

Person Specification and Job Description for the post of:

Senior Counsellor – Carer Counselling (self-employed)

POST	Senior Counsellor – Carer Counselling
EMPLOYER	VOCAL (Voice of Carers Across Lothian)
SALARY	£24.50 per hour
HOURS	21 hours per week, including one evening and occasional weekends
LOCATION	The postholder will be based within VOCAL's Carer Centre at 60 Leith Walk, Edinburgh, EH6 5HB
CONTRACT	Self-employed. Fixed term until end March 2026

Job Purpose:

VOCAL (Voice of Carers Across Lothian) operates a COSCA-validated Counselling service providing therapeutic support for unpaid carers in Edinburgh and Midlothian, helping them to process the impact of their caring role. The service is provided through qualified and student placement counsellors.

The postholder will provide direct counselling services to our unpaid carer clients and support the management and coordination of all aspects of the service. Working with the Counselling Services Manager, the postholder will oversee the work of other practitioners (including student placement counsellors) and help shape the development of person-centred mental health support within our carer-focused framework.

Key Responsibilities:

Clinical Practice

- Provide one-to-one therapeutic counselling to unpaid carers via face-to-face, telephone, and online sessions
- Undertake clinical assessments to develop tailored support plans
- Use a range of therapeutic approaches appropriate to the client's needs (e.g., person-centred, integrative, CBT-informed)
- Maintain high standards of ethical practice in line with COSCA/ BACP/ UKCP/ HCPC or equivalent professional body guidelines

Administration

- Support high standards in all aspects of the day-to-day administration of the service

- Maintain appropriate records, including clinical, financial, statistical and service evaluation

Safeguarding & Risk Management

- Identify and respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns
- Work within organisational policies and procedures, including those related to confidentiality, GDPR, and risk management

Leadership & Management

- Provide oversight and case support to a team of counsellors and students, ensuring counsellors work to recognised professional standards, including clinical supervision ratios
- Help to ensure confidential case records are maintained by all counsellors and a strict code of confidentiality is adhered to in line with counselling practice and VOCAL policy
- Contribute to the recruitment, training, and ongoing development of the Counselling Team
- Support and advise frontline staff and volunteers working directly with carers
- Support regular team meetings

Service Development

- Help shape and evaluate counselling services for unpaid carers, particularly underrepresented groups (e.g., rural carers, carers from ethnic minority backgrounds)
- Contribute to service design, monitoring, and reporting for internal and external stakeholders
- Contribute to the support and development of good practice, policy and procedures
- Work with partner organisations and carer centres across Scotland to strengthen pathways into mental health support

Accountability

- Participate in VOCAL staff team meetings
 - Support the planning and implementation of VOCAL Business and Annual Workplans
 - Maintain appropriate records of work done
 - Report on a regular basis to the Counselling Services Manager
 - Cooperate with VOCAL Quality Assurance exercises
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Person Specification:

This role requires a compassionate, experienced and qualified **Senior Counsellor** who is passionate about supporting those who care for others and who has the following skills, knowledge and experience:

Essential:

Qualifications:

- Recognised counselling qualification (minimum Diploma level) and registration with a professional body (e.g., COSCA, BACP, UKCP)

Experience:

- Minimum 3 years' post-qualification experience delivering counselling services
- Experience managing or overseeing other counsellors or therapy staff
- Experience working with carers or people experiencing complex life stressors
- Experience of managing own workload

Skills:

- Ability to motivate and encourage people
- Good listening, verbal and written skills
- Strong clinical assessment and risk management skills
- Ability to work both individually and as part of a team
- Ability to prioritise work in accordance with service aims and objectives
- Proficiency in use of computers and digital communication

Knowledge:

- Understanding of the emotional and social impact of caring roles
- Understanding of the relevance of counselling to carers
- Understanding of different counselling models and approaches
- An understanding of issues relevant to working with and supporting staff and volunteers
- Understanding of and commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion

Desirable:

- Experience of using digital counselling platforms, such as CORE
- Experience working in the third sector or health and social care partnerships in Scotland
- Knowledge of the Carers (Scotland) Act 2016
- Training in trauma-informed practice or mental health first aid

Development

There will be a comprehensive induction programme during the first four weeks in post and training for further professional development may be provided as appropriate.

VOCAL places emphasis on team accountability and mutual support.

Conditions of Service

The post is 21 hours per week and will include one evening a week and occasional weekend work. There is some flexibility over when the hours can be worked, and this can be negotiated between the Senior Counsellor and VOCAL.

The postholder will be expected to become a member of the Protection for Vulnerable Groups (PVG) Scheme (Adults).