



Volunteer Handbook

A Guide to Volunteering with the Breastfeeding Network

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Welcome from Shereen Fisher, CEO

The Breastfeeding Network (BfN) would not exist without its volunteers. You have been the inspiration behind the charity's purpose and design and you continue to be. The support we offer to parents and families would be seriously curtailed without your commitment, skills and enthusiasm and we certainly would not have been able to rise to the challenge of a global pandemic without volunteers. An important reason for me joining the charity as Chief Executive was because of BfN's commitment to volunteering and the volunteers' commitment to the charity. It's mutually beneficial and inseparable and good for communities.

There are not many charities remaining that have retained such a strong belief in the voluntary role and the Breastfeeding Network is both a rare and a shining example of an organisation where not only do volunteers play such a central part, but they should play a central part. At the heart of BfN is the offer of parent centred support and guidance from one person to another – a deceptively simple but incredibly powerful approach through which we have made a lifetime of difference to so many families across the UK.

The UK has an unsupportive culture towards breastfeeding and being an advocate or supporter in this space is not without challenge. Every day, you as volunteers navigate these challenges, whether it be through listening to callers on the National Breastfeeding Helpline, supporting in a virtual or face to face drop-in group supporting, parents and families at a difficult and fragile time in their lives when stress levels can be high.

Research tells us that volunteering is good for the people who do it, boosting not only their health and wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem, but building their skills and offering those who want it a route into employment. You have told us this too, and we try our best to nurture this energy and commitment through providing access to supervision, good up-to-date guidance, events and training. This guidance has been proudly co-produced with volunteers. We hope it is comprehensive and helpful to you in your volunteering.

With thanks for all that you do supporting parents and families to make breastfeeding possible.

Best Wishes



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Shereen Fisher". The signature is written in a cursive style and is underlined with a horizontal line.

Shereen Fisher, CEO
Breastfeeding Network

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the BfN peer supporters who guided us on the development of the initial handbook, working with the Central Team

We welcome any queries or comments that will help to improve the volunteer handbook, please contact admin@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk and feel free to discuss with your tutor/supervisor.

How to get the most from this handbook

This Handbook is designed to be a reference guide for BfN volunteers. We will update this handbook every two years and would welcome your views on how we can improve it along with your experience of volunteering for the BfN. It is non-contractual and for use within the Breastfeeding Network only.

If you have any comments or need a copy of this handbook in a different format, such as large print or dyslexia friendly text, or if you have any questions about the content please speak to your supervisor or tutor, or email admin@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

About The Breastfeeding Network

Our vision is a society where parents and families are able to make informed decisions about breastfeeding, access help when they need it and become confident in their choices. For a parent deciding how to feed their baby, talking to a trained volunteer who knows about breastfeeding can make a crucial difference and the Breastfeeding Network strives to be the best we can be at providing peer support.

Our mission is to offer independent, evidence-based information and support, to help build awareness of breastfeeding to individuals and organisations and to support families in their choice to breastfeed

You can read more about our values and achievements on our website here:

www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/charitable-objectives/

Investing in Volunteers

The contribution of volunteers is celebrated in our newsletters, via our social media platforms, in publications, at local and national events including volunteers' week and at our annual conference in October. At the conference NBH volunteer recognition badges are awarded to volunteers who have provided significant support to helpline callers, we offer badges for 100, 250, 500, 750, 1000 and 2000 calls answered!

BfN are really excited to be working towards the UK quality standard Investing in Volunteers with support from Volunteer Scotland. Investing in Volunteers is the UK quality framework standard for all organisations who involve volunteers. It aims to improve the quality of the volunteering experience and to ensure organisations acknowledge the contribution made by volunteers.

This requires us to look at all our volunteer-related processes against the standard and identify any gaps and actions that we would need to take to achieve the accreditation. You can learn more about Investing in Volunteers here: [Investing in Volunteers \(volunteerscotland.net\)](https://volunteerscotland.net)

Supporting Diversity and Inclusion

BfN have always acknowledged that some face higher barriers to accessing breastfeeding support. This is why we have and will continue to keep our peer support training for mothers free. We have also always targeted our work in areas where breastfeeding rates are at their lowest. We believe that increasing access to our training is key to building a more diverse charity.

Through our Diversity and Inclusion action plan we are seeking partnerships with others to help us build representation across our membership and in our community groups. We recognise that with a few exceptions the majority of the people we support across our helplines and in our commissioned services are white and we want to change this through encouraging wider access to our training.

The charity has a tradition of offering minority language lines. We proactively maintain specific helpline support for Welsh, Bengali/Sylheti and Polish women and families – and are able also to offer helpline support in various other languages, because of the diversity and strength in languages that our networks possess.

In 2021 BfN commissioned Unconscious Bias training for our tutors and supervisors, delivered by external providers. Our mandatory training and supervision requirements that is so important to our work in supporting families includes equality, diversity and inclusion training.

Our communications team do and will continue to ensure that our values around diversity and inclusivity are publicly demonstrated. This covers our newsletters, all social media channels, blogs, campaigns and printed materials.

We continue to collect and update resources, policies and documents on inclusion and diversity and we will make these available for all volunteers and staff as part of the induction process.

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/black-breastfeeding-matters/>

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/breastfeeding-with-a-disability/>

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/genderdiversity/>

BfN at its heart is a listening organisation and we believe that it is really only through listening that we can fully understand the needs of the women and families whom we serve. However, it is through action that we can really build trust and confidence.

We welcome any other feedback, especially where you think we could do better. Please contact us ceo@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

What we do at The Breastfeeding Network

The BfN develop and deliver training courses for people who have breastfeeding experience to enable them to provide skilled breastfeeding peer support (parent to parent support). We also run services across the UK that deliver peer support across a variety of settings including hospital, community, online and via telephone helplines. The following sections in this volunteer handbook provide more information about the BfN and how we work and what we do.

You can read more about the history of the BfN on our website here:

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/bfn-history/> and about our commissioned services here:

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/peersupportprojects/>

How we work

The Board of Directors

Our Board of Directors are all volunteers themselves and bring with them a wide range of experience and skills. The directors of the Breastfeeding Network are its Trustees for the purpose of charity law. There are distinct duty bearers on the Board covering areas such as finance, volunteers and information governance.

The Board works with staff and volunteers to ensure that the BfN meet its charitable objectives. They are dedicated and passionate about the work done by The Breastfeeding Network and are committed to growing the charity and to taking it from strength to strength.

You can find out more about the Board of Directors and other sub-committees on our website

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/about-us/whos-who/bfn-board-of-directors/>

You can visit the Articles of the BfN charity here:

<http://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/wpcontent/pdfs/governance/BfN%20Articles%20of%20Association%20Updated%202019%20Final.pdf>

Commissioned Services

Over the last 25 years, the BfN have increasingly been commissioned, by various organisations such as Public Health (local councils and authorities, health boards), NHS, CCGs and children's

centres, to deliver our training courses alongside co-ordination, as part of a peer support project. Our commissioned services are varied and we have experience of providing support in a variety of settings using targeted and universal approaches with a mix of trained staff and volunteers. There are over 100 paid staff members as part of our commissioned projects, and we recognise the many hours that are volunteered alongside these roles.

For more information on our peer support services visit:

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/get-involved/train-to-be-a-registered-volunteer/peer-support-programmes/>

Central Team

The Chief Executive, Shereen Fisher, heads up the central team and reports upwards to a Board of Directors (Trustees). Central management is part of the Trustees' vision to ensure better accountability, leadership and day to day running of the charity, which is also a standard advocated by the regulator and for which BfN in 2021 won an award for.

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/good-governance-award/>

Most members of the central team work remotely with a small number that are based in the Paisley office. You can find out more about the Central Team and their roles on our website

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/about-us/whos-who/bfn-admin-central-team/>

Volunteers

The Breastfeeding Network is a volunteer organisation, with around 600 volunteers across the UK, we are proud of the breastfeeding support that our volunteers offer directly to families alongside other volunteer roles as Peer Supporters, Supervisors, Tutors and Board Members.

Volunteers are at the heart of what we do giving their time and skills in supporting mums and families in their communities and over the Helplines.

You can find out more about other ways to volunteer for the BfN at

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/volunteer-for-us/>

Breastfeeding Support Services

Drugs in Breastmilk Service

The BfN runs the Drugs in Breastmilk Information service which provides online support and factsheet information to thousands of families and health professionals every year on the effects of medications or treatments on breastmilk and breastfeeding.

In 2019 Swansea University evaluated the service and described it as 'A lifeline when no one else wants to give you an answer'.

The service was founded and led by Dr Wendy Jones MBE and has always been supported by trained volunteers.

In 2020 the BfN trained its first cohort of 11 volunteer pharmacists to help support succession planning to ensure the service has a sustainable future. In turn these volunteers are supported by both general and clinical supervision.

Together they offer breastfeeding support alongside evidence based information to anyone who is concerned about the effects of medication or treatments while breastfeeding.

The BfN also represents on a consortium run by the Medicines in Health Regulatory Authority on work to improve the provision of information on medicines for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

The MHRA strategy was published in 2020 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safer-medicines-in-pregnancy-and-breastfeeding-consortium>

Currently the service is funded through charity reserves and public donations.

You can find the range of information sheets and can contact the facebook page or email address on our website here:

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/detailed-information/drugs-in-breastmilk/>

We would also like to acknowledge the huge effort and support we receive from the Friends of Drugs in Breastmilk. If you would like to become a Friend see the link below:

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/friends-drugs-breastmilk/>

Evaluation of the Drugs in Breastmilk Information Service <https://breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/wp-content/pdfs/BfN%20Executive%20summary.pdf>

National Breastfeeding Helpline (NBH), Web Chat and Social Media Support Service

The National Breastfeeding Helpline (NBH) is open 9.30am-9.30pm every single day of the year (bank holidays included) on 0300 100 0212. We have Welsh and Polish language options (callers should dial our usual number then press option 1 for Welsh and option 2 for Polish).

The helpline offers non-judgmental, evidence based, independent, confidential, mother-centred breastfeeding support and information to mums, partners, family members, friends, health professionals or anyone else who needs it.

The helpline is managed by the Breastfeeding Network working in collaboration with the Association of Breastfeeding Mothers and all calls are answered by volunteers trained and supported by these two charities. All the volunteers are mums who have breastfed at least one baby and all have completed in depth and ongoing training with BfN or ABM.

Calls to the helpline cost the same as a local call and are included in most mobile phone 'free minutes' packages.

We answer around 12-15,000 calls per year and spend more than 3,000 hours per year (around 125 full days!) talking to callers. We receive around 40-50,000 calls every year on the helpline so with more volunteers we will be able to answer more calls.

Web chat offers exactly the same support from the same volunteers who answer helpline calls too, but it is all done via safe and secure instant messaging. Some people prefer to seek support in this way rather than on the phone.

In addition to the telephone helpline and web chat, we also offer support via social media message, mainly via NBH and BFN's Facebook and Instagram messenger. Social media messages are answered by a team of NBH volunteers on a rota basis.

BfN Supporterline

BfN Supporterline was set-up by BfN before the National Breastfeeding Helpline started. Calls to Supporterline will be received by BfN registered Supporters via the NBH system.

BfN Supporterline in Bengali and Sylheti: 0300 456 2421 offers support for Bengali and Sylheti speakers. If a volunteer is not available to take the call, a message can be left. Lines are open 9:30 am to 9:30 pm, 7 days a week.

What does it mean to be a BfN volunteer?

What was the main reason you wanted to become a BfN volunteer? Some volunteers tell us they wanted to give something back as a thank you for the breastfeeding support they received, some do it as they feel strongly that all those that breastfeed should receive sufficient support and be provided with evidence-based information to enable them to meet their feeding goals. Some do it to meet new people or gain experience that might help them find a job. Whatever your reasons we thank you. Our volunteers make us who we are and enable us to support thousands of families each year.

BfN training and volunteer roles

BfN Helper and Supporter courses are accredited through Open College Network (OCN) London. Skilled staff develop and deliver these qualifications. OCN London is regulated by the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). The credits you will gain are nationally recognised and may help you with your career or to achieve a place in college or university.

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/get-involved/train-to-be-a-registered-volunteer/>

Volunteering as a 'Helper' - Helper Training

The Helper training course is the first stage of training for volunteers. The course can be delivered through 12 x 2-hour group sessions or can be delivered remotely via a mix of online learning and video call sessions. The course takes around 4-5 months from start to when you might expect to be able to start volunteering. The Helper course assessed Learner Assessment Log is completed in a variety of ways to suit different learning styles. It consists of two accredited units, 'Peer support for breastfeeding mothers' and 'Skills to support the breastfeeding mother' giving 6 units at level 2. You can find out more about our Helper training course here:

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/get-involved/train-to-be-a-registered-volunteer/>

Roles of a 'Helper' Peer Supporter

As a Helper you will be able to provide emotional support to breastfeeding parents and families, support them with positioning and attachment, and signpost to further information and support. You will play an important role in empowering new parents and helping them gain the confidence they need to breastfeed for as long as they wish and so to normalise breastfeeding in our society.

You will be able to volunteer in a variety of different settings such as breastfeeding drop-in groups (online or face to face), in hospitals, via phone or text and at health clinics. In some areas Helpers also talk to families at antenatal sessions, speak to young people in schools or promote local Breastfeeding Friendly schemes. Different areas have different types of support available so you may not be able to support families in all these different ways, check locally to see what volunteering options are available in your area.

Helpers usually volunteer alongside or with support from more experienced BfN Supporters or health professionals but you might also be asked to work more independently with close support from a volunteer coordinator/peer support coordinator depending on the services available in your area.

Have you completed your Helper course?

We appreciate that you may have had quite a journey to become a Helper – we realise that this can be a challenge especially when you may still have young children and a busy life, thank you for your commitment.

If you have finished your training, your tutor and/or local project coordinator, will confirm with you the necessary requirements needed to start actively volunteering. To summarise, you must have:

- Completed the training course and successful internal moderation of your Assessment log book/portfolio.
- Accepted the terms of the Code of Conduct (this can be done via our website <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/shop/membershipsubscription> and choose to register as a trainee member).

Trainee Member – if you have recently started training to be a BfN Helper you will receive two years' complimentary membership after which time you will be required to pay the appropriate membership fee which is either £1 or £20.

- Enhanced DBS/PVG certificate for Child and Adult Workforce, dated within 3 years, verified by a member of staff (usually your Tutor)
- Two suitable references received

- Have a named supervisor <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/supervision-requirements-for-bfn-volunteers/>
- Received a BfN ‘Helper’ badge to wear when supporting families and a letter confirming that you are registered

Congratulations you are now a BfN registered member

As a BfN member we offer essential training courses that are required to continue with ongoing membership.

Once you are a registered member you will need to attend regular supervision sessions (see Supervision section below) and complete the following training which will be available either locally or online within your first six months of becoming a volunteer:

- Information Governance training
- Safeguarding training
- Diversity and Inclusion training
- Health and Safety (includes hand hygiene and lone working) training

Many volunteers are happy volunteering in their BfN Helper role for as long as they choose. Others are interested in further training and this involves embarking on our Supporter course training.

Volunteering as a ‘Supporter’ – Supporters course training

The BfN’s second stage of training for volunteers is the Supporters course. All aspects of training introduced in the breastfeeding ‘Helpers’ course are covered in more depth. Depending on the modules you complete, this further training serves to develop your breastfeeding support skills to enable you to support in more complex situations and to work with more autonomy, enabling you to work more independently when you are supporting families. The assignments can be completed in a variety of ways to suit your learning needs.

The Supporters course consists of 2 modules:

Module 1:

‘Providing emotional support for breastfeeding mothers’ consists of 7 sessions to achieve 6 credits at Level 3 (OCN London accreditation) Sessions are typically 2 hours long and with timely completion of associated assignments, the course should take around 4-5 months to complete.

Module 2:

'Influence of society and research on infant feeding choice' consists of 3 sessions to achieve 3 credits at Level 3 (OCN London accreditation.)

The role of groups and skills around self-reflection. This consists of 2 sessions which are not accredited with OCN but are integral to BfN training and the way in which we work. Module 2 takes around 3-4 months to complete.

Module 1 - Helpline Supporter:

Module 1 is also known as the 'Helpline supporters course' which provides you with continued professional development to extend your skills in breastfeeding support and in so doing enabling you to take calls on the National Breastfeeding Helpline. The Helpline Supporters course (module 1) can be taken as part of a group face-to-face course or as an online course.

Thank you for your time and commitment to complete module 1, we hope you continue to develop and learn and enjoy the variety you get through taking calls on the helplines.

Have you completed your Helpline course?

Once this module is completed and assessed your tutor and Helpline Volunteer Coordinator (HVC) will then work with you to fulfil the necessary requirements needed to start actively volunteering on the National Breastfeeding Helpline.

All Breastfeeding Network Supporters are assigned to a Helpline Volunteer Coordinator (HVC). You will be put in touch with your HVC during your Supporter training and they will talk you through using the virtual call centre. Your HVC is your first port of call if you have any questions about any aspect of the helpline. They will keep in touch with you on a regular basis and can provide you with details about how much time you have given on the helpline. They are assigned loosely by where you live, and you will be given a direct contact for your assigned HVC.

The HVC are only employed for a few hours per month – they are generally available most days and will get back to you as soon as they can, but they may not always be able to respond immediately to your queries. If you aren't sure who your HVC is, or if you need a quicker response, you can contact all the Helpline Volunteer Coordinators and the Helpline Manager as a group on: HVC@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

To summarise, you need to have:

- Completed the training course and assignments have been internally moderated (lead internal moderator will notify your HVC).
 - Received an email 'welcome to the helplines' by your HVC
 - Received a call from your HVC to map you onto the National Breastfeeding and BfN helplines
 - A BfN 'Helpline Supporter' badge
- (Please note, if you are going on to complete modules 2 and 3 then you will only receive your badge at your next registration period)

Mum to Helpline Course

We also have a course designed for people who haven't yet done any peer support training and who would like to volunteer on the National Breastfeeding Helpline. This course takes people through a course that involves elements from both our Helper and Module 1 Supporter course (described in detail above) in one combined online course. This course is an option for people who specifically want to offer support over the phone and who are willing to make a commitment to volunteering on the National Breastfeeding Helpline for around 2 hours per week for at least 1 year after they finish training. This course takes around 6-7 months from starting training to being able to start volunteering.

Congratulations you are now a BfN 'Helpline Supporter'

Helpline volunteers receive awards for the number of calls they take. There are certificates for volunteers answering 50 calls, then a range of badges for volunteers answering 100, 250, 500, 750, 1000 and 2000 calls! These are usually awarded as part of our annual conference. Monthly spot prizes and other incentives are also offered from time to time to say thank you for volunteering on the helplines.

There is also private NBH Facebook group for volunteers as well as a WhatsApp group, and we send a quarterly e-newsletter to all NBH volunteers. Please contact your HVC to join these groups. Once you have completed Module 1 of the Supporters course you will start your probationary period. This helps you gather a record of the experience you gain supporting families which you can use as a basis for discussion with your supervisor about the skills you are developing or any other areas you would like to learn about.

Module 2 - BfN Supporter:

Module 2 of the Supporters course looks at protecting and supporting breastfeeding, understanding research, working within groups and self-reflection. Once this second module is completed, assessed internally moderated, you will get an updated badge to show that you are now a registered BfN Supporter. You will continue working through your record of experience for your probationary period supported by your supervisor. Once you have gathered all the experience you need to finish your probationary period your supervisor will sign you off as a full Supporter. Your badge will not change but on your annual return you will now tick that you are a 'Supporter' rather than a Helpline Supporter or Probationary Supporter

Information about the probationary period

Your probationary period can start as soon as you have completed the first half of the Supporters course (Module 1 – Helpline Supporter) If you are doing both modules of the Supporters course in one go you may decide to delay starting your probationary period until after you have finished both modules.

Your probationary period is about practicing and developing the skills you learnt during the training as well as supporting families with a wider variety of scenarios than we can include in the course. You are expected to do at least 100 units of BfN Supporting as part of your probationary period. At least 40 of these units must be National Breastfeeding Helpline units. Half of the helpline units can consist of time on web-chat or social media the rest should be answering calls on the helpline. If you are not able to answer calls on the helpline, please discuss this with your Supervisor and other ways of gaining relevant experience will be agreed so that you can still complete your probationary period.

A unit of BfN Supporting is:

- Answering 1 call or webchat on NBH
- Replying to 1 message thread offering support to a mum or other 'caller' on the NBH, DIBM or BfN Facebook pages. This might involve multiple replies to one person.
- Replying to one message thread offering breastfeeding support to parents on local Facebook pages. These should be messages offering support not sharing information about local groups/sharing Zoom links etc.
- Answer 1 email offering breastfeeding support to a mum via local services email addresses. This should be an email offering support not sharing information about local groups etc.
- Offering support to a mum/family via video call or phone call to offer support (not your own friends and family)
- Visiting new parents at home (excluding friends and family).

- Running or helping to run a breastfeeding drop-in centre or BfN Walking group (approx. 1-2 hours plus preparation and tidying away). This can be online or face to face
- Giving information and/or support to mums at a Child Health Clinic, postnatal or antenatal clinic (approx. 1-2 hours plus preparation and tidying away).
- Supporting families in hospital postnatal, neonatal or antenatal wards (excluding friends and family) (approx. 1 hour).
- Teaching an antenatal class about breastfeeding.
- Doing 1 Facebook live or other online activity talking to parents or others about infant feeding e.g. webinars, via Instagram etc.
- Giving a talk about breastfeeding (online or face to face) such as delivering the First Milk Matters training or another awareness/information type session. For example, to school/nursery staff, health care professionals, local community groups etc.
- Attending a meeting as a BfN Supporter (e.g. MVP, health trust, Children's Centre, planning meeting).
- Half a day helping to organize a BfN study day or event, setting up a new breastfeeding centre, promoting a local breastfeeding welcome/friendly scheme etc.
- Delivering one of the school lesson plans to children or young people in a school or nursery
- Half a day developing new BfN resources (in discussion with the central team) e.g. leaflets, information for website or helping translate materials into different languages
- Other activities as agreed between you and your Supervisor

Congratulations you are now a BfN 'Supporter'

Volunteering as a Full Supporter.

You have come a long way since your Helpers course and we recognise the work involved in becoming a full Supporter. This is a huge achievement and wish to take this opportunity to thank you for all your time and commitment that you have so far given to supporting mums and families as a BfN member, helping us to achieve the charity's visions and aims.

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/charitable-objectives/>

BfN Tutor and Supervisor training

Tutors and Supervisors are the backbone of BfN's work. They provide the high quality training and on-going supervision that BfN are so proud of. Some Supporters choose to go on to complete a tutor and/or supervisor training course so that they can train new volunteers and offer support via delivering Supervision sessions. The training is assessed by practical and written assignments. The training is split into a supervisor training course followed by a tutor training course, most people do both although you may prefer just to do the supervisor training course. The tutor training course includes an accredited unit called Developing your Assessing skills.

Supervision at Breastfeeding Network

Every BfN member should have a **named Supervisor** who will be your key point of contact during your journey with the BfN. If you don't know who your named supervisor is, please contact registrations@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

You can find out more about supervision and your supervision (and registration) requirements here: <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/supervision-within-the-breastfeeding-network/>

You may receive supervision from from a local supervisor/s and you can also access supervision from a team of 'Remote Supervisors' who offer supervision session to anyone in the BfN wherever they are based. You do not need to always attend supervision with the same supervisor but you will only have one 'named' supervisor who supports your re-registration process.

Supervision provides a space for support, learning and reflection. It is an opportunity for a two-way discussion to ensure that practical and emotional support can be given to volunteers, ideas can be discussed, training identified, up-to-date information shared and practice/personal matters raised and dealt with appropriately. We feel that it is BfN's commitment to supervision that makes the charity stand out and distinguishes our approach to peer support.

BfN supervisors are all trained BfN volunteers trained to Supporter level who have then completed an additional training course to develop their skills to offer supervision to others. BfN supervision (and registration) requirements differ depending on the level of training you have. Helper volunteers need to attend at least 4 supervision sessions every six months and are re-registered as volunteers twice a year in March and September. Supporters/Helpline Supporters/Tutors and Supervisors are expected to attend at least 6 supervision sessions every year, and at least one of

these should be a 1:1 session. Supporters/Helpline Supporters are re-registered as volunteers once a year based on completion of an annual return.

What you can expect from BfN

- Initial 2 years' free membership upon successful completion of Helpers course and necessary registration requirements. After the first two years, membership costs either £1 or £20
- Voting rights at your AGM
- Insurance for volunteers to support families
- Free accredited peer support training courses
- Free online safeguarding and information governance training and other courses relevant to your role as a peer supporter
- Named Supervisor and access to supervision
- National access to networking and support from other BfN peer supporters via our Facebook page for BfN members
- Detailed and up-to-date policies
<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/governance/>
- Breastfeeding information and resources via our website or ask your supervisor
<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/drugs-factsheets/>
<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/breastfeeding-help/>
- Regular updates <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/newsletter-copies>

What the BfN expect from you

- To abide by the Code of Conduct
- To seek and attend supervision and mandatory training necessary for on-going registration
- Stay up to date with and understand BfN policies and guidelines for registered volunteers. These include but are not limited to safeguarding policy, Equality and Diversity policy, health and safety policy (including hand hygiene, safe lone working/home visiting) and Information governance policy. <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/governance/>
- Ensure you have an up-to-date PVG/DBS (within last 3 years) and renew your DBS check promptly when required
- Maintain confidentiality
- Complete call record forms for calls taken on the Helplines

- Maintain your annual membership subscriptions (please check as this may be organised via a local project co-ordinator) <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/become-a-member/>

Learn and Develop with us

Study days

The BfN holds an annual conference and AGM that we hope members will attend. There are also a number of local study days that are held across the UK. For NBH volunteers there is access to regular online webinars.

Help us develop as a Charity

- We welcome your feedback and suggestions, which you can email to admin@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk
- Please register and come along to our annual conference and have your say at our AGM.
- If there is no training in your area, you are waiting for your course to start or if you don't think doing the training is for you there are still lots of ways you can help support us, you can find some examples here <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/volunteer-for-us/>
- If you have an idea or would like to offer some time or a specific skill or just for more information please email admin@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

Keeping in touch

You can stay in touch and keep up to date in the following ways:

- Follow us on social media – we have an active presence on Facebook www.facebook.com/thebreastfeedingnetworkuk,
- Instagram www.instagram.com/thebreastfeedingnetwork and Twitter www.twitter.com/bfn_uk.
- Join our Facebook group - your supervisor can provide you with this information or contact admin@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk
- Subscribe to our Newsletter – News and stories related to breastfeeding and BfN activity across the UK. If you have not already, you can opt in to communications (including the newsletter) by visiting www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/keepintouch. You can also view previous issues online at <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/newsletter-copies/>
- Attend the AGM and conference; a great opportunity to meet other BfN members across the country.

- Or contact our central office via post, telephone or email

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/contact-us/>

Fundraising

We hold two big fundraising events each year.

Move in May

Move in May is all about being active, having fun and raising money. You can walk, run, swim, cycle or Zumba (or any other activity you enjoy!) and you can do it as an individual or as a group of volunteers. Get your community involved by inviting local friends, family and neighbours to take part as well. Move in May is held in May and raises money that supports different aims of the charity and local areas.

BfN Big Tea Break

The Big Tea Break is all about having fun, taking a break and sharing tea and cake. The event is held in Autumn and specifically supports the Drugs in breastmilk helpline and information service.

For more information on these fundraising events or to find out other ways you can fundraise for us visit our website <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/get-involved/fundraising/>

Please also refer to our 'Fundraising for BfN' policy and guidelines

<https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/governance/>

For further enquiries email: fundraising@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

Stopping/taking a break from volunteering

We recognise that you might need to take a break from volunteering for different reasons. Please discuss with your supervisor your requirements with regards to taking a sabbatical from your volunteering and about supervision and re-registration requirements when you wish to return.

You can also request a reference from us by getting in touch with your supervisor or tutor. However, it is worth bearing in mind that in general, only following a period of volunteering work after you have trained would we consider being able to write a reference for you.

If there is a problem

There may be occasions when you are unhappy with an aspect of your work with BfN. In the first instance we hope you feel able to discuss the issue with your supervisor or service co-ordinator.

The BfN Complaints policy and procedure is in place to address any concern a BfN volunteer may have about the organisation or with BfN Colleagues. The BfN Grievance policy can be found here: <https://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk/governance/>

We hope this handbook is useful and that you enjoy your time volunteering with the Breastfeeding Network. If you have any feedback about this handbook, ideas for improvements or anything else you would like to share please contact admin@breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk

Thank you for everything you do to support families!