Requirements for Therapeutic Volunteering at Yellow Door

Thank you very much for expressing an interest in volunteering at Yellow Door.

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| We have two ‘pathways’ for volunteering at Yellow Door. This document explains the **therapeutic volunteer pathway** for people who would like to pursue a career in counselling, and wish to get their clinical placement hours or experience in a helping/supportive role. |

We hugely appreciate the work and support of all our volunteers. However, we can only accept a limited number of therapeutic volunteers each year. Given the complex client group that we work with, we need to select volunteers very carefully to ensure the correct ‘fit’. We realise that we ask for a significant commitment, but if you are selected, we believe you will have an extremely fulfilling and valuable experience.

We are providing this information sheet so that you are fully aware of the nature of the commitment and our processes before you decide whether to proceed with a formal application.

Please note that most of our services are delivered face-to-face, so you will need to be able to travel to YD’s premises in Portswood, Southampton.

**Eligibility criteria**

We have a number of different roles available for trainee therapists:

* volunteer counsellor
* trauma practitioner
* assessment support practitioner
* course co-facilitator
* call handler
* administrative support.
* We are also looking for volunteer supervisors. This role would be appropriate for people who are fully qualified counsellors, studying to become a clinical supervisor, and need placement hours.

**Why do we have a ‘pathway’ for therapy/counselling students?**

Each of the roles above require a different level of therapeutic qualification to undertake the role safely, effectively and ethically. Depending on your entry role, there are opportunities to develop your skills and progress within Yellow Door. This progression within Yellow Door will correlate with your ongoing educational progression at your respective college/university i.e moving from level 4 to level 5.

If you wish to progress to a new role, you will not need to fill in more forms or attend our course again. This will speed up our processes significantly as we will have already got to know you and your skills**. (Please note that successful recruitment to the next role is not guaranteed.)**

There are other therapeutic volunteering roles sometimes available, but these are generally more ‘ad-hoc’ and we can discuss them if you have been accepted onto the therapeutic pathway.

**About the application process**

Please download the [Therapeutic Application Form](https://yellowdoor.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Updated-Therapeutic-Volunteer-Application-Form.docx) and [Equalities Monitoring Form](https://yellowdoor.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/11/Updated-Equalities-monitoring-form.docx) also available on our website and return it to us by the **next closing date**. Please select **all** roles that you are **qualified and keen** to carry out.

1. Download the application and equalities monitoring form, fill it in and return to volunteering@yellowdoor.org.uk by the next deadline.
2. When the application window has closed, we carry out a paper-based selection process. This is like shortlisting for a job – we assess your application against our current needs and inform you whether you are through to the next stage. This will partly depend on your skills and experience, but also on your availability and Yellow Door’s current needs.
3. If you are shortlisted, we will invite you to attend our CPD accredited training course. This course allows us to get to know each other and is an informal part of the selection process. Whatever the ultimate outcome, you will receive a CPD accreditation “Introduction to Domestic and Sexual Abuse” from Yellow Door.
4. We will invite you to attend a selection day/session. For counsellors, this will be a day of role plays and other activities such as a group process. For other roles, the selection process will be tailored to the needs of that specific role.
5. We will carry out DBS checks and references.
6. If you are accepted onto the therapeutic pathway, we will arrange for you to start a supervision or reflective practice group.
7. Volunteering will start

NB. Volunteer counsellors need to attend the CPD course **before** selection. For other roles we can be more flexible and you will generally attend selection before the CPD course. We will do our best to accommodate your needs.

What if I’m not selected?

We would love to accept more therapy students into our service, but our clients often have very complex needs and therefore generally need the support of experienced therapists. Our client-facing volunteers will always receive clinical supervision or reflective practice. Unfortunately, spaces on these sessions are limited so we can only support a fairly small number of students at any one time.

If we don’t select you as a therapeutic volunteer, there could be various reasons: we don’t think you’re the right match right now; we can’t match up your availability and our needs; or we currently don’t have a space available in clinical supervision/reflective practice. We will endeavor to give you honest and helpful feedback. If you give us permission to keep your details, we will keep you on our volunteer files and let you know if other suitable opportunities arise.

Our training course

Each year we aim to run 4 new volunteer courses. Two of these courses will be 3 x full days; and two will be 5 x evening sessions.

The course is CPD accredited and covers: working with people who have experienced sexual and domestic abuse; safeguarding; trauma; information sharing & GDPR; equality & diversity; boundaries; personal impact & secondary trauma.

Additional assessment for **Volunteer Counsellor** and **Trauma Practitioner** - Friday 18th February.

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| **Application deadline** | **Notification of shortlisting by** | **Next training course start date** | **Details** |
| 5th December 2021 | 10th December 2021 | 10th January 2022 | Every Monday evening for five weeks, from 6pm - 9.30pm (10th, 17th, 24th, 31st, 7th Feb) |
| The below dates are provisional, exact dates are being clarified |
|  |  | 25th March 2022 | Every Friday for 3 weeks, from 10am to 4.30pm (25th March, 1st April, 8th April) |
|  |  | 15th June 2022 | Every Wednesday evening for five weeks, from 6pm - 9.30pm (15th, 22nd, 29th June, 6th, 13th July) |
|  |  | 12th Sept 2022 | Every Thursday for 3 weeks, from 10am to 4.30pm (12th, 19th, 26th September) |

Volunteer Counsellor (one-to-one)

Our therapeutic service works with people of all ages and genders who have been impacted by domestic or sexual abuse. Our counselling for adults is generally one-to-one talking therapy at our office in Portswood. Our counselling for children and young people can be play therapy, art therapy or talking therapy.

In order to be considered as a volunteer counsellor, you will need to meet the following criteria:

* Be working towards completing a L5 qualification[[1]](#footnote-1) in counselling, therapy or psychotherapy. The qualification should be accredited by a body such as BACP, UKPC, BPC, CPCAB, BAAT (or equivalent).
* Be in a position to receive a ‘fit to practice’ verification soon (from your training provider).
* Have received, or be receiving personal therapy.
* Be willing and able to commit to professional supervision (provided by Yellow Door) for 1.5 hours per fortnight. Please note that supervision is not modality specific.
* Be willing and able to attend a 3 day CPD accredited course at Yellow Door.
* Be willing and able to attend a day-long role play selection process after the course[[2]](#footnote-2).
* Be willing and able to commit to seeing two clients per week, plus professional supervision.
* Be willing and able to attend Lamplight training. Lamplight is our data system that client information must be recorded within. This training generally lasts for around 3 hours.

**Other**

* You should expect to attend at least two supervision sessions (one per fortnight) before you are assigned your first client.
* We have fixed dates/days for the training course and supervision sessions. We try to be as flexible as possible, but please bear this in mind before you apply. You will need to have a reasonable amount of time available.
* Due to the complexity of our client group, we cannot guarantee that you will be able to get your full hours of practice within your training provider’s specified timescale.

Trauma Practitioners (one-to-one)

Trauma practitioners offer trauma-informed, psycho-educational interventions to clients who have recently had an unwanted sexual experience (within the last 12 months). Practitioners will be working with clients who are experiencing active trauma symptoms such as hypervigilance and panic attacks and will need to have a good understanding of trauma and how it affects people. (We will provide volunteers with further training).

The aim of this service is to provide clients with an understanding of common responses to sexual abuse and/or assault as well as ensuring that they are equipped with tools and strategies to help manage their trauma symptoms effectively. This includes stabilization work, grounding techniques, working with trauma in the body as well as brain.

Trauma practitioners are not therapists in the conventional sense[[3]](#footnote-3), as they fulfil a role that is a cross between a coach, a therapist and sometimes an advocate. The practitioner’s function is not to provide counselling in relation to the actual traumatic experience, but provide psycho-educational support to help clients manage their trauma symptoms. Clients may attend conventional counselling later on in their recovery journey.

In order to be considered for this role, you will need to meet the following criteria:

* Have completed or be studying for Level 4 with a recognised provider.
* Have significant experience of working with distressed and vulnerable people.
* Have a good understanding of trauma and how it affects people.
* Practitioners need to ensure they are robust enough to work with clients whose trauma responses are active. This is why they come to the trauma service, rather than our traditional counselling service.
* Be willing and able to commit to professional supervision (provided by Yellow Door) for 1.5 hours per fortnight. Please note that supervision is not modality specific.
* Be willing and able to attend our CPD accredited course at Yellow Door.
* Be willing to attend a face-to-face selection process.
* Be willing and able to attend Lamplight training. Lamplight is our data system that client information must be recorded within. This training generally lasts for around 3 hours.

**NB**

* You should expect to attend at least two supervision sessions (one per fortnight) before you are assigned your first client.
* We have fixed dates/days for the training course and supervision sessions. We try to be as flexible as possible, but please bear this in mind before you apply. You will need to have a reasonable amount of time available.

Assessment Support Practitioner

All Yellow Door clients are initially screened by call handlers before being allocated to an appropriate Yellow Door service. Before joining the therapy waiting list, clients must also receive an assessment. The Assessment Support Practitioner’s role is to conduct assessments to check suitability for therapy, and to feedback to screening meetings. On the basis of your assessment, a therapeutic formulation will be created and the client allocated to an appropriate therapist. Assessments are generally carried out over the telephone.

In order to be considered as a volunteer Assessment Support Practitioner, you will need to meet the following criteria:

* Ideally have completed Level 3 / be studying for Level 4 with a recognised provider. We can be flexible on this qualification level if applicants have good mental health experience and understanding.
* Great people skills, with an ability to actively listen and ask questions.
* Be willing and able to commit to reflective practice sessions once a month.
* Be willing and able to attend our CPD accredited course at Yellow Door.
* Be willing to attend a face-to-face selection process. This will include roles plays and process group.
* Be willing and able to attend Lamplight training. Lamplight is our data system that client information must be recorded within. This training generally lasts for around 3 hours.

**NB**

* You should expect to spend some time shadowing our assessment practitioners before you are assigned your first client.
* We have fixed dates/days for the training course. We try to be as flexible as possible, but please bear this in mind before you apply.

Group co-facilitator

We run a number of groups for adults, young people, and sometimes adults and their children alongside each other. Some of these groups are therapeutic and some are psycho-educational. The groups are led by highly experienced staff members, but we always have at least one co-facilitator.

In order to be considered as a co-facilitator, you will need to meet the following criteria:

* Have completed Level 3 / be studying for Level 4 with a recognised provider.
* Be willing and able to commit to reflective practice sessions once a month.
* Be willing and able to attend our CPD accredited course at Yellow Door.
* Be willing to attend a face-to-face selection process.

**NB**

* We have fixed dates/days for the training course and supervision sessions. We try to be as flexible as possible, but please bear this in mind before you apply.

Call handler

We receive a great many calls from clients, who are often in distress. We would like volunteers to work with us who have experience of handling distressing calls, and some knowledge/experience of Safeguarding and risk.

In order to be considered as a call handler, you will need to meet the following criteria:

* Have completed or be studying for a minimum of Level 2 with a recognised provider.
* Have experience of handling calls from people in distress.
* Some experience of Safeguarding and assessing risk. Please note we have a Safeguarding Action Team (SAT) and a Duty Manager. You will be expected to **recognise** Safeguarding concerns and refer them to the SAT – you won’t be expected to deal with them yourself.
* Be willing and able to commit to reflective practice sessions once a month.
* Be willing and able to attend our CPD accredited course at Yellow Door.
* Be willing to attend a face-to-face selection process.
* Be willing and able to attend Lamplight training. Lamplight is our data system that client information must be recorded within. This training generally lasts for around 3 hours.

**NB**

* We have fixed dates/days for the training course and supervision sessions. We try to be as flexible as possible, but please bear this in mind before you apply.

Therapeutic admin support

We would also hugely value support with all the administration involved in running the therapeutic service.

This role is not directly client-facing, but you will be exposed to reading presentation issues and trauma experiences.

* Have completed or be studying for a minimum of Level 1 with a recognised provider.
* Be an organised person with an aptitude for administrative work.
* Be willing and able to attend our CPD accredited course at Yellow Door.
* Be willing to attend a face-to-face selection process.
* Be willing and able to attend Lamplight training. Lamplight is our data system that client information must be recorded within. This training generally lasts for around 3 hours.

**NB**

* We have fixed dates/days for the training course and supervision sessions. We try to be as flexible as possible, but please bear this in mind before you apply. You will need to have a reasonable amount of time available.
1. Generally we need counsellors to be at Level 5, but some courses or accrediting bodies may use different levels. We need volunteers to be at a level where they can receive a ‘fit to practice’ verification and to be getting their 100/150 placement hours. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Why do we ask you to attend the course **before** the main selection process? We hope that you will be pleased to have the opportunity to attend our CPD accredited course “Introduction to Domestic and Sexual Abuse” even if you are not ultimately selected. We do it this way around because you will have gained knowledge during the course that you will then be able to apply during the role-play day. We also hope that you will have become sufficiently comfortable with your colleagues and the trainers to do yourself justice in the role plays. We want to get a genuine view of our prospective volunteers without nerves getting in the way. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. It is unlikely that hours worked in the Trauma Service will contribute towards your counselling practice hours, as it is not a conventional therapeutic relationship. However, this will depend on your course and accrediting body’s requirements. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)