

TOGETHER WE CAN

A GUIDE TO FAMILY SUPPORT VOLUNTEERING

TOP TIPS FOR MONITORING PROGRESS AND IMPACT

Together We Can is a collection of resources for organisations developing a service where volunteers support families of a child with a life-limiting or life-threatening condition. The resources were developed and tested specifically for this purpose with volunteers working in the homes of a child with a life-limiting condition, but might be useful for any organisation developing volunteer services.

TOP TIPS FOR MONITORING PROGRESS AND IMPACT

This document provides some simple ideas about how to monitor the benefits of your Family Support Volunteering Service and examples of surveys and interview questions you could adapt to collect feedback.

Plan how you will monitor your impact from the start and build in time to do this.

Gathering information about impact will help people see what you are achieving. You can use the information to highlight why the programme should receive ongoing funding or support.

Use a 'before and after' design so you ask families and volunteers a few questions when they first get involved with the programme and the same types of questions after a set period of time, such as after six months or when they complete a match. Some simple surveys that can be used with volunteers and families at the start and later in the project are contained in the appendices overleaf.

Use a range of methods to collect information about your impacts. This might include quotes from senior managers or staff making referrals, quotes from families who have emailed or spoken with you on the phone or in person, the number of volunteers trained and families helped, quotes from volunteers and photos of training, volunteers in action and happy families.

Display numerical information on graphs to show progress and keep people motivated. For example you could do a graph showing the total number of volunteers trained or families helped each month. You could have a graph showing the total number of families getting help which grows each month. You could use other visual aids like a thermometer or rule image with a target number of volunteer hours to be provided for the year at the top, and colour in each week or month as the number grows higher and higher towards the target.

Consider collecting a few case stories where families or volunteers say why they got involved and what they got out of taking part. If photos are available these could be used to promote the service in newsletters or online.

Keep a log book about what you learned and your successes. A success log can be used to jot down nice quotes or emails and a lessons log can be used to note things you would do differently or things you learnt.

Use tools to calculate the value that volunteering is adding to your organisation and community. Examples are available in the Together We Can resource kit. Showing the numerical or financial value of volunteering helps to showcase its value even more.

Share what you are doing widely. Go to meetings, write blogs or articles and let others know about your volunteering service so they are inspired to support families and volunteers in this way too.

APPENDIX ONE – SURVEY TO ASK ALL FAMILIES TO COMPLETE AT START

Your feedback about your experience with the family support project is important to us – we want to learn what works most effectively and how we can improve approaches in future work with volunteers supporting families.

1. How would you describe the practical support that you would usually have at home? Please tick one box.	Lots of support	A reasonable amount	Very little	None
2. Thinking about the day-to-day life of your family, please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the statements below. Please tick one box for each statement	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
We have help with everyday practical tasks.				
We have a good quality of life as a family.				
We are able to focus on the things that are most important to us.				
We are not overwhelmed by tasks around the house.				
We feel able to cope as a family.				
We feel isolated a lot of the time.				
We feel stressed a lot of the time.				

Thank you for taking time to complete this questionnaire.

APPENDIX TWO – SURVEY FOR FAMILIES TO COMPLETE AFTER SIX MONTHS

Using the same questions as when families started will mean you can compare the proportion who said something at the start with the proportion after six months.

Your feedback is important to us as it will help us to continue to develop our services for other families. We are asking for your views on the services you have received through the Family Support Volunteering Service.

1. How would you describe the practical support that you would usually have at home? Please tick one box.	Lots of support		A reasonable amount		Very little		None	
2. Thinking about the day-to-day life of your family, please rate how strongly you agree or disagree with the statements below. Please tick one box for each.	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree	
We have help with everyday practical tasks.								
We have a good quality of life as a family.								
We are able to focus on the things that are most important to us.								
We are not overwhelmed by tasks around the house.								
We feel able to cope as a family.								
We feel isolated a lot of the time.								
We feel stressed a lot of the time.								
3. When was the last time you had a volunteer visit? Please circle one.	Within the last month		Within the last 2 months		More than 2 months ago			
4. How often did you receive support from a volunteer? Please tick.	Weekly		Fortnightly		Monthly		Occasionally as needed	
5. Was this help always given by the same volunteer? (Please tick one)					Yes		No	
6. What help have you received from the Family Support Volunteers Project? (Please tick all that apply)	Shopping				Help siblings with homework			
	Ironing				Play activities with siblings			
	Housework				Taking siblings to/from school			
	Cooking				Helping with social outings			
	Gardening				Signposting to advice on finance			
	Driving to appointments				Supporting you at appointments			
	Collecting prescriptions				Help to find local support for you			
	Dog walking/pets				Help with IT			
	Someone for you to talk to				Sharing hobbies			
Did you receive any other help not listed above?								

7a. How happy were you with the number of visits from your volunteer (please tick one)	About right	<input type="checkbox"/>	Would prefer more	<input type="checkbox"/>	Would prefer fewer	<input type="checkbox"/>
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7b. How happy were you with the length of time your volunteer spent on each visit?	About right	<input type="checkbox"/>	Would prefer longer	<input type="checkbox"/>	Would prefer shorter	<input type="checkbox"/>
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8. How often did you receive support from a volunteer? Please tick.	A great deal	<input type="checkbox"/>	Some	<input type="checkbox"/>	Only a little	<input type="checkbox"/>	None	<input type="checkbox"/>
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9. In what ways has the volunteer support made a difference?

10. It would be helpful to have some feedback from your experience of having support from a volunteer. Thinking about the volunteer that you saw most often, please tick one box for each statement.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The volunteer was a good match for our family.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The volunteer was friendly and helpful.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The volunteer was flexible and helped with things if I asked.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Our expectations of the service were met.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The volunteer gave us the help that we needed.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The volunteer was well prepared for their role.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer support has helped to improve our quality of life.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer support has helped us to cope better.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer support has helped to reduce my stress	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer support has enabled me to spend less time on everyday practical tasks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer support has helped me to have more time to do things that are important to me.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer support has helped me to feel less isolated.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Volunteer support has increased my awareness of local services that can help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11. Please tell us a little bit more about your family. How many children do you have?

12. We are keen to continue to improve the service. Please add any suggestions that you may have to help us to do this

Thank you for taking time to give us your feedback.

APPENDIX THREE – SURVEY TO ASK ALL VOLUNTEERS TO COMPLETE AT START

Your feedback is important to us. Any answers you give will be treated anonymously

1. What motivated you to become a Family Support Volunteer?

2. Have you been a volunteer before?

Yes

No

2b. If yes what volunteering have you done?

3. Do you want to volunteer with a family: (tick as many as apply)

Weekly

Fortnightly

Monthly

Now and then,
when I can

4. What help would you be happy to give as a volunteer in the Family support project? (Please tick all that apply)

Shopping

Helping siblings with homework

Ironing

Play activities with siblings

Housework

Taking siblings to/from school

Cooking

Helping with social outings

Gardening

Signposting to advice on finance

Driving to appointments

Supporting a family at appointments

Collecting prescriptions

Help to find local support for the family

Dog walking/pets

Help with IT

Someone for the family to talk to

Sharing hobbies

5. What would you like to get out of being a Family Support Volunteer?

6. What concerns do you have about being a Family Support Volunteer?

7. Please let us know whether you agree or disagree with these things.
Please tick one box for each statement

Strongly Agree

Agree

Disagree

Strongly Disagree

I am confident in my abilities.

I have developed new skills over the past six months.

I feel like I am helping others.

I feel like I am putting my time to good use.

Thank you for taking time to give us your feedback.

APPENDIX FOUR – SURVEY TO ASK ALL VOLUNTEERS AFTER SIX MONTHS

Your feedback is important to us. Any answers you give will be treated anonymously.

1. How long have you been a Family Support Volunteer? Please tick.	Under 6 Months		6 – 12 Months		Over 1 year	
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2. Did you volunteer with a family: (tick as many as apply)	Weekly		Fortnightly		Monthly		Now and then, when I can	
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3. What help have you given to families as a volunteer in the Family support project? (Please tick all that apply)	Shopping		Help siblings with homework	
	Ironing		Play activities with siblings	
	Housework		Taking siblings to/from school	
	Cooking		Helping with social outings	
	Gardening		Signposting to advice on finance	
	Driving to appointments		Supporting a family at appointments	
	Collecting prescriptions		Help to find local support for the family	
	Dog walking/pets		Help with IT	
	Someone for the family to talk to		Sharing hobbies	

Did you give any other help not listed above?
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4a. Have you always supported the same family? (Please tick)	Yes		No	
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4b. If 'no' how many different families have you supported?

5. Do you have any personal concerns about being a Family Support Volunteer?

6. It would be helpful to have some feedback from your experience of being a Family Support Volunteer. Please tick only one box for each statement.	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
The training prepared me effectively.				
I feel like I was well matched with a family.				
I found my volunteer role rewarding.				
I am inspired by my experience.				
My time and skills were used effectively with the family.				
I felt valued by my line manager and team I worked with.				
I felt valued by families.				
I felt part of the team.				
I received good support.				
I have developed new skills as a result of volunteering.				
I am confident in my abilities.				
I had a positive experience of volunteering.				
I felt like I am helping others.				
I would like to continue to volunteer with families.				

6b. Please add any benefits that you gained from being a Family Support Volunteer.

7. We are keen to continue to develop the service. Please give details of any difficulties that you experienced with the service (the process and way it is run) or any suggestions for improvement.

8. Please add any other comments that you may have about your experience of being a Family Support Volunteer.

Thank you for taking time to give us your feedback.

APPENDIX FIVE – INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR FAMILIES AT END OF A MATCH

Name of family:

Interview date:

Number of volunteers:

Date of first visit:

Number of visits completed:

Introduction

1. What sort of volunteer support did you receive?

Prompts – eg shopping, gardening, help with pets...

Were there any practical tasks that weren't offered that would have been helpful?

2. How did you find the initial process of being allocated a volunteer/s?

3. What was your experience of receiving volunteer support?

What did not go so well? Was it sorted quickly?

What went well?

What could we do better?

4. How has the volunteer support made a difference to your life?

5. As a result of having volunteer support is there anything you or your family are able to do or be involved in now that you could not do before?

6. Would you recommend this service to other families? If not – please tell us why.

7. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Thank you for taking time to speak to me today.

APPENDIX SIX = INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR VOLUNTEERS AFTER A MATCH

Name of volunteer:

Interview date:

Number of families supported:

Date of first family visit:

Number of visits completed (per family):

1. What sort of volunteer support did you give to the family/families?

Prompts – eg shopping, gardening, help with pets...

2. How did you find the process of becoming a volunteer?

3. How would you describe your experience of being a Family Support Volunteer?

Sub questions/prompts:

What went well?

What did you enjoy most?

What didn't go well?

Did you experience any issues/difficulties?

What could we do better?

4. How has the volunteering made a difference to you?

Sub questions/prompts

How has volunteering affected your confidence?

How has volunteering helped you in developing skills?

What does/did supporting families mean to you?

5. Would you recommend volunteering to others?

If not – please tell us why.

6. Would you like to continue as a volunteer to support families?

7. Is there anything else you would like to say?

Thank you for taking time to speak to me today.