

## Information to candidates

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We are seeking candidates who are committed to our objectives for children and young people and equally committed to the organisation and the development of our services. We recognise we are a predominantly white workforce and are genuinely committed to encouraging candidates from diverse communities in order to improve the services to the children and young people we help.

### Our Core Purpose

Coram Voice exists to enable and equip children and young people\* to hold the system to account, to challenge and support it to do its job properly and to uphold the rights of children and young people to actively participate in shaping their own lives.

### Our vision

Coram Voice strives for a society which recognises and willingly accepts its responsibilities to children and young people, where the inequalities and discrimination they currently face have been eradicated. Where those children and young people are fully engaged in all decisions that are made about their lives. Where the views, needs and feelings that they express are at the core of those decisions.

### Our Values

- We are **child driven**, always asking what children would want us to do. By engaging them at all levels of our work, their views and experiences are central to shaping all our plans. We are tenacious and passionate champions of children's rights and we will not be distracted in our determination to do the right thing for children and young people.
- Second only to our dedication to children is our dedication to each other. Our work is defined and inspired by meaningful, supportive, mutually empowering **relationships** with and between children and young people, colleagues and partners. These relationships are powerful because they are authentic and human, where every contribution is equally valued and respected.
- We create a **friendly and supportive** working environment where work can and should be fun. We recognise that happy people perform at their best, and that people performing at their best are happier in their work. We celebrate our successes together and are open about our concerns and mistakes, supporting each other to grow and learn from them. We work flexibly, supporting each other in times of high workload or when life gets difficult.
- We accept **personal responsibility** for our work and we are accountable for delivering results against those responsibilities. Managers empower their people to take ownership of and make decisions on their areas of responsibility, ensuring that workload is manageable, that people are treated fairly, that they are supported and challenged to succeed. Everyone at Voice is committed to modelling and championing these values, and managers have a particular responsibility for bringing them to life.

*\*We work with and for a range of children and young people who are potentially vulnerable to harm or exclusion from society, and who have a particular reliance on the state or its agencies for their rights and wellbeing, including children and young people who are looked after by the state, in need or who have severe and complex mental health problems, care leavers and young offenders. This is not an exclusive list.*

## Our management principles

To create a happy, high performing organisation where our values are the reality for all people all of the time (or at least for most people most of the time), we have a set of shared principles that challenge and support managers to perform highly. They are based on the belief that happy people are more likely to perform at their best, and that people performing at their best are more likely to be happy in their work. And that good leadership and management is essential for this to happen.

There are six related principles:

1. Good managers are *managers first*
2. *Trust* is the vital ingredient
3. Safe and positive *disagreement* leads to the best decisions
4. *Delegating responsibility* achieves better results and happier teams
5. A great manager is a great *communicator*
6. Working to our *strengths* gives happy, high performing people and teams

Coram Voice managers are supported to apply these principles as part of becoming the best leaders and managers they can be.

## Our Goals

Coram Voice's strategy for the period 2013-16 has three primary goals:

1. **A Voice for all Children:** *increasing* the number of children and young people we help until we are confident that we are reaching all children who need us, actively seeking out the hardest to reach, while lobbying to improve children's access to fully funded, high quality, independent advocacy.
2. **Fixing the Problem:** *reducing* the number of children and young people who need us by tackling the causes of the problems that they face: challenging the practices – local and national - that have a harmful impact on their lives.
3. **A high-performing, values-led organisation:** making the organisational and cultural changes needed to become an organisation which is optimally attractive and responsive to donors and commissioners, achieving long-term financial sustainability so that we can help the greatest number of children and young people, and embedding a culture of high performance and happy people.

## Our work

As of 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013, Voice became a member of the Coram group of charities and became known as Coram Voice. Coram Voice and the Coram group will be sharing services and together championing the cause of children dependent on the state for support.

Coram Voice (formerly Voice for the Child in Care) is a national independent children's charity which was established in 1975 and has grown to become one of the leading agencies for children and young people in the UK. Around 60 employed staff, 100 freelance workers and 30 volunteers deliver services to children and agencies through our London headquarters and regional offices. Together they provide Coram Voice with a high degree of specialist expertise in the fields of advocacy, children's rights, mental health, complaints, secure accommodation and experience of working with children in care, in custody, in need and those who have recently left care.

We provide:

- **Advocacy services** direct to children and young people in care, in need and to care leavers and children and young people with severe and complex mental health problems. Advocates around the country support children and young people to get their voice heard in decisions about their lives. This may be through the telephone helpline or through an advocate working directly with a child, for instance, to support them at a review meeting or to help them make a complaint about their care. Coram Voice provides visiting advocacy services to most of the secure units nationally, to Secure Training Centres, psychiatric hospitals, residential special schools and children's homes.
- **A National Helpline** to provide access for children and young people to advocacy and advice, with access to legal advice and links with other national helplines such as ChildLine.

- **Independent Mental Health Advocacy (IMHA)** to advocate for young people as qualifying patients under the Mental Health Act, in order to fully support them to get their views heard in matters relating to their mental health.
- **Independent visitors services** providing volunteer befrienders to children and young people in care.
- **Independent services:** Coram Voice is a major national provider of independent person services for complaints by children and for reviewing whether children should be locked up in secure units on welfare grounds.
- **Policy and campaigning** to create a better system for all children and young people looked after by the state, for their care to be more child-centred and to give young people a greater say in decisions about their lives.
- **Participation services** to ensure children and young people have a voice in the development and delivery of services and campaigns, and through the process, provide the opportunity to develop relevant skills which will be of benefit to them in their future lives.
- **Training, development and information** for young people, advocates and child care workers, offering courses in advocacy, children's rights and child-centred practice across a range of areas including the new National Advocacy Qualification.

## **Information about the role**

### **What is an independent Visitor?**

An independent Visitor (also known as an IV) is a responsible adult volunteer who befriends and supports a child or young person looked after by a local authority and has little or no contact with his/her parents. The children or young people may need additional support particularly as they are likely to be living in children's homes, foster homes or independently.

### **What does an IV do?**

An IV will be expected to visit the child/young person they are matched with regularly to demonstrate commitment to them. This could include visiting them at their home, trips out for example to football, sharing the young person's interests or hobbies or specific activity. During term time most visits will be in the evening or at weekends.

An IV can encourage a child/young person to participate in the meetings held to review his/her care plan and therefore be part of the decision making process about his/her life. The IV may also be asked by the child/ young person to speak at the meeting on his/her behalf in order to make his/her wishes, views and feelings known.

### **How are IVs selected?**

Coram Voice acknowledges IVs sensitive position in supporting vulnerable children and young people. We are also aware that there are adults who might target this role in order to exploit or try to take advantage of young people. For this reason, we have a specific selection process in place. If you are interested in becoming an IV please complete the forms included in this pack. Once we receive this we will arrange to visit you to explain the service. The purpose of this is to give you more detailed information about the scheme, a chance for you to ask any questions and for us to get to know you better as a person, which will help us when the time comes for matching you to a young person.

Following this there is a training program which will be arranged to fit in with the applicants' availability as much as possible and, finally, a one to one interview and a formal panel interview. This is a comprehensive selection process, the final part of which is Coram Voice receiving satisfactory DBS (Disclosure & Barring Service) clearance and references. Only then would you be appointed as an Independent Visitor. It is a thorough process but that is necessary for people who are to work with vulnerable children and young people. Once successful you will receive a letter of acceptance and your induction will be arranged.

### **How children and young people are matched to an IV?**

Children and young people are referred to the service and we meet with them to learn more about them. We also find out more about their expectations of an IV. This information is considered along with the information about the IV and the most appropriate match is made.

### **What support do IVs receive?**

You will receive ongoing support, training and supervision from the service. This will include telephone contact, individual support and group support meetings with other IVs for informal discussions and training on relevant subjects. You will be able to claim reasonable expenses to cover the costs involved in visiting a young person.

### **General considerations**

- Please note that people employed by a local authority cannot work for Coram Voice in the same authority.
- All posts are subjected to an Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service check and successful candidates will not be able to work unsupervised with children or young people until the completion of this process.
- All Coram Voice workers are required to comply with Coram Voice Codes of Practice and Code of Ethics.

### **Returning your application**

- We cannot accept general CVs. When completing your application form, you need to address each point of the person specification and **demonstrate** how you meet it.
- Applications must be fully completed. Additional sheets or information should be sent as an attachment in the same email as your application form. Applications must be received by 5pm on the closing date.
- If you are a current Coram Voice employee you may submit a supporting statement only addressing the person specification requirements for the post.

**Please note this rolling recruitment and interviews will be scheduled once sufficient applications have been received**

### **The recruitment process:**

- Shortlisting will be undertaken by the IV Co-ordinator and the Manager
- Successful candidates will then be invited for interview in London and the panel will include the Manager of the service, the Regional Manager and a Safeguarding professional.

The interview process will comprise of a panel interview, a young persons panel and a Warner interview.