

Groundswell

Out of homelessness

VOLUNTEER WOMEN'S PEER RESEARCHER: RECRUITMENT INFORMATION

Volunteer Role Title: Peer Researcher

Main Functions:

- To conduct research interviews with people who are or have experienced homeless
- To contribute to the design of the research
- To be involved in the analysis of the information collected

Overview:

Peer Research is conducted by people with lived experience. The issues that are being explored, in this case females with experience of homelessness.

Peer Researchers are trained to develop research skills and work alongside professional researchers using personal experience to shape the way research will be conducted.

We are looking for a team of volunteer peer-researchers who can undertake interviews with women who have experienced homelessness in London. This is a short-term project for six months running through March 2019 and September 2019 in which you will visit services across London to conduct one-to-one interviews and questionnaires.

Peer Researchers must fully complete the 2-day training with Groundswell which will be held at Groundswell's offices in Brixton.

What's this about?

The number of people experiencing "persistent poverty" in the UK has increased 18% and poverty rates among women are rising considerably quicker than amongst men¹. As a result of this, women and children are the fastest growing group experiencing homelessness². Despite this, there is limited understanding of the experience of homeless women and

¹ Bulman, M. 2017. Number of Britons enduring 'persistent' poverty surges by 700,000 in a year, figures show. Found at, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/britons-persistent-poverty-uk-families-surge-18-per-cent-2016-year-figures-ons-action-statistics-a7810391.html>

² Feantsa, 2016. Found at, <https://www.feantsa.org/download/summer-2016-perspectives-on-women-s-homelessness1684329503268833210.pdf>

reliable information is not always available due to the lack of gender specific data and hidden homelessness amongst women.

Women who face homelessness are often subject to worse health and health outcomes than homeless men and significantly worse than women in the general population. For example, from 2013 to 2017 the average life expectancy for homeless women is just 42 years – 2 years shorter than homeless men, and 39 years shorter than the general female population³. Homeless women are also living with mental illness at much higher rates than the general population as 70% of homeless women have mental health needs⁴, compared to 20% of female population⁵.

Who are Groundswell?

Groundswell is a registered charity that exists to enable people who are homeless to create solutions and move themselves out of homelessness – for benefit of our whole society.

Our work is based on a set of core beliefs that see homeless people at the heart of solutions to tackling homelessness. Our largest area of work is around health and homelessness through our Homeless Health Peer Advocacy Service (HHPA). We also conduct research projects that are led by people who have personal experience of homelessness.

What is Peer Research?

Peer Research is conducted by people with lived experience of the issues that are being explored, in this case females with experience of homelessness or being at risk of homelessness.

Peer Researchers are trained to develop research skills and work alongside professional researchers using personal experience to shape the way research is conducted.

We are looking for a team of volunteer peer-researchers who can undertake interviews with women who have experienced homelessness in London. This is a short-term project running through March 2019 and September 2019 in which you will visit support services across London to conduct one-to-one interviews and questionnaires.

Peer Researchers must fully complete the 2-day training with Groundswell which will be held at Groundswell's offices in Brixton.

Is this project for me?

Qualities of a peer researcher:

The ideal peer researcher will:

- Be a **good listener** who is interested in others and their opinions

³ ONS, 2017.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/birthsdeathsandmarriages/deaths/bulletins/deaths-of-homeless-people-in-england-and-wales/2013-to-2017>

⁴ Rebuilding Shattered Lives, 2014. St Mungo's. Found at, <https://www.mungos.org/publication/rebuilding-shattered-lives-final-report/>

⁵ The BMJ, 2016. Women have higher rates of mental disorders than men, NHS survey finds. Found at, <https://www.bmj.com/content/354/bmj.i5320>

- Be **confident** to speak about other people's experiences
- Treat others in a **non-judgemental** way and with **respect**
- Be **committed and reliable**
- Understand the importance of **boundaries and be comfortable to ask for support** when needed
- Be keen to **learn new skills**

Skills and experience needed in a Peer Researcher:

The ideal peer researcher should:

- **Have experience of being homeless or being at risk of homelessness.**
- Have **good literacy skills** and be comfortable taking notes.
- Practice good **time keeping**.
- Have good **verbal communication** skills.
- Be **secure in recovery** if relevant.

*Given the nature of this project and the fact that we will be talking to women about very sensitive issues **only applicants who identify as female are suitable for this role.**

*This role is **only for people with lived experience of homelessness**, this includes rough sleeping and living in hostels, night shelters, refugees, sofa surfing, squatting and other temporary or insecure accommodation.

What do I get in return?

Participating in this project will give you the opportunity to:

- Play significant part in capturing important data on **women and homelessness**
- Learn **new skills** and gain experience which can add to your CV
- Take part in training and get a **certificate for taking part**
- Get to know Groundswell's work and be an important part in the organisation's growth and development
- All **travel costs and other expenses** involved in the project will be covered by Groundswell

Time commitment:

- The project will last a total of 6 months, with an event in September to showcase our research findings with professionals and policy makers. There will be opportunities for continued involvement following this.
- Two days of training to be held in Groundswell's offices in mid-March. To be confirmed nearer the time.
- From April to July Peer Researchers will conduct interviews across services in London. Visits are likely to last half days and will include travel by public transport. Research visits will be arranged depending on your availability.
- Follow-up meetings will be held when the field work is complete to review findings and feed into the final report, event and podcast.

How do I apply?

If you are interested in becoming a Peer Researcher on the Women's Research project, please fill in the application form answering the following questions:

- Why you are interested in this volunteer role?
- What experience do you have that makes you suitable for the role?

Please email this form (or ask a keyworker to send for you) to recruitment@groundswell.org.uk. Please add 'women's peer researcher' in the subject line in the email or send us your application:

Sarah Hough
Groundswell
6th Floor St Matthews
Brixton Hill
SW2 1JF

We will then call to arrange an informal interview. The deadline for applications **11th March 2019 at 5pm.**

If you have any questions about the role, please contact: Sarah Hough or Suzy Solley on 0207 725 2851 or email: sarah.hough@groundswell.org.uk

If you are interested in becoming a Peer Researcher on the Women's Health project; please fill in the application form below answering the following questions.

Name	
Address	
Mobile Number	
E-mail address	
What's the best way to contact you?	

What experience do you have that makes you suitable for this role?

Why you are interested in this volunteer role?