

# “A deeply satisfying way to work in the community”

Volunteer



**circles**  
south west

delivering circles of support  
and accountability

# **Information for volunteers**

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**As a volunteer with Circles South West (CSW) you will be making an important contribution to preventing further sexual abuse by helping reduce the risk of sexual offending by known perpetrators.**

Circles of Support and Accountability give Core Members – both adults and young people – a safe space to spend time with volunteers from their local community who have knowledge of their harmful behaviour and risk. Many Core Members suffer from social isolation, emotional loneliness and limited social skills. The Circle gives these individuals the opportunity to develop communication skills and to have any distorted thinking challenged.

In this way a Circle can help an individual increase confidence and self-esteem and enhance their safe and purposeful reintegration into the community. Each Circle meets for an hour or so every week in a risk-assessed community venue and can last between 12 and 18 months.

## **Volunteers**

We have volunteers of all ages and from all walks of life and welcome applications from anyone aged over 18. Volunteers must have a mature outlook and good communication skills, and these will be assessed throughout your application process. We require an enhanced DBS check and extended vetting for those interested in volunteering in prison. There are some convictions that will preclude volunteering and these can be discussed with our Volunteer Coordinator.

## **Training**

Following a two-day specialist training and assessment event with other prospective volunteers, you will become part of a Circle, made up of four to five volunteers and a Core Member.

A Core Member will have been convicted of sexual offence(s) or engaged in harmful sexual behaviour and has been referred to us by police, probation, youth offending or health services. Each Circle is managed by a local coordinator who you will get to know through your application process – they are experienced criminal justice professionals who will work closely with you to ensure the safety and success of your Circle.

## **Challenges**

Volunteering with people who have been convicted of, or engaged in, harmful sexual behaviour can present challenges – this is a complex and emotive subject and we take our duty of care for volunteers very seriously. You will have continuous support from your coordinator and fellow volunteers.

We work with clear boundaries, policies and procedures to ensure everybody's safety and wellbeing. Circle volunteers are required to participate in supervision meetings with their coordinator to review progress and explore any development needs.

## **Expectations**

As a volunteer we ask that you commit to attend meetings regularly and maintain good communication with fellow volunteers and your Circle coordinator.

Fundamental to the success of a Circle is the ability to build a trusting, non-judgmental relationship and, from this foundation, to challenge and support the Core Member to ensure no further offending.

The face-to-face meetings between volunteers and their Core Member last for one hour with half an hour before to allow volunteers to prepare and half an hour afterwards to debrief without the Core Member being present.

Meetings take place in a risk-assessed, community venue – a relaxed environment where you can converse over a cup of tea.

Volunteers share responsibility for ensuring minutes from each meeting are returned to the Circle coordinator within 48 hours of each meeting. These minutes are then forwarded by the coordinator to the relevant statutory managers – for example, police, probation, youth offending or health services.

## **The next step**

For further information about volunteering with us, please email [volunteering@circlessw.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@circlessw.org.uk), call us on 07738 947988 or visit [www.circles-southwest.org.uk](http://www.circles-southwest.org.uk)

**NO**  
**MORE**  
**VICTIMS**

## How Circles work



Email: [info@circlessw.org.uk](mailto:info@circlessw.org.uk)

Tel: 07717 442413

 @CirclesSW

Avon, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset,  
Gloucestershire, Somerset, Wiltshire

[www.circles-southwest.org.uk](http://www.circles-southwest.org.uk)

Registered charity no: 1138726. Company no: 07369778

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