



Cumbria Family Support

VOLUNTEER POLICY

Cumbria Family Support,
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(1) Scope

- 1.1 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..

(2) Ethos

- 2.1 Volunteering is not a substitute for paid work, it is just as valuable. Everyone has the right to volunteer.
- 2.2 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.
- 2.3 Cumbria Family Support (CFS) provides support for families on a group and individual basis. The individual support is usually provided in the family's 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.

(3) Recruitment

- 3.1 We will 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. In line with this we will actively target volunteer recruitment across a range of settings such as supermarkets, community settings such as leisure centres, entertainment etc, and community events, as well as volunteer fairs, Higher and Further Education settings etc.
- 3.2 We will arrange for an informal meeting to take place, ideally within 4 weeks of the prospective volunteer's initial contact with CFS. This will be arranged at a mutually suitable location to discuss volunteering with CFS and consider the suitability of the prospective volunteer in meeting the requirements of volunteering with us. Appendix 1 covers the procedure for following up prospective volunteer enquiries and completion of said visit.
- 3.3 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.
- 3.4 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 Offenders 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 Volunteer Coordinator if they become subject to police investigation, out of court disposal (e.g. caution), or criminal conviction. CFS's safer recruitment, including recruiting people who have experience of the criminal justice system is covered in our Safeguarding Policy.

- 3.5 Members of families who have received our support are welcome to apply to be volunteers. We will deal with each such enquiry on an individual basis but would expect there to be at least six months elapsed after the support from us comes to an end. We would also need the support with CFS to have been engaged with, ended positively, and with no ongoing safeguarding concerns or other vulnerabilities within the family that could interfere with the interest in volunteering. In addition, additional support to become a volunteer may be put in place to ensure their previous experience as a supported family with CFS does not leave them or CFS vulnerable to conflicts of interest.
- 3.6 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
- 3.7 Volunteers need to be capable of tasks assigned to them. We expect volunteers to keep us informed of any changes to their physical/mental health which may impact on their volunteering. Volunteers are asked to give a commitment of at least one year's volunteering².
- 3.8 Volunteers will be issued with a signed ID card which they should carry with them when volunteering.

(4) Confidentiality and Information Sharing

- 4.1 Confidentiality is central to the work of Cumbria Family Support. Volunteers adhere to the Confidentiality and Information Sharing Policy. 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.
- 4.2 Volunteers' own records are open to inspection by the volunteer concerned upon request 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.

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

² Unless they are signing up as part of an Employer Volunteer release scheme for a set amount of days per year. This will be covered in a separate Appendix once this has been adopted by CFS

(5) Scope of the Volunteer Role

- 5.1 Family Support volunteers³ will primarily provide support in the allocated family's home. On occasion though, support may be delivered via school or community settings. This must be agreed in advance with the relevant Family Support Practitioner and will require a risk assessment. Due to several issues such as Health & Safety, Insurance and Safeguarding, CFS does not permit volunteers to provide in person family support in their own (volunteer's) homes.
- 5.2 Alongside adherence to CFS' Driving policy, volunteers must not have other adults travel with them when they have supported families' children (under the age of 18 years old) with them in their car. The only exception to this is if the other passengers are CFS Volunteers, or are DBS checked and it has been approved in advance by CFS and the relevant parent. In addition, when undertaking community-based support, it is acceptable if the volunteer's own children accompany them, but again this must be agreed in advance, risk assessed, and with parental consent in place.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 CFS paid staff will attend multi-agency meetings (TAFs, Core groups etc). However, Volunteers may be invited alongside them, if the volunteer and family agree.
- 5.5 Volunteers will never be expected to share their personal contact details with families. Communication between the family and volunteer can be managed via the Family Support Practitioner, and/or the Business Manager. If a volunteer chooses to share their contact details with a family, the boundaries and expectations around this will be addressed in the matching meeting.

(6) Training

- 6.1 Family Support Volunteers:
Volunteers are required to complete an initial **induction** (lasting 1 day or 2 half days) and complete the CSCP e-learning Level 1 safeguarding training⁴, which equips them to begin visiting a family. On completion a discussion will take place with the Volunteer Coordinator to see whether they wish to proceed as a volunteer.

³ Naturally, the role of Contact Centre Volunteer is exclusively delivered in the centres themselves.

⁴ If a volunteer can evidence completion of CSCP (or equivalent) Level 1 Safeguarding training in the 12mths prior to joining CFS, they will not need to repeat this as part of their commencement with CFS as a volunteer but will refresh it in line with CFS' Training policy. CFS are also permitted by CSCP to deliver in house L1 training if this is deemed more effective than e-learning provided it covers the range of content in CSCP's training.

- 6.2 As part of their induction, volunteers will be asked to sign relevant policies (including this one) to confirm they have received, read, and will adhere to them. (Confidentiality, consent form, driver policy, information security, and the Volunteer policy).
- 6.3 Within the first 12 months of volunteering most volunteers are asked to complete CFS Volunteer Development Programme to give them the knowledge, skills and increased awareness in safeguarding, abuse, mental health, relationships, parenting, disabilities and more to enable them to be confident working with families with more complex needs. Volunteers who have evidence of prior accredited learning or those not directly working in a family setting will be welcome to attend all additional training although not essential. (Provided the prior learning is still valid i.e. within 12-18mths or date identified on the relevant training certificate).
- 6.4 Volunteers will always have access to a member of staff through the “yellow card” which gives staff contact details.
- 6.5 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.
- 6.6 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. Volunteers will be required to complete the 10 modules of NACCC⁵ mandatory training across a three year rolling programme.

(7) Support and Supervision

- 7.1 Supervision is crucial for enabling volunteers to provide safe and effective ongoing support for families, including maintaining quality and monitoring safeguarding issues. It also allows ongoing learning and reflection, which helps volunteers to develop, grow and become more confident. In this way, we give back to volunteers, making it a reciprocal process.
- 7.2 Alongside this one of Cumbria Family Support’ Operational Objectives is:
“Volunteers will experience a positive impact on their personal development, health and wellbeing, community involvement and engagement with the labour market”
- 7.3 To support the above, and in-line with best practice, regular support and supervision will be arranged for each volunteer. This will take place as follows:
- **For Family Support Volunteers;** one to one discussions (in person or by phone) with the Family Support Practitioner (or nominated other paid team member). This will take place approximately every 6 weeks. This will be recorded on the volunteer’s folder in SharePoint, and reference made to the discussion in the family record.

⁵ National Association of Child Contact Centres

- **For Contact Centre Volunteers;** this will be undertaken on a regular basis with the Centre Coordinator
- **For ALL volunteers;** volunteers will be invited to attend group support sessions

(8) Matching for Family Support Volunteers

- 8.1 The matching and Induction procedure is covered in more detail in Appendix 2. Whilst completion of the Development Programme (or evidence of relevant previous experience) 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 Volunteer coordinator to explore the types of complexity of families we may ask a volunteer to support. This will then be considered when future matching is undertaken and may identify further individual development for the volunteer also.
- 8.2 There are 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.
- 8.4 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 volunteer and the Chief Officer; if it is then agreed this will be recorded on the relevant family contact notes and volunteer file.

(9) Records of Family Support Volunteer Contact/Visits with a Family

- 9.1 After each support visit or contact, volunteers are required record details of this within 5 working days. The available methods and standards for sharing this are detailed in Appendix 3.
- 9.2 If the volunteer is using Charity Log, the most recent Early Help action plan and notes will be uploaded to the system where possible to allow the volunteer to be kept informed of the multi-agency support in place and their contribution to it. If the volunteer is not accessing Charity Log the Family Support Practitioner, will both gather updates from the volunteer, and provide feedback to them, about any multi agency meetings and support plans.

(10) Expenses

- 10.1 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 the team member that is allocated the family (usually the Family Support Practitioner).

10.2 Expenses should be claimed on a monthly basis. See CFS Expenses Policy for further details. Volunteers must seek permission from their own insurance company to use their vehicle for voluntary work, confirming necessary insurance cover. This must be completed/in place before mileage expenses will be paid.

(11) Ending Volunteering

11.1 When ending their involvement with CFS, volunteers are asked to return their ID card and yellow cards to the Volunteer Coordinator and destroy any contact details for the families they have supported, unless they have agreed to keep in contact as a friend.

11.2 If the volunteer and family intended to remain friends after the formal CFS role has ended this must be recorded on the family record on Charity Log, and 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.

11.3 Volunteers are asked to complete a final evaluation of their volunteering experience. This will be arranged via the Volunteer Coordinator, who ideally will meet the volunteer for an exit discussion.



VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT PROCESS CHART

INITIAL ENQUIRY

Volunteer Co-Ordinator will:

- Contact the enquirer as soon as possible and give information including the background of CFS and ways of working
- Send out the volunteer registration form for the enquirer to complete and return



COMPLETED REGISTRATION FORM RECEIVED FROM POTENTIAL VOLUNTEER

Business Manager will:

- Create the new Volunteer on Charity Log and create a folder within the SharePoint site and save the registration form
- Request references from named referees on registration form



UPON RECEIPT OF COMPLETED REFERENCES

Volunteer Co-Ordinator will:

- Verify references via phone call, ensuring paperwork is signed and dated
- Inform the Business Manager that references are completed

Business Manager will:

- Send out the DBS application link and details on how to complete the application to the volunteer



WHEN NOTIFIED THE DBS APPLICATION HAS BEEN COMPLETED

Volunteer Co-Ordinator will:

- Arrange for volunteers ID to be checked to complete the DBS application (NOTE: this has to be done in person. Checks can be carried out by either the Volunteer Co-Ordinator or Business Manager).



UPON RECEIPT OF SATISFACTORY VERIFIED REFERENCES AND DBS CHECK

Volunteer Co-Ordinator will:

- Arrange one full, or two half day induction sessions (which will cover safeguarding and other relevant training)
- Complete all mandatory paperwork with the volunteer

Business Manager will:

- Send out all relevant paperwork and policies for the volunteer to read prior to meeting with the Volunteer Co-Ordinator (consent form, confidentiality policy, driver policy, information security policy)



UPON COMPLETION OF TRAINING

Volunteer Co-Ordinator will:

- Pass all signed mandatory documents (consent form, confidentiality policy, driver policy, information security policy) to the Business Manager
- Liaise with the relevant family Support Practitioner about families on the waiting list, to start to identify potential matches for the family. The **Family Support Practitioner** is responsible for arranging the matching visit and pre-meeting with the Volunteer. (including the recording of this on Charity Log- (Volunteer and family record)

Business Manager will:

- Scan and save the mandatory documents into the SharePoint folder and update Charity Log

Family Support Volunteer Induction & Matching Visits

Matching process:

1. The Family Support Practitioner (FSP) 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 ensure time/space to talk before the matching visit. This pre-matching discussion should also cover the volunteer's preference about communication (see 5.5 above).
2. The referral form / case recordings and risk assessment should be available for the volunteer to read through prior to the visit (in person, or if they have been trained, via Charity Log).
3. 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 should never be given out to families. If the volunteer has already indicated they will be communicating directly with the family (see 5.5 of the main policy), numbers will be exchanged and a discussion around the boundaries of communication with the volunteer will take place.
4. The Family Support Plan (drawn from Outcome Star or other multi agency plan) should be agreed; this process should involve the worker, volunteer, and family. This ensures that everyone is clear about the support that is going to be provided.
5. 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 FSP is responsible for completion of any associated risk assessments and discussing and sharing this with the volunteer and family.
6. 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.
7. The date and time of the first visit should then be arranged. Risk Assessment and Permissions for outside activities to be completed if appropriate.
8. 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.
9. Access to records and the complaints procedure leaflets should be given to the family.
10. After the visit the volunteer should be given the time and opportunity to reflect on the match and both the FSP and the Volunteer Coordinator should be available for them to meet with to raise any issues or anxieties.

11. Once the match is confirmed, the FSP will write confirming the arrangements to the family, volunteer and, if appropriate, referrer.
12. The FSP will go through recording standards and expectations with the volunteer and agree how they will complete this (see Volunteer Policy Appendix 3).
13. The FSP will email or post a blank expense form to the volunteer to be completed and emailed or posted into the office on a monthly basis.
14. After the first volunteer support visit has been made the FSP 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 FSP as soon as possible. If the FSP is not available, then the Team Leader should be contacted.
2. The records should be provided to the allocated Family Support Coordinator. This can be done:
 - Recording on Charity Log Case Management System⁶
 - By email
 - By post (1st class)
3. The contact records should be completed on the Volunteer Visit form if not being recorded directly onto Charity Log (a blank copy will be provided to volunteers when matching).
4. Volunteers should be reminded to comply with CFS' data protection policy, by not keeping electronic copies on their own computer or paper copies at their home. Copies of their visit reports are kept securely on Charity Log and volunteers are welcome to access them as required.

I confirm that this policy has been discussed with the Volunteer as part of their Induction.

Signed:

Print Name:

Role (usually Volunteer Coordinator)

Date:

I confirm that this policy has been discussed with me and I will adhere to it.

Signed:

Print Name:

Date:

⁶ This is the preferred method of recording. Full training and support will be given to volunteers before they are expected to use this.