication and in meeting new people
3. Reducing anxiety – members who attend for the first time are often nervous. They report feeling welcomed and quickly being able to relax in the group or 1-1 session.
4. Increased physical activity – members are encouraged to continue physical activity outside of the groups and they report finding it easier to continue with, and try other activities

Ideally our volunteer walk leaders would be able to commit time to lead a regular Walk and Talk Session each week. However, they have the support of the wider group of Volunteers so regular sessions can be shared.

What will you be doing?

As a Walk Leader, you will be responsible for (with support from Red Balloons)

- Deciding on a meeting place which allows for a few different routes
- Familiarising yourself with the routes and their suitability for different attendees (considering terrain, accessibility, mobility issues etc)

- Carrying out a Risk Assessment of the route before starting the group (with support)
- Welcoming walkers to the walk, paying particular attention to new walkers to ensure they feel comfortable
- Brief introduction – advise the group of the route, check everyone OK with the route, advise of any underfoot conditions (if necessary), ensure everyone is suitably dressed with suitable footwear, requirement to be within sight of the leader at all times etc
- Leading and managing the walks (sometimes with support from other Volunteers) ensuring everyone is in sight and that you spend time with new walkers
- Advising the group they are available for a one-to-one chat after the walk if anyone feels they'd like to talk privately
- Encouraging people to attend the walk again and to continue their physical activity in between walks
- Ensuring, if there are any Health and Safety or other concerns during a walk, that they are highlighted as soon as practicable to the Volunteer Manager.
- Informing group members of other services available from Red Balloons and Partner Organisations
- Attending relevant meetings and/or training provided by the organisation
- Ensuring that if you are unable to run a scheduled walk that you let the Volunteer Manager know as soon as possible to enable a replacement to be organised.

What can you expect from us?

- Induction training (either group or 1-1) including Health and Safety, Safeguarding etc
- Further training when funding allows (emergency first aid, peer support training, mental health awareness etc)
- Full support and guidance at all times
- The opportunity to meet and gain support from other Red Balloons Volunteers
- Leadership and Management Skills
- Increased confidence
- Access to further opportunities as they arise with the organisation

What should you have?

- A desire to support people and a mindset in line with the organisation's mission
- An appreciation of how physical activity can support mental and physical wellbeing
- Active listening skills
- A lot of our Volunteers have lived experience of mental and physical health problems (this is not a pre-requisite)
- A friendly, approachable manner
- Tact and diplomacy (the ability to respect others' points of view even if you strongly disagree)
- Punctual and organised

- Ability to lead a small group (with support)

V2.March 2020