



# **Red Balloons Physical & Mental Wellbeing**

## **Teesside**

# **Volunteer Information Pack**

March 2021

## **Contact Details**

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**Website:**

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**Social Media:**

[www.facebook.com/redballoons2017](http://www.facebook.com/redballoons2017)

[www.twitter.com/balloons\\_red](http://www.twitter.com/balloons_red)

[www.instagram.com/thegirlwiththeredballoons](http://www.instagram.com/thegirlwiththeredballoons)

## **Available Volunteer Roles**

Walk Leaders

Run Leaders (existing qualification preferred)

Tail walkers

Coaches (existing qualifications preferred)

Promotion (leaflet distributors, stall workers)

Peer Support Facilitators

Fundraisers

Bloggers

Vloggers

## **Who are Red Balloons?**

Red Balloons was developed in 2017, adapted from a blog from our founder Claire and her lived experience of ill mental health. Red Balloons first came onto social media, to promote how exercise can help you manage your physical and mental health, before then becoming a Peer Support group.

These meetings offered a safe space for people to voice their stories and their issues getting help and support, while receiving ideas and hints on how to improve their health, as well as motivation, encouragement and a sense of understanding.

Mental health is not a Monday to Friday, 9-5 illness, therefore we try to offer services outside of these times. We are an inclusive community, where we do not use the words such as service users, but anyone who accesses anything we do are referred to as “Members”. Everyone 16+, is welcome to join us, with Youth Services to be introduced in 2021/22.

We are currently a not for profit organisation, relying heavily on low overheads and fundraising to raise vital funds to enable us to continue our work. We are not trained counsellors or mental health professionals; we are people who have real life experience of a range of mental health conditions, who want to use our experience to help others.

We want to help give our members the tools to be more confident in their own management of their conditions, knowing they have a support network around them to catch them if they fall.

We are looking to achieve charitable status this year, which will enable us to improve and increase the services we offer and who we can reach.

When the pandemic hit the UK we were determined to continue with our services within Government Guidelines. We started offering online services and, when we were able to, we started offering 1-1 Walk & Talk, Run & Rant and Fitness sessions (online and in person). We're now, at the time of writing, starting to offer group sessions again.

### **What services do we currently offer?**

Walk & Talk groups

Run & Rant groups

Monthly Park Run meet ups (when able to)

## Public Speaking

### Workshops

- Mental Health Myth Busting
- Exercise for Mental Health
- Self Care, A guide to coping strategies and self management
- Introduction to Gratitude and Mindfulness
- Introduction to Work Place Peer Support

## **Visions for Red Balloons Future**

### Future Plans

2021 is going to be a year of building capacity in the Organisation. We will do this by recruiting Volunteers and also by looking for funding opportunities which will allow us to expand our services, and ultimately employ staff. We've been successful in securing Funding via the National Lottery Community Fund for our Community Wellbeing Ambassador Project which will support us to recruit, train and support new Volunteers who will start and run their own Group and 1-1 Sessions (with support from the organisation).

### Expand Groups

Our Walk & Talk and Run & Rant Groups are working. People are joining us regularly, with some people dipping in and out as they can. This proves to us that there is a need for this type of group in the community. We want to build on this initial success with more groups running in different areas throughout Tees Valley, at different times to ensure that we are offering the service to anyone who needs or wants it. The funding secured will allow us to do this, as well as look to fund future projects.

## Partnership Working

We firmly believe in working in partnership with other organisations with the same mission and objectives as us. The more organisations work together, the more successful we will be in plugging the gaps left by formal mental health services and creating a safety net for those who need one. We have a strong track record already for working alongside other organisations and we intend to focus on this in 2021.

## Wellbeing Services

With the expertise we have within the Organisation and our network of contacts and members, we are in a position to offer Wellbeing Services to other organisations and businesses. A lot of businesses recognise the links between the Wellbeing of their workforce and the profits of the business, or the effectiveness of the organisation. We are able to put together packages to support businesses with their Wellbeing offer based around physical and mental wellbeing.

## Develop Projects

Part of our focus for 2021 is developing Projects that further our mission, values and objectives, but that also benefit our Volunteers and the local community.

## Funding Applications

With support from other Grassroots organisations and Catalyst we intend to apply for further funding in 2021. Initially we want to pilot one project, which

if successful, we will look to fund on a larger scale. Our vision for Red Balloons is to be in a position to employ staff and have our own premises, with Wellbeing services on site.

## **Volunteer Recruitment**

### **Why?**

People volunteer for all sorts of reasons but it's quite common for people with their own lived experience of ill mental health to want to support others going through similar experiences. That experience is invaluable to Red Balloons and we recognise and value our Volunteers – they are the lifeblood of our organisation.

Volunteering is a two-way street and we want to ensure our Volunteers have chance to develop their confidence, skills and experience, alongside the support they give to us. We also want them to feel that their skills and experiences are being utilised.

### **Process**

We will arrange to meet with you on a 1-1 basis to discuss the organisation and what you would like to do as a Volunteer. You may have a clear idea of the role you'd like to undertake, or you may want to discuss this further and try some different roles.

We will ask you to complete an Application Form and send you more information on Red Balloons and what our plans are. A good way to find out more about what we do is to attend one of our groups. New Volunteers find it useful to attend a group to get a feel for what we do and see the support we can offer people in action.

Leigh will keep in touch with you and once you feel you want to start Volunteering will meet you to go through the Volunteer Agreement. This Agreement is NOT a contract of employment, rather a document setting out what you can expect from us and what we hope from you.



# Training

We intend to ensure that our Volunteers can access relevant training. All Volunteers who wish to start and run their own Walking/running group will have to undertake Group Leader Training before starting their role. We intend to source training from a number of sources including any delivered free of charge that is relevant. However, we will be looking to source funding to pay for training if required. Training may include:-

**Induction (mandatory)**

**Group Leader Training (mandatory)**

**Mental Health First Aid**

**Basic Life Support/Emergency First Aid**

**Peer Support Training**

**Coaching Qualification (mandatory for Run Leaders)**

Funding of other training may be considered, depending on the relevance and cost. It may be possible to support with a % of the cost of any further training that you wish to do.

# Support

We will ensure that all our Volunteers are supported in whatever they do. If you decide you would like to run a Group on our behalf, we will organise shadowing and coaching and support you to get the group off the ground. Ideally another Volunteer will attend your Group Sessions with you at all times, to ensure you have support and you also have cover if you are unable to run a session at any time.

We will meet with you regularly to ensure you're happy with what you are doing, to discuss any development goals you have or any issues you may have. We will ensure we keep you up-to-date with new developments within the organisation as well as any new opportunities you may be interested in.

We are always happy to receive feedback about things that are going right, and things that we could improve on. We are also happy to discuss ideas you may have for other services we could be offering.

## Questions?

There is no such thing as a silly question. If you're thinking of something, chances are we've been asked it before. If you'd like to discuss the information in this booklet or chat further, please contact Leigh on 07486594499

**THANK YOU**

