



## **Community Action Project**

Heathermount Mentoring Scheme

## **Community Action Partner**

Heathermount - Disabilities Trust

**Aim:** The Disabilities Trust is a leading national charity providing quality care, rehabilitation and support for people with complex disabilities across the UK. Over the last 30 years the services have expanded to include purpose-built accommodation, community-based housing, respite care, education, community enabling support and rehabilitation. The Disabilities Trust believes that in today's Britain people with disabilities (including those with profound and complex needs) should be supported to make a full and meaningful contribution to our society. The Disabilities Trust has provided the opportunity for one of its autism services, Heathermount, to set up a mentoring scheme for its students. Heathermount is a specialist school for children and young adults with autism, specifically those with High Functioning Autism or Aspergers, aged 5-19 years old.

**Role:** Heathermount is looking to recruit volunteers to work with and mentor students on the autism spectrum. All students are aged between 14 and 19, and are predominantly diagnosed with High Functioning Autism or Asperger's Syndrome. Mentors will take an active role, predominantly organising and taking part in activities, as well as providing some support, emotional guidance and informal educational/career advice. With a mentor's support, students can develop essential social skills, recognise and build upon their own strengths and inevitably grow in confidence. Most importantly, volunteers should be committed, reliable, and willing to have fun! Mentors should essentially be positive role models for their mentee. They should be supportive, encouraging and motivating and should help with goal setting, achievement and personal development. Ideally mentors will be willing, empathetic and active listeners who will be proactive and encourage and empower their mentee to make choices leading to growth in confidence and esteem.

**Training:** All volunteers will be expected to attend a one day external accredited training course which will look at areas such as; what is mentoring?, qualities of a mentor, beginning, middle and end of a mentoring relationship, listening skills, questioning skills, challenging behaviour, equality and promoting good practice. On completion of this training, all volunteers will receive a certificate. Volunteers will be expected to attend a second day (or two 1/2 days if more appropriate) of in-house training and induction. This will look at Autism Spectrum Conditions, our students, and what is expected of, and procedures for our mentors here at Heathermount.

**Skills:** This is a great opportunity for those wanting to gain experience working within a multidisciplinary team and with individuals with learning disabilities. Supervision is provided by an assistant psychologist and overseen by a consultant clinical psychologist. You will gain great insight into how education provisions have to be adapted to meet the needs of such students. All of this is hugely valuable experience if you are wanting to pursue a career in psychology

**Location:** Heathermount, The Learning Centre.

**Times:** For a minimum of one hour per week during term time. Mentors can spend time with their mentee essentially between the hours of 9.30am - 3.30pm. Once every four to six weeks volunteers will be expected to attend a supervision session with the project co-ordinator.

**CRB:** A CRB disclosure is required via the Community Action office.

**Other:** All travel expenses will be reimbursed. The school is in Sunningdale, and is easily reached by public transport.

**Application:** All volunteers must be registered as Community Action volunteers. To do so, visit <http://www.rhul.ac.uk/services/volunteering/register.html>



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