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## Dear Volunteer

Thank you for your interest in the Accompanying Adult volunteering role with the Young Lives Foundation. I trust this pack will tell you everything you need to know in order to decide whether this might be the role for you.

This pack comprises the following:

- Information about the Young Lives Foundation (YLF)
- Young person's story
- About this role
- Where your role fits in the bigger picture
- Application process

More than 30 members of staff and over 170 volunteers work for YLF and together we aim to make a difference to the lives of young people across Kent and Medway. If you are excited by the possibility of joining our team, then please apply.

If you would like to have an informal discussion about any aspects of the role or the information provided in this pack, then please contact Lucy Newsome, on 01622 693459 or via [enquiries@ylf.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@ylf.org.uk)

For further information about YLF please visit our website at [www.ylf.org.uk](http://www.ylf.org.uk)

We look forward to receiving your application.

With best wishes

Stephen Gray

Chief Executive Officer

# About the Young Lives Foundation

## Our Vision

Our vision is that every young person in need shall have access to the resources and opportunities needed for them to achieve their potential and lead fulfilled lives.

The Young Lives Foundation (YLF) works towards achieving this vision by supporting young people through times of difficulty and distress, enabling their voices to be heard and assisting young people to achieve their potential.

## Our Foundation

YLF is an independent children’s charity established in 2007. We are dedicated to delivering quality services that include mentoring, befriending, advocacy and positive activity programmes. Our services are tailored to ensure we achieve effective outcomes in the lives of vulnerable and disadvantaged children and young people across Kent and Medway.

## Our Support

YLF supports the following groups of people:

**Looked after children / care leavers**  
**Young offenders / those at risk of offending**  
**Vulnerable adults**  
**Families in need of support**

**Children in need / on the edge of care**  
**Young people disengaged in education**  
**Unaccompanied asylum-seeking children**  
**Children who have been adopted**

YLF have over 170 volunteers committed to supporting our services and our young people.

**34,000**

*Voluntary hours are given per annum*

**3,500**

*Vulnerable people supported each year*

## Our Values

At YLF, we believe that staff and volunteers should have:

**Passion** ...to be helpful, friendly, non-judgemental and understanding

**Principles** ...to be respectful, a good listener, and a good time-keeper

**Integrity** ...to be trustworthy, open minded, reliable and consistent

**Innovation** ...to be creative, a good team player and someone who thinks outside of the box

## Who We Help



# Rachel's Story

Rachel lives in an isolated area and the family do not drive. Rachel used to have a good relationship with her brother but as he had got older he didn't want to spend time with her and could be quite nasty to her. Rachel had also previously had problems with her peer group at school and could feel very lonely. Rachel's grandfather had also recently died.

It was felt Rachel would benefit from increased confidence by developing different interests outside of home; support with accepting her older brother not wanting to spend time with her and encouragement to feel more positive about things. Rachel was referred by the family Support Worker and then matched with a YLF Mentor.

***“Six months ago Rachel would never have had the confidence to join in an activity with others especially a climbing activity”*** Sally | Parent

The Mentor worked with Rachel to increase her confidence and social skills and introduced her to swimming lessons which was something Rachel had wanted to do. Towards the end of the arrangement Rachel was referred to our Positive Activities and she

attended a Climbing Activity. YLF was able to support with transport, enabling Rachel to participate, and she has been offered the opportunity of future activities.

The Mentor was able to listen and offer support and give guidance around her relationship with her brother, whereby Rachel became more accepting of her brother's need for his own space. Rachel also started to maintain good

friendships with her peers at school, with fewer arguments or upsets. At the end of their time together Rachel was

***“Rachel was less negative and nervous about things and has shown a more happy and positive side and approach towards things”*** Faye | Mentor

able to reflect on how positive having a Mentor had been for her by recording her journey through a picture story, something that she could keep to remind her of her own ability to achieve and develop and feel more positive about things. YLF was able to signpost the family to some support groups for children with additional needs as the family had still not received a diagnosis for their son.

[www.ylf.org.uk](http://www.ylf.org.uk)

[facebook.com/ylf.org.uk](https://facebook.com/ylf.org.uk)  
[twitter.com/ylfcharity](https://twitter.com/ylfcharity)  
[instagram.com/ylfcharity](https://instagram.com/ylfcharity)

**Our Vision is that every young person in need shall have access to the resources and opportunities needed for them to achieve their potential and lead fulfilled lives**





*“The one thing that keeps me going is the feeling that you are helping people. The people you support don’t always show gratitude in the way you or I may because of a lack of social skills, but you know you have helped them”*

Terry | Volunteer

*“One of the most vital skills is to be able to gain the confidence of people in fairly quick time, advising that you are there for them and not the police, but you are not there to hinder the police in any way”*

Jane | Volunteer

*“Even though at times you hear the harrowing background of a young person’s journey to the UK, it is rewarding to be supportive. You are also able to ensure that the person understands the proceedings and that the Age Assessment is conducted in the correct manner. In addition my geography of the world has improved enormously*

Dennis | Volunteer

## Role Description

### Volunteer Accompanying Adult

#### Responsible to

Accompanying Adult Coordinator

#### The Role

Unaccompanied children in the immigration system often have their age disputed by either the Home Office or a local authority. When a local authority does not accept what a child says about their age, two social workers undertake an age assessment, usually in the form of an interview or series of interviews, at which an independent adult – referred to as an ‘accompanying adult’ – should be present.

There is no statutory guidance or procedural rules on how the age assessment should be conducted, and what can be done to assist social services to carry out a fair and just assessment, however there are a number of court judgements (known as case law) that set guidance on how the assessment should be carried out. The local authority has to conduct an assessment that is ‘Merton Compliant’ (B v Merton [2003] EWHC 1689).

An accompanying adult is not simply there to act as an observer, but to make representations and to offer advice and support to ensure the child understands the process. They are independent from the local authority.

This is an important role requiring a genuine commitment to improving the lives of young people. An accompanying adult must be a positive role model for the young people; a champion of their needs, interests and aspirations; and also a champion of the charity’s values and an effective ambassador for the work and the organisation.

#### Responsibilities

- Advise and assist the unaccompanied child during their local authority age assessment interview(s)
- Ensure the child has adequate breaks to consult with the Accompanying Adult, seek legal advice or if the child is tired, distressed or ill
- Observe whether the social workers are acting properly and fairly and intervene if they are not
- Assist with communication between the child and the social workers
- Ensure that the child understands their rights, including the right to seek legal advice before continuing further with the interview
- Meet the child prior to the interview to explain the role (when possible)
- Ensure the child understands that the interview is being conducted for the primary purpose of assessing how old they are

- Take notes of the questions and the child's (interpreted) answers. In particular, make accurate notes of anything that appears to be contentious or any questions you feel are inappropriate.

### Expectations

- Maintain regular communication with the service coordinator
- Attend seminars/training
- Follow the policies and procedures laid down by the service
- Keep such records as may be required
- Report any safeguarding concerns to the service coordinator

### Training and Support

Full training and on-going support is provided to help you in the role and the service prides itself on the welcoming and friendly style in which it operates.

YLF delivers training and an induction to all applicants that include:

- An initial interview
- An induction training day
- A study of the Merton Judgement
- An accreditation interview
- An enhanced DBS
- An annual seminar and continuous briefing updates on legislation, policy and practice
- Full and up-to-date service handbook containing YLF's policies and procedures
- Continuous communication from the service coordinator
- Out of hours facility to ensure adequate support
- Formal and informal supervision to all volunteers (open door policy)

YLF reimburses all authorised expenses.

### Qualities, Experience and Attributes

Good inter-personal and communication skills are necessary as the accompanying adult will be required to interact with social services, social workers, solicitors and interpreters as well as with the child. You will be required to ensure that the child understands his/her rights and the meaning of the procedures taking place and must be able to facilitate communication between all parties.

You should have a non-judgemental approach and be able to exercise discernment and objectivity. You must be a person of high integrity, able to maintain confidentiality within agreed boundaries and be thoroughly trustworthy in dealing with asylum-seeking young people.

This role description does not form a binding contract and can be amended, as the needs of YLF and the volunteer require. All amendments will be discussed with the volunteer. The role involves travel within Kent, Medway and beyond, and the volunteer must therefore have use of a car for business purposes.

## Application Process

### How to Apply

Please complete and return an application and safeguarding form (there is also an optional equal opportunities form).

You can apply directly online or download these forms from our website: [www.ylf.org.uk/resources](http://www.ylf.org.uk/resources)

If you require hard copies, they are available upon request.

**Applications are then submitted online automatically or can be sent to:**

**Email |** [volunteering@ylf.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@ylf.org.uk)

**Post |** YLF Volunteering, 71 College Road, Maidstone, Kent ME15 6SX

### DBS/Referees

All volunteers are required to complete an enhanced DBS form; we also seek a reference from your current employer and two others (whom you have known for over 5 years).

### Further Info

Please visit the volunteering pages of our website for further information and frequently asked questions at [www.ylf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/volunteer/](http://www.ylf.org.uk/how-you-can-help/volunteer/) or feel free to call us with any questions on 01622 693459