## Volunteer Link Worker – English Language Support

## Working within the Language Support Team

**Background Information**

Please also refer to our website <http://savte.org.uk>

SAVTE works with Sheffield communities and individuals to realise their potential through the enhancement of skills, confidence and experiences through either practical English language development or volunteering to become more active, empowered and connected citizens.

We work in partnership with communities and community groups to respond to locally identified issues, through the provision of informal and inclusive volunteer-led English language development. We work with speakers of other languages, local organisations and relevant services to empower people to improve their health and wellbeing or to progress into new opportunities whether these are learning, volunteering or employment.

Our provision is person-centred and self directed and comprises of two complementary programmes:

**Language Support Programme** – The LSP team’s focus is on providing English learning support to help learners develop everyday English skills and confidence. Our ethos is to support learners to overcome barriers to learning which sometimes include isolation so that they can progress onto other learning or volunteering opportunities.

Volunteers and participants meet 1:1 (face to face and/or online), in small groups (face to and/or online), and in conversation groups (online and face to face). Our projects include ESOL Together (Family Learning with ESOL) and a Digital Inclusion programme.

Volunteering is a way to give time and to do something great in Sheffield. We recruit, train and support volunteers to this programme who would like to develop new skills and gain new experience.

We are also planning to deliver new community ESOL classes and more accredited courses to complement our more informal conversation groups that occur in the city. Our ethos is to provide choice, therefore we are continually looking to diversify our offer and provide a range of opportunities to meet diverse needs in Sheffield.

**Volunteer Development Programme.** The CVD Team is focused on working in communities, where we aim to recruit, and support volunteers, particularly from underrepresented communities, who are keen to try volunteering, develop new skills, experience and confidence to enable them to achieve their own personal goals, whether that be finding a job, continuing with lifelong learning, or becoming active in their communities. We envisage that the community classes will provide placement opportunities for our Development Volunteers, and therefore there will be the opportunity for the Link Worker to provide support for volunteers on our accredited volunteer programme.

**Our Community Development** approach is to ensure that all our volunteering and learning activities facilitate community connections which not only help to develop language further but make a valuable contribution to health and wellbeing, reduce social isolation and accelerate participation in society.

We work in partnership with a wide range of organisations in the city, and through detailed mapping and consultation we have a good understanding of local needs and issues which we use to inform planning and delivery of activities in partnership with local people and organisations. We aim for our provision to meet the needs and aspirations of people in their particular neighbourhoods (rather than a one size fits all) therefore our class programmes are designed along these lines.

**Organisational changes as a result of Covid-19 –** We have now moved to a hybrid-flexible working policy and staff are expected to work from the office at least 50% of their time which we believe supports creativity, wellbeing and good team working. However, *individual circumstances are taken into consideration to ensure working patterns both meet the needs of the individual as well as the organisation.*

With the pandemic still very much at large, however, we are open to sudden changes in Public Health guidance, but on the whole we are working to a complete resumption of face to face activities, with the offer of online learning through our digital inclusion programme where required.

**JOB DESCRIPTION**

**Main Purpose of the Role**

The role forms an integral part of SAVTE Language Support Team which is responsible for the delivery of the Language Support Programme which involves recruiting and training volunteers to provide 1:1 or group based learning either online or face to face with learners, most of whom are unable to access mainstream provision. The Link Worker’s role is to assess, understand learners' needs and aspirations, and to work with their volunteers to support learners' progression, to gain new skills, confidence and knowledge.

*All link workers in SAVTE have their own lead area of responsibility and cover an area of the city. This will be discussed at the time of appointment. The current 2 areas of responsibility: Resource Development, Training, and Information Advice and guidance.*

**Specifically the role involves:**

**Volunteer Support and Coordination**

* Along with the SAVTE team, recruit, interview, assess and assign volunteers to provide either 1:1 English support or to facilitate online small groups or conversation groups
* Deliver SAVTE volunteer training courses either during the day, evening or possibly over a weekend.
* Allocate “best fit” placements for volunteers and facilitate introductory meetings, which will include goal setting and devising a learning plan based on learners' self-identified aspirations which aim towards progression and accessing activities in their community or other learning providers.
* Provide on-going support online or face to face for a cohort of volunteers through support sessions, which may be a range of individual or group sessions depending on their needs, to ensure that teaching placements meet the learners needs.
* As a link worker for volunteers, deal with any issues that may arise during placement, supporting session and resource planning, and providing end of placement reviews and assessments.
* Facilitate volunteer groups and development sessions which may identify further training and development needs.
* Ensure that volunteers are accountable for the work they are undertaking and work within SAVTE’s policies and procedures.

**Learner English Language Development**

* Manage a “cohort” of learners and the volunteers supporting them– including those participating in 1:1, small group, online conversation groups, family learning and digital skills development within a defined locality,
* In liaison with the Programme Director and programme support team, follow up with learner referrals.
* Assess learners’ needs which include their circumstances, motivation, aspiration and language levels, and determine what input is appropriate either in their home or at community venues or refer learners onto appropriate activities within SAVTE or partners.
* Undertake risk assessments for all new referrals (and placements) that take into account safeguarding, lone working and environmental/health factors.
* Support Lead Tutor with resource development
* Support families (and their volunteers) who are participating in the ESOL Together programme.
* Support participants who require additional support with accessing learning via the internet.
* Where feasible, establish small learning groups (2-3 learners) online or in the community, in order to enhance community integration opportunities.

**Information Advice and Guidance (IAG)**

* Maintaining accurate local information on providers and sources of support
* Updating the wider SAVTE team on new developments and relevant opportunities
* Identifying progression opportunities across SAVTE programmes for learners and volunteers
* Identifying gaps and solutions in SAVTE IAG provision
* Supporting link workers with completing learner reviews, identifying progression opportunities and outcomes for learners.

**Working with the Volunteer and Community Development team\***

* Work closely with the Community and Volunteer Development team members in ‘your’ defined locality to ensure that both SAVTE programmes work together ensuring both volunteer and learner progression within the context of the community. This will include working together in the office as well as attending community based meetings.
* Where a Development Volunteer is supporting a 1:1 learner, work with the Volunteer Development Link worker (who provides volunteer support) to ensure that both volunteer and learner have positive outcomes from the placement.
* Keep up to date with your assigned locality to ensure SAVTE provision is aligned with local priorities and partnerships. This will include tailoring teh learning plan and IAG to local opportunities.
* Identify opportunities for learners to progress into supported volunteering roles.

*\*please note that this area is still in development and will evolve during the next 12 months*

**Organisation - Operations and Development**

* As SAVTE evolves, contribute and undertake project development tasks as required
* Contribute to the communication strategy to raise SAVTE’s profile in order to increase awareness of SAVTE volunteer applications and widen the reach of learner referrals, by attending community events, or producing publicity.
* Database and information management, use systems in accordance with SAVTE processes and procedures.
* Ensure all activities comply with SAVTE’s agreed policies and procedures including Safeguarding and Reporting Domestic Abuse, Health and Safety (including Lone Working, Equalities Diversity and Inclusion and GDPR.
* Undertake own administration as necessary.

**General**

* Participate in supervision, appraisals, team and partnership meetings.
* Identify your own training needs within supervision and attend training courses and events as necessary.
* Undertake any other duties as required, which are consistent with the nature of the post.

**PERSON SPECIFICATION - Link Worker(English Language Support)**

| **Qualifications and Experience** | Shortlisting  criteria | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 1. Experience of working with and supporting volunteers 2. Hold a L3 or above qualification in Education and Training or ESOL subject specialism ( e.g. CELTA, TESOL)   and / or   1. At least 2 years experience delivering adult ESOL learner support , ideally in a community setting. 2. Experience of assessing and supporting adult ESOL learners with additional needs and barriers to participating in mainstream classes. 3. Knowledge and experience of supporting progression and using IAG (Information, Advice and Guidance) to enable adults to achieve further learning or employment outcomes. 4. Experience of using technology to support learning activities online 5. Experience of training delivery online and face to face 6. Monitoring and evaluation, collecting and maintaining records producing reports to evidence outcomes. | **E**  **D**  **or**  **E**  **E**  **E**  **D**  **D**  **D** | |
| **Knowledge** |  | |
| 1. Aspiration, skills and needs of people whose first language is not English. 2. Learner-centred development methods and resources for one to one teaching in the home, informal groups and online. | **E**  **E** | |
| **Skills and Ability** |  | |
| 1. Developing and producing teaching resources (Learner- centred approach) 2. Assessment of Learners English levels and learning needs to inform appropriate inputs and measure impact. 3. Use a reflective approach to review work and adapt accordingly. 4. Use IT skills – e.g.. MS Office, Google Workspace and Apps. | **D**  **E**  **E**  **E** | |
| **Personal Qualities** |  |  |
| 1. Ability to work on own initiative to organise, plan and prioritise own work programme, including when under pressure and meeting deadlines. 2. Good written, oral and interpersonal communication skills for working with learners (speakers of other languages), volunteer tutors, organisations and the public. 3. Ability to work flexibly and enthusiastically within a team and self-motivated to work on own initiative and take responsibility for own performance. 4. Knowledge of and commitment to equalities, diversity and inclusion and community development values that SAVTE promotes. 5. Commitment to maintaining security – in compliance with safeguarding and GDPR requirements. | **E**  **E**  **E**  **E**  **E** | |
| **Personal Circumstances** |  |  |
| able to travel to different locations in SHeffield either using own car, bike or public transport. | **D** | |
| Flexible to work :   * occasional weekends and evenings (events, volunteer training, meetings) * from home, office or in community settings | **E** | |

May 2022 Key: E=Essential, D= Desirable