

## Home Support Volunteer

Living with a child's diagnosis can place considerable strain on the whole family and in recognition of this the Home Support Volunteer programme was established in 2008 to help families cope with the demands of providing constant care. Home Support Volunteers provide a range of practical and social support to the families of children with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions in the community.

Becoming a Home Support Volunteer is a serious commitment but it provides a rewarding opportunity to directly support children with life-limiting/ life threatening conditions and their families.

The needs of individual families will differ, but each Home Support role will be agreed in advance between the family, Noah's Ark, and the volunteer.

**Noah's Ark takes their responsibility for safeguarding the wellbeing of children seriously. This role is subject to an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Application. 2 references are also required.**

**What the role involves:** Depending on the member of the family being supported, a Home Support Volunteer role could involve:

### **Siblings**

- Playing together, sharing hobbies or activities
- Helping with homework or reading
- Going on outings to the local community

### **Noah's Ark Children**

- Playing together, sharing hobbies
- Doing sensory or developmental play activities
- Helping with homework or reading

### **Parents/Whole Family**

- Supporting them with outings in the community



- Helping with light housework chores such as laundry & ironing
- Driving the family to medical appointments
- Gardening & mowing the lawn

### **Play and Therapies support**

- Structured and guided play activities to Noah's Ark or their siblings.
- A step-down service from the Play/Therapies team to continue providing children with a safe space to continue developing social, communication or play skills.
- Play/therapies volunteers receive ongoing support from their assigned Play/Therapies team member (Music, Drama or Play).

As well as offering regular support for families, we often receive one-off requests for help in the home: from packing boxes for a house move, to decorating for Christmas, cleaning a home for a child to return from hospital or painting a garden fence. Our Home Support Volunteers sign up to support families on an ad hoc basis when needed most.

**PLEASE NOTE:** You will not have responsibility for a child with a life-limiting or life-threatening condition and will not be expected to undertake any personal care or administer medication.

### **Qualities/ experience/ skills needed:**

- Experience of working with children, young people or families is desirable but not essential. We welcome volunteers from all backgrounds with all sorts of skills.
- Ability to work well with others and able to follow instructions and be part of a team
- Understanding of confidentiality
- A good understanding of the role and of Noah's Ark's expectations of volunteers
- Good communication skills
- Reliability, commitment and engagement



- Initiative and problem-solving skills
- A good level of self-awareness

#### **Opportunities of the role:**

- Gain rewarding experience of working directly with children, young people and their families
- Develop communication sensitivity skills with families in challenging circumstances
- Training and support to build new skills
- You are entitled to claim travelling expenses at the current mileage rate

**Interviews, training and assessment process:** At Noah's Ark we value volunteer support, but we are also aware that not all roles are suitable for everyone. The interview and training process is in place to ensure that the Noah's Ark staff get to know more about you, to ensure that you are given the correct training for the role and so that you can find out if this is a role you would like to undertake. The training process is as follows:

- **Volunteer Information Session** All potential volunteers have to attend one of these sessions before they are able to get involved in any capacity.
- **Interview** This will take place at the Noah's Ark Office at a mutually agreeable time.
- **Core Module** Any volunteers wanting to work directly with Noah's Ark families are required to attend a 3-hour training module on a weekend day morning.
- **Home Module Training** A weekend day afternoon session to prepare volunteers for the specific requirements of the Home Support Volunteer role. This training takes place immediately after the Core Module.
- **Safeguarding Training** 1 morning or 1 evening, depending on the schedule, this helps to ensure the safety of our service.



Training programmes are run at regular intervals throughout the year.

**Time commitment:** Volunteers would usually commit to visiting a family once a week/ fortnight for approx. 1-2 hours, however the frequency and times will vary dependent on a family's needs and a volunteer's availability. Home Support Volunteer roles are available 7 days per week, between 8am-8pm.

Home Support Volunteers are required to complete and return written Support Records following a visit and to attend Supervision (support groups) every 3 months. It is hoped that volunteers can commit to supporting a family for a minimum of 12 months.

**Location:** Noah's Ark supports families living in the London boroughs of Barnet, Enfield, Haringey, Camden and Islington, and Hertsmere. We appreciate as much flexibility as possible and will take on board volunteers' preferences regarding location when being matched with a family.

**Minimum age:** 18 years

*To apply, please return a completed Volunteer Interest Form to the Volunteering Team: [volunteering@noahsarkhospice.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@noahsarkhospice.org.uk)*