

Helpline Adviser (voluntary)

Our helpline advisers listen to anyone who calls or webchats who may be going through a difficult time, looking for information, or who might be struggling to cope.

Location:	Home based or office based
Reports to:	Helpline Development Officer
Time Commitment:	You can choose your shift for the week and what time or day works best for you, shifts are 3 hours long

More about being a helpline adviser

People contact us about all kinds of problems. It could be alcohol or drug use, grief, depression, loneliness, stressful situations, domestic abuse, money worries, relationship issues and many other things. As a helpline adviser, we ask you to listen, give the person the chance to get things out in the open and talk things through with them. You will be helping people at difficult times and will make a difference to their day. Most of our calls end with the person being signposted to a group or service, or being referred to a Scottish Families support service.

You need to be:

- **Supportive** and friendly
- **Open minded** and understanding of someone else's opinion even if different to yours
- **Empathetic** to the person's feelings
- **Non-judgemental** of the person's life, views, choices and family
- **Honest** in telling the truth even if it is difficult to say

Is this role for you? A checklist of points to consider:

- I have a phone, PC/laptop and internet access so that I can answer calls from my home
- I have good online skills including finding information online, filling in forms and sending emails
- I have my own email account, or I am happy to set one up
- I have good English communication and writing skills
- I have some knowledge of alcohol and drugs (training will be given)
- I have experience studying/training/volunteering/working in health and social care, mental health, addiction or trauma support services/organisations
- I understand the importance of data protection, confidentiality and protecting people's personal details
- I am in Scotland and can attend a training session in Glasgow at my own expense

For your safety, we ask for you to be two years alcohol or drug free if you have previously experienced problems with alcohol or drugs. If you have a family member who has experienced problems with alcohol or drugs, they must also be two years alcohol or drug free for your safety and wellbeing.

How much time can I give?

We ask for you to do one three-hour shift a week. You can book your shift at the start of the week for when it suits you. Shifts can be during the day, the evening or at the weekend. If doing a shift during the day, you can work from our office in Glasgow by arrangement. You can also support us with other work such as social media and fundraising when in the office.

What support and training will I get?

You will be given supervision from a member of staff until you are ready to start taking calls.

You will then be given supervision once every two months but you can always ask any questions when needed.

After you have had an informal chat with us, you will go through our Helpline Volunteer Training. Our half-day of training includes **alcohol and drug awareness, why families need support, call-handling, and navigating our website and service directory.**

How long does it take to become a volunteer?

As long as you submit an application and we arrange suitable dates and times for training depending on the availability of our staff, the process should only take a few weeks:

1. Complete application and provide two references
2. We'll have a quick chat about your skills, your background and why you want to volunteer with us. We will then contact your references.
3. Take part in training
4. Start taking calls, webchats and online community engagement

Other points to consider:

- I understand that some of the things I may hear on a call might be difficult
- I understand I cannot tell callers what to do but can give them information on groups and services and support them to make decisions
- I will not judge others
- I can cope with hearing things that may be uncomfortable

Next steps

If you are interested in the role please contact us for an application form **suzanne@sfad.org.uk**. We will then contact you to find out a bit more about you and tell you about the role. We ask for two references to be completed before you can start volunteering for our organisation.