



## **Volunteer Counselling Opportunities**

Please find enclosed our information pack about applying to be a volunteer counsellor with this agency. This is a fantastic opportunity to learn and provide counselling within an agency at the fore of really making a difference to people's lives.

Tayside Council on Alcohol (TCA) was established in 1972 and is one of the leading providers of support services in the Tayside area for people who are affected by the misuse of alcohol. We are currently recruiting for volunteer counsellors.

**The closing date for applications this year is 28<sup>th</sup> February 2011**

You will see from the information that we have limited sponsored spaces each year to recruit, train and support selected candidates as counsellors. TCA has other opportunities to volunteer with our young person's services and in our administration team and details can be supplied on request.

We have several options for training of successful candidates dependent on previous skills and knowledge. Following training the time commitment is around 3-4 hours weekly. All applicants are selected according to the same criteria irrespective of previous training. We then allocate the most appropriate course following selection.

An application form is enclosed which should be completed and returned to our head office at TCA, The Wishart, 50 Constable Street, Dundee, DD4 6AD. If you need to discuss any aspect of volunteering with us please contact 01382 456012.



## **Information for people interested in volunteering as an alcohol counsellor**

The counselling we offer throughout any of the services working with adults is provided by trained and qualified counsellors who have undergone training, study and supervised practice. Many of these counsellors are volunteers with the agency.

All counselling is supported by ongoing practice supervision and is monitored to high national standards. Our approach to counselling with alcohol problems uses cognitive behavioural skills, within a person-centred framework. We deliver effective alcohol treatment through this approach.

TCA  
The Wishart  
50 Constable Street  
Dundee  
DD4 6AD

01382 456012  
[enquiries@alcoholtayside.com](mailto:enquiries@alcoholtayside.com)



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## Information about the services

The mission of the Tayside Council on Alcohol is to provide throughout Tayside support, education and information to those experiencing problems arising from alcohol misuse and to promote a healthy approach to alcohol. TCA has identified a number of objectives and service priorities, these include:

- Raising awareness and understanding of the impact of alcohol and other substance abuse on individuals and those around them
- Encouraging and supporting positive lifestyle change to reduce alcohol-related harm and raising awareness of alcohol-related issues, locally and nationally, to promote culture change
- Reducing the impact of parental substance misuse on children and young people
- Contributing towards reducing the negative effect on the economy of alcohol misuse
- Valuing the contribution of volunteers to TCA and the services delivered and involving service users in the development and delivery of TCA services

TCA offers a range of services across priority areas. The adult counselling service is one of these within the support and treatment services. TCA will work in partnership with other agencies to ensure each client is provided with the relevant support and treatment. The counselling approach integrates the following criteria:

- Clients are deeply individual and in order to help them we need to work on an individual level. We recognise that people drink problematically for many reasons and we need to work simultaneously with client's alcohol use and their other difficulties
- In assessing a client's alcohol problems, we examine the client's alcohol use, the drinking behaviour, the effects of the use of alcohol, the client's expectations, values and understanding of the problem and the context in which the client has been drinking
- The alcohol counselling process requires the same fundamental skills as counselling other problems and includes developing trust, helping clients to set goals, empowering clients to take action and maintain changes. The client is also active in negotiating when the counselling relationship comes to an end
- Giving clients information and advice about active techniques and strategies for preventing lapse, relapse and controlling drinking are part of the counselling process. Counselling draws the client through a process of reflecting, clarifying, challenging and exploring



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## Training as a volunteer counsellor

It's a great opportunity! ... We offer comprehensive training for counsellors and full support during the time you are working with us... We match training to volunteer learning needs, some of this is provided by our own trainers, some by Alcohol Focus Scotland, Scotland's leading national alcohol agency ... and some by other national training providers ...

It's a long term commitment if you are selected to train with us ... training takes around 6 months, usually takes place on weekends and a 2 year period of supervised practice follows ... a portfolio for accreditation is built by our counsellors during this practice period ... after initial training we require a commitment of around 3 hours per week for counselling practice and supervision. We sponsor the cost of the training courses for our volunteers through agency funding, the costs of the initial training alone per person ranges from £580-£1700.

If you are selected to train with us there are various options which include:

- **Full Training Course** ... for people who are selected as suitable and who have no previous formal counselling training ... this involves undertaking 120 hours of counselling skills training (approx 20 days), usually delivered over 4 modules + the alcohol counselling 6 day course.
- **Alcohol Counselling Course** ... for selected candidates who have previously completed a recognised counselling course such as COSCA certificate in counselling skills ... some other courses are also eligible ... this is a 6 day course.
- 1. **Induction Briefing for Placement Students**...for selected counselling placement students, e.g those on a relevant diploma course seeking counselling practice. This is negotiated according to the agency requirements.

We recruit and select using the same criteria for all of these options ... it is following selection that we can allocate training places to the relevant course ... previous counselling training alone does not mean that a candidate would be automatically selected as suitable to work with TCA. The training courses involve working in a group, exploring key issues and approaches to working with clients who are experiencing problems related to their alcohol use, training includes the necessary information required to work within the model of counselling used within TCA... this includes motivational enhancement techniques, a cognitive behavioural counselling approach within a person centred framework.

**To apply** ... please fill in the enclosed application form ... you are welcome to contact us for an informal discussion about any aspect of volunteering prior to completion of this form. You can find out more about counselling skills training and the alcohol counselling course at [www.cosca.org.uk](http://www.cosca.org.uk) and [www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk](http://www.alcohol-focus-scotland.org.uk)



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## Volunteer recruitment and selection

**The Selection Process:** There are only a few opportunities each year for training with us as a counsellor, this is in order for us to fully support anyone practicing with us, as well as the costs of the training programme... In addition to this, to ensure that the service to our clients is of the highest standard, our selection and recruitment involves several stages ...

- **Initial Stage** ... People interested in considering counselling with us approach the agency ... an application pack is sent out ... candidate may come in for an informal chat
- **Application Stage** ... If an application is submitted to the agency this is considered according to the volunteer job specification and description ... you will be informed if your application is being forwarded to the selection committee or whether we will be unable to forward it at this time
- **Selection Stage** ... Applications forwarded to the selection committee will be invited to the counsellor selection event which consists of an individual interview and a group activity ... this event also allows you to ask any questions you have about the opportunities with us ... References will be sought for candidates invited to this
- **Outcome Stage** ... There are 3 outcomes possible following the selection event
  1. Candidate has been successful and will be offered a place to train with the agency as a counsellor and forwarded for training course
  2. Candidate has been successful and will be put on Reserve List for next available training place
  3. Candidate has been unsuccessful and will not be offered a place to train with the agency ...TCA can discuss reasons for this, although our decision would not be changed ... where possible we would support volunteers to seek alternative opportunities ...

Have you had an alcohol problem yourself? We very much value the experience of people who have experienced problems with alcohol, however as part of our support and volunteering guidelines, we require an appropriate period (usually a minimum of 2 years) between resolving a personal alcohol related problem and applying for a place on the Alcohol Counsellor Training Programme

All trainee alcohol counsellors will be required to undergo an Enhanced Disclosure Check ... TCA does not consider that all convictions mean that a candidate is unsuitable to work within our services but that we make a decision based on a wide range of information of which disclosure information would be part

We would encourage anyone interested in training with us to contact if they have any questions about the agency, approaches or volunteer opportunities ... as well as counselling there are also a wide range of opportunities to volunteer in our young person's services, reception and office and full details of these opportunities can be obtained from TCA.

## Volunteer Alcohol Counsellor Job Description

## Volunteer Alcohol Counsellor Person Specification

- To commit to TCA Training identified
- To participate actively in all elements of the training and local agency induction procedures
- To recognise that the counselling placement opportunity is part of the training/learning process
- To be open to self reflection in terms of the task of training, counselling and supervision
- To assimilate information about theories i.e addictions and counselling practices
- To complete the required written tasks within the expected timescales
- To be willing to challenge and be challenged and to communicate with others
- To offer/receive constructive comments to/from trainers, fellow trainees and supervisors
- To engage in the process of portfolio building
- To commit to a minimum of 2 years supervised practice with TCA
- To work within the ethical practice and confidential framework laid down by the agency
- To attend support and supervision sessions as specified by the local agency
- To maintain case records an any other records as required by the agency

### Essential Criteria

- ✓ Ability to reflect on personal reasons for becoming an alcohol counsellor
- ✓ Interest in addiction/concepts
- ✓ An ability to differentiate between experience of self and others
- ✓ Willingness to discuss personal experiences which are related to the task
- ✓ An ability to express own viewpoint and listen to/articulate another's viewpoint, however much it contradicts theirs
- ✓ The potential and an openness to learn and cope with difficult situations
- ✓ Ability to articulate own attitudes towards addictions/dependencies and an openness to developing understanding of alcohol issues
- ✓ Ability to attend **all** training days, counselling and supervision commitments
- ✓ The potential to acquire the necessary skills and knowledge to counsel to TCA standards
- ✓ A commitment to equality
- ✓ The potential to utilise support, supervision and review

TCA Counselling Standards Group