

## Children's Advocacy Helpline Volunteer

### Information to candidates

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Coram Voice is a leading children's rights organisation.

We champion the rights of children. We get young voices heard in decisions that matter to them and work to improve the lives of children in care, care leavers and others who depend upon the help of the state.

Coram Voice are part of Coram, a vibrant group of specialist charities and organisations, supporting hundreds of thousands of children, young people and families every year. Coram is committed to improving the lives of the UK's most vulnerable children and young people. We support children and young people from birth to independence, creating a change that lasts a lifetime.

Coram is the UK's oldest children's charity founded by Thomas Coram in London helping vulnerable children and young people since 1739. Today, the Coram group helps more than one million children, young people, families and professionals every year by providing access to the skills and opportunities they need to thrive.

### What we do

We provide:

- **A National Helpline** to provide access for children and young people to advocacy and advice, with access to legal advice and links with other national helplines such as Child Line.
- **Advocacy services** direct to children and young people in care, in need, and to care leavers and children and young people with severe and complex mental health problems. Advocates around the country support children and young people to get their voice heard in decisions about their lives. This may be through the telephone helpline or through an advocate working directly with a child, for instance, to support them at a review meeting or to help them make a complaint about their care. Coram Voice provides visiting advocacy services to most of the secure units nationally, these include Secure Training Centres, psychiatric hospitals, residential special schools and children's homes.
- **Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)** to advocate for young people as qualifying patients under the Mental Health Act, in order to fully support them to get their views heard in matters relating to their mental health.

- **Independent services:** Coram Voice is a major national provider of independent person services for complaints by children, and for reviewing whether children should be locked up in secure units on welfare grounds.
- **Independent Visitors services** providing volunteer befrienders to children and young people in care.
- **Participation services** to ensure children and young people have a voice in the development and delivery of services and campaigns, and through the process, provide the opportunity to develop relevant skills, which will be of benefit to them in their future lives.
- **Policy and campaigning** to create a better system for all children and young people looked after by the state, for their care to be more child-centred and to give young people a greater say in decisions about their lives.
- **Training, development and information** for young people, advocates and child care workers, we offer courses in advocacy, children's rights and child-centred practice across a range of areas including the new National Advocacy Qualification.

## **Core purpose, vision and values**

### **Our core purpose**

Coram Voice exists to enable and equip children and young people to hold to account the system responsible for their care, to challenge and support it to do its job properly and to uphold the rights of children and young people to actively participate, in shaping their own lives.

### **Our vision**

Coram Voice strives for a society which recognises and willingly accepts its responsibilities to children and young people, where the inequalities and discrimination they currently face have been eradicated; where those children and young people are fully engaged in all decisions that are made about their lives; where the views, needs and feelings that they express are at the core of those decisions.

### **Our values**

- We are **child driven**; always asking what children would want us to do. By engaging them at all levels of our work, their views and experiences are central to shaping all our plans. We are tenacious and passionate champions of children's rights and we will not be distracted in our determination to do the right thing for children and young people.

- Second only to our dedication to children is our dedication to each other. Our work is defined and inspired by meaningful, supportive, mutually empowering **relationships** with and between children and young people, colleagues and partners. These relationships are powerful because they are authentic and human, where every contribution is equally valued and respected.
- We create a **sharing and supportive** working environment where work can and should be fun. We recognise that happy people perform at their best, and that people performing at their best are happier in their work. We celebrate our successes together and are open about our concerns and mistakes, supporting each other to grow and learn from them. We work flexibly, supporting each other in times of high workload or when life gets difficult.
- We accept **personal responsibility** for our work and we are accountable for delivering results against those responsibilities. Managers empower their people to take ownership of and make decisions on their areas of responsibility, ensuring that workload is manageable, that people are treated fairly, that they are supported and challenged to succeed. Everyone at Coram Voice is committed to modelling and championing these values, and managers have a particular responsibility for bringing them to life.

### **Application**

- We would be grateful if you could tell us how you meet the person specification in your application as we can only take forward applications that clearly demonstrate they meet it.
- Please also confirm that you are in a position to volunteer 1 day a week for a year.

### **Development opportunities**

This role will give you the opportunity to build on and develop a range of skills and knowledge including:

#### **Skills**

- Communicating with children in crisis situations who contact the helpline
- Dealing with professionals within Social Services including social workers and foster carers
- Signposting young people, adults and professionals to relevant agencies and organisations

- Direct work with children and young people in the care system and living away from home
- Working with case management databases (Coram Voice uses Frameworking database also used within Children's Social Care).

### **Knowledge**

- The care system and the law surrounding this including the Children Act 1989, 2004 Safeguarding, Data Protection (1998)
- Advocacy practice and procedures for children and young people in contact with Children's Social Care including the National Advocacy Standards and how they are implemented
- Children and young people's rights and entitlements within the care system
- Specialist areas in reference to children and young people's rights and entitlements including; homeless young people, refugee and asylum seeking young people, care leavers, young people experiencing mental health difficulties and children and young people with disabilities.

### **Access to free training**

Coram Voice provides an award-winning range of learning and development opportunities in advocacy, children's rights and child-centred practice, for our workers and the wider children's workforce; including seminars and training days, qualifications and blended learning. Volunteers are also eligible to attend such training courses training opportunities including:

- 'Being a Voice' advocacy training - a highly interactive course that equips you to advocate with children and young people in need and in public care system and to promote their rights, participation and empowerment. You will learn the relevant legislation and guidance to champion young people's rights and enable them to make informed choices about their situation.
- Safeguarding - Describe the context and current practice issues of safeguarding and child protection, the legal framework – Working Together (2013), Data Protection, Role of the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards, advocate with young people on safeguarding issues from a child-centred perspective.
- Equality and diversity training - Summarise key legislation, rights and guidance relating to diversity and equality; demonstrate an awareness of your own and others beliefs, attitudes and behaviours based on our experiences. Identify ways to promote equality and diversity within your practice

- IT database training on how to create individual records and use the database to record case work.

### **Expenses**

All Coram Voice volunteers can expect to be paid out of pocket expenses. Coram Voice will reimburse volunteers' expenses upon the production of receipts as follows:

- Travel to and from your home to Coram Voice up to a maximum of £10 per day (to be agreed with your line manager at time of appointment)
- Lunch expenses up to a maximum of £5 per day

Volunteers will be given clear information from their line manager about what expenses can be claimed and how to make a claim.