

Volunteer Role:

Support Line Volunteer

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer with Children First. We are delighted that you are considering offering your time and energy to help improve the lives of Scotland's children, young people and families.

About Children First

Children First is Scotland's national children's charity. We stand up for every child because all children should have a safe childhood. We protect children from harm and support them to recover from trauma and abuse through our national and local services. We help children, their families and the people that care for them by offering emotional, practical, and financial support.

We give children hope and a safer, brighter future.

About the Children First Support Line

Children First believe that by making the first step towards help more easy, flexible and compassionate, we can transform lives and reduce child poverty. Children First support line is a digital whole family support service that reaches every community across Scotland to offer compassionate help, advice and support to any family or any person concerned about a child. Flexible options to connect remove barriers, helping families access support earlier, resolve challenges faster and build long-term resilience.

What will I be doing?

As a Support Line Volunteer you will provide support to adults by phone, webchat, email and text offering time to talk about anything to do with children. This will include:

- Building supportive relationships and working alongside individuals to help them think through what will work best for their families while keeping the child at the heart of every contact.
- Providing emotional and practical support and advice
- Working in partnership with Support Line Co-ordinators to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children is a central focus of all contacts.
- Accurately recording the details of every contact.

In addition to this we ask all our volunteers to come to volunteer meetings and trainings as required. The service is based at our office in Bruntsfield, Edinburgh.

How could I benefit from volunteering?

Volunteering with us is more than just giving us your time, we want you to gain from it as well. It is a great way to build confidence, meet new people, boost your wellbeing and make a real difference to children and families. It can help you develop new skills and knowledge and build valuable experience that can be useful to you both personally and professionally. We will take time to get to know you and understand what you want to achieve and, where we can, offer you opportunities to develop in the role.

Here's what some of our volunteers have to say about volunteering with us

'If you feel that you may have been able to help someone - even in a very small way - it makes you feel that you are doing something positive in that person's life.'

As a volunteer you develop valuable and very transferable skills, communication and listening skills being big part of that. My time at the support line increased my confidence in my abilities into a job that I would not have thought about or have had the relevant skills to approach, had it not been for the skills I've learnt at the support line.'

'Through volunteering with Children 1st, I have learned a lot about myself and my capabilities. Each day is an opportunity to develop my skills, and support those in need within the community. It is extremely rewarding to know that you have actively made a positive difference within someone's life.'

What training and support will I get?

- We provide our volunteers with all the training and information they need to carry out their role effectively and confidently.
- Before starting to volunteer you will need to successfully complete our Initial Volunteer Training which consists of around 38 hours of trainer-led group learning and some self-study in between training sessions.
- On successful completion of the initial training you will become part of a friendly, supportive team and when volunteering Children First staff will always be on hand to provide support and guidance.
- You will also have a named individual supervisor who will provide you ongoing support and opportunities for learning and development.

‘The training I received prior to volunteering was excellent. It was very informative, interactive and really enjoyable. The support throughout the training and after the training is second to none. I would really recommend joining Children First as a Volunteer.’ (Support Line Volunteer)

Will it cost me anything?

We believe that volunteering shouldn't cost you anything and you will be able to claim for reasonable out-of-pocket expenses for travel to and from our office in Bruntsfield, Edinburgh.

What do you need from me?

No specific experience or formal qualifications are necessary as full training is provided. This is what we are looking for from our volunteers:

- Good communication skills are essential as a caring, kind and non-judgemental response can make a real difference to someone who wants to talk.
- Able to build positive relationships with those who contact Children First, the staff team and other volunteers
- Some knowledge/understanding of issues affecting children, young people and families would be helpful.
- The nature of the role means that we ask that volunteers are aged 18 or over.
- We ask all our volunteers to share the Children First values, be reliable and committed and be keen to learn and help others grow too.
- Support Line Volunteers must apply for a Basic Disclosure Certificate and the cost of this is covered by Children First. We support trainee volunteers to apply for this during our initial training programme.

How much time will I need to give?

Our support line is open Monday-Friday 9am – 9pm and Saturday-Sunday 9am – 12noon and volunteer shifts are available throughout the day, evening and weekend.

On successful completion of our initial training we ask for a minimum of one year's commitment, during which we ask you to do 40 shifts, in our support line a shift is approx. 4 hours. In addition to this, volunteers are asked to attend meetings and ongoing training to support their development.

Interested and want to find out more? Please get in touch, we'd be more than happy to have a chat and answer any questions you have.

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