

Grief support for children
and young people in
Swindon & Wiltshire



2025

Phone Volunteer - Role Description

After reading this information you can apply for this role by emailing admin@wiltshiretreehouse.org.uk to request an application form

Role Title: Phone Volunteer

Reporting to: Service Director

Wiltshire Treehouse is a small charity based in Swindon which supports bereaved children and young people. We provide a range of support services including advice and guidance to families and professionals, and group programmes for bereaved children and young people.

For more information about our services visit [Tree House Wiltshire - Bereavement support for children and young people in Swindon and Wiltshire](#)

Role Description:

This role involves phoning parents, carers and professionals who have contacted our service about a bereaved child. The adults being called will be expecting someone to contact them (this is not cold calling).

This role is suitable for people who have worked with children in a professional capacity.

Full training is provided (see page 2 for further information about training).

Over the phone our volunteers offer:

- A safe space where adults can talk about the bereaved child(ren) in their care, and about any concerns they may have
- Information about grief, including reassurance that the child's feelings and behaviours are part of the natural grieving process
- Reassurance to adults about the care and comfort they are providing the child

- Advice about what might help the bereaved child
- Information about the bereavement programmes and events that we offer
- Signposting to other sources of support where relevant
- Hope that the child can manage their grief

Parents and carers will have submitted a referral form, which is securely shared with volunteers so that details about the child(ren) and the bereavement can be read before making the call.

Most calls to families will be one-off calls. In some circumstances repeated calls may be required. For example, if a parent/carer wants time to think about accessing a programme and another call is needed in order to check back in with them.

Adults will often give us a preferred time of day to call them, and we ask that volunteers respect this where possible. We will always try to allocate calls to volunteers that are available at the preferred times.

Volunteers will be asked to make calls from home, from their own phone lines (blocking their number for privacy).

Training:

Full training will be given. Training covers:

- the grief process in relation to children and young people – including how children grieve, how stages of development affect grief, and models of grief
- practical methods of supporting grieving children that parents/carers/professionals can use
- information about the bereavement support programmes we can offer families
- information about other sources of support for children
- information about sources of support for adults needing help with their own grief
- how to spot complex grief, and how to report it to a member of the Wiltshire Treehouse team for additional support
- safeguarding training

Opportunities for further training on specific areas of interest are also available.

Support for volunteers:

As well as support from an on-call member of the team, volunteers also receive group support alongside the other volunteers. Volunteers are also supported via our Employee and Volunteers Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy.

Volunteers are part of a wider Wiltshire Treehouse team who are all passionate about the work we do and are supportive of each other.

Hours required:

The hours of this role are flexible. We ask that volunteers commit to making at least 1 phone call per week, during daytime hours Monday - Friday.

Each call takes up to approximately 1 hour each (including time to write up notes of the call via our secure system).

Volunteers can make more calls if they wish by simply letting us know their availability. The number of calls made by our volunteers changes with the demand for our service. Some weeks might be busier than others.

When volunteers are not available they simply let us know (for example, if they go on holiday).

We ask volunteers to make their allocated calls as soon as they can, and within 2 weeks of receiving the information from us. This helps us to ensure that families receive timely support.

As part of the induction process volunteers will need to be available for training as follows:

- Initial training that will take place across 4 evenings, 1 session is in person* in Swindon and 3 are virtual sessions.
**Our preference is that the first session is attended in person, but there may be scope to attend virtually in discussion with the Service Director*
- At least 1 visit to one of our sessions. Sessions take place on dates across the year on Monday evenings (Swindon), Wednesday evenings (Trowbridge) and Saturdays (Swindon). These visits help volunteers to understand the programmes that we offer, so that they can explain these to parents, carers and professionals.

Key Responsibilities:

- To work with adults over the phone (parents, carers & professionals)
- To make service users feel listened to and comfortable
- To build trusting relationships with adults who contact our service
- To provide initial advice, tailored to the needs of the family/child
- To provide information about the programmes we offer, and how families can access these
- To provide signposting information to other services where relevant
- To work within national and local Wiltshire Treehouse guidelines and policies ensuring that practice is standardised, ethical and safe. This includes child protection, complaints and grievance procedures
- To participate in supervision meetings, de-brief calls where necessary and in continued professional development

Key Working Relationships:

- Parents, carers professionals
- Treehouse volunteers
- Treehouse colleagues

Requirements for the role:

Experience of working with children in a professional capacity is **required for this role**.

For example, within education, health, social care, youth/community, or police services.

Experience of communicating with parents and carers in a supportive role would be an advantage.

The following would be beneficial but is not a necessity as full training can be provided:

- An understanding of grief, particularly in children
- Safeguarding knowledge and training

Volunteers will require a quiet, confidential space at home where they can make phone calls.

Volunteers will require access to a phone line that they can use to make calls, and access to a device that they can access emails and an online form (this could be a desktop computer, laptop, tablet or mobile phone).

This is an exciting opportunity within an expanding charity. Volunteers should have an interest in working with bereaved families and have a deep empathy for the objectives of Wiltshire Treehouse.

All volunteers are subject to an enhanced DBS check, at the expense of the charity. Reasonable out of pocket expenses can also be paid, for example phone expenses, or any travel costs.

You will need to be at least 18 years old to carry out this role.

Personal qualities:

- Warmth, understanding, sensitivity and a willingness to listen
- A genuine desire to support bereaved children by providing adults with the confidence and knowledge needed to support the bereaved children in their care
- Excellent communication skills and the ability to talk to all kinds of people
- The ability to be supportive and non-judgmental, regardless of a person's age, race, sexuality, religion or disability and a willingness to learn from your own and others' experiences
- IT literacy with the ability to use a Wiltshire Treehouse email address to receive details of families to call, and to use a secure online form to submit notes of the call
- Emotionally resilient

GENERAL INFORMATION

Equal Opportunity

All volunteers must comply with the Wiltshire Treehouse Operational Policy "Equal Opportunity" section and must not discriminate on the grounds of age, race, colour, nationality, ethnic or national grounds, sex, marital status, disability or any other grounds which cannot be shown to be justifiable.

Health and Safety

All volunteers are subject to the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Act. Volunteers must ensure that their methods do not endanger themselves or others.

Data Protection/Confidentiality

All volunteers are subject to the requirements of the Data Protection Act 2018 and must maintain strict confidentiality in respect of client records and information.

Variation

This role profile is not intended to be a complete list of duties and responsibilities but as a guide for information.

If you would like to apply for this role please email admin@wiltshiretreehouse.org.uk to request an application form.

For any other questions or enquiries please contact Kath Brownlee at servicedirector@wiltshiretreehouse.org.uk