



**family  
lives**

*Volunteer  
Information  
Pack*

*Do something  
wonderful...*



## *Volunteering is at the heart of the work that Family Lives delivers*

As an organisation we have a proud history spanning over three decades in which volunteering has spearheaded our organisational response to family need.

Family Lives seeks to provide the same levels of support to its volunteer workforce as paid staff and does not make any distinction between a staff member who offers time freely as a volunteer or through a paid wage, as all Family Lives staff are trained to the same programmes.

The volunteer information that you are about to read describes the work done by current volunteers and covers some of the values and vision that we have for ensuring effective, respectful and impactful volunteering throughout the organisation.



We recognise that volunteers can play an active part in all aspects of our organisation. This is demonstrated by the Chief Executive being managed by a volunteer body in the board of trustees.

I would personally like to thank each and every one of you who goes on to volunteer for Family Lives as, without your gift of time and commitment to learning and delivery, we would not be able to provide the range of support to families across the country.

I am very proud of the work that we undertake within Family Lives as it is driven by a very practical example of vision, passion and selflessness within our volunteer body.

With thanks and best wishes

Jeremy Todd

Chief Executive

Family Lives





## Who we are

We believe that happy children come from happy families and currently support families to improve the outcomes for over 1 million children each year. Family Lives is a charity that has over three decades of experience in helping parents deal with the changes that are a constant part of family life. We know that many people play active roles in the raising of children within any family, from dads, grandparents, stepparents and non-resident parents. Our role is to support everyone to achieve the best relationship possible with the children that they care about.

We recognise that the best way to support families is to provide free, non-judgmental support and advice. We pride ourselves on providing a safe, supportive environment for people to air their concerns and to receive support. We therefore provide a helpline, a website packed with essential information, online forums, and parenting/relationship support groups in many local communities.

People contact us about all aspects of family life that include all stages of a child's development, issues with schools and parenting/relationship support. We also respond when life becomes complicated and provide support around family breakdown, aggression in the home, bullying at school, risky teenage behaviour and mental health concerns of both parents and children.

We aim to be the first place people can turn if family life becomes difficult.



## Where do we work?

Family Lives has a number of offices which offer volunteer opportunities. With all current volunteer posts, you will need to be within traveling distance to an office or a project site to attend training courses, supervision and staff support.

Regions covered by our work are:

***London and the Northern Home Counties (Hatfield, Stevenage, Camden)***

***London and the Southern Home Counties (Croydon, Lambeth)***

***Westminster***

***Essex (Hadleigh)***

***East Midlands***

***South West (Stroud, Gloucestershire, Bristol)***

***Hampshire (Southampton)***

***North East (Newcastle)***



## How you can help

### **Helpline call taker**

This role provides an empathic, caring and informed response to callers to the helpline. Our free confidential helpline provides confidential support, guidance and information about any family issue. This is a diverse and challenging role – no two calls are the same and you have to be ready to deal with whatever issues are happening at the other end of the line. However, you receive full support from a staff supervisor and all our volunteers find the work rewarding, inspiring and fulfilling.

### **Administration**

All offices sometimes need administration support- whether it's helping to minute meetings, photocopying, filing or database work. Administration volunteers help keep the office running smoothly. If the office is well organised and supported, the organisation can focus on supporting families. This role suits people who want to start a career in office work or the charity sector or who simply want to spend some time each week working to support a friendly team.

### **Outreach**

Do you enjoy getting out into the community and meeting new people? This role includes being part of a team that goes to events, tells people about our services, gives out information at community venues such as schools and GP surgeries and generally spreads our message that seeking family support is a strength, not a weakness.

### **Befriending and family support**

Matched with a parent or family who need one to one support, our volunteers visit families in community settings or family homes to listen and provide support. You will also be supporting Family Lives staff to set up parenting groups, run training courses in parenting skills and support families to support each other. A demanding but fulfilling role, befriending would suit anyone who wants help make real and lasting change in people's lives.

### ***Time commitment***

Each role is different and we can be as flexible as possible around your other commitments. However, for Family Support volunteers, Befrienders and Family Support Mentors we ask that you provide a minimum of four hours per week for 12 months or more. Other roles may be a full 35 hour week or a few hours per month attending events. For each role, we also ask that you attend a minimum number of group sessions and one to one supervisions on top of any time undertaking activities. You will also have to commit to the training that is relevant for that role.



## How you can help

### **Media volunteers**

Help us to reach out to isolated families to give them the confidence to pick up the phone, go along to a local group or simply know they are not alone. By talking to the media about everyday family life, worries or dilemmas the name Family Lives really comes to life for the thousands of families who hear about us in newspapers and radio stations across the country.

If you become a family media volunteer we may ask you to: speak to your local newspaper about your family situation, take part in television or radio interviews, or feature on other carefully selected websites

### **Fundraising**

All the work that Family Lives does to support families costs money and has to be funded by the charity. We need your help to fundraise- whether that's by collecting money at local events, organising raffles or being sponsored to run a marathon. This role would suit anyone with a good imagination and a sense of creativity and fun.

### **Family support mentor**

Volunteers are matched with a parent or family who need one to one support. With work revolving around GP surgeries and health centres, families on this project will have been referred to us by a health professional or will be families with health issues.

As they become more experienced, volunteers will also have the opportunity to support staff to run parenting groups and can choose to support other, less experienced volunteers.

### ***Expenses and benefits***

Volunteers bring their time, commitment and enthusiasm to Family Lives and in return we are committed to making sure that volunteers are never out of pocket. We pay expenses against receipts for the use of public transport. Where appropriate we may also provide expenses for lunch and childcare.

For those claiming benefits, volunteering will not affect the money you get, and you can volunteer for as many hours as you like. You should, however, tell your benefits advisor that you are volunteering.





## Training

All our volunteers receive appropriate training ranging from a short induction to 25 hours of professional workshops.

Areas covered in our training programme include:

- The ethos and work of Family Lives
- Listening skills
- Empathy and being non-judgmental
- Equality
- Personal Safety
- Group working skills
- Communication skills
- Child protection and Risk of Harm
- Supporting families
- Home visiting
- Assessing risk
- Dealing with difficult situations

## Experience

All of our volunteers who work with families are encouraged and supported to undertake accreditation with Apt Ed, which could lead to a professional qualification and certificate - all paid for by Family Lives.

As well as formal training, volunteers can benefit from:

- Increased experience in listening and supporting families
- Working as part of a passionate team
- Experience in the voluntary/social care sector
- Increased confidence
- Increased skills and experience for future employment
- Motivation
- Sense of achievement
- New experiences
- Working with a diverse range of people
- Sense of fulfilment from helping people





## What next?

Like what you've read? We hope so! Please follow the steps below to get you on your way to volunteering for Family Lives.

### ***Where are you needed?***

[Click here](#) to see our current volunteering opportunities.

### ***Can't find an opportunity in your area?***

Please email your CV to [recruitment@familylives.org.uk](mailto:recruitment@familylives.org.uk)

In your email please tell us the area of work that you would like to volunteer for, Someone from the office will be in touch with you when an appropriate volunteering position becomes available.

### ***How do I apply?***

If you find an opportunity you feel you are suited to, please follow the instructions provided in the advertisement. The office you apply to will advise you about the process.

Thank you for your interest in Family Lives. We look forward to meeting you.

***“It's difficult to put into words how much volunteering and then working for Family Lives helped me – it was pivotal in getting me to where I am today, what with all the training and encouragement I received.”  
– Previous Volunteer***



**family  
lives**

*Through life's ups  
and downs, we're  
**with you, all the way***

To get in touch please contact 020 7553 3080

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[www.familylives.org.uk](http://www.familylives.org.uk)