Youth Services Volunteer

Responsible to: Volunteer Coordinator; Youth Services Manager
Based: Bedfordshire

Context

Q:alliance provides support, information and representation for the LGBTQ+ people who live, work and play in Milton Keynes and Bedfordshire. We have detailed knowledge of the issues and challenges that organisations and individuals face locally.

It's our goal to create more safe spaces and resources to ensure the LGBTQ+ community is well represented and supported.

Scope

The Youth Services Volunteer will support Q:alliance youth sessions by helping create a welcoming, inclusive and engaging environment for LGBTQ+ young people. Volunteers will work alongside staff to encourage participation and interaction, support activities, build positive relationships and help young people feel heard, while staff retain overall responsibility for planning, delivery, safeguarding decisions and session management.

Main Volunteer Activities

- Session support and engagement – welcome young people into sessions, help them settle in, encourage participation in activities and support positive interaction between young people and the wider team.
- Supporting activities – assist staff with prepared activities, discussions and informal group work, helping young people to feel included, involved and able to contribute at their own pace.
- Inclusive spaces – model respectful, inclusive behaviour and help maintain our safer spaces policy. Foster a welcoming environment where LGBTQ+ young people feel valued and respected.
- Listening and signposting – listen to young people appropriately, offer encouragement within the boundaries of the role, and refer any support needs, disclosures or concerns to Youth Support Workers or Designated Safeguarding Lead rather than managing these independently.
- Feedback and reflection – share observations and feedback with staff after sessions to help improve young people's experience.

Skills and Experience

Expertise

- An interest in supporting LGBTQ+ young people in a youth work or community setting
- Ability to engage positively with young people and encourage participation in group activities
- Awareness of the challenges that may affect LGBTQ+ young people, or willingness to learn
- Willingness to follow safeguarding, confidentiality, safer spaces and behaviour policies at all times
- Ability to recognise when a concern should be passed to staff and to report concerns promptly rather than attempting to resolve them alone
- Commitment to attending relevant induction, safeguarding and role-specific training provided by Q:alliance

Communication

- Able to communicate warmly, respectfully and clearly with young people, Youth Support Workers, other volunteers and wider Q:alliance Team
- Attendance to regular check-ins with Volunteer Coordinator and supervising staff
- Confident to join conversations, encourage quieter young people where appropriate and support group participation
- Able to share relevant information with Youth Support Workers promptly, especially where a young person may need additional support
- Understands the importance of confidentiality and professional boundaries when supporting young people

Behaviours

- Demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of professional boundaries when working with young people and the importance of consistency
- Passionate about equality and the rights of LGBTQ+ people
- An ability to listen with empathy and act compassionately
- Model Q:alliance's values

Desirable

- Previous volunteering, youth work, community work or group facilitation experience
- Safeguarding, mental health first aid or LGBTQ+ awareness training, or willingness to complete this training
- LGBTQ+ lived experience or strong understanding of LGBTQ+ inclusion
- Creative, practical or discussion-based skills that could support youth session activities

Other

- Commitment to further personal development and training

What you'll bring to the team

You will work closely with the Youth Services team, to help facilitate youth spaces and make sure all young people have a voice. Aiming to increase engagement in the sessions, you would be a friendly and approachable member of the team that young people feel safe around and able to talk to. Assisting the Youth Support Workers with their planned sessions, including free-flowing sessions where young people do as they wish, you'll become a role model for the young people and a supportive presence for the Youth Support Workers. You'll bring your own lived experiences, authenticity and expertise and engage with Q:alliance more generally for opportunities for personal development.