Volunteer Role Description

Online Support Group Facilitator

Location: UK-wide, remote (via Zoom)

Time commitment: Roughly 2 hours once or twice a month (flexible rota on Thursday evenings, 18:45–20:15, including a 15-minute pre-session check-in and brief debrief), plus one 1.5-hour online team meeting per quarter

Reports to: Advocacy & Peer Support Coordinator (APSC)

Expenses: Necessary expenses will be reimbursed

About the role

About Faith to Faithless

Faith to Faithless, part of Humanists UK, provides dedicated support to individuals who leave high-control or coercive religious groups. Leaving a closed religious community can be a deeply disruptive and painful transition; people frequently face sudden isolation through family rejection and shunning, the loss of lifelong social networks, coercive control, religious abuse, homelessness, and a lack of understanding from mainstream public services.

Alongside our awareness-raising, professional training, and campaigning work, we run dedicated peer support services to ensure that nobody has to navigate religious exit alone.

The Weekly Peer Support Sessions

We are looking for experienced volunteers to join our existing facilitation team for our weekly online peer support sessions, which take place every Thursday from 19:00 to

20:00 via Zoom (with facilitators logging on at 18:45).

Unlike our informal monthly socials, these weekly sessions are structured, topic-led spaces where participants explore the deeper, more challenging realities of leaving a high-control religion.

Facilitators work on a flexible rota, typically facilitating once or twice a month rather than every week. For mutual support and volunteer wellbeing, our standard model is for two facilitators to co-facilitate each session together (with one leading the welcome, weekly topic, and flow of conversation, and the other monitoring group dynamics and participant wellbeing). However, once you have completed our full training and supported induction period, and only when you feel confident, you may occasionally be asked to facilitate a session solo (for example, to cover annual leave or rota gaps).

Clear Boundaries: Peer Support, Not Therapy
Because participants regularly share experiences of religious trauma, family shunning, coercive control, and emotional distress, facilitators must feel comfortable holding heavy material while remaining grounded and appropriately boundaried. This role involves offering structured peer support, not counselling, therapy, medical/legal advice, or crisis intervention.

Your role is to foster a safe, respectful environment where peers can support one another, while following our clear safeguarding procedures whenever a participant needs additional support (you will never be expected to manage safeguarding concerns alone).

Key Activities

As an Online Support Group Facilitator, you will:

- Co-facilitate (and, once fully inducted and confident, occasionally facilitate solo) weekly one-hour online peer support sessions via Zoom on a flexible rota (typically once or twice a month on Thursdays evenings).
- Welcome participants warmly, introduce the weekly discussion topic, and establish clear group expectations and boundaries at the start of each session.
- Listen attentively and guide group discussions to encourage inclusive participation, ensuring quieter members have space to speak.
- Manage group dynamics sensitively, including navigating differing viewpoints, holding space for distress, and gently de-escalating conversations if they become overly intense or re-traumatising.
- Bring sessions to a contained, grounding close at the end of the hour, followed

by a brief 15-minute check-out with your co-facilitator (or self-reflection/check-in note if facilitating solo).
- Complete brief post-session admin, including recording attendance and emailing a short session summary to the Advocacy & Peer Support Coordinator (APSC).
- Follow Faith to Faithless confidentiality and safeguarding procedures, promptly escalating any safeguarding concerns or disclosures to the APSC and Safeguarding team.
- Attend quarterly online team meetings (1.5 hours) and optional monthly group clinical supervision.

Why volunteer with Faith to Faithless?

What you will gain:

- The opportunity to use your non-religious pastoral or group facilitation skills to make a profound, direct difference in the lives of ex-religious people.
- Experience facilitating structured support groups with people affected by religious trauma, coercive control, and major life transitions.
- **Evidenced Pastoral Care Hours:** For members of Humanists UK's Non-Religious Pastoral Support Network (NRPSN), this role offers valuable, structured experience in non-religious pastoral care, boundary management, and safeguarding. We provide certification of your volunteering hours and skills to support applications for humanist chaplaincy roles in hospitals, prisons, universities, and other settings.
- Being part of a supportive, skilled facilitation team with ongoing reflective practice.
- Insight into Humanists UK's wider humanitarian, educational, and campaigning work.

Support, training, and induction period:

- **Comprehensive Induction & Settling-In Period:** Full training on Faith to Faithless, the specific dynamics of apostasy (leaving religion) and religious trauma, and a structured induction period involving shadowing and co-facilitating alongside an experienced facilitator. We hold a supportive 3-month review check-in to make sure the role is a good mutual fit before any solo facilitation is considered.
- **Enhanced DBS Check:** A paid Enhanced DBS check (including the Adults' Barred List).
- **Safeguarding Training:** Online vulnerable adults safeguarding training plus bespoke Faith to Faithless safeguarding training with our Safeguarding Lead.
- **Facilitated Group Reflection Sessions (Clinical Supervision):** Monthly online supervision led by an external therapist specialising in religious trauma, giving

you a confidential space to reflect on difficult sessions, group dynamics, and your own wellbeing. (Please note this is reflective practice supervision rather than personal therapy.)
- **Ongoing Staff Support:** Regular check-ins with the APSC, optional weekly drop-in debrief sessions, and a dedicated Faith to Faithless email address and secure online systems.

What you'd bring to the role

Personal lived experience of leaving a high-control religion is **not** required for this role, as we provide full specialist training on religious exit. Instead, we are looking for volunteers with established non-religious pastoral, therapeutic, or group support skills who demonstrate:

- **Non-religious Pastoral or Support Experience:** Training or substantial experience in non-religious pastoral support (such as Humanists UK's NRPSN), chaplaincy, counselling, mental health support, or trauma-informed group facilitation.
- **Trauma Awareness and Emotional Resilience:** The ability to remain calm, grounded, and non-judgemental when hearing distressing stories of religious abuse, shunning, or trauma, alongside strong self-awareness of your own emotional boundaries and wellbeing needs.
- **Strict Role Boundaries:** A clear understanding of the difference between peer support facilitation and therapy/crisis intervention, with the confidence to hold safe group boundaries without taking personal responsibility for participants' problems outside the session.
- **Group Facilitation and Listening Skills:** Warm, empathetic active listening skills, knowing when to hold quiet space, when to guide discussion, and how to balance voices in an online group.
- **Safeguarding and Confidentiality:** A sound understanding of confidentiality limits and a commitment to escalating safeguarding concerns promptly in line with our procedures.
- **Reliability and IT Confidence:** Dependability in honouring rota commitments and confidence using Zoom, email, and basic online forms (training will be given).
- **Values Alignment:** Commitment to Humanists UK's inclusive, secular values and beliefs.

You are welcome to contact us via volunteers@humanists.uk to discuss the role before applying.