



Supporting children,  
young people and families

# Volunteer Handbook

**FSN volunteers, the helping hands that  
make a difference to people's lives!**



Supporting children,  
young people and families



Registered Charity  
No: 208446



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## **Welcome to FSN!**

### **Our Mission:**

FSN aims to provide effective and professional caring action without discrimination and favour for children and young people suffering the effects of poverty, disadvantage, neglect and abuse.

### **About Us**

The charity was founded in 1939 and supports children, young people and families. Starting as children home's then moving to extending into support through a range of projects. FSN have been based at the St Nicholas Centre in Central St Leonards since 1999. The charity has 3 nurseries and 2 Community Centres, as well as funded projects to support children, young people and adults with gaining new skills, mental health and bereavement support to progress and make positive changes to their lives.

Volunteers are a vital part of our organisation, supporting in a wide variety of roles. FSN is based in St Leonards on Sea, but support reaches out to Hastings, Rother, Eastbourne and Wealden.

Volunteering at FSN you can be part of a charity really making a difference to the lives of children, young people and families.

Whether you are looking to gain more work experience and training or are looking for a role where you can feel valued and meet others, FSN has a selection of positions to choose from.

You will be supported and have many opportunities to improve your skills and knowledge.

# Volunteering Opportunities at FSN

## Supporting Early Years

Volunteers have opportunities to help with children's play and learning, at mealtimes and with housekeeping.

Sessions run mornings or afternoons. You might want to volunteer once a week, or several sessions a week. This can be discussed with your line manager.



“I can see that my child has progressed in the time he has been there”

### **Comment from Parent**

**Ofsted Report** “Staff have warm, caring relationships with children. They are sensitive and responsive to their individual needs”

To learn more about early years at FSN please see our website

<https://www.fsncharity.co.uk/nurseries>

For a copy of the current role description for early years volunteer please call 01424 423683 ext. 24 or email [enquiries@fsncharity.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@fsncharity.co.uk)

## Supporting Children and Young People – Mental Health and Bereavement Support

FSN offer peer support groups where young people can share their feelings and experiences, using creative and therapeutic activities alongside group discussion. Children and young people have the opportunity to talk to others of their own age who may be going through similar experiences, and to gain support from each other.

The peer support groups are offered in the Hastings, Rother and Eastbourne areas and delivered by trained staff and volunteers. Sessions are delivered within schools as well as in our centres. Opportunities for volunteering include group support, fundraising, events and administration.

### Comment from parent:

*"My child has been more confident with other people, goes to places on his own. He understands a lot more about feelings towards bereavement."*

### Comments from young people:

*"Everyone was kind and never judged everyone."*

*"I feel more open in front of other people now."*



To find out more bereavement and mental health support for children and young people at FSN, please see our website:

<https://www.fsncharity.co.uk/projects/dragonflies-bereavement-project> or

<https://www.fsncharity.co.uk/projects/my-time>

For a copy of the current role description for supporting young people please contact 01424 423683 ext. 24 or email [enquiries@fsncharity.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@fsncharity.co.uk)

## Supporting Adults

FSN offers courses, workshops and drops-ins for adults aged 18 plus to promote wellbeing, improve employability skills, healthier lifestyles and offer volunteering opportunities.

Volunteer roles include: tutor support, drop-in support groups, administration, food pantry support, running table sales, leading or supporting volunteer led activity groups and workshops (personal development, craft, IT etc.) and helping at events.

Activities run from the St Nicholas Centre, London Road, St Leonards and the Robsack Centre, Bodiam Drive, St Leonards.



*“Great being part of a team with a constructive view to education and fighting poverty!”* **Wellbeing Volunteer**

*“Volunteering at FSN has been a wonderfully rewarding experience. I feel my confidence has improved immensely, so much so I felt confident enough to run a volunteer led course.”* **Wellbeing Volunteer**

To find out the adult support at FSN, please see our website:

<https://www.fsncharity.co.uk/projects/health-and-wellbeing-communityhubs>

For a copy of the current role descriptions for supporting adults please contact 01424 423683 ext. 24 or email [enquiries@fsncharity.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@fsncharity.co.uk)

## Supporting the running of the Centres

FSN manages two centres, The St Nicholas Centre and The Robsack Centre. Volunteer opportunities at these centres include: reception, groundworks, setting up rooms, centre maintenance, administration, fundraising and café support.

The centres are in the middle of busy communities and offer activities for the whole family, room hire to external organisations as well as being the base for our projects.



To find out more about our centres, please see our website:

<https://www.fsncharity.co.uk/about-us/our-facilities>

For a copy of the current role descriptions for centre volunteer please contact 01424 423683 ext. 24 or email [enquiries@fsncharity.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@fsncharity.co.uk)

## **Volunteering: What you can expect from FSN**

### **Recruitment Process**

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer at FSN, you can look at our website for more information on the projects and services [www.fsncharity.co.uk](http://www.fsncharity.co.uk) or alternatively you can call on (01424 423683 ext. 29) or email [enquiries@fsncharity.co.uk](mailto:enquiries@fsncharity.co.uk) to get more information about our volunteering opportunities to help you make your choice. Projects recruiting for volunteers will be advertised on our website and also on our Facebook pages. Role descriptions are in place for all projects, to give an overview of your role. Once you have completed your application form (help is available to do this) and know where you would like to start your volunteering journey, a visit can be arranged to the project you are interested in, where you will have an opportunity to have an informal interview with your line manager to learn more about your chosen opportunity.

### **Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS)**

FSN works with vulnerable children and families and all our staff and volunteers are police checked. You will be asked to fill in a DBS Form and to bring in documents to confirm your identity. Human Resources will support you with this and once the check is verified and approved, and we have received two satisfactory references you will be able to start volunteering.

### **Training and Support**

#### **Induction**

The Manager/Leader of the project will take you through a process called 'Induction' which will explain FSN's background, your role, health and safety requirements and policies. They will also introduce you to the people you will be supporting and show you around the building. It will be an opportunity for you to discuss any worries or concerns and learn more about your role.



## Support in daily role

The person supporting you, will help you with your day to day role, show you where things are kept and explain the routines. Your Line Manager will give you time, on a regular basis, 'supervision' where you will be able to discuss any ideas or problems you may have. This should help make your volunteering an enjoyable experience.

## Monthly Newsletters

FSN send all staff and volunteers an electronic monthly newsletter and podcast to keep you updated on what is happening at FSN.

## Access Training

During your Induction, you will be required to do safeguarding training and offered opportunities that will support you in your role e.g. food hygiene, first aid, IT skills and personal development skills.

You will be offered opportunities from time to time to improve your confidence and skills.

*"I started to volunteer with FSN in the Health and Wellbeing Hub. I then started a level 3 course at FSN through another of their projects. The course started me on this new path and changed my life."*

**FSN Volunteer**

*"I have been at FSN since 2010. Volunteering has changed my life. It is not only the staff who are always there to help you when you are at your lowest and feel down, but it's also a place where you can come and meet people."*

*Volunteering for FSN has changed my life!"*

**FSN Volunteer**

## What you can expect from us

- To be respected, valued and appreciated
- To be inducted into your role and have an understanding of what is expected of you
- To be supported to have an understanding of our policies and procedures
- To be offered training we feel might benefit you in your role
- To keep you safe whilst volunteering
- To have your views heard: we will send out annual surveys to have feedback from you, as well as including your views as part of supervision
- To provide a reference for your time at FSN, if the request is in the first year of leaving and you have volunteered for a reasonable time (over 6 months)
- To have your out of pocket expenses occurred during volunteering to be paid
- To have any concerns dealt with promptly

## What we expect from you

- To perform tasks and undertake training in line with your role
- To commit to FSNs values and treat volunteers, staff and service users with respect
- To follow the organisations policies and procedures with regards to volunteering
- To communicate any challenges to your line manager
- To respect confidentiality, but also to ensure any safeguarding concerns are reported
- To represent the organisation in a professional way at all times
- To practice good time keeping; if you unable to volunteer for a session or are unwell please notify your line manager in good time to allow cover to be arranged

## Volunteer Testimonials

*"I volunteer to give something back for the many blessings I have in my life, but actually, the young people give me so much more than I could ever hope to give them!"* **My Time Volunteer**

*"My first interaction with FSN was when I attended a course, which had a very positive influence on me. I was so impressed by the positive effect FSN had on me that I now volunteer. I am encouraged to be involved and have a sense of purpose. This has definitely improved my mental health and sense of wellbeing. As soon as I go through the doors of FSN the accepting and welcoming environment is an inspiration."* **Wellbeing Hub Volunteer**

## **Policies and Procedures**

Our projects aim to care for people in our communities, which includes our own staff and volunteers. Our range of policies create safe working practices to protect service users, volunteers and staff.

During your Induction the Manager/Leader will take you through our policies and procedures and give you time to read them. They will always be on hand to help you understand them and answer any questions.

There are a number of policies to be aware of, please be aware that you can always talk to your line Manager/Leader who is trained to support you and ensure your safety.

FSN has an independent Board of Trustees that monitors and supports our work; they are also volunteers.

## **Safeguarding**

Because we are a charity working with children, young people and families, it is important that you know about our Safeguarding Policy. You will receive training in this but if at any time you are worried about a child, young person or vulnerable adult, you should speak to your Manager so that the right action can be taken. If you cannot get hold of your Line Manager, then you should speak to the Safeguarding Leads. You will be introduced to them during your induction.

## **Confidentiality**

You may have access to information about the organisation and the people we work with. Our Confidentiality Policy means that you will agree not to discuss any of this information with any other person unless as with the Safeguarding Policy, you feel that someone else needs to know to ensure the health and safety of the people you are involved with. The people who need to know will be your Manager and if they are unavailable you can talk to one of the safeguarding leads.

## **Equal Opportunities and Diversity**

FSN values all its services users, staff and volunteers. To ensure that people are given appropriate respect and equal access to our services, without discrimination or favour, FSN has an Equal Opportunities & Diversity Policy. We ask that all volunteers abide by this policy so that all, regardless of race, gender, marriage and civil partnership, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, age, religion, will always feel welcome and valued when they are with us.

### **Volunteer Policy**

Volunteers are a valuable part of our organisation. They complement and support our existing staff base bringing with them a wide range of individual skills. FSN aims to nurture volunteer's development, offering opportunities through a range of training provision. FSN listens, values and responds to volunteers' suggestions and recognises that successful volunteer involvement requires an open two-way communication leading to mutual understanding and a good relationship between the organisation and volunteer.

The volunteer policy contains, recruitment, training and information on areas such as expenses and other relevant information.

### **Code of Conduct**

FSN aims to provide welcoming, safe and enjoyable services for all children, young people and families and a supportive working environment for staff and volunteers. FSN expect standards of behaviour that ensure that everyone is treated with courtesy and respect and that no safety guidelines are infringed and they are maintained and adhered to. The Code of Conduct applies to everyone - staff, volunteers, parents and carers, young people and children. This involves, wherever possible, taking a positive view, to be encouraging and welcoming. It also means avoiding behaviour that can be offensive or unsafe, for example - offensive language, no smoking (including e-cigarettes) in projects or in the immediate environment, no physical or verbal intimidation of anyone using the facilities.

## **Health and Safety**

FSN seeks to provide a safe working environment and undertakes to conduct its operations in such a way as to ensure the health and safety of its employees, board members, volunteers, service users and all who visit its premises.

FSN has a duty of care to you to ensure your health and safety. You also have a duty of care to yourself which means you must always talk through anything that you wish to do with your Manager. There may be a legal health and safety requirement around the task you have in mind and there may be times when you are not able to do something until we have carried out a risk assessment.

## **Data Protection**

FSN is committed to protecting the rights and freedoms of data subjects and safely and securely processing their data in accordance with legal obligations.

FSN holds personal data about our employees, service users, volunteers, suppliers, donors and other individuals for a variety of business purposes.

The data FSN holds must be kept safe and secure. For written documentation, this means it is stored in a locked filing cabinet at all times. Computers holding personal data will be logged off or closed down when the authorised user leaves the workstation. Access to systems is controlled by passwords.

Passwords are personalised by all FSN employees on first use of computer equipment. Users must never document or divulge their password to another person. Passwords should be changed periodically.

## **Expenses**

FSN volunteers for are entitled to 'out of pocket' expenses. These include:

- Travel to and from the place of volunteering
- Travel undertaken in the course of volunteering
- Light meal taken during the period of volunteering work if over 4 hours
- Postage and telephone costs if required for the volunteering activity

There is a form to be filled in to claim expense which will need to be approved by your Line Manager.

## **Resolving Concerns**

FSN will endeavour to address any issues and to seek to find ways of meeting volunteers' needs as well as those of the organisation, staff and service users.

If a volunteer has a concern, In the first place they should talk to their Project Manager. He/she will best understand the way the project service is delivered and the people within it.

If this is uncomfortable for any reason, arrangements should be made to speak to HR based at St. Nicholas Centre, London Road. You will be listened to in the strictest confidence and efforts will be made to resolve any problems. In the unlikely event that a particular issue cannot be resolved a meeting can be arranged with the Chief Executive.

## **References**

FSN are happy to complete references for volunteers within one year of leaving the organisation, who have been volunteering for more than 6 months You should obtain permission from your project Manager to give their name and the address at FSN as a referee. HR and your Manager will then complete the reference.

## **Insurance**

Volunteers helping in the projects are fully covered by FSN's Employer's Liability Insurance. To ensure that the insurance is valid certain tasks may need to be risk assessed, a proper qualification may be required and/or regular supervision in place. These measures will ensure that you are protected at all times.

## For Your Records

**Start Date:**

**Project Supporting:**

Your Line Manager	Job Title	Contact Number	Email Address	Address where based

Jackie Earl HR Department 01424 423683 ext 30 [jearl@fsncharity.co.uk](mailto:jearl@fsncharity.co.uk)

**Space for notes**