

Family Supporters in Edinburgh



2021-22 Impact Report

in partnership with

Introduction

Family Supporters Edinburgh offers practical, emotional and social support to families across the City of Edinburgh, empowering them to face a range of life challenges. We recruit, train, match and support dedicated volunteers to help families every step of the way.

We are proud to present our 2021-22 impact report.

Our volunteers spend valuable 1:1 time with parents and families, working together on a personalised set of goals chosen by the family, for the family.

Themes of support include:

Education, Employment & Training

Support with school life and behaviour, parental support and reaching new opportunities

Health & Wellbeing

Support to access services, health advice, making positive choices and self-care

Housing & Finance

Support with living standards, housing stability and achieving financial independence

Our Families

What a family can expect when they choose our service to help them make positive steps forward.

Empowering families to lead their own change is at the heart of what we do. A person-centered approach impacts the way we deliver our service - from the big to the small - and we're confident that it's been key to our success so far.

Their own dedicated volunteer

Spending a few hours with them every week for (at least) 6 months, set up through a careful and thoughtful matching process.



A personalised action plan based on the families needs

Supported by our programme staff and their volunteer, each families plan is co-produced by the family and updated regularly.



To have their voice & opinion heard

Various opportunities for a family to feedback on their experience at all stages.



Overview

A snapshot of our programme from September 2020 - August 2022.

During the second year of our programme (2021-22), we were privileged to see many new families benefit from the support of a Family Supporter. Through positive and empowering relationships, families have achieved sustainable outcomes around physical and mental Health and Well-being, accessing Education, Employment and Training opportunities as well as stability when it comes to Housing and Finance.

61

individual families supported to date

29 families have received long-term support since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic

Each volunteer has completed a comprehensive recruitment and training process, equipping them to be successful Family Supporters.

61

active volunteers

91

referrals received from across the City

From a range of Education, Health and Social Work professionals and other third sector groups. Families can also self-refer to our programme.

Our incredible volunteers have dedicated over 1600 hours supporting families during 2021-22. Overall, that's around 3200 hours to date.

Our Impact on Families

100%

of families now fully independent around self-care and nurturing

95%

of families now fully independent accessing health support

91%

of families now fully independent with housing stability

Edinburgh families facing a range of life challenges can rely on Family Supporters to be there for them

Our personalised action plans are broken into different support needs that a family may have, as well as suggested actions for our volunteer and families to focus on during mentoring sessions together. These desired outcomes normally fall under three themes: Housing & Finance, Education, Employment or Training, and Health and Wellbeing. From suitable living standards to improved school life to self-care & nurturing, we're there at each step of the journey to enable the family to make the differences they desire.

48%

increase around families being financially independent

71%

decrease from crisis point around school life and behaviour

0

families assessed as in crisis under any theme by the end of our support

Our Commitment to The Promise

Volunteering Matters is wholeheartedly committed to The Promise made to Scotland's care experienced children & families. Our programme reflects the 10 principles of Family Support:

Community based

Non stigmatising

Flexible

Patient and Persistent

Work with Family Assets

Responsive and Timely

Therapeutic

Holistic and relational

Empowerment and Agency

Underpinned by Children's Rights

Family Supporters is based within localities, aiming to maximise the assets of those communities. Support offered is tailored and specific to each family based on their unique needs, with the starting point being to understand what children and families need, rather than what the system dictates they need.

Our programme is all about trusting and honest relationships, with no set timescales, and families have a say on who provides them with support. We operate outwith a Monday-Friday, 9am-5pm approach because we recognise family life does not operate on those timescales.

The service is underpinned by children's rights. That means ensuring all rights of children are upheld in all decisions and support received by the family. We recognise trauma and work with families to heal. We avoid stigma which means our staff and volunteers have no uniforms, lanyards or branded vehicles.



**the
promise**

Rishikaa & Angelica's Story

It was so heart warming to see the kids excited to meet me every week and to provide mum with emotional & practical support. It made me realise that sometimes you can make a huge impact by just listening and re-assuring someone.

Rishikaa, Family Supporter

Rishikaa joined Family Supporters as our youngest volunteer and has proved that age is just a number. She has made a great impact on this family which included a single mum with several young children as well as a teenager trying to navigate life at a new secondary school.

Rishikaa engaged with the family for a few hours each week, supporting family members individually and as a unit. Support this family needed included researching and accessing community resources, helping the children with their confidence and decreasing their isolation.

Rishikaa also provided much needed emotional support to mum and helped her to consider options to return to University. She championed mental health and self-care with the family, signposting them to helpful resources and services.



It was a real pleasure to first meet with Rishikaa and since then, I look forward to our catch up's each week, in person or on the phone. She helped me a lot and is a really good listener. I'd call her a friend now.

Angelica, Mum

Magda & Beth's Story

As a volunteer, I felt a great desire to help those in need, so I was delighted to be matched with Beth. I think the support available for families can be priceless and it's been a pleasure to be involved in this project

Magda, Family Supporter

Magda and Beth developed such a positive relationship. This "match" was an example of how family life can't always be predicted. Magda supported Beth for over a year, working on various on-going and new needs that Mum had identified, throughout many life challenges and adversities.



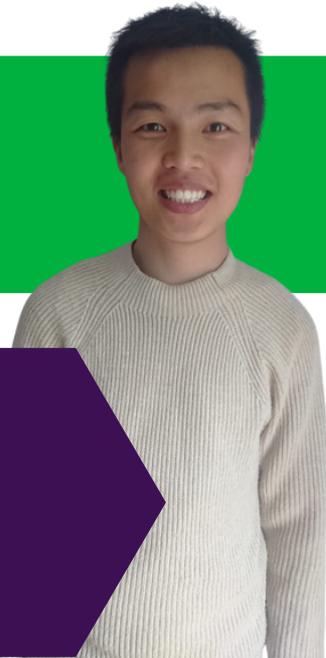
Support included developing a stronger family unit and relationships, linking into community services for various needs such as clothing, and 1:1 emotional support during challenging times.

Over time, Magda helped Beth to be in a more positive place of stability and confidence.

I am very happy with Magda's help. She supported me a lot and I believe that such help is 100% amazing to have. Thank you so very much.

Beth, Family Supporters Mum

Li Ning & Simon's Story



From the very beginning it felt like a slow development of a normal friendship with the family. Having spent many months together, my meetings and chats with them are still teaching me more about their lives, as we both navigate the experience of being an immigrant.

Li Ning, Family Supporter

Li Ning joined Family Supporters Edinburgh eager to support a family in need. As an immigrant from Hong Kong, Li Ning understood some of the exciting and challenging experiences that New Scots can face. Li Ning is fluent in Mandarin and Cantonese.

We were looking for support for a family who were new to the country and in need of some guidance to reduce social isolation. The families teenager, Simon, was struggling as he didn't know anyone and was isolated, a source of anxiety for Mum, along with the normal challenges of raising a teenager.

Li Ning stepped into the role of a Family Supporter for both Mum and Son, and relationships quickly grew. Lots of support was centered around Simon in particular and the emotional support that Li Ning provided quickly made a positive influence.

The family bonded with Li Ning, coming from similar cultures, and navigating their experiences together. They took part in cooking some traditional dishes. This families support has now come to an end, however Li Ning remains in regular contact with the family and they have developed an even greater bond outside of the programme.

During 2021-22, we supported 8 volunteers who speak additional languages to English. These volunteers provided extra guidance for Families navigating different needs around the City. Some of these languages include Spanish, Urdu, Cantonese and Polish to name a few.

Our Amazing Volunteers

What a volunteer can expect when they choose to join our Family Supporters Edinburgh team.

Whether they've seen an advert online, or one of our posters around town, any member of the public interested in becoming a volunteer can expect a consistent and rewarding experience from start to end. Here's how we do that.

Comprehensive induction and ongoing training

Our established training courses help volunteers to be ready to help families of all types, shapes and sizes

Ongoing support throughout their experience

A dedicated Volunteer Manager, a variety of resources, hints and tips, our regularly Volunteer Newsletter and a peer-support WhatsApp group

Certificates, references & hands on experience

To celebrate their achievements & Equip volunteers with skills and experiences to carry with them, to other aspects of life



Our Fortnightly Volunteer Newsletter includes information and resources on training, community events and resources, hints and tips, news and celebratory impact stories

Our Impact on Volunteers

79%

of volunteers feel more confident being part of a team

91%

of volunteers feel more connected to their community

100%

said volunteering made a positive difference to their life

Volunteers have a range of motivations to signing up, so it's important we recognise their own goals

At Volunteering Matters, we are passionate about the "double benefit" of volunteering - that volunteers themselves can benefit from the programme just as much as our families. We aim to offer each volunteer a quality experience throughout their commitment.

86%

have achieved personal goals from volunteering

100%

felt fulfilment in meeting and supporting families in Edinburgh

10

volunteers in the last year credit volunteering for jobs and studies

Being a Family Supporter has been really positive for me. I've learnt how to be a better listener and came to realise how vital support services are for those who are isolated. I've felt supported and appreciated during my experience, and learnt so much which I'll take into my new job!



Inclusion

We are serious about our responsibility to remove barriers and reach people in most need, in our communities

It's often the case that those who need help the most, face the biggest range of barriers. Family Supporters Edinburgh are committed to supporting families and volunteers from all walks of life, no matter what.

Our volunteers come from a range of backgrounds

Some are from Hong Kong, Sudan, Sweden and India, we welcome volunteers who have made Edinburgh their home.

Age will never be a barrier to volunteering with us

We engage local University students as volunteers, as well as the working age population and those in retirement

Over 39% of our families identify within 1 or more minority groups

Whoever our families are or whatever their needs may be - they can rely on us to be there for them.

We work closely with vital services across the city

To reach families who need us most, we engage with others including The Welcoming, Shakti, Polish Family Support Centre and Edinburgh Young Carers

Outreach

Just some ways we've fostered partnerships and spread the word about Family Supporters Edinburgh

We've spent lots of time over the last two years, creating and fostering partnerships with others. We'll continue to work alongside other services and organisations across the City, offering our experience and contributing towards Edinburgh being a great City for families.

Used a range of channels to build our online presence

From Twitter to Facebook, LinkedIn to Volunteer Scotland, we've promoted our work and captured an audience.

Connected with over 160 different services & organisations to date

Including schools, health services and other third sector organisations. We believe strongly in a collaborative approach in helping families.

Advertised our project far & wide across the city

From displaying our posters and flyers in local community spaces, to issuing materials to various professionals



We've been proud to link with local businesses such as Lighthouse Bookshop, where our families can go to and receive free brand new books through the store's pay it forward scheme. Thanks for your support!

Looking Ahead

We're proud of everything that Family Supporters have achieved so far, but there is more work to do.

Over the last two years, we have launched, grown and developed our programme, fostered new relationships, engaged amazing volunteers and supported some incredible families. We are excited about the year ahead!

We will support even more families

In 2023, we aim to support another 60 families with Health and Wellbeing, Housing and Finance, and accessing Education, Employment and Training.

We will listen to the communities needs

The evolution and growth of our project will be led by those we support.

We will further expand our services across the city of Edinburgh

Creating partnerships and promoting our service in new localities, to reach families in priority areas.

We will recruit and support dozens of new volunteers

We will always facilitate opportunities for volunteers to support people in their communities, offering a great experience every step of the way.

What our families said

I was grateful to be referred to the programme and matched with a lovely volunteer, Amy, who was able to help. best meet my needs. It was a difficult time in my life with my mental health, and hard to leave the house. When Amy first came, she just listened at first. Looking back I just needed someone to talk things over at that time. She gently encouraged me to start meeting outdoors and go for a coffee. We went on some nice walks and was there for me if I had a wobble. We would just start again. She has no idea the darkness she pulled me out of and I'll always be so grateful to Amy. This can be a lifeline for people who need it.

I was impressed by the support offered to the family. I got to know my volunteer, Rebecca, quickly. She was there when I had a sticky problem during the school year with my daughter. I got support to communicate with the school, attend appointments, and to talk things through. I liked that the programme helped me create my own action plan, of things I wanted to change, and it was at my space. I would recommend this service to anyone.

My Family Supporter is very easy to get along with. She helped me on my journey as a new single parent having left an abusive partner. I felt I could open up, she supported me with housing, debt, work/life balance, nurse mishaps and even gave me some encouragement when I found myself ready to start dating again. More importantly, she has been a friend, someone I look forward to seeing each week.

What our partners said

I would say Family Supporters Edinburgh is a unique service. As a Community Link Worker, when it comes to matching individuals with support services, many of them are for pre school age children. Family Supporters is flexible and can support families of all types, shapes and sizes.

Sophie, Community Link Worker



**Pilton
Community
Health
Project**

Serving North
Edinburgh since 1984

My dealings with Family Supporters Edinburgh have been hugely positive. I have found staff to be easy to communicate with - very personable and respectful. Referrals are straightforward, and the wait times are minimal. The feedback I have received from families has also been great with with parents saying the volunteer support was like having a friend rather than a "worker". It's great to have this resource in Edinburgh!

Katie, Health Visitor

What Our Volunteers said

I enjoyed getting to know my family, it was valuable experience getting to know someone out with my usual circle and from a different cultural background as I feel it helped me develop my social skills.

Kira, Family Supporters Volunteer



I've enjoyed the feeling of making a positive change in someone's life who is in need of help. I've learned it's important to listen to someone's experiences and learn from what they say.

Azeez, Family Supporters Volunteer

I enjoy being a family support volunteer. It gives me the opportunity to meet people, feel part of the community and make a difference. The family I support have complex needs and through this I have learned how to source services and information from a variety of places.

Christine, Family Supporters Volunteer



deliver in partnership with and funded by



Thank you to our partner organisations for your support to our
Family Supporters Edinburgh programme so far



VOLUNTEERING MATTERS



VOLUNTEERINGMATTERS.ORG.UK

Volunteering Matters is a registered charity in England and Wales no. 291222 and in Scotland no. SC039171. Volunteering Matters is a company limited by guarantee no. 1435877. VAT regd. 480 852432.

@volunteering_uk

