



Volunteer Role:

Helpline Volunteer – Children 1st Parentline

Thank you for your interest in becoming a volunteer with Children 1st. 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.

About Children 1st

At Children 1st our ambition is for every child in Scotland to be safe, loved and well with their family. As a charity we offer emotional, practical, and financial support to help families to put children first and campaign to uphold the rights of every child.

We support the whole family when they need it, for as long as they need it. We offer help to prevent families reaching crisis point, to keep children safe and to support children and families to recover from trauma and harm.

About the service/department

With over 25 years of experience, Children 1st Parentline is more than just a helpline. It is a national digital family support service which provides one easy point of immediate access for families to receive a range of support bespoke to them, to help them cope with the challenges they face whether practical or emotional. Through our relationships with parents and carers, we promote early intervention, supporting families to build resilience and prevent those challenges from escalating.

General Purpose of Role

Our Helpline 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.

Key Tasks

- 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 Helpline 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.

What our volunteers say about volunteering with Children 1st Parentline

‘Training to be a Children 1st Parentline call taker 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.’

‘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.’

‘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.’

Training and support

Volunteers are provided with all of the training required to fulfil their role effectively and confidently. Helpline 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 Children 1st Parentline.

Helpline Volunteers must apply for a Basic Disclosure Certificate and the cost of this is covered by Children 1st. 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 1st
- 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 helpline 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 helpline (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: Helpline Supervisor

Location: 83 Whitehouse Loan, Edinburgh, EH9 1AT