

Dundee Women's Aid Recruitment Case Study – January 2026

At Dundee Women's Aid (DWA), volunteer recruitment and training takes place once a year. Recruitment usually takes place in June and July, with most volunteers starting in January. Throughout the year, anyone who makes contact is added to an "Expression-of-interest" list so they can be invited to the next recruitment round.

Volunteers must attend training sessions running once a week for 7 weeks. This schedule isn't always accessible for everyone however, with only 1 Coordinator and with the organisation's capacity to run only 1 full training session annually, the commitment and availability is made clear at the outset. Most DWA volunteer roles are one-to-one befriending positions, and require volunteers to have a deep understanding of domestic abuse, which is why this extensive training period is necessary. The Volunteer Coordinator delivers all volunteer training, allowing them to get to know the volunteers over the 7-week programme. This helps to assess their suitability and make informed decisions about matching them with service users. The training period also filters out individuals who cannot commit, which is important because withdrawing from a befriending relationship can be harmful for the service user. Drop-out rates during training are generally low because volunteers tend to be highly motivated and passionate about the organisation's work and want to give something back to survivors of domestic abuse.

At time of writing (December 2025) DWA capacity is currently at its limit, both in terms of staffing and volunteer numbers, so cannot accommodate a larger volunteer intake. In 2025, they received 14 applications—the highest number in recent years—which has resulted in 12 trainees.

After completing training, volunteers are asked to commit 8 hours per month for at least 6 months. Befriending relationships are intended to run for 12 weeks but often extend beyond three months due to missed weeks and changing circumstances. Not all volunteers are matched for befriending immediately; some will support group activities while they wait, and others choose to volunteer only at groups. There is also a need for a reception volunteer on Tuesdays.

Recruiting only once per year is not ideal, as potential volunteers who get in touch after recent recruitment drives understandably may not wait for next intake. However, as the coordinators role also involves running groups, they are able to get to know service users' needs which is very important for the matching process.