



# Talking Heads: Volunteer Information

## What is the Talking Heads project?

Talking Heads is a volunteer project by the [Mental Health Foundation](#), taking place as part of the [Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival](#) (SMHAF) programme. It is supported by the National Lottery Communities Fund.

It supports a group of volunteers to engage with arts and mental health events and activities, including during SMHAF, and develop creative responses including written pieces, interviews, audio and video content, photography, illustrations and more.

Each response is published on the SMHAF website and shared through social media and our network of partners, as well as with the artists, organisations and participants involved.

## Who can apply to take part?

This project is open to anyone aged over 18 who is living in Scotland and has personal experience with mental health issues in some way. You will not be asked to provide evidence or disclose any information about your mental health.

No experience is required but applicants should be able to demonstrate an interest in mental health and the arts or creative activities.

## What is the application process?

There is a simple [Application Form](#) to complete, which you should submit alongside an anonymous [Equal Opportunities Monitoring Form](#). If you would like to apply in another format to make this opportunity accessible to you, please get in touch.

Spaces are limited and we do not anticipate being able to offer this opportunity to everyone who applies. Applicants will be selected based on their applications by a panel of staff at the Mental Health Foundation.

The application questions are:

- Why would you like to be a volunteer with the Talking Heads project?
- What will you bring to the Talking Heads project? This can include skills, work or volunteering experience, or anything else you feel is relevant.
- What skills do you hope to develop by taking part in the Talking Heads project?
- Tell us about your interest in the arts and creativity, including the art forms and types of events or activities you enjoy.

## **What is the role of a Talking Heads volunteer?**

Talking Heads volunteers will have the opportunity to engage with and promote the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival and other arts and mental health events. It also allows you to share your perspective and have your voice heard.

By producing creative responses to events, workshops, projects, and exhibitions, volunteers will help to bring this work to life and share it with a wider audience. This will help to promote this work and support the arts and mental health in Scotland.

Volunteers will also act as ambassadors for SMHAF and the Mental Health Foundation. There will be opportunities to attend events as volunteers and audience members and help to spread the word about the festival online and in your communities.

## **What are the benefits of taking part in the project?**

The Talking Heads project creates opportunities to: engage with the arts and culture; develop knowledge, skills and confidence; raise awareness and challenge stigma about issues you are passionate about; and share your perspectives and experiences in mental health and the arts.

Volunteers may also have the opportunity to make connections and access further opportunities. Some past volunteers have: secured paid and voluntary work; participated in other arts and mental health projects; and developed their own arts and mental health events at SMHAF as a result of taking part in the project.

## **What training and support will be provided?**

Training will be provided as part of this project to equip you with the skills you need to get the most out of it. These will support you to build confidence in talking about mental health issues and develop your skills in areas such as writing, podcasting, interviewing, and visual techniques. Training sessions will be accessible to everyone and led by experienced professionals.

Support will be provided to help you plan your activities and access the events and projects you would like to engage with as part of the project. Feedback will be provided on each piece of creative work you submit as part of the project and we will support you to make any changes that may be required.

Volunteers will have a point of contact at the Mental Health Foundation throughout the project to ask any questions or discuss any issues as they arise.

Please let us know in the application process if you have any access requirements to take part in the project, or anything else you would like us to be aware of.

## **What commitment is required to take part in the project?**

Successful applicants should be prepared to take part in all training sessions, which will take place over three half days from July-September. These will take place in a hybrid format, enabling participants to attend in person or remotely.

Applicants should be available to participate during 4-22 October 2023, when the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival takes place. You do not need to be available across all dates but you should have some availability to participate in the project during this time.

During the project, volunteers will be required to submit four pieces of creative work that can be presented on our website. These will be shaped by volunteers and have flexible deadlines.

### **Will expenses be covered?**

The Mental Health Foundation will reimburse travel and subsistence expenses in accordance with our expenses policy. For this project, we will also cover ticket costs for events you attend. Where possible, we will source complimentary or press tickets on your behalf, and otherwise we will purchase tickets or reimburse ticket costs. There is also a small budget to cover costs for required equipment or software for volunteers.

### **When will the project take place?**

The Talking Heads project will begin in July 2023. Training sessions will be held from July-September 2023. The main focus for activity will be during the Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival, which takes place from 4-22 October 2023. We hope to support ongoing engagement with SMHAF after the festival.

### **Who can I contact for more information about the project?**

Please contact Rob Dickie, Arts and Festival Officer at the Mental Health Foundation, for more information about the project.

[rdickie@mentalhealth.org.uk](mailto:rdickie@mentalhealth.org.uk)

0141 226 9857