

MAST CELL ACTION PARENT/CARER PEER SUPPORT SERVICE INFORMATION

This work has been made possible by an award from
The National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund.



We extend our heartfelt thanks to The National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund for their generous support, which has enabled us to deliver this vital work.

WHAT IS THE SERVICE?

This service is a free service delivered by trained volunteers who can provide peer support to other parent/carers caring for a child or young person with MCAS or suspected MCAS.

All of our parent and carer volunteers have personal experience of parenting or caring for a child with MCAS or suspected MCAS.

Volunteers are trained in **Safeguarding, Active Listening and Suicide Prevention** as well as having to provide DBS checks for security purposes.

Our volunteers can provide around **8 sessions of support** via an agreed communication method whether that is *via zoom video calls, phone calls, emails or postal letters.*



HOW DO I ACCESS THE SERVICE?

This service is for adults, so you will need to be aged over 18 and have a child with MCAS or suspected MCAS in order to make use of the service.

Please complete our online referral form.

You can access the referral form through our website at *Request for Parent or Carer Support*

We aim to get in touch with you within **14 days** of you submitting our online form.

We will then try to **match you with a suitable volunteer**. We match service users and volunteers by *availability, skills, experience and compatibility*.



We will contact you to let you know if we have been able to successfully match you with a peer supporter and **introduce you to your supporter.**

If we are unable to find a suitable match, we will contact you to discuss other support which may be available and can add you to our waiting list so that you can be matched with a supporter when a suitable volunteer becomes available.



WHAT HELP CAN SUPPORTERS PROVIDE?

VOLUNTEERS CAN SUPPORT YOU BY:

- Sharing personal experiences
- Offering emotional support
- Signposting you towards information and resources
- Being there to listen to you sharing your experiences and any difficulties you may be facing

WHAT IF I BECOME FRIENDS WITH MY VOLUNTEER?

That is totally fine, after the support has ended if both of you are happy to stay in touch then you are welcome to do so.

CAN I VOLUNTEER?

You may find yourself keen to support other people living with MCAS or suspected MCAS.

If you are interested in volunteering yourself, please get in touch with Mast Cell Action and we would be delighted to discuss how you can support our work.

RECEIVING SUPPORT

Once you have been matched with a volunteer peer supporter, **you will be introduced to them through a suitable format** – for example by email or you may be given a contact number.

Receiving feedback is important for us and helps us to show funders the difference we are making as well as helping us make our services better,
*so **please complete our feedback form after you have had your last support session.***

WHY ONLY 8 SESSIONS?

Mast Cell Action relies on our incredible volunteers to operate many of our services and help to support the MCAS Community.

Limiting sessions to 8 allows our support volunteers to help others in the community.

We hope that after you have received your 8 sessions of support you will feel ready to access **other forms of support** such as **joining our online events, and our Facebook or WhatsApp groups**

WHAT DATA DO YOU COLLECT?

We will collect data such as your *contact details, name and address*. These will be **held on our secure database**.

Volunteers do not write reports on your conversations. All conversations between you and your volunteer will be **treated as confidential** unless your supporter has a safeguarding concern.

If this happens, your supporter will follow our safeguarding procedure.

More information about our safeguarding policies and procedures can be found <https://www.mastcellaction.org/policies>



MORE QUESTIONS?

Please email enquiries to info@mastcellaction.org or call our Community Engagement Coordinator, Charise on 07519 504808.

IN CRISIS?

We know that living with MCAS can be tough.

We are here to help, but sadly we can't be available 24/7.

If you are having a difficult time and **need to speak to someone**, you can call **Samaritans on 116 123**.

If you prefer to text, **Shout** are here for you on **85258**.

Shout is a free, confidential, anonymous text support service.

You can text from wherever you are in the UK.

If you are a **young person** or are concerned about a young person, contact **Papyrus on 08000 68 4141**.

If your life is at imminent risk, please call **999** for immediate help.