

Volunteer Information

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with us!

Parent carers often lead very busy lives. It is absolutely remarkable that you want to spend your time and your energy on trying to make things better for others. We will do our best to enable you to do that.

Who we are and what we do

Sheffield Parent Carer Forum is a parent-led charity. We were established in 2008 to bring together parents of children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) from across Sheffield to exchange information, provide mutual support, and influence policy and practice. We have almost 3,000 members.

We are funded by Sheffield City Council, South Yorkshire Integrated Commissioning Board, Health Education England, the Department for Education, and various small grants.

We are part of the [National Network of Parent Carer Forums](#) and the Yorkshire and Humber regional network.

We have 18 part-time workers and eight trustees; you can [read about them here](#).

Volunteer roles available

We are currently looking to fill the following volunteer roles:

- **Parent representative:** to represent a wide range of views of parent carers from across Sheffield at meetings with the local authority and health services. We attend groups on transition, education, neurodisability, autism, EHC plans, Sheffield's inclusion strategy, and more.
- **Trustee:** we are looking for parent carers, particularly parents from a BAME background and/or a parent of a young child with additional needs (0-5 years) or a child with a physical disability, and those with HR expertise, to join our board of trustees. Our trustees are responsible for the governance and management of our organisation.
- **Outreach volunteer:** to attend coffee mornings at schools and nurseries and run stalls at events to promote SPCF, gather parents' views, and provide peer support and signposting
- **Fundraising volunteer:** to help raise funds for our projects and events; no cold calling involved!
- **PR volunteer:** to help us raise the profile of our organisation. Tasks include writing and distributing press releases, building relationships with local media outlets, and contributing to our social media accounts.

[More information about our volunteering opportunities](#)

I'm interested in volunteering – what happens next?

We will invite you to have a chat with a couple of our trustees/staff to find out where your skills and interests lie, and to tell you a bit more about the role(s) you are interested in. If we have a suitable role for you, we will invite you to attend a volunteer induction within two months. At the induction, we will tell you a bit more about our aims, structure, policies and procedures.

We will then match you up with a mentor (usually a more experienced trustee or member of staff) who will be your main point of contact.

We will not throw you in at the deep end! If you are a new parent representative, you will start by shadowing your mentor at meetings. If you are a new outreach volunteer, you will accompany your mentor to a few outreach visits. You will only play a more active role when you feel ready to do so.

The time commitment varies from role to role, but wouldn't be more than a few hours per month.

What can volunteers expect from SPCF?

- We will give you an induction and allocate you to a mentor, who will be your main point of contact for any queries.
- We will invite you to two volunteer get-togethers per year, where you will meet with other volunteers over lunch.
- We will offer you a range of training opportunities to help you fulfil your role. You can also access [webinars and other training](#) for parent carer forums provided by the charity *Contact*.
- We will reimburse any reasonable out-of-pocket expenses, such as travel costs.
- We will give you as much advance warning of meetings as possible.
- We will always understand that your children come first. We will never make you feel bad if you have to reduce or pause your involvement to focus on your family.
- If you have been a regular volunteer, we will provide you with a reference.

What does SPCF expect from its volunteers?

- To be professional, polite and discrete. Avoid criticism or endorsement of named individuals, schools, organisations or services whilst undertaking work on behalf of SPCF
- To log your volunteering hours using our [online form](#)
- To let us know as soon as possible if you can't attend a meeting or event
- To declare any conflicts of interest promptly
- To pause your involvement if you are engaged in a dispute with one of SPCF's partners
- To report any safeguarding concerns immediately
- To maintain confidentiality and comply with data protection rules
- To respect other cultures, religions, parenting styles, political opinions etc.
- Not to champion one approach over another; e.g. you may personally be very pro or anti mainstream inclusion, but our line always has to be that it should be down to parental choice, and meeting the needs of individuals
- Not to speak to the media on behalf of SPCF without prior authority
- To be clear if you are speaking as a representative of SPCF, or as an individual parent – for example at events, or on social media
- Parent representatives only: to represent the views of a wide range of parent carers, not your own; not to use your attendance at meetings to resolve your own issues

Key contacts

Laura Gillespie, Chair and Volunteer Coordinator: laura.gillespie@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk

Clare Peck, Outreach Coordinator: clare.peck@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk

Katie Monette, Director of Strategy: katie.monette@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk

Eva Juusola, Director of Operations: eva.juusola@sheffieldparentcarerforum.org.uk