



Role Description: Befriending Officer (Volunteer)

Organisation: OUT North East

Location: ONE Centre, Unit 2B Stonehills, Pelaw, Gateshead, NE10 0HW.

In-person, hybrid or remote role: This is an in-person role.

Reports to: Volunteer and Outreach Manager.

Time commitment: Flexible. Minimum 3 hours per week during drop-in opening times.

Days: The drop-in currently runs on Monday, Wednesday or Friday (11am-3pm) and so volunteering would be between these times.

Who are OUT North East?

OUT North East is a leading LGBTQ+ charity and community organisation in the North East of England focused on promoting equality, inclusion, wellbeing and community connection for LGBTQ+ people, their families, friends and allies through support services, events, advocacy and awareness-raising programmes. Based at the ONE Centre in Gateshead, it offers safe spaces, practical help, social activities and outreach work to reduce isolation and strengthen community ties. In addition to its core services, OUT North East organises the Summer of Pride festival series, which are free Pride celebrations and events delivered across Gateshead, Sunderland and South Tyneside. These are held over the summer period, bringing together diverse communities for family picnics, concerts, creative days, and other inclusive events that celebrate LGBTQ+ life and promote visibility and belonging.

Role purpose:

The Befriending Officer plays a vital role in creating a welcoming, inclusive and supportive environment at OUT North East's drop-in sessions. The primary focus of this role is to befriend and engage with individuals attending the drop-in, helping to reduce isolation, build confidence, and foster a sense of belonging within the local LGBTQI+ community. This is a relational and community-centred role focused on connection, presence and positive engagement, rather than advice-giving or formal support provision.

Key responsibilities:

- Welcome attendees warmly during drop-in opening hours.
- Engage in friendly, informal conversation with visitors.
- Provide companionship to individuals who may be new, isolated, or anxious.
- Support individuals to feel comfortable in the space and how to use it.
- Encourage participation in activities, peer discussion, and community events.
- Signposting attendees to the ONE Centre diary and any relevant drop-in support services.
- Maintain appropriate professional boundaries.
- Report any safeguarding or well-being concerns to designated staff members.
- Support a culture of dignity, respect and inclusion.



What the role is not:

- It is not a counselling or crisis support role.
- It is not an advice or advocacy position.
- Volunteers should refer individuals to staff where specialist support is required.
- Volunteers should only befriend people who are based on-site at the drop-in.

Skills and qualities needed:

- Friendly, approachable and empathetic.
- Good listening skills.
- Respectful of confidentiality.
- Comfortable engaging with diverse members of the LGBTQI+ community.
- Support any promotion of the drop-in.
- Reliable and punctual.
- Committed to equality, diversity and inclusion.

Lived experience of the LGBTQI+ community is welcomed but not required.

Support and training:

Volunteers will receive:

- Induction and safeguarding training.
- Ongoing supervision and check-ins.
- Clear escalation procedures for concerns.
- Opportunities for further training and development.

Impact of the role:

By offering a consistent and compassionate presence, Befriending Officers help:

- Reduce loneliness and social isolation.
- Strengthen community connections.
- Create safer and affirming spaces.
- Improve well-being and confidence for attendees.

Safeguarding and confidentiality:

All volunteers must:

- Adhere to OUT North East safeguarding policies, as well as other policies and procedures.
- Respect confidentiality at all times.
- Complete any required training prior to starting, or during their time as a volunteer.