

**Barnsley Central Area - Support Services for New Parents**

**Requesting a Service - Information for Professionals (RFSIP)**

Family Lives are offering support services to new parents (mum’s, dad’s and kinship carer’s) and their families. Support is available during the perinatal period and beyond, whether it is a parent’s first child, a new addition to a growing family or a new family living and caring arrangement. We work alongside parents during pregnancy, following birth or anytime during the child’s first three years of life. We match our mums and families with trained volunteers, who will help them to recognise and use their strengths to work towards agreed goals. The support aims to develop emotional resilience, reducing isolation and supporting parents and their families in establishing supportive peer networks.

**What happens next?**

* When we receive a completed request for service, our Senior Family Support Coordinator (SFSC) may contact the referrer for additional background information via telephone, if it is felt it is required or information is missing from the RFS.
* The SFSC telephones the parent confirming consent and provides a summary of Family Lives and the service.
* If the parent wishes to continue, the SFSC arranges an initial visit to establish in more detail the parents’ circumstances, needs and wishes.
* A Peer Support Volunteer is matched to the family; this will be someone who we think they will get on with well. They meet initially at an arranged Match Meeting where they plan their first visit.
* If we do not have a suitable volunteer available immediately, we will tell them about approximate waiting times. The SFSC or Family Volunteer Support Worker will consider the availability of other appropriate services and provide weekly telephone support.

**What sort of things can a Peer Support Volunteer help with?**

* Providing a friendly, non-judgemental and confidential space for talking
* Listening and acting as a ‘sounding board’ - someone parents can talk to about what is happening and help to find solutions.
* Providing support for managing a parent’s time to reduce stress and tiredness.
* Supporting the parent to go out if they are finding it difficult to leave the house.
* Finding fun, low cost activities to do with their children and for themselves in the local area.
* Providing ideas for how to help the children learn and play at school and home.
* Chatting through ideas about what to do if the parent is experiencing challenging behaviour with children or teenagers.
* Working out how to set routines and boundaries to make family life smoother.
* Talking through ways to improve family relationships.
* Signposting to other support services that may be able to offer information, advice and practical or emotional support.

A Peer Support Volunteer **is not** able to help with housework, childcare, medical care or provide lifts in cars

**Who is eligible for the service?**

* Parents living within the Barnsley Central Areas (Central, Stairfoot, Worsborough, Kingstone and Dodworth)
* Mum’s who are pregnant or have at least one child aged under 2, preferably referred to the service by the time they reach 18 months old or before
* Mums who are not currently accessing Family Centre services

**How many visits can parents expect? When and where will they take place?**

Peer Support Volunteers usually work with parents for between four- seven months. We offer some flexibility, and can extended or reduce the service. The Peer Support Volunteer can visit weekly or fortnightly at a time which works for both parties. They meet either at the family home or in the local community, such as a café.

The first time the volunteer and parent meet after the match meeting; they will make a rough plan of the dates and times of future visits and put these in their diaries. Parents and volunteers may change these nearer the time if necessary.

**What happens if parents cannot make an arranged visit?**

* If a parent needs to postpone a visit, they should telephone or text their Peer Support Volunteer to tell them as soon as possible,
* They can rearrange two visits if they have to cancel at short notice.
* If they cancel at very short notice or do not turn up more than twice, it will not be possible to offer alternative dates.
* If a Peer Support Volunteer is unable to meet at an agreed time, they will telephone or text the family and rearrange the meeting.

***We ask parents to remember that volunteers are giving up their time and it’s really important that they tell them if there is a change of plan to avoid volunteers making unnecessary journeys and wasting their time.***

**Whom can a parent contact about the service?**

* Parents can self-refer to the service either by completing the RFS form themselves or by contacting the SFSC via telephone, who will complete the form on their behalf.
* Whilst accessing the service the SFSC will telephone parents from time to time to find out how everything is going. If between calls there is, something that parents wish to talk about they can contact the SFSC on the telephone number listed below.

**Final reviews**

As the volunteering visits reach an end, the SFSC or FVSW will visit to find out how the parent has experienced the service and talk through their outcomes. They can provide guidance on other useful services and work out next steps. It is helpful if parents give honest feedback so that we can understand what worked well and what we can do better.

**Become a Family Lives Volunteer**

Some parents who have had a Peer Support Volunteer go on to become one themselves. We always invite parents to take up this opportunity as it helps them to gain useful training and work experience. We are always looking for volunteers who would like to join our team.

**Contacts: Lesley Brewin, Senior Family Support Coordinator on 07971253308**