

Twins trust. Family Crisis Support



Are you interested in making a difference to the lives of families of twins, triplets or more who are in crisis?

At Twins Trust, we're looking for volunteers to support families of twins, triplets and more by modelling how to care for their babies, and empowering them to be confident, capable parents. We offer two kinds of support through our Family Crisis Support and Family Support Services.

Family Crisis Support helps parents in severe need or crisis by providing short-term, practical help at home with caring for their children.

Families often come to us because of bereavement, serious medical or mental health issues, or other extreme parenting challenges. Support is tailored to each family depending on the areas they're most struggling with. Families often tell us that this critical support has enabled them to cope better and get back on their feet during a very difficult time in their life.

Our Family Support Service offers remote support and guidance to families in less severe situations but who are struggling with specific parenting concerns. Volunteers may offer phone or email support with routines, sleep issues, feeding questions and other common difficulties, to help parents solve the issues they are facing and increase their parenting knowledge and skills.

How it works:

Once we know your availability, and we've confirmed your documentation is up to date, we'll set up the contact between you and the family and send you some information about their situation. Then it's up to you to introduce yourself and carry out the support. At the end of your visit or call, we'll send you a survey to ask for your feedback – it's really important that you complete this for our records.

What we require from you:

- Availability to volunteer for at least one year (volunteering is flexible and can fit around your other commitments)
- Complete Twins Trust's safeguarding and equality training
- Keep your DBS and First Aid certificates up to date
- Comply with Twins Trust policies and safeguarding procedure
- Full confidentiality of family information

What you'll get out of it:

- Something to add to your CV
- Experience of working with twins, triplets or more
- Cases matched wherever possible to your interests, expertise, and aspirations
- Access to the Twins Trust website and resources
- Attend exclusive Twins Trust volunteer events
- Make a genuine difference to the families you support
- Support from the Twins Trust team during your time as a volunteer
- Opportunity to be nominated for our volunteer award

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Kirsty's experience

Please tell us a bit about yourself

My name is Kirsty; I originally trained at Norland in 1994. Since leaving, I have worked in a number of roles from nannying, maternity nursing, school, and managing a day nursery, to working for the local education authority. Over this time I have continued to study, thriving on learning new research and knowledge within the early years sector. Most importantly, I am also a mum to two teenage boys who keep me busy.

How long have you been volunteering for Family Crisis Support?

Just over a year.

What made you decide to become a volunteer?

I initially saw the information about Twins Trust in the Norland newsletter and on their Facebook site. After reading the requests, I decided that I would like to offer my help to support these families. From my own experience I know that being a new parent is hard, so to have multiple babies to care for is very challenging. I felt my expertise and knowledge I had gained over the years could be used to support these parents.

What is the best part of being a volunteer support practitioner?

The emotional feeling that you are helping the parents and babies; whether that was enabling the mum to have a shower, something to eat, going for a walk or talking through different ideas/strategies that the parents could try. The most important part was being a supportive listening ear for the mother, which was evident with all the families I have supported. Plus spending quality time with the twins/triplets and lots of cuddles!

Have there been any challenges?

Not really, although I found it emotionally hard to walk away knowing that I couldn't help on a regular basis.

What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about volunteering for the first time?

Have a go, the help and support you can give is so valuable and appreciated by all the families. Even if it's just a few hours of your time, your help can make such a difference to the parents and babies. Being a volunteer doesn't require you to walk in and solve everything, it's about sharing your knowledge in a way that empowers the parent to grow in confidence, so they feel able to introduce small changes. Your help is invaluable! If you have any worries or concerns Twins Trust will support you through the process.

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Emma's experience

Please tell us a bit about yourself

I'm Emma, I'm 27, I have been working as a nanny in London for the past 7 years. I currently work a rota role with a two-year-old boy. Prior to volunteering for Family Crisis Support I had very little multiples and baby experience, most of my roles have been with children aged between two and ten years old - so don't let that put you off if you are thinking of volunteering!

How long have you been volunteering for Family Crisis Support?

7 months

What made you decide to become a volunteer?

I was really interested in the work that Twins Trust and Family Crisis Support did. I attended a volunteer's day and was amazed by how many people Twins Trust helps and supports and the different ways they do it. I spoke with other Norlanders that were helping to volunteer through the Family Crisis Support programme and vowed that I would make time to give it a try - it did take me a whole year to pluck up the courage to do it.

What is the best part of being a volunteer support practitioner?

Feeling that you are really helping other people.

Have there been any challenges?

For me my biggest challenge is doubting my knowledge, but through volunteering you realise that you know a lot more than you think, and things that you do on autopilot are things that new parents running on empty, totally overwhelmed and exhausted just don't think of.

It's also a challenge realising that there are situations in which you want to fix or improve things, but they just aren't in your control; living situation, financial situation and lack of support network outside of professionals etc. There is a great network of volunteers that are always happy to have a chat with you and give their thoughts on a situation.

What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about volunteering for the first time?

Give it a go at least once. I was extremely nervous about meeting my first family through Family Crisis Support. I read the brief, thought I wouldn't have much advice to give and had no idea where to start. Which was true, I couldn't give that much advice on coping with twins or help fix many of this family's problems. But what I could give was my time, attention and a listening ear, and for the mother this was more useful than any of the things I have learnt through my Norland experiences. I have visited this family four times, we get out of the house together, we go to classes, we grab a coffee and just talk.

Being a Family Crisis Support volunteer doesn't require you to walk in and wave a magic wand and solve everything, it's about imparting our knowledge in a way that builds confidence and allows the parent to change things about their situation, or just know that someone is on their side. Remember that however much or however little time you can give, there will always be a family grateful for it.

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Lorna's experience

Please tell us a bit about yourself

Hi! My name is Lorna and I am from set 38. I currently work as a full time live out nanny in West London. I have been living in London since graduating from my NQN year and I absolutely love it!

How long have you been volunteering for Family Crisis Support?

I have been volunteering for Family Crisis Support since August 2018 and have learnt so much from each of the families. Previously my role was to visit families in their homes and to provide hands on help or support in such areas as reflux, routine, practical help, colic etc., however since the service became virtual, my role has changed to helping families over the phone or online.

What made you decide to become a volunteer?

In 2017 I took part in a placement working in a children's hospice and respite centre to support my dissertation. It was during this time I realised how empowering and important it was to help those who really needed hands on practical help. It allowed me to meet a wide range of professional help and work alongside a team. It also showed me how important it was to support parents mentally and emotionally, and how I can help the family as a whole to make their lives change for the better. Currently my nanny charge attends nursery so I had some extra time on my hands and wanted to use it wisely, so I have increased my availability for Twins Trust. I also feel like it is important to keep up to date with government guidance and CPD in terms of younger babies as I spend a lot of my time with toddlers.

What is the best part of being a volunteer support practitioner?

I genuinely don't know how to answer this! There are so many reasons why I adore being a volunteer. For one, the families are beyond grateful for the time and tips you can offer to them. I really enjoy hearing the success stories from my families and hearing how their lives or day to day routines have improved after receiving my support. The office team are amazing and always there to help me in whatever way they can. It's also so great to meet and work with such a wide range of families who all have such varied needs.

Have there been any challenges?

I would say the main challenge for me personally would be not being able to see the family physically. It's always hard to tell over the phone how someone is 'really' doing but I've managed to learn a few tips from the Twins Trust office staff to figure out how well a family may or may not be coping. Isolation was a common theme with these families, however Twins Trust have done a great job of offering virtual clubs.

I'm very mindful and aware of how I manage my time to ensure I'm not over working myself and to overcome this I take time out for myself during the week and do things I enjoy as well such as working out and baking!

What advice would you give to someone who is thinking about volunteering for the first time?

Oh my goodness, Absolutely do it! You'll get such a joy helping out families and it leaves you feeling like you're really making a difference.

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About Twins Trust

Twins Trust began in 1978 as Twins Clubs Association and later Tamba, the Twins and Multiple Births Association, before rebranding to become Twins Trust in 2019. Twins Trust is the only UK-wide charity working to improve the lives of twins, triplets or more, and their families. Our mission is to provide twins, triplets or more – and their families – with the information needed to make informed decisions; facilitate a network of community support; and ensure that our community's unique needs are understood by the professionals who care for them and reflected in research, care standards and public policy.

As well as our Family Crisis and Family Support Services, we provide a variety of services and resources to support families throughout their parenting journey:

Courses, both face-to-face and online, for parents and expectant families of multiples.

Twinline, a listening service run by parents of multiples.

A network of Facebook support groups for all ages and stages, with specific provision for one parent families, those with special needs, triplets and quads, grandparents, and dads.

Bereavement support, including a support group and befriending service, for those who experience the death of one or more of their twins, triplets or more.

Experts who support families experiencing a range of issues in education, psychology, special needs and more through our Professional Referral Service.

Breastfeeding peer support and courses, to support parents throughout their feeding journey, however they feed their babies.

Factsheets and booklets on a wide range of topics and relevant to various situations.

A network of local twins and multiples clubs as well as virtual clubs held online.

A membership scheme which includes over 100 discounts on popular brands, holidays, activities and baby equipment.

Supporting families directly is only one part of what we do – you can read about more of what Twins Trust is trying to achieve and how on our website: www.twinstrust.org

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**Family
Crisis
Support**

The Family Crisis Support team



Helen Regan – Co-Head of Family Services and Resources

Involved in Family Crisis Support since 2014 and Family Crisis Support Coordinator since 2017

Mum to boy/girl twins

Helen usually works Mondays, Thursdays and Fridays. She speaks to our families to see if they're eligible and what support they need. Contact Helen at HelenRegan@twinstrust.org



Natasha Fenwick – Family Crisis Support Officer

Involved in Family Crisis Support since 2016

Over 10 years of volunteering experience

Also Twins Trust's Research and Resources Officer

Natasha usually works Monday-Friday, either in the office or from home. She'll help you get set up as a volunteer, send you volunteering opportunities and our newsletter. Contact Natasha at NatashaFenwick@twinstrust.org



Sophie Harrold – Family Crisis Support Officer

Involved in Family Crisis Support since 2022

Mum to twin boys

Qualified Social Worker

Sophie works Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Fridays. She speaks to our families about what help they need and also runs the twins virtual clubs.

Sophie also engages with volunteers and helps to attract new ones.

Contact Sophie at SophieHarrold@twinstrust.org

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Gemma Gunter – Twins Trust Support Practitioner



Twins Trust Support Practitioner since 2015

Qualified Norland Nanny

5 years as Family Outreach Worker

Also runs Twins Trust's online behaviour and weaning courses

Mum to two boys

Gemma works remotely for Twins Trust part-time. She's our consultant support practitioner and helps us to provide support to more families. Gemma works Tuesday-Thursday and is in her virtual office those days (when she isn't visiting families or running our virtual clubs). You might speak to Gemma if she's in touch with a family you're supporting. Contact Gemma at GemmaGunter@twinstrust.org

You might also speak to



Louise Bowman – Co-Head of Family Services and Resources

At Twins Trust since 2014

Mum to twin girls and an older daughter

Qualified nanny

Oversees our other support including Twinline and Bereavement

Louise can be contacted if there are any safeguarding issues – her details are in the safeguarding document you'll receive when you register with us.

You can contact the team at FamilyCrisisSupport@twinstrust.org

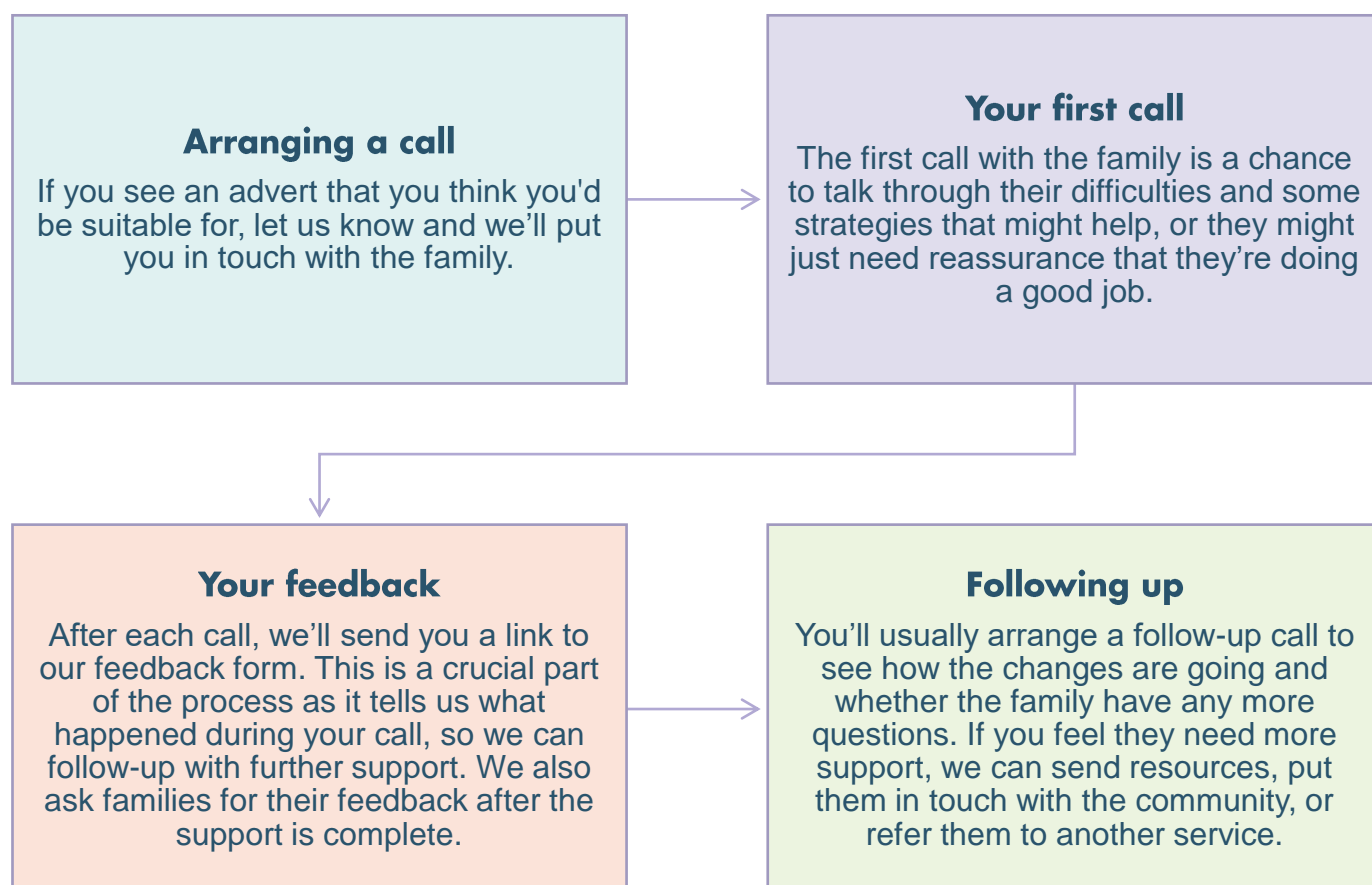
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The role of our support practitioners

What does being a support practitioner involve?

Our volunteer support practitioners are what help us to make our service a success. By volunteering, you help us support more families in crisis to become confident, capable parents. You might be wondering what to expect from being a volunteer support practitioner. You can see the processes of supporting a family at home and by phone below.

If you're supporting a family remotely (Family Support Service)



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The role of our support practitioners

If you're supporting a family at home (Family Crisis Support)



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What next?

If you've read this far and you've decided you want to volunteer and support our families – thank you!

Once you complete the registration form via the link below, one of the team will be in touch to get you signed up.

Before you start supporting families, we'll ask you to:

- Read and agree to our policies and procedures
- Have a quick chat with one of the team about your interest in volunteering
- Make sure your DBS and First Aid certificates are up to date
- Take our safeguarding training (if it's 3 or more years since you graduated, and you haven't completed any other safeguarding training recently) and equality training

Once you're signed up you'll get access to our website, newsletter and we'll notify you whenever a family is ready for you to support.

Click the link below to start your volunteering journey:

[Sign me up!](#)