

Dear Applicant

Thank you for expressing an interest in becoming a volunteer link worker at WYCCP. Please find enclosed information about our volunteer role and application form.

Please return your completed application form by email to richard.garratt@wyccp.org.uk

Please note that we often receive a high number of applications. We will add all applicants to a waiting list and contact successful applicants in order of the date applications have been received.

If you are selected, you will be invited to attend an information and assessment session which is to take place on **Thursday 12th September, 10am – 1pm**.  If you are successful at this session, you would then need to attend all of the link worker induction training dates, which will run as follows:

**Day one:** Thursday 19th September, 10am to 4pm

**Day two:**Thursday 26th September, 10am to 4pm

**Day three:**Thursday 3rdOctober, 10am to 4pm

**Interview:**Held over Thursday 10th October (Timings arranged individually).

We place great emphasis on personal and professional development for all WYCCP volunteers and appreciate the difference made by our volunteers in the work that we do. We hope that you will apply to volunteer at WYCCP and look forward to hearing from you.

If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to get in touch,

Best wishes

Richard

**Richard Garratt**

**Volunteer Coordinator**

Tel: 0113 3874588

Email: richard.garratt@wyccp.org.uk

**WYCCP Resettlement Service – Link Worker Programme**

**About WYCCP**

WYCCP is an independent charity that provides resettlement and family support across West Yorkshire to men leaving HMP Leeds and their families. We work in partnership with Jigsaw Visitor Centre and other agencies and are committed to reducing reoffending for the benefit of the individuals and the wider community.

**WYCCP Mission Statement**

We help men who are being released from prison, and their families, to integrate into the community through giving practical support both inside the prison and after release. Local faith communities have an integral part to play in this process. Our work benefits ex-prisoners and their families, helps to create safer and healthier communities and supports public sector delivery.

**WYCCP Aims and Objectives**

**Aims**

* To contribute to reducing re-offending and reconviction by supporting men leaving HMP Leeds to resettle in West Yorkshire.
* To enable men to break the cycle of re-offending and to improve their life chances.
* Ensure families are able to gain greater access to support and early help within their local community and support services and families work together to decrease the chance of intergenerational crime.

**Objectives**

* Establish and maintain a team of support workers to provide support and advice for men leaving prison, and for the families of prisoners, in West Yorkshire.
* Develop a comprehensive and effective volunteer link worker programme with a diverse range of volunteers, including ex-prisoners, to support men on release from prison and their families and to raise awareness in local communities.
* Maintain a network of contacts within the local faith communities from which volunteers will be sought.

*“I have enjoyed working as part of the WYCCP team, every day has been different and I have made a difference to service users’ lives. Just a phone call or a quick chat to service users can have a big impact in their lives and I enjoy being part of that.”* WYCCP Link Worker

* Actively seek and develop partnerships in order to provide a holistic and comprehensive package of support for men leaving HMP Leeds, and their families.

**WYCCP Values and Multi-Faith Ethos**

* **Respect:** We are committed to treating everybody with respect and dignity in all circumstances.
* **Diversity:** We celebrate the differences in all people and their experiences; embracing variety in a positive way.
* **Effectiveness**: We have a clear mission that we deliver effectively.
* **Teamwork**: We are a diverse team working together for the achievement of shared goals.

**Volunteering at WYCCP: Key facts**

WYCCP volunteers are called ‘link workers’– we have opportunities for volunteering with men who are prison leavers and with families of prisoners. Link workers are an integral part of the WYCCP team and contribute to the success of our organisation.

**WYCCP Office**

WYCCP’s office is based at HMP Leeds. The WYCCP office is next door to the Jigsaw Visitor Centre; both offices are outside of the prison gates and can be accessed without passing through prison security. The WYCCP office is not fully accessible, however, reasonable adjustments may be made for volunteers with disabilities. Please speak to a member of the team to discuss further.

**Travel and Expenses**

WYCCP works with men across West Yorkshire, and link workers provide community support across the region. Link workers may be expected to travel throughout West Yorkshire using public, or their own, transport. We are flexible with how this works in practice and agree the areas where volunteers they are willing to travel, however, please bear in mind that travel may make up a large part of volunteering time.

*“I think that the staff team manage volunteers very well. I felt like I was treated like a member of the team, and the staff were always available when help was needed. I think that is so lovely how appreciative the staff team are towards the volunteers. There is always such a happy feel in the office.”* WYCCP Link Worker

All link workers will have their travel within West Yorkshire and other agreed expenses reimbursed.

**Volunteers living outside of West Yorkshire**

Based on experience, we have found that volunteers who live outside of West Yorkshire find the travel for the volunteer role prohibitive. As a result of this, we are only able to accept applications from volunteers who live in West Yorkshire.

**Introduction to the role of WYCCP’s volunteers**

We are looking for committed people who are emotionally mature, empathic and able to maintain firm boundaries. We ask our volunteers to offer a minimum of 3 hours a week to their volunteering. Reliability and adaptability are essential.

The primary role of link workers is to work alongside the resettlement and family teams to provide support to men prior to and following release from prison and to provide support to families in the community. Link workers meet regularly with their service users in the community across West Yorkshire. You will create an action plan with your service user and provide them with practical and emotional support to achieve their goals.

**Link worker role description**

**Key tasks:**

* To support men leaving prison, and their families, prior to release and in the community, working towards an agreed ‘action plan’, with support from staff.
* To meet service users in the community and, where necessary, accompany them to appointments with relevant agencies and networks.
* To keep clear and comprehensive records and case notes.
* To complete ‘follow up’ and administrative tasks.
* To commit a minimum of three hours per week to volunteering at WYCCP.

**Other duties:**

* To undertake the induction training provided by WYCCP.
* To undertake additional training as required.
* To maintain a professional relationship with service users at all times.
* To work positively in partnership with the staff team and to maintain regular contact with volunteer programme staff in order to debrief, discuss issues and share relevant information.
* To attend regular supervision in order to access immediate practical and emotional support with the volunteer programme manager.
* To undertake regular case management supervision with key workers.
* To abide by and be familiar with WYCCP volunteer agreement, policies and procedures.

*These tasks may be carried out by individual link workers, or working collaboratively with other link workers and WYCCP/ Jigsaw paid staff. Working partnerships with the service users/families may be from single meetings to several months, depending on the needs of the client.*

**Link worker and family link worker person specification**

* Be at least 18 years old and of sufficient emotional maturity to take on a supportive role.
* Be committed to the principles of diversity and equality.
* Be reliable, well organised and resourceful.
* Be able to work in a flexible, non-judgemental and person centred way.
* Have good interpersonal, listening and communication skills.
* Be able to work in partnership with staff, link workers and other agencies.
* Have good IT skills.
* Be committed to the aims and values of WYCCP, including our multi-faith ethos.

**Link worker recruitment and selection**

Application form and References

Assessment session and DBS check

Induction Training

Three interactive full-day sessions over three weeks

*“One aspect of being a link worker that I have really enjoyed has been being able to make a difference to the lives of many ex-prisoners. I have met some truly inspiring service users and had the honour to listen to some incredible stories. These men have experienced some terrible tragedies, yet despite the setbacks have remained focused on improving their lives.”* WYCCP Link Worker

Formal Interview

Complete induction, including shadowing

**Congratulations! You are now a volunteer link worker**

**A day in the life of a WYCCP link worker…**

A typical day at WYCCP would be near impossible to put into words, as no two days are ever the same. My experiences of being a link worker have been extremely varied over the 18 months I’ve had the pleasure of being involved with the WYCCP team. However, if I were to try and put down on paper what an example of a link worker day may look like, here goes…

Arriving at the office at 9am, I would be booked in through legal visits to see two new referrals. I would complete the initial screenings and the first spider assessments with each of these men, and carry out the necessary follow up work back at the office. I would input all of the information onto the database and create a paper file for our new service users.

My afternoon would consist of meeting with one of my service users in the community. Having already arranged a meeting with him the week before, I would call him on the morning of our meeting to check that he was still able to attend. The meeting would generally take place either at the WYCCP office or in a public place which was convenient and easy for the service user to get to, usually his home town. The initial stages of the encounter would include an update on how the service user had been, and what progress he had made since our last meeting. We would also cover any areas in which he was concerned and would address if there was anything that he would appreciate help with that we were not already doing to support him. One issue that may arise is that the service user is finding it difficult to manage his money since his release, and finding that he is unable to make his JSA stretch for the two weeks before his next payment. In this case, we would devise a budget plan together, whereby we would look at what income and what outgoings he had each week and try to make it balance. Debts, including rent arrears, often play a large role in our service users finding it difficult to budget, and therefore it may be possible to reduce their weekly outgoings by negotiating a reduction in the repayment rates with the necessary organisations. After the meeting, follow up work would take place back at the office. All of the case notes from the meeting would be written up onto the database and the necessary phone calls would be made to try and negotiate the repayments of any debts. Every task that is completed, and any time spent working on behalf of the service users, would be documented on the database so that a record can be kept of the time spent on each individual.

*“The experience I have gained and the support I have received from working within the WYCCP team has been invaluable and it has honestly been an incredible learning experience for me*.” WYCCP Link Worker

During my time as a WYCCP link worker I have met some truly inspiring service users. These are men who have remained positive and motivated, in spite of what turmoil they may have previously experienced, and despite what life may continue to throw at them. Working to support our service users can provide a real sense of achievement, knowing that you are helping to make a real different in another’s life. If I had to give one piece of advice to future link workers it would be that it is important not to take things personally. Some of our service users lead extremely hectic lifestyles, which can sometimes lead to them missing pre-arranged meetings, for example. Although this can often be considered a set-back, it is crucial to remember that we are there for the benefit of the service user and must do what we can to rearrange meetings and continue to engage with the service user for as long as they value our support.

Josie Foster – WYCCP Link Worker

**Volunteer application form**

*Thank you for your interest in supporting the work of WYCCP. Please complete all sections of this form and return your application to our Volunteer Coordinator –* *richard.garratt@wyccp.org.uk*

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| **Personal Information**  |
| **Title** | **Forenames**  | **Surname**  |
| **Address** |
| **E-Mail address** |
| **Telephone no.** (daytime)  | **Telephone no.** (evening) |
| **Date of birth** | **Availability** (*WYCCP expect a minimum commitment of at least 3 hours per week (Mon-Fri between hrs of 9:30am-4pm) from volunteer link workers)* |
| **National Insurance no.** |
| **Are you a member of a faith community?** **If so, which one?** |
| **How did you hear about WYCCP?** |
| **Emergency contact name and relationship to you?** | **Emergency contact telephone no.** |

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| **References** |
| Please give details of two people who we can contact for a reference. Your references should **not** be related to you or be your partner. They should know you well and be able to vouch for you. If relevant, one referee should be your current or most recent employer or your teacher/ tutor. **Please note that references may be followed up with a phone call.** |
| **Name and title:** | **Name and title:** |
| **Address:** | **Address:** |
| **Email address:** | **Email address:** |
| **Telephone no.:** | **Telephone no.:** |
| **Relationship:** | **Relationship:** |

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| **Employment history** |
| Please list your employment / education or training / volunteering history for the last three years: |
| **Employer/Organisation Address** | **Job Title (paid/voluntary)** | **Key Tasks** | **Dates from/to** |
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| **Volunteering for WYCCP** *Please continue on a separate sheet, if necessary.* |
| **Please explain why you are interested in being a volunteer link worker at WYCCP and what you hope to gain from the experience:****Please read the person specification and tell us how you think you have the abilities and personal qualities to undertake the link worker role:****Please tell us about any skills or experience (from work, volunteering or personal experience) that you have which would be relevant to the link worker role:** |
| **Disability** |
| **We positively welcome applications from people with disabilities. Do you consider yourself to have a disability (as defined in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995) that WYCCP should be aware of in relation to the role you are applying for?**  **Yes No** If yes, please give details and let us know whether you will need any help/special equipment to enable you to carry out your volunteer role: |

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| **Criminal Convictions** |
| **WYCCP is an organisation committed to the rehabilitation of ex-prisoners and we positively welcome applications from people who have lived experience.**The volunteer role for which you are applying is likely to involve direct contact with vulnerable people. The role is therefore exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. When answering the following questions you must therefore disclose ***any pending prosecutions or criminal convictions*** (including cautions, boundovers, supervision orders or secure orders) which you may have, ***even those considered ‘spent’ for other purposes.*** **Are you subject to any pending prosecutions and/or have you ever been convicted of an offence in any criminal proceedings in any country?**  **Yes No** *For motoring offences, please answer ‘yes’ only if it resulted in a disqualification.***If ‘yes’, please give full details on a separate sheet.** The information you provide will be treated in confidence.**Have you ever been found guilty of gross misconduct in any disciplinary proceedings conducted by an employer? Yes Yes No** **If ‘yes’, please give full details on a separate sheet.** The information you provide will be treated in confidence. |

***I certify that the information I have provided on this form is true and accurate and not misleading in any way. I understand that any wilful mis-statement or omission may mean that I cannot volunteer with WYCCP Resettlement Service.***

**Name:**

**Signature: Date:**

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| *Thank you for applying to volunteer as a link worker at WYCCP. We will be in touch to let you know we’ve received your application and again after shortlisting.* |