SOMEONE LIKE ME VOLUNTEER

Our Someone Like Me service

The Someone Like Me service matches people affected by breast cancer to a trained volunteer who has experienced similar situations and concerns. The volunteer will understand the issues they're facing – whether it is concerns relating directly to the cancer, its treatment or to the physical or emotional impact on any area of life. This confidential service provides the opportunity for people to talk openly without worrying about the feelings of the person listening and to ask any questions they like. Most of the support is offered by telephone, but some volunteers additionally provide support by email.

What experience do I need to have had to apply?

- To have had a diagnosis of primary breast cancer in the last four years and be at least 6 months past the finish of active (hospital based) treatment; or
- To meet one of our 'service gaps' (if you meet a service gap, then we'd welcome an application from you, regardless of when you had your initial diagnosis). You can find out service gaps **at the foot of this document*.**
- To have had a genetic diagnosis that has increased your risk of developing breast cancer in the last four years and be at least 6 months past diagnosis
- To be a partner or close family member of someone who has had a diagnosis of primary breast cancer.

What skills and qualities do I need?

- To understand the importance of boundaries and self-care, be non-judgmental and non-directive, and able to show empathy and compassion when supporting someone.
- To be a good listener, communicator and confident whilst using the telephone.
- To be willing and able to refer to your own experiences.
- To receive referrals, take part in training and complete associated admin tasks, you need to be competent using the internet and have access to a laptop or similar device.
- Able to work within Breast Cancer Now's policies and guidelines, including respecting client confidentiality, safeguarding, and data protection.
- Sharing Breast Cancer Now's commitment to ensuring that the support we provide is inclusive and accessible to people from a diverse range of backgrounds.

What commitment is required?

- The number of people you support and how often you call them will vary based on the requirements of our service users and your capacity/time, but we would hope that you would feel able to make one or two calls each week if required. You will always be able to tell us if you are not free to provide support.
- You will be contacted when you are identified as being a suitable match to provide support. Calls are made from your own home, at a mutually convenient time for both you and the service user.

What training and support will I receive?

- Volunteers will be asked to attend a Welcome Workshop and take part in role specific training, consisting of five sessions, before commencing their role. The training will predominantly take place via video call but there will also be independent reading and telephone training.
- Following your initial training you may be required to take part in further training as and when required by the charity.
- As a volunteer, support from one of the team will always be just a phone call away but you will also be assigned a volunteer mentor and be offered further training. We will also send you regular updates, keeping you informed of any changes.

What will I gain from volunteering for the service?

- Developing your communication and telephone support skills, and experience of supporting people during a difficult time.

- The opportunity to network with other volunteers and meet new people as part of the wider BCN volunteering community.
- The chance to 'give back' to people affected by breast cancer now; many volunteers report feeling a greater sense of purpose and mental wellbeing as a result of their volunteering.
- Being part of the UK's foremost breast cancer charity and helping us support people with breast cancer to live well.

Service Gaps

Based on requests from our service users and to meet a 'gap' on our service, we particularly encourage applications from people who have had any of the "experiences" listed below, even if you received your diagnosis more than four years ago.

- Over 65 years old when diagnosed
- Man with a diagnosis of primary breast cancer
- From a black, Asian or under represented background
- From the LGBTQ+ community
- Second primary or local recurrence of breast cancer (within four years)
- Rarer form of breast cancer (e.g. occult/tubular/mucinous)
- DCIS only (not invasive) under the age of 45
- Diagnosis of PALB2 genetic mutation
- Radiotherapy consisting of 5 sessions
- Innovative treatments i.e. lymph node radiotherapy, TCHP chemotherapy regime.
- Bilateral DIEP reconstruction
- Neo-adjuvant (before surgery) hormone therapy or bisphosphonates
- Treatment for HER2 positive breast cancer which included drugs such as Kadcyla, Neratinib and Perjeta
- Had chemotherapy both before surgery (neo-adjuvant) and after surgery
- Implant, Tug, IGAP, SGAP, LICAP flap reconstruction
- Faced a decision about whether to have a certain treatment or not
- Had a child after a diagnosis
- Cared for children under 5 years old whilst undergoing treatment
- Lives alone or lived alone when diagnosed
- Speaks a language other than English
- Managed other or chronic health conditions alongside a diagnosis

Please note that the above list is not exhaustive. Breast Cancer Now will assess applications based on the likelihood of you being matched to service users as well as suitability for the role, so please do apply if you can help us with any of the above or any additional experience relating to your experience of breast cancer.