



Cumbria Family Support

VOLUNTEER POLICY

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Scope

This policy covers Family Support and Contact Centre Volunteers. If any of the content applies differently for the two roles, this will be specified in the relevant section. Whilst the Trustee role is also volunteering, there are separate specific policy and procedures for Trustees.

Ethos

Everyone has the right to volunteer and volunteering is, in itself, a legitimate activity. It is not a substitute for paid work, but it is just as important.

The purpose of this policy is to provide overall guidance to staff and volunteers. It is not a contractual agreement, and will be reviewed on a regular basis at the discretion of the management committee.

Cumbria Family Support (CFS) provides support for families on a group and individual basis. The individual support is usually provided in the families own home, and is given mainly through volunteers. Cumbria Family Support recognises the special relationship this can offer to families. The volunteer's role together with that of paid staff is at the core of the organisation's mission, and our policy aims to reflect that.

Recruitment

We aim to follow accepted good practice with regard to equal opportunities and diversity, and seek to recruit volunteers from a wide range of backgrounds and life experiences, reflecting the local community, as the families we support have a variety of needs.

At the first point of contact with a prospective volunteer an initial visit will be arranged at the volunteer's place of residency, in order to give them information on volunteering with CFS and to assess their suitability. We aim to complete this visit within one month of their initial contact. Appendix 1 covers the procedure for following up prospective volunteer enquires and completion of said visit

Prospective volunteers are required to complete a registration form which gives their permission for CFS to contact 2 suitable referees. At least one referee will be contacted by phone to discuss their reference, in line with safe recruitment practice. Referees must not be related to the applicant and should be from a relevant source e.g. Work with children. Prospective volunteers will be required to undertake an enhanced DBS disclosure. We will ask volunteers to sign up to the DBS Update Service (free of charge), and maintain this each year. Whilst this permits CFS to check the DBS status of a volunteer at any point, we will check the DBS at least every 3 years as a minimum.

Volunteers are asked to disclose previous convictions (including spent convictions), cautions and warnings or pending proceedings as voluntary work with CFS is considered to not be covered by The Rehabilitation of Offender's act 1974 but is in accordance with Home Office Circular (86) 44. A positive DBS Disclosure must be considered by the Trustees and will be taken seriously, but need not debar the applicant. Volunteers must, during their work with us, advise the relevant coordinator if they become subject to police investigation, out of court disposal (e.g. caution), or criminal conviction.

Members of families who have received our support are welcome to apply to be volunteers at least one year after the support from us comes to an end.

Volunteers are asked to give a commitment of at least one year's volunteering.

Reviewed and adopted by Management Committee: 3rd November 2021

If a person is deemed to be unsuitable to be a volunteer they will be informed as soon as possible, with the reasons given and the details of how to appeal.¹

Volunteers need to be capable of task assigned to them. We expect volunteers to keep us informed of any changes to their physical/mental health which may impact on their volunteering.

Confidentiality and Information Sharing, and scope of the volunteer role

Confidentiality is central to the work of Cumbria Family Support. Volunteers are expected to maintain the confidentiality of all information to which they are exposed during the course of their volunteering and after it has ceased. Any failure to maintain confidentiality during the course of their work will be brought to the attention of the Trustees. Volunteers will be required to sign CFS's Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy at their initial training session. Volunteers will also be required to sign a Consent Form.

Any respite support that is provided within the volunteer's own home must first be discussed with the appropriate member of staff. Volunteers are not allowed, or covered by the organisation's insurance, to look after children overnight in their own home.

Volunteers must seek the advice of staff or management before taking any action outside the role assigned to them, which might serve to commit CFS, or compromise the integrity of the organisation. Examples of this would be liaising with the media, lobbying or raising finance.

CFS employs trained staff to attend any family or interagency meetings and it is not part of the volunteer's role to attend.

Volunteer records are open to inspection by the volunteer concerned and are stored electronically or in a secure filing cabinet at the office of Cumbria Family Support and are classed as confidential. Records are kept for 6 years after the volunteer's last involvement with CFS. If a volunteer wishes to return to volunteering, a new DBS check will be required, and they may be required to refresh their training.

Training and support

Family Support Volunteers:

Volunteers are required to complete (as opposed to attend if we move to any video based delivery) an initial training session (lasting approximately 2-3 hour) and complete the LSCB e-learning safeguarding session, which equips them to begin visiting a family. On completion a discussion will take place with the Family Support Coordinator to see whether they wish to proceed as a volunteer. We also expect encourage volunteers to then complete ~~attend~~ a Volunteer Development Programme which ~~runs for six sessions and~~ enables them to support a family with a more complex need. The course takes a more detailed look at topics such as being a volunteer, confidentiality, levels of support, mental health and engagement, relationships within families, parenting, domestic abuse awareness and safeguarding children in need of protection. It is expected that this will be completed by the volunteer within the first 12 months of volunteering with us. The content and delivery method of the programme will be annually reviewed by the Coordinators to.

¹ Appeals will be heard within 28 days of the decision and will be heard by the Chief Officer and at least one Trustee

Individual support is tailored to each individual volunteer's needs and a Family Support Coordinator is available for face to face and telephone support as required. Volunteers will have access to a member of staff at all times through the "yellow card" which gives staff contact details.

Cumbria Family Support will review the volunteer's work with a family on a regular basis, and assess the need to continue providing support.

Contact Centre Volunteers:

Volunteers are given induction training to the contact centre building which will include health and safety, building layout, equipment and resources. They will also be given information on supporting parents during contact, parental alienation and the impact contact has on mental health.

All Volunteers:

Volunteers are given ongoing support and training and encouraged to attend group support meetings and additional training opportunities.

Established volunteers will have the opportunity to take part in any of the training sessions to refresh their knowledge.

Volunteers will be issued with a signed ID card which they should carry with them when volunteering

Matching for Family Support Volunteers

The matching and Induction procedure is covered in more detail in Appendix 2

Whilst completion of the Development programme is required to enable support to more complex families/situations, this is not an automatic transition. Once the Development Programme is completed a discussion will be held with the relevant coordinator to explore the types of complexity of families we may ask a volunteer to support. This will then be taken into account when future matching is undertaken, and may identify further individual development for the volunteer also. There is no set criteria for defining a family as "complex" to determine allocation to an experienced volunteer, or determining they need support from a paid member of staff as well as, or instead of a volunteer. The types of things that will be taken into account when assessing the level of complexity include:

- Level of engagement from the family
- Current or recent substance misuse
- Concerns about safeguarding that are not already addressed through Early Help or other multi agency plans
- Chaotic lifestyle that may require considerable initial support to understand
- Significant parental mental health needs that are not being supported by other services
- Generalised initial concerns that need further assessment and support identified before allocation to a volunteer

CFS will normally aim to match a volunteer with a family within a 15 mile radius of their home. Anything outside of this will be discussed in advance with the Coordinator's manager. If the match is agreed for more distant family and volunteer locations the reasons for this will be recorded on the relevant family folder contact sheet.

Records of Family Support Volunteer contact/visits with a family:

When a volunteer is matched with a family, a Family Support Plan is completed to record the focus of the support and will include the role and focus of the volunteer. After each support visit or contact,

volunteers are required to provide details of this to the Family Support Coordinator within 5 working days. The available methods and standards for sharing this are detailed in Appendix 3.

It is CFS's policy to communicate with the family and referrer when support comes to an end. Support can be resumed if necessary.

Expenses

It is the policy of CFS to reimburse expenses for travel and phone calls incurred during volunteering. Any other expenses reimbursed will be at the discretion of CFS and should be agreed in advance between the volunteer and coordinator. Expenses should be claimed on a monthly basis.

Volunteers will be required to complete a Driving Policy at their induction. Volunteers must seek permission from their own insurance company to use their vehicle for voluntary work, confirming necessary insurance cover. A standard letter is available for use if required.

Ceasing Volunteering

On ceasing their involvement in Family Support with the organisation, volunteers are asked to return their ID card and yellow cards to their Family Support Coordinator and destroy any contact details for the families they have supported, unless they have agreed to keep in contact as a friend.

If the volunteer and family intended to remain friends after the formal CFS role has ended this must be recorded on the family folder, and a written confirmation (letter, email or text) supplied from the volunteer and family member confirming that they agree this is now longer through CFS and our role with them has ended. This is to be stored on the family record.

Volunteers are asked to complete a final evaluation of their volunteering experience.

Cumbria Family Support's policies are reviewed regularly by the Trustees and are available for volunteers to view within office hours or on our website.

Potential Volunteers Procedure

When an initial enquiry is made by a potential volunteer the Family Support Coordinator should:

1. Complete an initial volunteer enquiry form.
2. Visits – a potential volunteer should be visited at their current home address, this is to verify where they live and that they are who they say they are. This also helps the family support coordinator to get to know the potential volunteer.
3. The Family Support Coordinator will then contact the potential volunteer to make a home visit appointment. Family Support Coordinators should carry out a risk assessment on whether to visit the potential volunteer alone. Identified members of the Management Committee or an existing volunteer are available for these visits if required.
4. The volunteer enquiry form would normally be completed at the first point of contact, but the details can be verified with the potential volunteer at the home visit.

Information should be given about:

- a) The background of the organisation, its charitable status and how the Association has developed.
- b) The criteria for a service, the kind of support we offer and the diversity of needs of the families.
- c) Confidentiality and information sharing – with regard to the volunteer and the family.
- d) The support systems in place for volunteers.
- e) Expenses
- f) Initial Training Session and Volunteer Development Programme training courses – it is a requirement of the organisation that all potential volunteers complete our initial training session, and they are also expected to attend the Volunteer Development Programme during their first year with the organisation, including reasons for training:
 - 1) To raise awareness of issues that may affect the families we support.
 - 2) To give information about the organisation's policies and procedures.
 - 3) For Family Support Coordinators to get to know the volunteers and identify their skills.
 - 4) To share information and skills.
- g) DBS check and references – explain to the volunteer about the DBS check and ask them if they have any past convictions or cautions including anything pending that may come up on the disclosure.
- h) Discuss with the volunteer their experience of working with children or family life and what they feel they have to offer.
- i) Leave leaflets, a registration form, SAE and explain what will happen next.

Family Support Volunteer Induction & Matching Visits

All volunteers should undergo an induction meeting with their Family Support Coordinator before beginning their volunteering with CFS. This ensures they have all the resources they need to provide the support eg ID card, yellow cards. The Office Manager should be informed that this has taken place to update the database

The Family Support Coordinator should spend time with the volunteer before the allocated time for the matching visit. This is to ensure that the volunteer is clear about the issues in the family and what will be expected of them. It is sometimes a good idea to meet up at the office or at a place near the family home so you can chat in the car.

Matching process:

1. The referral form / case recordings and risk assessment should be available for the volunteer to read through prior to the visit.
2. At the matching visit the volunteer should be introduced by their first name only, and the family should be given the phone number of the office so that they can get in touch if they need to change a planned visit for any reason. Volunteer addresses and phone numbers should never be given out to families.
3. The Family Support Plan (drawn from Outcome Star) should be completed; this process should involve the worker, volunteer and family. This ensures that everyone is clear about the support and that is going to be provided.
4. If during the course of support other contact or activities are identified as beneficial, this must be discussed between the volunteer and the coordinator in advance of agreeing these with the family (e.g. trips out to leisure facilities). The Coordinator is responsible for completion of any associated risk assessment and discussing and sharing this with the volunteer and family.
5. The time and day of the support visits should be agreed, taking into consideration the availability of the family and the volunteer, and when the support is going to be most effective.
6. The date and time of the first visit should then be arranged. Risk Assessment and Permissions for outside activities to be completed if appropriate.
7. A review date which is convenient for both the family and volunteer should be arranged, the time of the first review will depend on the support being offered and the issues in the family.
8. Access to records and the complaints procedure leaflets should be given to the family.
9. After the visit the volunteer should be given the time and opportunity to reflect on the match with the Family Support Coordinator, and raise any issues or anxieties.
10. The Family Support Coordinator will write confirming the arrangements to the family, volunteer and, if appropriate, referrer.
11. The Family Support Coordinator will go through recording standards and expectations with the volunteer and agree how they will complete this (see Volunteer policy Appendix 3).
12. The Family Support Coordinator will email or post a blank expenses form to the volunteer to be completed and emailed or posted in to the office on a monthly basis.
13. After the first volunteer support visit had been made the Family Support Coordinator should telephone both the family and the volunteer to see how things have gone.

Family Support Volunteer Recording Standards

1. Routine contact / visits with the family should be recorded as soon as possible after their occurrence and provided to CFS within 5 working days. Anything that arises that is a worry to a volunteer should be communicated to the Coordinator as soon as possible.
2. The records should be provided to the allocated Family Support Coordinator. This can be done:
 - Recording on Charity Log Case Management System²
 - By email
 - By post (1st class)
 - Calling the CFS office (the office manager or relevant Coordinator will transcribe the notes onto the family file)³. If not completed directly by the allocated Coordinator, the staff member taking the call will email the Coordinator to ensure they are aware of the new contact record.
3. The contact records should be completed on the Volunteer Visit form (a blank paper and / or electronic version will be provided to volunteers when matching).
4. Volunteers to be reminded to comply with our data protection policy, by not keeping electronic copies on your computer or paper copies at home. Copies of your visit reports are kept securely in the family file at the office and they are welcome to access these as you need to.
5. When a Volunteer is supporting a family that is also allocated to a Family Support Worker, it is important that there is clear communication between the Coordinator, volunteer and Support Worker. To this effect whilst the 4 steps above apply throughout, in addition:
 - When the Coordinator receives a visit form from the volunteer they must ensure the FSW is made aware it has been received and on the system
 - The volunteer will continue to use the Coordinator as their first port of call for support and for feeding back about family contact.
 - If the Coordinator is away from work, unless other agreements have specifically been made, the volunteer will for that period liaise directly with the allocated FSW
 - All database records for the volunteer engagement to remain the responsibility of the Coordinator

² This will be available in late 2021 and will be the preferred method of recording once operational. Full training and support will be given to volunteers before they are expected to use this.

³ This should only be used as a last resort when email or other means is not feasible.