**Support Group Leader - Local Support Group**

**Role Description**

Our Local Support Groups provide a hugely needed support service for pituitary patients; The Pituitary Foundation has over 20 successful support groups around the UK and online. They provide a truly unique service for the pituitary community as no other country in the world has such a programme for the pituitary population. Some of our groups are informal and smaller and meet a couple of times a year, and some are larger and meet nearly every month. We are hugely thankful to our wonderful team of voluntary support group leader (SGLs) who run the current support groups. Groups meet to listen to speakers, share their personal experiences or meet and support others affected by pituitary conditions. Some groups also choose to get involved with spreading awareness and raising funds. The SGL of a group acts as the overall coordinator of all group activities as well as liaising with the Foundation office.

**Description of overall role:**

Overseeing the organisation of meetings of local pituitary patients, carers and friends; liaising with Foundation staff and; communicating with the local pituitary community about group meetings and events. It is optional but some groups end up with a couple of committee members who can help SGLs by taking on tasks, but the overall responsibility still lies with the SGL. In starting a new group, as the co-ordinator of the group, you can create a meeting and activities schedule based on the time you have to commit to the role.

**Tasks**

*When starting up a group:*

* Understanding the policies and procedures of volunteering for The Foundation and running a LSG.
* Understanding and signing the handbook and adopting the standard Constitution.
* Planning and overseeing committee meetings when/if a committee is in place.
* If Group is to have their own bank account, opening the bank account (via liaison with office) and keeping records of finances and submitting accounts to office, hopefully with the help of a group treasurer.
* If there is one, building links with your local endocrine centre to encourage them to inform newly-diagnosed patients about your group. It is useful to ensure that posters are present in pituitary clinics (these can be obtained from NSO).

*Running the Group Meetings:*

* Arranging venues and/or speakers for meetings and events.
* Attending meetings and organising cover if this is not possible.
* Making sure the meeting room is set up before the meeting.
* Ensuring people have directions to the meeting room with posters showing the way.
* Ensuring members are warmly greeted and light refreshments are available.
* Encouraging fundraising to cover the costs of running the group if needed (i.e., raffles, quizzes, etc.).

*Maintenance of Group/Members:*

* Taking calls from new group members as referred from Foundation office or other volunteers.
* Writing and distributing a newsletter, including sending a copy to Office upon publication. (*Note:* Providing a newsletter to your members is not mandatory.)
* Maintaining a mailing/communications list of your group members.
* Making certain publications and other group communication adhere to The Foundation’s Brand Guidelines.
* Making certain any fundraising activities are appropriate.
* Communicating meetings and local events to office in a timely manner (for inclusion on the National Website and other publications, where possible).
* Ensuring office has up-to-date records and volunteer forms for all local committee members (i.e., volunteer application form, Confidentiality Agreement, Code of Conduct, correct contact information).

*General:*

* At recruitment, all SGLs must be willing to apply for role, submit to a short interview/informal chat (can be via telephone) and supply references which will be contacted by The Foundation.
* All SGLs must sign and abide by The Foundation’s Confidentiality Policy and Code of Conduct.
* All SGLs must read and understand The SGL Handbook.
* All SGLs will be invited to attend any further training that The Foundation may provide.

**Specifications:**

The volunteer should:

* Be organised.
* Have good communication skills (verbal and written).
* Be able to speak in front of an audience.
* Understand the mission, goals, history and services of The Pituitary Foundation.
* We must ask that you have access to the internet and be IT literate to fulfil this role.

**What help will The Foundation provide?**

* The provision of an SGL Handbook and other documentation which will contain a wealth of information which relates to the running of a support group.
* Support from a designated member of staff.
* Contact with an established SGL who has experience of running a successful support group.
* Regular e-mail updates from office4.
* If you are setting up a new group, you may be able to receive a small amount of finances from The Foundation to help start up your group for up to the first 2 meetings. (This will depend on the groups situation) However, if you are taking over an established group with funds, you will be advised of the financial position in your group and arrangements will be made accordingly.
* Ideas for and introduction to speakers where possible.
* Ongoing volunteer training - as funding allows.
* Copies of The Foundation’s pituitary information leaflets and newsletters as well as posters (for clinics and for your group) and ‘business cards’ to hand out and provide to clinics which provide information about your group’s meetings. We can also provide other materials such as balloons or t-shirts for events.
* A copy of *Volunteer News* posted to you three times a year, and quarterly volunteer bulletin.
* Free membership subscription to The Foundation throughout tenure as active volunteer.