



Information on Volunteering

Tuam Cancer Care is a non-profit, charitable organisation that offers emotional, psychological and practical support to people with a cancer diagnosis and their families in their Centre in Tuam, and relies to a great extent on its Support Volunteer to provide this service. Do you think you would be interested in helping out with this worthwhile work by becoming a Support Volunteer?

- The Centre provides therapies, support and information and is open Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday mornings and Monday evening. Workshops and public information talks are also organised by the Centre. All services and therapies are provided free of charge.
- We provide initial training in listening skills for Trainee Support Volunteer, ensure they are rostered with experienced volunteers and on-going support is available from the Centre Co-ordinator, Support Volunteer leaders and the Centre Psychotherapist.
- We ask our Support Volunteers to be available for two sessions of duty per month and to attend Support Volunteer Support meeting.
- Support Volunteers are also encouraged to help out with workshops, public education talks, support groups and administration work, if they are interested in any of these areas.
- We are particularly interested in hearing from you if you have had a cancer diagnosis or have cared for or lost a loved one who has had a cancer diagnosis. (However in these cases, we ask that you be two years post treatment or post bereavement before you get involved in volunteering with the Centre).
- The Centre is committed to providing support for men as well as women with a cancer diagnosis also, so we are particularly interested in hearing from prospective male Support Volunteers.
- To apply, please complete the Centre Application Form. Thank you.

The Role of the Support Volunteer

The role of the Support Volunteer in *Tuam Cancer Care* is to 'listen to and care for' the clients they meet, or speak with on the phone, while on duty in the Centre.

The Good Listener

Everybody has the capacity to listen. A 'good listener' is a person who can hear what is being said, and who can convey to the speaker that they have been heard and that they are understood.

The Listening Conversation

In Tuam Cancer Care, the Listening Conversation takes place between a client and a Support Volunteer; the Support Volunteer is the listener. The listening of a Support Volunteer is empathic, compassionate and non-judgemental. The focus of the Listening Conversation is the experience of the client. The Support Volunteer, by refraining from speaking about their own experience, keeps the focus of the conversation on the Client's experience.

In this Listening Conversation the client is encouraged to talk about what is of concern to them: no advice of any kind is given. Most importantly, the Support Volunteer never attempts to answer medical questions. The client is supported by the Support Volunteer to find strategies that will help them to ask their questions of their doctor. An example of a supportive strategy might be to assist the client with writing down their questions, so that the client can then take their list of written questions with them on their next visit with their doctor.

Confidentiality

Of critical importance to the integrity of Tuam Cancer Care is confidentiality. Everything that is discussed in the Centre (with clients or with Centre personnel) is held in confidence. The Support Volunteer never speaks to anybody outside of the Centre about anything heard in the course of their volunteer work. Within the Centre, discussion about a client with centre personnel or another volunteer takes place only when it is necessary for the care and support of the client, and thus is specifically in the interest of the client.

The Commitment Required of the Support Volunteer

Support Volunteers are asked to roster in Tuam Cancer Care twice a month during opening hours (9.50a.m.-2.00p.m. or 6.45 p.m. to 9.00p.m.). Support Volunteers choose the two periods for which they are available each month. Attendance at two Support and Guidance sessions is an essential requirement. There are Support Volunteer Meetings throughout the year which includes In-service training. Social evenings take place twice a year.

During their times of duty in the Centre, in addition to being available to listen to the clients, the Support Volunteer is expected to assist with the provision of juice, teas or other drinks, general tidying of the kitchen area, loading and unloading of the dishwasher, folding and storing of sheets and towels etc.

Support and Guidance Meetings

Support and Guidance meetings takes place regularly in the Centre with scheduled small and large group meetings during the course of the year. This will be organised by the Co-ordinator and is an essential requirement for being a Support Volunteer.

Attendance at these meetings are encouraged and required of the Support Volunteer. It is at these meetings that information about new and ongoing activities of the Centre is shared. Support and help is available to Support Volunteers to enable them to deal with any difficulties encountered in their work; additional training in listening skills and 'being present to clients' is also provided. On starting work in the Centre each Support Volunteer is provided with a Manual that contains all of the information needed for full participation in the life and work of the Centre.

We at Tuam Cancer Care welcome your interest in and support of the work of our Centre.



Support Volunteer Programme

Becoming a Support Volunteer in Tuam Cancer Care involves a number of stages:

1. Application & Interview Process
2. Probation Period
3. Training

Application & Interview Process

A Volunteer Pack including the following: Volunteer Recruiting Guidelines, Information on Volunteering with Tuam Cancer Care, a Support Volunteer Application Form, Role of the Volunteer and a covering letter are sent to all who express an interest in volunteering in the Centre. The enclosed application form should be completed and sent to the Volunteer Liaison Officer in Tuam Cancer Care.

We ask applicants who have had a cancer diagnosis or who have been bereaved through cancer to be at least two years post treatment or two years after their bereavement. Tuam Cancer Care welcomes you to apply after the required period of time.

The interview will be conducted in line with best practice and confidentiality will be ensured at all times. The successful applicant will be notified by letter from the Coordinator and asked to call into or phone the Centre to arrange for induction and orientation of the Centre. In the event of an applicant being unsuccessful a letter to this effect will be sent to the applicant by the coordinator.

Induction

Induction is the process of guidance, training and learning about the work of Tuam Cancer Care. It is a time for the Trainee Support Volunteer to learn about the policies and operational procedures of Tuam Cancer Care.

All Trainee Support Volunteers are provided with induction by the Centre Coordinator before commencing their probationary period with Tuam Cancer Care. During induction Trainee Support Volunteers will be provided with an opportunity to discuss any concerns they may have. All new Trainee Support Volunteers will be given a copy of Tuam Cancer Care's Support Volunteer Manual. In addition they will be asked to *read and sign* the Policy on Confidentiality. They will also be asked to read the Centre's Health & Safety Statement and sign that they agree to abide by the Centre's Health & Safety Policy.

Probation Period

Volunteers commencing voluntary work with Tuam Cancer Care are subject to a probationary period. The probationary period is an opportunity for the organisation and the volunteer to decide whether they are suited to each other. It allows the Support Volunteer to see if the work is what they had envisaged and also to get a feel for working in a cancer support service. In addition it allows the organisation to determine that the Trainee Support Volunteer is suited to the work and that he/she has the foundation skills that are required for the role of a Support Volunteer with Tuam Cancer Care.

The probation period consists of:

- 4 scheduled duty sessions with an experienced Support Volunteer.
- The probation period lasts approximately 3 months
- 2 duty sessions per month are required

The Centre Coordinator will coordinate the rostering with Trainee Support Volunteers to ensure that they are supported and rostered with experienced Support Volunteers throughout this period.

Reviews and any matters arising during the probationary period may be recorded in writing and attached to the Support Volunteers application form.

End of Probationary Period

On completion of the probation period the Trainee Support Volunteer will receive a letter informing them that they have successfully completed the probationary period and inviting them to become a Support Volunteer.

In the event of a Trainee Support Volunteer being unsuccessful, a letter to this effect will be sent to the applicant.

Training

In order to ensure that the professional standard of the Centre be maintained, initial and on-going training of Support Volunteers is considered imperative, following the successful completion of the probation period.

Attendance at the Support Meeting and other Training Days is essential in order to ensure that best practice is achieved at Tuam Cancer Care.

Tuam Cancer Care is committed to providing a high standard of care and support to all who use the Centre.



Support Volunteer Application Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact Numbers: Home: _____ Work: _____ Mobile: _____

Email: _____

Please tick the sessions you would be available to work in Tuam Cancer Care:

Monday 9.45a.m. – 2.00pm. Monday 6.50pm. - 9.00pm

Tuesday 9.45a.m. – 2.00pm. Wednesday 9.45am. - 2.00pm.

Thursday 9.45a.m. – 2.00pm Friday 9.50am.- 2.00pm

Can you commit to two sessions per month and a monthly Support Volunteer Meeting?

Yes No

Why do you want to volunteer in Tuam Cancer Care?

Have you had any training that would be relevant in your work as a Support Volunteer?

What do you hope to gain from being a Support Volunteer?

What qualities would you bring to your work in the centre?

What experiences have you had that may help you in your work as a Support Volunteer in Tuam Cancer Care?

What are your interests or hobbies?

Have you had a cancer diagnosis?

Yes No

(If yes please complete Section A)

Have you had a relative or a close friend who has had a cancer diagnosis?

Yes No

(If yes please complete Section B)

Section A

Details of cancer diagnosis: _____

Date of diagnosis: _____

Treatment: Surgery↑ Chemotherapy↑ Radiotherapy↑ Hormone Therapy↑ Other↑

Recurrence

Details of recurrence: _____

Date of recurrence: _____

Treatment: Surgery↑ Chemotherapy↑ Radiotherapy↑ Hormone Therapy↑ Other↑

Section B

What experiences have you of being involved with a person with a cancer diagnosis and what was your relationship to this person?

Details of cancer diagnosis: _____

Date of diagnosis: _____

Section C

Reference

(Please provide contact details for a reference)

Name: _____

Address:

Phone: _____ **Mobile:** _____

Any other relevant information

Signature of Applicant: _____ **Date:** _____

Please return application to: *The Coordinator of Services, Tuam Cancer Care, Cricket Court, Dunmore Road, Tuam, Co Galway.*