

## Children's Advocacy Helpline Volunteer

### Information to candidates

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As of 1st 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 50 employed staff, 30 freelance workers and 60 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 need and those who have recently left care.

### What we do

We provide:

- **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.
- **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.
- **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 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.

- **Independent visitors services** providing volunteer befrienders to children and young people in care.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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.

## **Core purpose, vision and values**

### **Our core purpose**

Coram Voice exists to enable and equip children and young people\* to hold to account the system responsible for their care, 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.

*\*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 and care leavers. This is not an exclusive list.*

### **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 **sharing 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 Coram Voice is committed to modelling and championing these values, and managers have a particular responsibility for bringing them to life.