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| Volunteer Role: | Support Line Volunteer |
| <p>Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer with Children First. We are delighted that you have chosen to offer your time and energy to help improve the lives of Scotland’s children, young people and families.</p> | |
| <p>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.</p> <p>We protect children from harm and support them to recover from trauma and abuse through our national and local services.</p> <p>We help children, their families and the people that care for them by offering emotional, practical, and financial support.</p> <p>We give children hope and a safer, brighter future.</p> | |
| <p>About the service/department From mental health, money worries and online harm to struggles at school, our support line offers emotional, practical and financial support to any family in Scotland. We listen and support anyone who has concerns about a child’s wellbeing and help them to work through what is best for the child.</p> | |
| <p>General purpose of role Our Support Line Volunteers provide support to adults by phone, webchat and email offering time to talk about anything to do with children. They listen to those who contact us and offer support, information and advice and, where appropriate, signpost to other agencies. Our aim is to put the child at the heart of every contact and to support people to decide for themselves how to move forward.</p> | |
| <p>Key tasks</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide emotional and practical support and advice by phone, webchat and email. • To build supportive relationships and work alongside individuals to help them think through what will work best for their families. • To work in partnership with Support Line Supervisors to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of children is a central focus of all contacts. • To accurately record the details of every contact. • To attend support meetings and trainings as required. | |
| <p>What our volunteers say about volunteering with the Children First support line</p> <p><i>“Training to be a Support Line Volunteer and all the subsequent time volunteering has really helped me build some skills which I wish I'd built years ago. Many of these I'd call 'life skills' which I can usefully apply in many different parts of my life.”</i></p> <p><i>“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.”</i></p> <p><i>“No matter how many calls I have taken, I still find that there is no such thing as two that are identical. Every person is an individual with their own particular issues and this keeps you interested in the role.”</i></p> | |

Training and support

Volunteers are provided with all of the training required to fulfil their role effectively and confidently. Support Line Volunteers must successfully complete our assessed initial training course which consists of 24 hours of trainer led group learning with some self-study between sessions.

On successful completion of the initial training volunteers become part of a friendly, supportive team where trained staff are always on hand to provide support and guidance. Volunteers are supported by a supervisor when on shift in the call room and in addition to this all volunteers have a named individual supervisor who is responsible for their ongoing support and development.

Specific requirements

A caring, kind and non-judgemental response can make a real difference to someone who wants to talk. No previous experience or formal qualifications are necessary as full training is provided, but good communication skills are essential to enable you to listen to and support those who contact the Children First support line.

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.

Core requirements for all volunteer roles

- A positive and realistic commitment to volunteering role
- An understanding of, and commitment to, the values of Children First
- Sensitivity to the needs of others
- A self-assured and positive outlook
- Responsible and accountable
- A desire to learn and help others to learn

Time Commitment:

The 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 on the support line (a shift is approx. 4 hours). In addition to this, volunteers are asked to attend support meetings and ongoing training to support their development.

Out-of-pocket expenses

Volunteers are able to claim reasonable out-of-pocket expenses for travel and costs incurred as part of the volunteering role.

Responsible to: Support Line Supervisor

Location: 83 Whitehouse Loan, Edinburgh, EH9 1AT