

Circles of Support and Accountability  
information for volunteers

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

Volunteer



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

delivering circles of support  
and accountability

## **Circles of Support and Accountability information for volunteers**

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**As a volunteer with Circles South West you will help prevent further sexual harm by adults convicted of sexual offences and young people with harmful sexual behaviour, thereby preventing the profoundly damaging consequences for victims, their families and communities.**

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 integration into the community. Each Circle meets for up to two hours 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 references. 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.

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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.

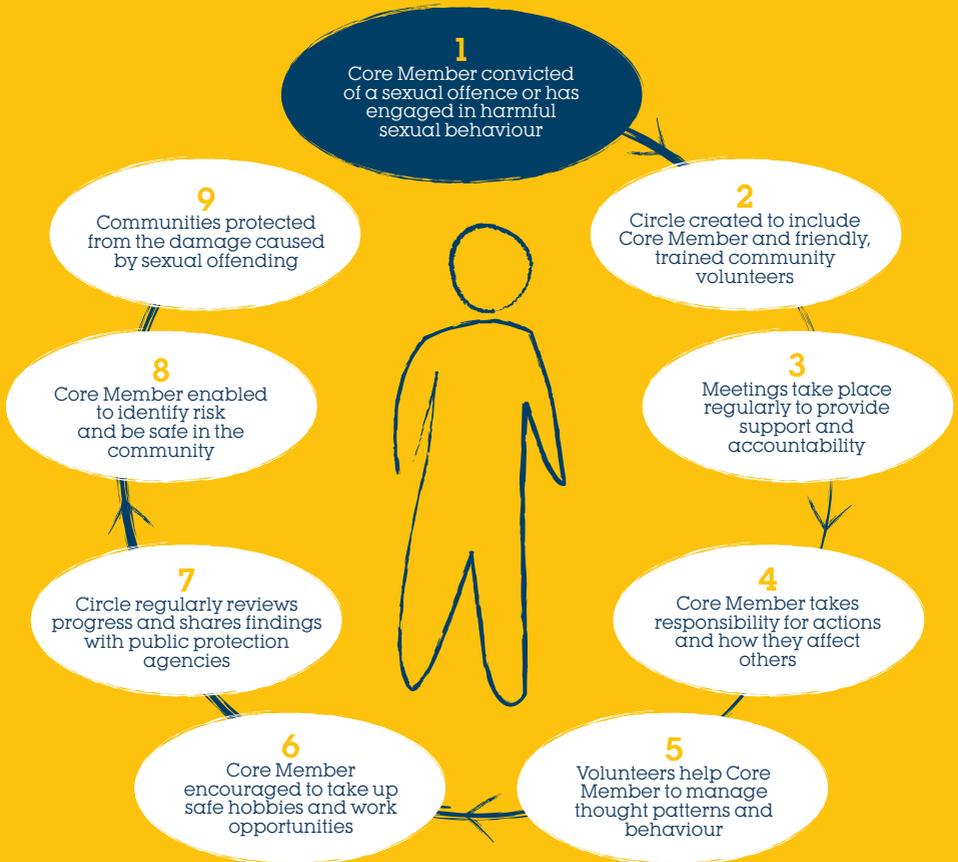
Volunteers share responsibility for ensuring minutes from each meeting are returned to the Circle coordinator within 48 hours of each meeting. The coordinator will provide the statutory managers with a monthly progress report based on these minutes.

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

# Circles of Support and Accountability information for volunteers

## How Circles work



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

Tel: 07717 442413

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

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

Registered charity no: 1138726. Company no: 07369778

**NO  
MORE  
VICTIMS**