

Alzheimer's Society

**Helpline Adviser
Information Pack
October 2009**

Dear Applicant

Thank you for your interest in this position with the Alzheimer's Society. Please find enclosed an information pack as requested.

We ask you to fill in your application carefully, giving all relevant information and in particular, setting out the ways in which you meet the competencies outlined in the job description. You should provide clear and concise examples of a time when you have had to use the necessary skills. Please read the person specification carefully. We are looking for people with two years experience on a telephone helpline: **telephone experience in a business setting needs very different skills, and does not count as helpline experience**

The application should be typed or completed in black ink. The panel will be considering the presentation of your application during the selection process.

This is a part-time post of 20 hours per week. **Advisers are required each week to work on four out of the five usual working days - Monday to Friday. Actual days may vary. Each shift is 5 hours long.** The earliest start time is 08.30, with the working day ending at 13.30. The latest start is 13.30 ending at 18.30. Shifts may also start at any time between 08.30 and 13.30. Rotas are usually sent round 4 weeks in advance.

You will be asked at the interview if there are any restrictions on your ability to work this flexible shift pattern.

Your completed application and any additional papers should be returned to us by **5pm on Wednesday 18 November 2009**. Late applications will not be accepted.

Interviews: 3 and 4 December 2009.

Please send your completed application form to:

**Recruitment
Alzheimer's Society
Devon House
58 St Katherine's Way
London E1W 1JX.**

or e-mail recruitment@alzheimers.org.uk

Yours faithfully

The Recruitment Team

Alzheimer's Society

Information for Candidates

Alzheimer's and Dementia

Alzheimer's Society is concerned with all forms of dementia, of which Alzheimer's is the most common. Structural and chemical changes in the brain are responsible for the devastating effects of dementia which include deterioration of memory, confusion over time and place, changes in personality and behaviour together with the loss of everyday skills such as driving or telling the time and, as the condition progresses, the ability to wash or dress or even recognise friends.

More than 700,000 people in the UK have some form of dementia - one in 20 of those aged 65 or more and one in five of the over 80s. As the population ages we expect this figure to rise and demand for specific services to grow.

Alzheimer's Society

Alzheimer's Society is the leading national care and research charity for people with all forms of dementia, their families and carers. We offer support, give information and advice, run day care and home care services, campaign for adequate benefits, proper assessment and high quality care and we fund research into the causes and possible treatments for dementia.

The Society delivers its services through a combination of national and local activity and last year provided help to over 100,000 people.

Alzheimer's Society is made up of approximately 240 local branch operations, varying in size from £10k to £600k pa, supported by a central office based in London. We employ approximately 1,800 staff and benefit from the time and commitment of up to 5,000 volunteers covering a range of duties from direct care to finance. The Society has grown to this size in under 30 years, and is still ambitious. The challenge is to build on its successes, to actively pursue its growth and develop services across the country, whilst at the same time improving governance arrangements and the management of risk.

JOB DESCRIPTION

Title of role	Part time helpline adviser
Contract	Initially 6 month contract
Salary	£13,270 per annum
Hours	20 hours per week
Location	Alzheimer's Society Centre, London

Main purpose of job

To inform, advice and support enquirers to the Alzheimer's Society National Dementia Helpline

Position in organisation

- Report to the helpline supervisor in the information and education team
- Work as a team with other helpline advisers
- Act as a first point of contact for anyone connecting with the Alzheimer's Society

Scope of the job

- Respond on a daily basis to all enquirers concerned about any aspect of dementia including people with dementia, carers, Society branches, professionals, students and businesses
- Respond to each enquirer in the way most appropriate to their level of knowledge, understanding, and ability to listen
- Interpret and explain to enquirers complex medical, scientific, legal, social or care issues in the way they can best understand
- Discuss with enquirers issues relating to dementia care and caring; for example, what may help when a relative is walking about or wandering
- Regularly gain an understanding of new, and sometimes complex issues as they arise, and as quickly as possible
- Research information or issues for specific enquiries

Dimensions and limits of authority

- Use own initiative and sensitivity to find the best way to present and explain information to each enquirer
- Be aware at all times of the impact information or advice provided by the helpline can have on the physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing of enquirers
- Ensure information provided to enquirers is accurate and up to date. Consult colleagues and other sources as necessary. Phone back enquirers as required.
- Respond to all enquiries within the helpline policies, procedures and practices
- Use counselling skills to support enquirers as appropriate
- Provide information and advice given based on the accumulated knowledge in the Society's electronic information system, Dembase; the Society's factsheets and other materials; trusted websites; the Dementia Catalogue and the adviser's experience or own research, when necessary

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- Hours are set by employment contract and shifts are set by the helpline supervisor

Duties and key responsibilities

On the telephone (65%)

- Answer helpline calls and provide information, advice and support to all enquirers – carers, people with dementia, social and health workers, students, businesses
- Assist enquirers in assessing their needs
- Explain complex medical, scientific, legal social or care issues to enquirers in a way that they can best understand
- Respect the needs of enquirers to receive as correct and full information or advice as far as they are able to do so.
- Keep up to date with the Society's and outside sources of information so specific information can be found quickly and passed on
- Provide emotional support to enquirers when appropriate
- Treat all enquirers with dignity and respect, regardless of the approach taken by the enquirer
- Identify own needs for support, including emotional support and use the support network (including optional monthly visits by an external counsellor) as needed
- Offer enquirers printed information, and send within established timescales
- When appropriate, signpost enquirers to suitable other sources of help
- Check voicemail and return calls
- Record on computer details of enquiries and enquirers
- Work daily shifts of up to 4½ hours with no planned break (taking informal breaks as needed)

Non-phone helpline duties (25%)

- Compose, research and write responses to emails, letters and faxes within established timescales
- Research specific information required by enquirers
- Undertake care home searches on the proprietary database as enquirers require
- When necessary liaise with, advise and seek information from other teams, such as research, services directorate and external affairs
- Develop and maintain own knowledge of all aspects of dementia

Other duties (10%)

- Support other members of the team
- Assist and share knowledge with other members of the team
- Attend and contribute to helpline meetings and information and education team meetings
- Familiarise self with the formal 'risk assessment on helpline advising' and follow the safety measures listed
- Any other reasonable duties commensurate with this post

PERSON SPECIFICATION

All of the following requirements are essential except where stated (*) and will be assessed from a combination of information provided on the application form, extended interview process, panel interview and references.

Education, qualifications, knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Graduate or equivalent level of education • Good spoken and written English • Broad understanding of community care and health issues • Basic awareness of the effects of dementia • Empathy for the life experiences and/or issues faced by older people
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two years' experience of telephone helpline work • Understanding of the limitations of helpline work • Experience of providing and disseminating information, preferably information on health or social care (*)
Skills, abilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to both understand and to explain complex issues to enquirers of all backgrounds, levels of knowledge and understanding • Practical daily experience of word-processing, using email systems, interrogating databases and searching intranets and the internet, with good keyboard and typing skills • Ability to relate to and respond to a wide variety of enquirers • Ability to manage calls and enquirers
Personal qualities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to use own initiative and judgement when on the phone • Ability to cope with challenging or emotional enquirers • Ability to relate to and to work within a small team • Sensitivity to the needs of enquirers • Non-judgmental attitude
Special circumstances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Availability to work varying shifts between 8.30am and 6.30pm Monday to Friday (unless contracted otherwise)

April 2008

Job application guidelines

The Alzheimer's Society aims to be an equal opportunities employer. We aim to treat every applicant fairly. The information you provide in your application form is the only information we will use in deciding whether or not you will be invited for interview, so it is important that you complete it with care. To help you, please follow these guidelines.

1. Please complete all sections of the form.
2. Please complete the application form in black ink, as it will be photocopied. Do not stick or glue paper to the back of the form – it gets caught in the photocopier. Please add a separate piece of paper instead.
3. After reading the person specification and job description, think carefully about your application and consider to what extent you have the skills and experience necessary to meet the requirements of the post.
4. Your last and present post allows you the opportunity to tell us about the work you are doing or have done in the past. Be as brief as you can, and use the personal statement at the back of the form to describe in more depth your skills, knowledge and experience relevant to the job.
5. Under the section 'Education, qualifications and training' you are asked to state your qualifications or name a course that you attended. We do not need a full account of your education since your junior school days. It is sufficient to state that you have a specific number of 'A' levels and GCSEs unless you are asked for a specific qualification on the person specification, such as GCSE English. You should mention qualifications or training relevant to the post you are applying for.
6. The personal statement is an important part of the application form and should be used to tell us how you meet the person specification. Always remember to specify your responsibilities rather than those of your section or department. Remember to explain how your current or previous experiences relate to the job you are applying for.
7. Please ensure that your completed application form is returned by 12 noon on the closing date stated on the advertisement. Do not attach any other documentation apart from the equal opportunity monitoring form. Any attachments, such as CVs, references or photocopies of your qualifications, will be disregarded and will not be seen by the selection panel.
8. In order to make good use of the charity's money, your application will not be acknowledged unless you enclose a stamped addressed postcard or similar, nor will you hear from us unless you are selected to attend for interview.

Information for Candidates

Terms and Conditions of Employment

Outlined below are some of the main terms and conditions of employment relevant to all employees of the Society.

1. Probation

All posts are subject to a probationary period of 12 weeks unless otherwise stated on the letter of appointment. During this probationary period, either party may give the other one-week's notice in writing to terminate the employment. After successful completion of the probationary period, the notice stated on your contract of employment will apply.

2. Annual Leave

The holiday year runs from 1 April to 31 March. In each holiday year, in addition to bank and statutory holidays, the holiday entitlement in the first full year will be 25 days, scaled down according to start date. This then increases in line with service as follows: During the first full leave year and up to 2 leave years 25 days, third leave year 26 days, fourth leave year 27 days, fifth leave year 30 days. Holiday will be calculated on a pro-rata basis for part-time workers.

3. Pension Scheme

The Society currently operates a Group Personal pension scheme. All employees under the age of 75, may join the scheme on completion of the probationary period. Employees may contribute a percentage of their salary to the scheme, and the Society will double the employee's contribution up to 8% of the employees' gross salary. This will mean that a 1% employee contribution will attain a 2% contribution from the Society and a 4% contribution will attain the maximum 8% from the Society. Alzheimer's Society will not pay into a personal pension scheme. .

4. Salary Payment

All new employees are placed on a grade based on the Society's salary scheme, which is normally reviewed in April of each year.

The commencing salary is as stated in the letter of appointment. Salaries are paid in arrears on the 25th of each calendar month, by direct credit transfer into a bank or building society account. (If the 25th falls at a weekend, payment is made on the working day immediately prior to the 25th)

5. Sick Leave

The Society operates an occupational sick pay scheme that is based on length of service with the Society.

6. Retirement Age

The Society's normal retirement age is 65. However, staff may be employed who are over the age of 65.

Any applicant aged 65 and over who is successful in obtaining a position with the Society should be aware that as a result of the Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 they will now have the statutory right to claim unfair dismissal. They will now also be entitled to a statutory redundancy payment if they are made redundant. In addition, they also have the right to claim statutory sick pay for up to 28 weeks if they are absent to work due to sickness.

7. No Smoking

The Society operates a no smoking policy.