

Young People's Participation Officer Job Profile, Responsibilities and Person Specification



Post Title:	Young People's Participation Officer
Hours:	35 hours per week / part-time hours also available
Reports to:	Social Work Adviser
Contract:	Permanent
Purpose of Post:	To build upon and further develop the charity's young people's participation activities so that young people with experience of the child welfare system inform, influence and help to deliver the strategic priorities of the charity. You will lead participation work and activities with care experienced young people who will be integral to the development, influence and promotion of Lifelong Links-related work including the Lifelong Links: London programme.
Grading/Salary:	NJC scale PO2 £40,986 (including £3,650 London Weighting) and 5% pension contribution
Location:	Family Rights Group's office is in Islington. Because of the specific work required, the post-holder will need to be London-based.

About Family Rights Group

Family Rights Group aims to create a more socially just society, in which the child welfare and family justice system support children to live safely and thrive within their family and strengthen the family and community networks of those children who cannot live at home.

Our charity uniquely combines legal and social work expertise, advice giving, policy expertise, and direct work with families.

- Our free specialist advice service supports parents and relatives and friends including kinship carers in England. We help them to understand the law, child welfare processes and their rights and options.
- We pioneer innovative child welfare practices including family group conferences and Lifelong Links.
- Our legal, policy and campaigning work has been at the forefront of developments across the child welfare and family justice system over the past 50 years - including the landmark Children Act 1989, the creation of special guardianship orders, and the 2023 extension of legal aid for kinship carers.

All our work is undertaken in collaboration with families with lived experience of the child welfare and family justice systems, including our established parents' and kinship care panels.

About Lifelong Links

In 2016, Family Rights Group collaborated with stakeholders, including young people in care, to develop the Lifelong Links approach. The aim of Lifelong Links is to ensure that children and young people in care and care leavers have a positive support network to help them practically and emotionally during their time in care and later as adults. To date, more than 3000 children and young people have benefited from Lifelong Links, which is offered by 39 local authorities in the UK.

Lifelong Links involves a trained Lifelong Links coordinator working with young people to find out who is important to them, who is in their family network, who they would like to be back in touch with, and who they would like to know. The coordinator searches for these people and then brings them together at a Lifelong Links family group conference (FGC) to make a plan of support with and for the child. This Lifelong Links plan is then embedded by the local authority into the child's care or pathway plan.

Family Rights Group leads the national FGC and Lifelong Links Network, runs training and consultancy services and publishes practice guidance and resources to support agencies to implement FGCs and Lifelong Links. We run conferences and events, lobby government to promote these approaches as a right for children and families and ensure consistent quality standards by running accreditation schemes.

In 2023 we received a significant donation to boost the work of Lifelong Links to reach more care leavers in London. Our ambition is that every child in care and care leaver is offered Lifelong Links, and this three year funding helps us to get near to achieving this as a reality in London. This funding has enabled us to create an important new post to support young people to engage with, influence, promote and help to deliver, our work.

Job Profile

The Young People's Participation Officer will build on and continue to develop the charity's young people's participation activities so that young people inform, influence and help to deliver the strategic priorities of the charity. Over time, this may include setting up and supporting a panel of care experienced young people who will be integral to the development, influence and promotion of Lifelong Links-related work including the Lifelong Links: London project. Alongside the Lifelong Links participation work, the Officer will support other young people who have experience of the child welfare system or were raised in kinship care, to have their voices heard.

They will work closely with others within the charity, including members of the Senior Leadership Team, FGC and Lifelong Links Team, Policy Team and with the charity's Family Participation Officer. They will be managed by the Social Work Adviser.

We welcome applicants to this role who have lived experience of being raised in kinship care or the care system.

Responsibilities

- ❑ Leading the development of Family Rights Group's young people's participation strategy and draft related policies and procedures.
- ❑ Leading on participation work and activities that involve young people in shaping and promoting the charity's work, including to local and national decision makers. This will include:
 - Involving young people with experience of the child welfare system, including care experienced young people, those raised in kinship care and young parents.
 - Ensuring that participation work is inclusive, involving young people from diverse communities, including those whose experiences are often marginalised.

- Ensuring that young people are supported to effectively and safely share their insight, experiences and expertise. Ensure these always match the culture and values of Family Rights Group.
 - Engaging with national and local level organisations with expertise in young people's participation.
- Supporting young people with experience of Lifelong Links and other care experienced young adults to play a key role in the development and promotion of Lifelong Links, including Lifelong Links: London. This will include, but not be limited to:
 - Informing practice guidance, training practitioners, developing high quality resources for other young people, campaigning, promoting and influencing activities.
 - Supporting skills development and curating learning opportunities so that young people feel able to contribute effectively to the charity's work, including Lifelong Links, and express their perspective in a way that is meaningful to them.
 - Identifying and pursuing opportunities to champion Family Rights Group's young people's participation work, including our Lifelong Links work in London. This will include helping to prepare and deliver presentations, talks and events to promote the activities of the panels will be a key element of this.
- Working with colleagues and experts by experience, plan the implementation of a panel of care experienced young people to inform the work of the charity. When appropriate, this will involve leading the scoping phase, set-up, and ongoing development of a panel of care experience young people. This will include:
 - Drawing up a terms of reference and recruiting young people to the panel.
 - Organising a programme of meetings and activities, to ensure young people are engaged and involved.
- Assisting young people to get specialist advice or advocacy as required, to enable them to understand their rights and their options.
- Alongside the social work adviser, appropriately managing safeguarding training for all young people supporting our work and managing any safeguarding concerns in line with our safeguarding policy.
- Contributing to the preparation of reports to funders where information about young people's participation activities and work is required.
- Contributing to the overall work of the organisation and to attend staff and policy meetings, training and development meetings and other relevant events as required.
- Ensuring that all work undertaken is delivered in accordance with Family Rights Group's equalities framework.
- Undertaking other tasks as requested by the Social Work Adviser or Chief Executive that are broadly compatible with the remit of the post.

Person Specification

1. Professional qualifications, skills and experience

- You will have significant experience of working with, and advocating for, young people from a range of communities and backgrounds, including care experienced young people.

- You will have experience of planning and delivering a range of workshops, meetings and other events, using different formats and mediums to engage groups of young people, with a clear purpose and outcome.
- You will have experience of effectively engaging young people in shaping organisational, policy and/or practice developments, including influencing decision making.
- You will have good organisational and administrative skills.
- You will ideally have project management skills.

2. Anti-Discriminatory Practice

- You will be able to demonstrate and apply knowledge and understanding of the way in which discrimination impacts on families, including children and young people involved with the child welfare system, black and minority ethnic young people, disabled young people, and young people affected by poverty.

3. Knowledge and Learning

- You will have an excellent understanding of the principles, methodologies and methods of youth participation with strong understanding of good practice in this area, including ways to involve young people in decision-making and how to share their insight and knowledge with others.
- You will be able to demonstrate and apply insight in and understanding of the possible challenges facing care experienced young people.
- You will be able to demonstrate the ability to review your work and be committed to continuing professional and personal development.
- You will have knowledge of child welfare practice and policies, legislation and guidance underpinning children's rights and the child welfare system.
- You'll have experience and knowledge of safeguarding for children and vulnerable adults.

4. Communication Skills

- You will have strong interpersonal skills and the ability to work effectively with young people who are, or have experienced being, under a great deal of emotional stress.
- You will have a range of communication skills, including experience of:
 - building and maintaining supportive relationships with young people;
 - communicating in an engaging way and non-judgmentally with young people;
 - delivering training or skills-based activities to young people;
 - building relationships with practitioners and organisations working with care experienced children and young people;
 - presenting publicly to a range of audiences, including young people;
 - facilitating large and small groups, forums or workshops;
 - preparing clear written reports;
 - tailoring communications to different audiences and converting complex messages into engaging and accessible language; and

- identifying opportunities to place stories and using social media platforms, e.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn.
- You will be able to develop strong working relationships with people from other organisations and have excellent team working skills.
- You will be able to manage conflict and offer positive ways forward in difficult situations.

5. Self-Management

- You will be skilled in handling a busy workload, meeting deadlines and managing conflicting priorities.

6. IT

- You will be experienced and highly competent in using Microsoft Office applications including Word, Outlook, Powerpoint and Teams.

7. Other Requirements

- You will understand and be committed to the aims of Family Rights Group.
- This post is being offered as London-based, due to the geographical remit of much of the work. This means that you will be expected to attend the Islington office at least three days out of five (or proportionately less if working part-time), as well as attending meetings and events to support young people across London.
- Please note this post requires an enhanced disclosure and barring check.
- You may be asked to attend evening meetings and events which require an overnight stay occasionally and with notice. Occasional weekend work is anticipated.