



## National Digital Parents Support Service

**Role Title: Virtual Parent Befriender**

**Time Commitment: 2hrs per week for 12 months**

**Location: Homebased**

**Reporting to: Volunteer Coordinator**

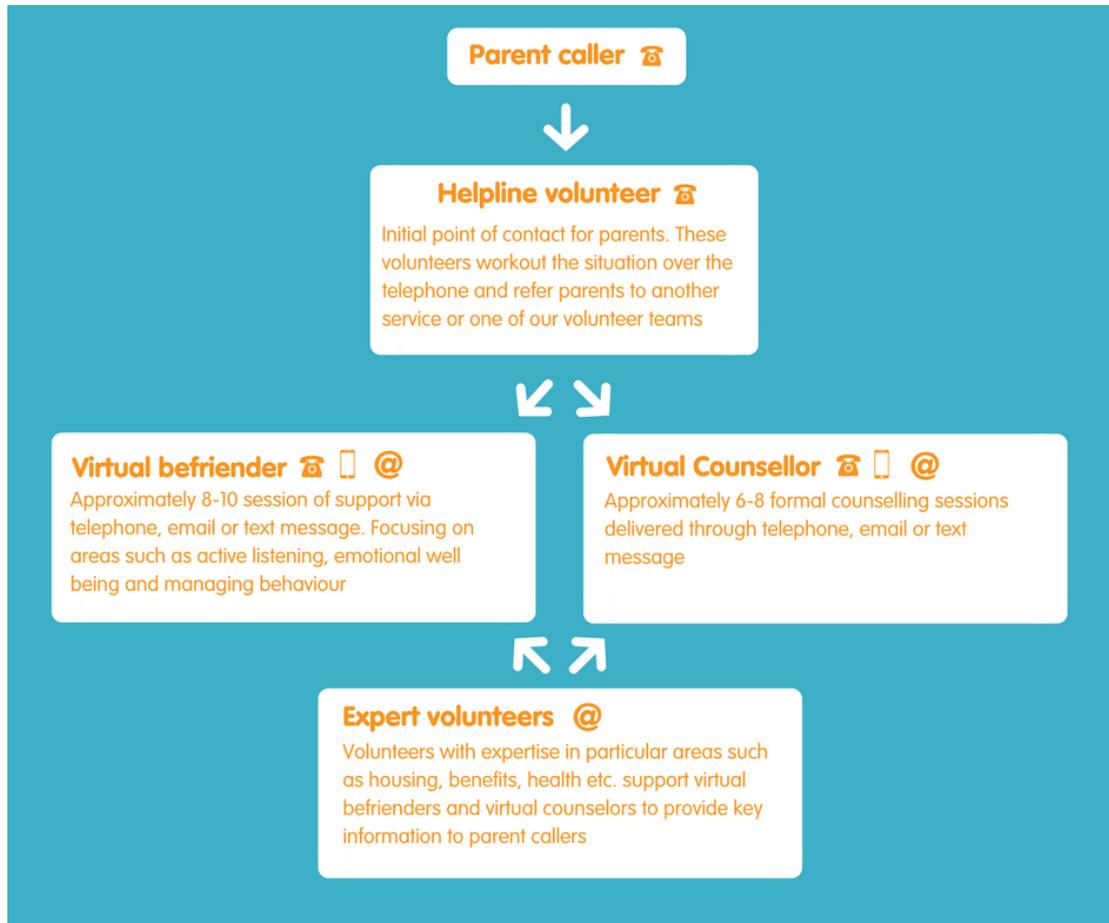
### **Purpose of Role:**

The newly developed National Digital Parents Support Service provides digital and telephone support to parents and carers as they face issues or challenges which are impacting on their families day to day living. The areas of support may include but is not limited to parenting, hardship, isolation, relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, immigration, education, disability and additional needs. Parents and carers will be able to access the service by calling the dedicated freephone helpline, using the text messaging service or by email and will be offered support appropriate to their needs.

**The service is available from 6pm – 10pm Monday to Friday and from 10am – 1pm Saturday to Sunday.**

Based on our highly successful face to face befriending model, Virtual Parent Befrienders provide one to one weekly support to parents and carers by phone, text messaging or email, relating to a range of parenting and family issues such as managing behaviour, managing their own emotional wellbeing, family routines and isolation. The aim of support is to help parents and carers build resilience and develop strategies to enable them to cope with stressful situations. The length of support provided varies depending on individual need but typically lasts 1-3 months.

**We are looking for volunteers who've gained skills through their own life experiences, whether through personal circumstance or a career and would particularly welcome applications from volunteers aged 50+. Volunteers are asked to commit 2 hours of their time per week.**



### The volunteers help parents to:

- Talk openly about the challenges they face by using a calm and non-judgmental approach
- Recognise their own emotional and physical health needs
- Feel more confident in managing their children's behavior
- Manage relationships with members of the immediate and wider family
- Manage challenges that cause family breakdown or lead to crisis

### Responsibilities

- To arrange telephone/digital appointments with parents at mutually agreeable time on a weekly basis
- Be available for a minimum of 2 hours per week to carry out befriending appointments and record information on the system
- To understand and abide by all relevant Family Action policies and procedures
- To engage with a Volunteer Coordinator who will provide ongoing support and assessment of training needs. Participation in monthly phone calls or face to face meetings
- To build trusting relationships, fostering open and honest communication

- Encourage befriender to access local services where appropriate
- To maintain confidentiality and professional boundaries at all times
- To positively promote Family Actions values and if called upon act as an ambassador of the charity

### **Training and Support:**

Volunteering for Family Action is not only personally rewarding, it is also a great opportunity to develop new skills. In addition to the training programme, volunteers are supported throughout their journey by Volunteer Coordinators.

Volunteers are provided with all the training required to carry out the role, which includes (but is not limited to) using the digital system, responding to challenging and emotional calls, safeguarding and effective communication. Volunteers have access to Family Action staff training which is relevant to and would support them in their role.

Volunteers are required to join our telephone group supervision sessions and have the opportunity to attend volunteer celebrations to meet other volunteers and share skills, experiences and ideas.

### **Benefits:**

- Becoming a part of Family Action, the largest National Family Charity established in 1869
- The opportunity to be part of a new service supporting families during challenging circumstances, providing a rewarding volunteering experience
- Regular training and development opportunities
- Being part of a virtual team
- Support and guidance from skilled volunteer coordinators including regular supervision and debriefs
- The opportunity to be involved in group work, gaining further skills and knowledge
- The opportunity to build a portfolio of your training, skills, experience and qualities
- Opportunity to improve future employment prospects

### **Skills and attributes required:**

- Basic computer skills and access to a computer, telephone and the internet
- Ability to quickly develop and sustain trusting relationships
- Non-judgmental and accepting of difference
- Friendly and reliable
- Be able to demonstrate empathy
- Ability to manage own and others emotions
- Emotionally mature

- Able to demonstrate commitment
- Be reliable and consistent
- Demonstrate resilience and the ability to remain calm in times of stress
- Demonstrate good listening and communication skills
- Ability to understand the experiences of parents
- A desire to help individuals gain coping skills to better manage stressful situations relating to being a parent
- To be open to challenge and to be able to challenge while maintaining trust and relationships

*Funding for the Digital Parents Support Service is provided by Nesta. The Second Half Fund is a fund from innovation foundation Nesta and the Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport that will support the growth of innovations that mobilise the time and talents of people aged 50+ to help others, alongside public services.*