

Helpline, Email Support and Live Chat Volunteering Application Information



*What's involved in volunteering
and how to make an application*

We are delighted that you are interested in volunteering for us!

We are the only specialist service in Cambridge providing dedicated support to women survivors of rape and sexual violence. Our helpline service has been run by volunteers since 1982 and our email support service since 2013. Our live chat service opened in 2021 and, after a service break, it reopened in 2023. These confidential and anonymous services would not exist without our volunteers, who provide vital emotional support to women and girls who have been subjected to rape, sexual abuse, childhood sexual abuse or any form of sexual violence.

We are a feminist organisation, although we do not require that women who volunteer for us are feminists. For more information about Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre's values and mission, visit our website: <http://cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk/about-us>

Why volunteer with CRCC?

- ❖ The opportunity to acquire or enhance understanding and skills to support survivors of sexual violence and abuse
- ❖ The opportunity to live our values and make a difference
- ❖ Fulfilment from supporting women & girls who inspire us
- ❖ Joining a community of amazing women
- ❖ Ongoing training and development opportunities

'Volunteering at CRCC is very rewarding. The community of volunteers is warm and supportive. It is fantastic to be able to work with such a dedicated group of like-minded women.'

Helpline, Email and Live Chat Volunteer Role Description

Where: CRCC'S Cambridge office and remotely (the latter only possible if volunteers have access to a private, confidential space to volunteer from that isn't their bedroom)

Duration: Ongoing, ideally for 18 months+

When: After initial training period:

- ❖ Shifts: Wednesday 7-9.30pm & Sunday 10am-12.30pm
- ❖ Monthly reflective practice: Monday or Tuesday 6-7.30pm

Commitment: After initial training period:

- ❖ 3 shifts per month on helpline/email/live chat shifts per month (we operate a flexible rota)
- ❖ 1 reflective practice session per month
- ❖ Volunteer meetings once every 6 months approx
- ❖ Regular ongoing training
- ❖ Regular one-to-ones

Responsibilities:

- ❖ Provide emotional support to women and girls over the phone, email and live chat using counselling skills, the empowerment model, empathy and an understanding of sexual violence and its impacts

- ❖ Regularly reflect on your practice with other volunteers
- ❖ Read email updates and respond (if needed) in a timely manner.
- ❖ Keeping up to date with CRCC policies and procedures, including data protection
- ❖ Attend reflective practice, volunteer meetings and ongoing training
- ❖ Maintain confidentiality and anonymity

Who we're looking for

We especially welcome applications from Black & minoritised women, women with disabilities and women from the LGBTQIA+ community.

We also welcome applications from non-binary AFAB (Assigned Female At Birth) individuals and those who have experienced oppression as a woman and feel comfortable volunteering within a service run by women for women.

- ❖ Women 18 years+
- ❖ Empathetic, non-judgemental & good listeners
- ❖ Self-aware & emotionally resilient
- ❖ Excellent communication skills
- ❖ Interested in discussing and understanding rape & sexual violence, and its impacts on women and girls
- ❖ Able to maintain confidentiality & anonymity
- ❖ Able to work independently using initiative & be part of a team

- ❖ Share CRCC's survivor-focused ethos
- ❖ Able to meet volunteer commitment (see pg 4)
- ❖ Have access to a private, confidential space to volunteer from that isn't their bedroom – only if volunteering remotely.

Please be aware that if you have previously accessed support from CRCC, for your own wellbeing, we ask you to wait 12 months before applying.

Accessibility:

CRCC's office is located on a first floor and it can be accessed via stairs or lift. In addition, we have access to an accessible toilet. Please contact us with any questions about accessibility and let us know if you require accessibility support as we will do our best to ensure we minimise or eliminate barriers. CRCC can contribute to out-of-pocket expenses (ie childcare costs and reasonable travel expenses) to enable women to volunteer with us.

Anonymity:

Helpline, email and live chat volunteers don't tell anyone other than very close friends and family that they volunteer with CRCC. This is to preserve confidentiality and reduce the chance that women will be put off from using our services in case they speak to someone they know. If you make an application, please ask your referees to keep this information confidential.

'If you're curious about the role and you're passionate about providing the space for the survivors to share their story, you really will do an amazing job.'

Volunteer commitment:

Please be aware that as a small organisation it costs us a lot of money to train volunteers, and we rely on trainees becoming committed volunteers in order to keep our support services running. Therefore, we ask that applicants think carefully about applying for the role. All women who can fulfill the commitment requested are very welcome to apply.

Applicants who are given a place in the volunteer training programme are expected to attend all the sessions. Furthermore, evaluations will be booked within one month of the training programme finishing and, once someone has passed an evaluation, they are expected to start volunteering within one month.

'To be able to provide this space for them
(women and girls) to use their voice to express
what is on their mind and what they are feeling
brings me such joy'

Duty of Care:

CRCC has a duty of care to ensure the safety and well-being of our volunteers at all times. Many of our volunteers are survivors of sexual violence who now support other survivors, although we don't discuss our own personal experiences of rape and sexual abuse with the women and girls we work with. We would however ask prospective volunteers who have personal experience of rape and sexual abuse to think about how

being a volunteer helpline, email and live chat volunteer and hearing other women and girls' experiences and feelings around sexual violence will affect their own emotional health and ongoing recovery process, and whether they themselves have been able to access the support they need. It is crucial that applicants and volunteers look after themselves first.

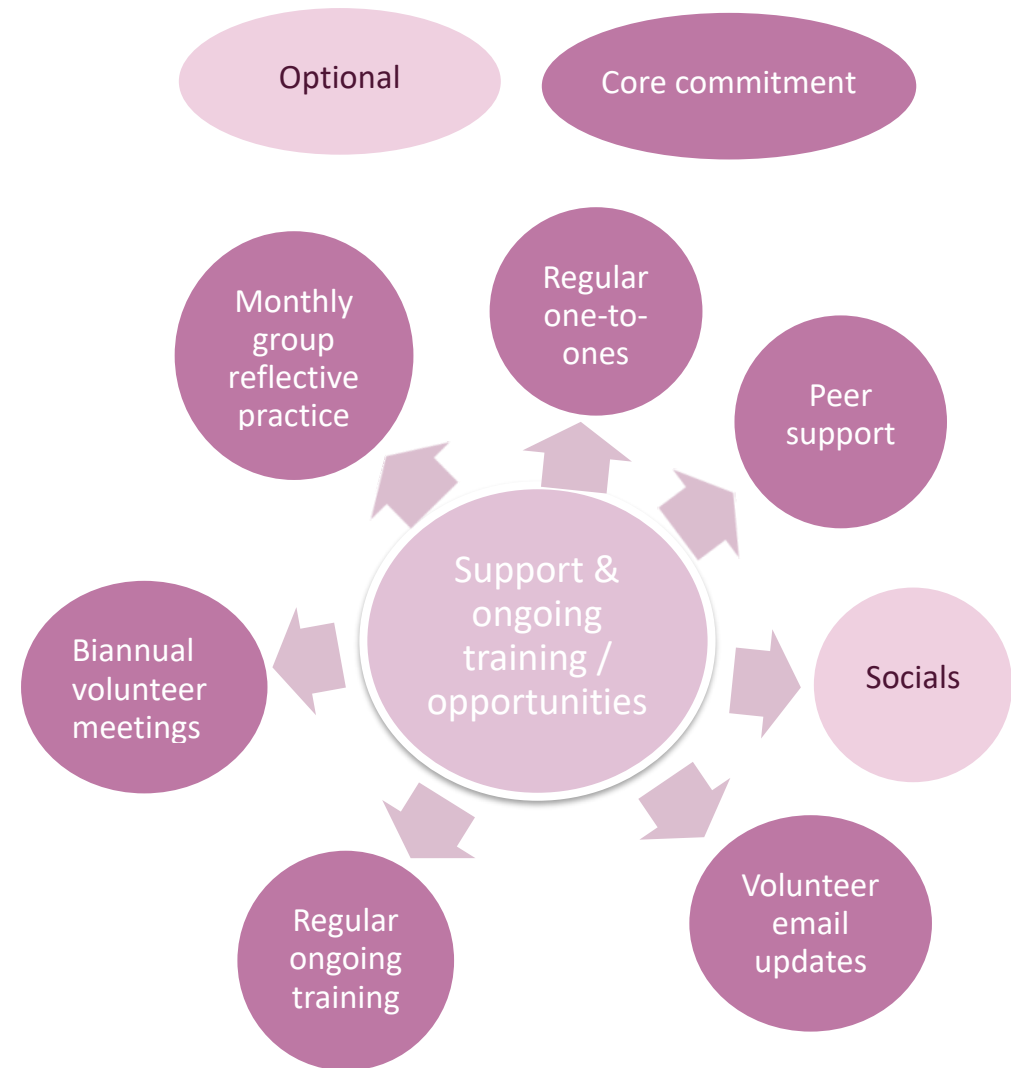
If you have accessed Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre support services yourself in the past, such as counselling or our email support, we ask that you wait 12 months after finishing receiving support, before applying to volunteer with us. Beyond this, your readiness to volunteer on the helpline, email and live chat support service is down to your discretion and ours.

Leaving CRCC:

We understand that your circumstances may change, however, to help us run a sustainable service for survivors, we ask that you confirm that you are intending to volunteer with us (do shifts) for, at least, a year, and will provide us with at least 2 weeks' notice of your intention to leave CRCC if your circumstances do change. If you leave sooner than a year, we will (at our discretion) ask you to contribute £100 towards training costs.

If you have any questions, concerns and/or would like to discuss your circumstances, please get in touch with us at volunteering@cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk

Support & Ongoing Training Opportunities



Application and Training Process

Equal opportunities monitoring form submitted online and application form returned to volunteering@cambridgerapecrisis.org.uk

Successful shortlisted applicants invited to informal online interview

All applicants will be notified within a week
Successful applicants will be invited to attend training

Trainees complete the training programme, including:

- Face to face training sessions
- Reading & viewing material
- Helpline and live chat role plays and email practices
- Shadowing shifts – remotely/office

During training we will also:

- Follow up your references
- Make an enhanced DBS check
- Provide support

Evaluations are booked within 1 month from the training programme ending. Trainees can choose whether they would like to volunteer on the helpline, email support, live chat service or all three

- New volunteers are provided with a volunteer handbook and all the support on the previous page. They start volunteering within 1 month of having passed an evaluation.
- Anyone who does not complete this process successfully is welcome to reapply in the future

