

Job Description

Job Title:	Grief Companion Coordinator
Hours:	20 hours per week (flexible), spread evenly over approx. 3 days
Reporting to:	Chief Executive Officer

About The Compassionate Friends

The Compassionate Friends (TCF) is a national charity founded over 50 years ago providing peer support to bereaved parents, siblings and grandparents whose child has died at any age and from any cause. We also provide information on parental and sibling bereavement to professionals and other organisations.

About The Grief Companion Scheme

Grief companions will provide voluntary informal support and friendship (like a befriender) to another more recently bereaved parent. The Grief Companion will offer another more newly bereaved parent an opportunity to share their grief and experiences, to 'walk alongside' them and in this way be a listening ear and understanding friend (albeit with boundaries). The contact will most likely be by phone, email, online (FaceTime, Skype etc) or sometimes in person.

Benefits of this one to one peer support include:

- Enabling a recently bereaved parent to access one-to-one support if they find it difficult to attend one of our support groups or if there is no group or other local support in their locality
- Reducing the social isolation often experienced after child death
- Offering the newly bereaved a peer supporter to whom they can speak honestly about how they are feeling
- Providing understanding and normalisation of the intensity of early grief and the long lasting impact of child loss
- Enabling the newly bereaved parent an opportunity of having contact with a parent who is further on in their grief as this can help to encourage and sustain them – demonstrating ways they might survive such a devastating loss and find hope for the future
- Offering ongoing support to a parent when the support from family or friends has diminished.

Role description

TCF is seeking an exceptional and highly motivated individual for this exciting role to continue and fully develop the Grief Companion Scheme. This is a new position which has been undertaken to date on a freelance basis, but we now have the funding from the National Lottery for a part-time fixed-term post. We are looking for someone who is a pro-active self starter and can bring initiative, creativity and enthusiasm to develop and grow this additional layer of support for newly bereaved parents.

The post holder will:

- Take responsibility for the management and coordination of the Grief Companion Scheme.
- Communicate on a regular basis with existing Grief Companions and those who have requested a Grief Companion to follow up and monitor progress
- Develop the vision of and strategy for the Grief Companion Scheme as an additional and important source of support for bereaved parents.
- Promote the scheme to the newly bereaved and recruit new Grief Companions from the TCF membership.
- Carry out the administration of the scheme –including ensuring DBS checks for Grief Companions and keeping DBS and 'matches' log
- Regularly review and develop the role descriptions for Grief Companions and ensure that newly bereaved have a clear guidance as to what to expect from their Grief Companion.
- Correspond with and inspire Grief Companions by telephone and email to find out more about their loss, give advice, support and facilitate introductions.
- Correspond with the parents seeking a Grief Companion to find out about their loss, their requirements for a befriender, and act as their main point of contact for both feedback and evaluation of the Scheme, as well as managing any issues that might arise from being supported in this way.
- Research, develop and produce outside and in-house training, support systems and printed/online support for Grief Companions.
- Keep accurate records of matches made and outcomes.
- Devise methods to collect feedback and implement regular evaluation of the scheme.
- Report on progress on a regular basis to CEO and to Head of Fundraising to enable reporting back to National Lottery.
- Attend TCF training and information days and staff and volunteer team meetings as necessary.
- Attend TCF AGM and Gatherings as necessary.

Main Duties and Responsibilities

1) Scheme coordination

a) To take responsibility for the management and coordination of the Grief Companion Scheme, including marketing and promotion, ensuring that it meets the needs of beneficiaries and provides a safe service for all.

b) Ensure that the scheme meets the outcomes as required by our funders.

c) To measure the effectiveness and success of the service by collecting quantitative and qualitative data

d) To ensure that the service links in with the organisation as a whole

2) Volunteer management, training and support

a) Work with the CEO, Helpline Manager and National and Regional Coordinators to recruit suitable volunteers to be Grief Companions.

b) Match Grief Companion volunteers with compatible parent seeking a Grief Companion. Be the main point of contact for parents seeking a Grief Companion both for feedback, evaluation and managing any issues that arise for the more newly bereaved parent.

c) Identify and coordinate volunteer training and contact sessions – one to one, or in a group - to induct, build befriending skills among Grief Companions and promote safeguarding awareness. Offer on-going support ensuring that volunteers have an excellent volunteering experience.

3) Evaluation & Reporting

a) To regularly review the Scheme and monitor targets, using this information to advise on, initiate and develop new ways of working or initiatives as appropriate

b) Prepare monitoring reports for the CEO, Board and funders as required

c) Regularly review Grief Companion and newly bereaved experiences to evaluate the effectiveness of the scheme

4) General

a) Ensure all relevant administration and reporting is completed in a timely manner as required.

b) To behave in a professional manner to build good working relationships with other volunteers, staff colleagues, newly bereaved and external agencies as appropriate.

c) Post-holder will be required to be flexible with their working hours, as some volunteer interviews and Grief Companion/befriending matches may need to be conducted outside of regular working hours (evenings/weekends)

d) To support colleagues with the provision of information as requested for other functions within the organisation

f) Comply with all policies and procedures with The Compassionate Friends and promote Equal Opportunities, Safeguarding and Confidentiality

h) Attend team meetings as required.

i) Undertake other duties that may from time to time be reasonably required, e.g. attending community events, assisting with fundraising activities etc. as directed by the CEO or charity Trustees.

Person Specification

Desirable knowledge and Experience

- Experience of managing or supporting volunteers or employees
- Experience of working with and supporting people who are bereaved, ideally bereaved parents
- Knowledge and awareness of issues affecting bereaved people and appropriate sensitivity to the needs of bereaved parents and families
- Empathic with good self-awareness and emotional intelligence
- Ability to prioritise and manage workload, highly self-motivated
- Ability to work independently, and also to work with others
- Excellent communication skills (written and verbal). A confident and friendly communicator, with outstanding listening skills
- Competent in use of MS Office (Word, PowerPoint, Excel and email), and ideally database and social media.
- Able to reflect on own performance
- Able to act as a positive representative of the organisation externally

Also desirable

- Experience working within the charity sector
- Ability to develop ideas for expanding the befriending service
- Ability to assimilate and understand information by listening and reading
- Attention to detail and willing to work to guidelines, standards and policies
- Taking a flexible approach to work and having a practical 'can do' attitude
- Ability to listen to others and to explain things clearly
- Experience of co-ordinating a comparable service or demonstration of transferable skills to do so.

General requirements

- An understanding of and commitment to the work and values of The Compassionate Friends
- To work flexibly and cooperatively as a team member and to seek support, guidance where necessary
- Willingness and interest in learning and self-development by identifying and attending training, meetings and other events
- Able to work without direct supervision and demonstrate initiative
- Understanding of outcomes monitoring and reporting
- Awareness of discriminatory practices and equal opportunity issues

Additional information

- This role is subject to an enhanced DBS (Disclosure Barring Service) check
- 25 days annual leave (pro-rata)
- Flexible working hours
- Occasional travel within the UK and work outside normal hours may be required (all reasonable expenses will be paid)
- Pension scheme
- IT provided