

## **Application Information – Your Volunteer Journey**

We have a rigorous selection process for our volunteer mentors, in order to ensure the safety of the children we support, and to give you, and us, time to assess whether this is the right volunteering opportunity for you. All our volunteers receive training and ongoing supervision and support from our experienced team of caseworkers.

### **Application Form**

If you would like to find out more about becoming a mentor, please complete this short online form [link to application form]. When you submit the form, you should receive an email response with details of how to book onto one of our Volunteer Orientation Evenings.

### **Volunteer Orientation Evenings**

These two hour information sessions take place after work on weeknights. These events include:

- Further details about our service, who we support, our model of mentoring, and skills & commitment we look for in our volunteers;
- Full details about next steps in process provided on the evening;
- No obligation to progress your application further if you decide this is not the right role for you.

NB: Please complete our short application form [link to application form] to receive an email with details of how to book a place at an upcoming event.

### **The Interview**

If you decide to progress your application after attending the orientation evening, you will be invited to book onto an interview with two caseworkers, which:

- Takes place during working hours, at our Head Office in Angel Islington;
- Includes questions about your family life, childhood and current relationships;
- Involves discussions about how you manage the challenges in your life;
- Explores your values and worldview;
- Asks about your commitments now and over the next 2 years.

After the interview, your caseworker will call you to discuss the outcome and next steps.

### **Assessment and Training Weekend**

Assessment and training weekends are run by our casework team and are held approximately every 6 weeks. You will need to attend both days with a group of other potential mentors. The training includes sessions about:

- Understanding more about the families and children we support;
- Exercises in active listening and communication skills;

- Child Protection policies and procedures;
- Advice on planning successful outings, and responding to the different situations you might encounter as a mentor.

The training will give you all the information and preparation you need to be confident about building a friendship with a young person.

### **References and DBS check**

We take our safeguarding responsibilities very seriously, and carry out an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service checks (criminal record check) and obtain references for each volunteer. Only mentors who have completed a DBS check and supplied their references can go on to be matched with a young person. We will manage your DBS checks, and your caseworker will make sure you know what documentation you need to provide.

If you have any questions about this, please refer to our FAQs.

### **Home Visit**

Once you have completed your training and your references and DBS check are satisfactorily completed, your caseworker will arrange to come and visit you at home.

Your caseworker will be able to assess you in your home environment, and at this stage will also talk to you in more detail about the sort of young person you would like to mentor.

### **Confirmation as a volunteer**

In the final stage of assessment, your information, references and DBS will be reviewed by a panel for final approval. Provided that there are no further questions regarding your application, references or DBS, the Head of Service Delivery will sign off your application, which means you have completed our assessment process and are ready to be matched.

You and your caseworker will then start the process of matching you to a young person.

### **Being matched as a mentor**

Our system of matching young people and mentors is tailored to the individual needs of each child. Our caseworkers base their recommendations on an assessment of the child's personality, needs, and what sort of mentor they would most benefit from. Your preferences will also be discussed and taken into account, and we will look at any shared interests as well, although a mentor is expected to introduce a young person to new things and help them develop new interests.

### **Ongoing support**

Every matched friendship has a named caseworker. As part of your commitment to mentoring, you will be required to:

- Participate in regular supervision calls with your caseworker.

- Take part in friendship reviews at 6 and 12 months, and then annually for every further year you are matched.

Your caseworker will also meet separately with your mentee and their parent to talk to them about how it's going.

### **After two years**

After two years you will have a review with your caseworker to talk about what happens next. You will have the choice of:

- Deciding to end the match - you will be invited to join our network of Friendship Works alumni mentors.
- Agreeing with your mentee to continue meeting for regular outings (these may become less frequent after the two year point). You will continue to engage in supervision, plus a yearly review until either the match comes to a natural close, or until the young person you support turns 18.

Whether your match ends at the two year point, or later, we will work with you to bring about a positive ending for you and your mentee.