

TOGETHER WE CAN

A GUIDE TO FAMILY SUPPORT VOLUNTEERING

TOP TIPS FOR SUPERVISING FAMILY SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

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 SUPERVISING FAMILY SUPPORT VOLUNTEERS

Organisations should provide volunteers with regular support and supervision.

The supervision arrangements for each volunteer should be clearly identified. Volunteers should know how to contact their supervisor and how to access support between planned supervision sessions and in an emergency.

What to cover

- Support and supervision should offer opportunities for reflection, debrief and learning.
- Volunteers should be told of the importance of feeding back to staff immediately about anything that they are unsure of or concerned about. This should be emphasised at each session.
- Role boundaries should be explored at support and supervision sessions.
- Reflecting on visit records during supervision helps to monitor the wellbeing of the volunteers and to gather feedback about individual families.
- Supervision sessions can identify the need for training and development opportunities for volunteers.
- Sessions should reflect on progress and successes, and raise issues and ideas including their development requirements with the volunteer organiser.
- Supervision sessions also offer an important opportunity to explore whether the volunteering placement is meeting the needs of the volunteer and opportunities to consider whether the volunteer wants to offer more/different/skills or time to the organisation.

Approaches

- Support and supervision of volunteers should fit the model of supervision of other staff within the organisations eg
 - Planned group sessions where volunteers can talk with peers as well as supervisors.
 - Planned one-on-one sessions (face to face and telephone).
 - Planned personal debriefing sessions.
 - An open-door policy where volunteers are always welcome into the office.
 - Feedback and evaluation surveys (ensure you share feedback and proposed actions with everyone who contributed).
 - A suggestion box where anonymous comments can be submitted.
- Volunteers should be aware of how many mandatory supervision sessions they are expected to attend.

Issues or concerns raised during supervision should be acted on quickly to enable suitable support to be put in place for volunteers or to make changes to the support being provided to families.