## Role Description: Crisis Volunteer

**Job Title:** Crisis Volunteer (NightLight)

**Responsible to:** Crisis Volunteer Coordinator

**Time commitment:** A minimum of two hours per week

**Age restriction:** Volunteers must be aged 18 and over

**Locations:** Hemel Hempstead (Crisis House/helpline), Watford (Crisis Café), Bishops Stortford (Crisis Café), Ware (helpline/safe space), Borehamwood (helpline/safe space).

**Who we are:**

Hertfordshire Mind Network is a mental health organisation that promotes mental well-being and provides a diverse range of recovery orientated services to residents across Hertfordshire. We are the largest mental health provider in the county and provide support to over 5000 clients every year.

**About NightLight:**

Hertfordshire NightLight is an out of hour's crisis service providing a safe and welcoming space for people who are feeling distressed and experiencing a mental health crisis.

The Crisis Cafés in Watford and Bishops Stortford will aim to provide a wide range of therapeutic activities for those who are experiencing a mental health crisis. They are open from 6pm-11pm in the week, and then from 3pm-11pm at the weekends.

The helpline also operates seven days a week and is open from 7pm-1am for service users or referrers to phone in.

Finally, the safe space face to face provision operates in Hemel Hempstead (Crisis House with overnight stay capacity), Ware and Borehamwood.

Whilst the Crisis Cafés will act as low level mental health support drop in centres, the remaining centres will only offer face to face support when a service user has been assessed via the helpline and depending on need/capacity. If a service user calls or is referred via the helpline, requires an overnight stay (because going home isn’t safe for them) and can’t get to the Crisis House in Hemel Hempstead easily – a taxi or pick up service is arranged for them.

**Purpose of post:**

We are seeking Peer Mentor Volunteers for NightLight to work a minimum of two hours an evening/night for once a week to support people in the community who are feeling distressed and experiencing a crisis. Volunteers will work alongside staff to provide support either by telephone or in person at one of our centres. The Nightlight service has recently been expanded so the role is extremely flexible and diverse and is expected to develop as the service does.

This is a great opportunity for anyone wanting to increase their understanding of mental health issues and provide support within their local community. It’s also a fantastic opportunity for students studying towards a mental health care professional qualification, particularly one requiring practical experience working alongside a wide range of mental health professionals.

**Main tasks:**

* Prepare the room ready for the evening including setting up tea/coffees/activities
* Welcome clients to the centre, ensuring they are comfortable and provide drinks
* Engage with clients through talking and active listening
* Signpost clients to other Hertfordshire Mind groups, courses and Peer Support as well as external services which may be of benefit
* Provide support to clients over the telephone through the helpline
* May be asked to transport service users using own vehicle
* Report any safeguarding issues immediately to a member of staff

**What we are looking for:**

* Good listening skills, non-judgemental attitude, and empathy
* Confident and effective communication
* Ability to deal with stressful and difficult situations in a calm manner
* Adaptable to the changing nature of a crisis service
* Willingness to be hands on, proactive and use own initiative
* Able to work evenings/nights (volunteers are able to choose their shifts)

**Why become a Peer Mentor for NightLight:**

Peer mentoring someone who has struggled with a mental health crisis can be a very

challenging but rewarding experience where you can use your own lived experience of mental health to help others:

* Be an integral part of an individual’s recovery from mental health by inspiring hope and empowering them towards positive change.
* Develop your understanding of mental health and its service provision.
* Invaluable experience for anyone with a desire to work within mental health services or Hertfordshire Mind Network.

**What you can expect from us and what we can offer you:**

* All volunteers will receive training in mental health awareness, handling crisis situations, confidentiality, boundaries, risk management, safeguarding, plus on-going training relevant to the role.
* Volunteers will also receive a specific NightLight training to ensure a comprehensive induction to the service.
* Regular support from Peer Mentor Coordinator (Crisis).
* Access to listings of paid-work opportunities within HMN when they arise.
* Flexibility to volunteer on weekends and evenings to accommodate busy schedules.

**Before applying:**

Please consider whether you are suited to this role carefully. Whilst we are ideally looking for people who have lived experience of a mental health crisis, we recognise that this role could put you in an incredibly triggering environment. If you have any doubts that this role could severely impact on your mental health, please get in touch with the Peer Mentor Coordinator (Crisis) to discuss these concerns in more detail.

This may also be a role that you want to work your way up to. Here at Herts Mind Network we don’t just need people to mentor people in crisis, but also as part of their general wellbeing. Providing one-to-one support for clients in the local community, assisting them to set and achieve goals and supporting them to recover from mental health difficulties - could also be a very rewarding role allowing you to gain experience and confidence before volunteering as part of the NightLight service.

Please see our Peer Mentor Volunteer (Wellbeing) role description on our website for more details about the above.

**Next steps:**

If you are interested please complete our application form: <http://www.hertsmindnetwork.org/join-us/volunteering/> or contact the Peer Mentor Coordinator (Crisis) – alastair.armstrong@hertsmindnetwork.org for more information.