

INFORMATION PACK FOR CHIPS (Children in a Place of Safety)

HOUSE PARENTS

Children in a Place of Safety – CHIPS

CHIPS is first and foremost to be a safe haven and a home for trafficked young people and the house parents will be a pivotal part in ensuring that the young people living there feel cared for, supported, nurtured and loved.

CHIPS will provide a place where up to three trafficked young people can live in a family home, with 'parents' present, experiencing domestic life in a shared and supportive environment whilst also benefiting from professional and enhanced support services offered by Unseen's highly trained team.



House Parents role

The House Parents will play a crucial role in delivering the “family” aspect of home-life to the young people. House Parents can be one couple or a small group of couples that split their time at the home between them.

Due to the live-in nature required, the volunteer House Parents role is based on a year-long commitment. In order to provide the familial setting, homely environment and stability we will require one of the 'parents' to be available and on-site daily and to sleep at the home overnight. This does mean that working part-time for one or both of the house parents is a potential option and the flexibility to do this will be discussed during the application process.

Creation of a familial environment is a core component of CHIPS. The House Parents will be living in the property with the young people providing a parental, care-giving role and facilitating a stable, caring and compassionate family structure, within which the young people's feelings of safety and trust will increase and their personal development flourish. Alongside this a staff team consisting of a manager and support workers will also be on-site 24/7 to deliver trafficking specific support and interventions.

The key characteristics we are looking for from House Parents are positive but authoritative parenting, high quality child care, emotional intelligence and warmth, a pro-active approach to learning at home, clear boundaries, fostering of mutual respect, bonding, love and responsiveness, routine setting, activities that promote the young people's cognitive, acceptance, language, social and emotional development, and promotion of positive aspirations for their future. In line with parenting responsibilities, House Parents will be expected to maintain a home that is comfortable, tidy and welcoming.

Day in the Life of a House Parent

7.30 – 9.00	Ensure everyone is up, personal hygiene attended to (shower, bath, teeth brushed), breakfast is had and all tidied away
9.00 – 9.30	Discuss plans for the day with young person and support worker
9.00 – 12.30	Assist young person with their plans – drive/deliver to school, appointments.
9.00 – 12.30	Support young person with any in house activities – education classes, life skills, gardening, cooking
9.00 – 12.30	If children are attending mainstream education this time will be free time for House Parents
12.30 – 13.30	Facilitate making of lunch for those at home
13.30 – 14.00	Touch base with support staff
14.00 – 18.00	Support young person with any in house activities – education classes, life skills, gardening, cooking
14.00 – 18.00	If children are attending mainstream education this time will be free time for House Parents
18.00 – 19.00	Facilitate family dinner
19.00 – 22.00	Family time - sporting activity, family trip (movies) or family activity
22.00- 23.00	Facilitate bedtime routine

Throughout the day there will be general interactions between the House Parents, staff and children and general activities that will need to be kept on top of to ensure the house is clean and tidy.

Typical activities

- 1) **Parental care** - giving support, stability, consistency, encouragement, care and guidance around the clock in the way that dedicated, loving parents or grandparents would. Creation of a safe, loving and familial environment that reinstates the concept of healthy relationships and structured boundaries.
- 2) **The domestic running of the household** - morning and bedtime routines, mealtimes, cleaning, planning fun evening and weekend activities, managing house finances.
- 3) **Advocacy and development support** – empowering children in every context be it helping them to learn English, assisting them with homework, developing their education and life-skills, accompanying them in statutory meetings or cheering them on at a football match.



Essential Qualities

- Empathetic

- Self-controlled
- Loving
- Applies common-sense
- Patient
- Caring
- Flexible
- Tolerant
- Dedicated
- Communicative and calm under pressure

Experience and Attributes

- Be part of a loving relationship and have been together as couple for at least 5 years.
- At least 5 years' experience with teenagers either in a parenting or professional capacity.
- Demonstrable commitment to working with vulnerable young people/children and an ability to provide an excellent standard of care, for example having worked previously in a social care, parenting, foster or related role/capacity.
- Ability to develop and maintain secure, healthy relationships with children.
- Ability to provide experiences which will stimulate a young person and provide opportunities to develop new skills.
- Ready to “leap into action” even when off-duty (if on-site).
- Able to manage the health and educational needs of children in a proactive way.
- Able to set appropriate boundaries and manage behaviour without physical or other inappropriate punishment.
- Ability to listen and communicate in ways appropriate to the child's age, language and understanding.
- Respect for children's origins, religion and culture and willingness to learn more and enable them to participate in cultural and religious activities.
- An ability to respect the child's point of view and help them share that point of view, even if you don't personally agree with it.
- At least one of the couple having a professional background in health, social care, education or another appropriate field of expertise.
- Experience working with children from other countries, children who have been trafficked or children who have experienced trauma.

- Language skills.
- Love working with children and putting their needs first.
- An ability to appreciate how personal experiences may have affected you and the impact that this year will have on you and your family.
- An ability to develop a good support network and make use of this.
- Ability to demonstrate resilience and work under pressure.
- Both parties must be warm and friendly.
- A joint commitment to the volunteer placement and an open acceptance that this is a new project for Unseen working with extremely vulnerable unpredictable children.

What Unseen will give you

This is a voluntary role but we want to ensure that the selected House Parents and Reserve House Parents are able to maintain a good standard of living and are not out of pocket.

In return for volunteering, Unseen will be able to offer:

- Full Board and lodgings (including bills);
- Access to a car for house and personal use;
- An initial relocation package (any associated moving costs/travel costs);
- Small allowance to cover personal expenses (clothing, toiletries, meals, date night allowance, travel related to volunteering);
- Reimbursement for any spending relating to the young people in your care.



House parents will be responsible for their own tax and ensuring any income they receive during the year is correctly documented with HMRC, especially if in paid employment elsewhere. Please note that payment against expenses as set out above within this volunteer arrangement does not constitute income for tax purposes.

Support

Peer support is available 24/7 as there will always be a member of staff on duty and on site. A manager will be in during working hours (between 8am-6pm) and on-call support available out of hours from a member of the staff team. The staff team will be a ready source of support, easily accessible to the House Parents.

Weekly reviews will provide extra support, where specific children and their needs can be discussed with the whole team.

There are monthly team meetings, which are more informal gatherings of the whole staff team to build a strong team morale, facilitate a common approach and ensure everyone is up to date with relevant information.

Monthly mentoring will take place between the House Parents and the Managing Director. This is an opportunity to discuss any issues that may arise and discuss the emotional impact of caring for vulnerable children.

Monthly individual counselling sessions will also be arranged with an external counsellor to ensure that House Parents receive comprehensive support.

We will also provide a comprehensive training schedule based upon foster care training and relevant to the role of House Parents that will include:

- Child protection;
- First Aid;
- Understanding the specific needs of unaccompanied asylum seeking and trafficked children;
- Self-care;
- Creating a therapeutic environment;
- Setting and implementing boundaries.

House Parents will get one weekend a month off and up to five weeks off throughout the year (to be agreed in advance).

NB: *Due to the safety elements involved in the project, House Parents will be required to have a vetted list of friends and family that will be able to visit the project. It should be noted that House Parents will not be in a position to reveal their address to people who are not vetted and will require security training to ensure they fully comprehend the safety issues pertaining to trafficked young people.*

Project Team

Volunteer House Parents (can be one couple or a small group of couples – full time or part-time)

The house parents are expected to move into the home and be resident continuously in the property, for a yearlong placement period. They provide a home-like environment and domestic routine consistent with the young people engaging in education, training or work, including the provision of meals and participating and facilitating other daily household and domestic chores/activities. They will be expected to establish appropriate and consistent personal relationships with the young people living at the home, including non-intrusive practical help and advice. House Parents will need to be mindful of the cultural and language barriers that may face the young people they are supporting and ensure they meet these needs effectively. They are responsible for maintaining the property and domestic/family chores.

Support Team

Service Manager and Support Workers:

These members of staff oversee placement and all assessments of young people who may be accommodated in the home. They are responsible for:

- Creating care plans and support plans with the young people
- Ensuring access to health care, education, legal advice, counselling, assessments, life skills
- On-site education
- On-site therapy
- Risk Assessments, safety plans, safeguarding, needs assessments
- Points of contacts for Social Workers and police/other agencies involved
- Attending and advocating for each child at strategy meetings
- 24/7 pick-up
- On call and initial 72 hour buddy support for new arrivals
- Supporting the House Parents.

Clinical Psychologist:

Will be employed part-time to work with the children and the staff team and direct their care and ensure support is appropriately tailored and consistent.

Reserve Volunteer House Parents:

Will cover for the House Parents one weekend a month and during the times House Parents take as holiday.

House Aunties and House Uncles

Will offer cover for the House Parents one weekend a month and during the times House Parents take as holiday. They will be part of the extended family unit and provide all the elements House Parents do.

Application Process

The process will be split into several stages

- A.** General Application
- B.** Interview for shortlisted potential volunteer house parents (full-time/part-time/Aunties & Uncles)
- C.** Health Screening Questionnaire for selected parties
- D.** DBS Check
- E.** Final Interview
- F.** Volunteer placement offered

Interview 1: Those shortlisted for interview (from Application Form) will be invited to attend an initial panel interview consisting of Unseen staff, Trustees and a Clinical Psychologist. This initial panel interview will be an in-depth process and will focus on, at a minimum, the following areas: motivation for doing role, personal background, social assessment, relationships, health and wellbeing, stress management, provision of quality of care. There will also be a psychometric testing section and interview time as a couple and as individuals.

Interview 2: Those shortlisted further will have a final panel interview with Unseen staff and independent experts (police, social worker and psychologist) and this will look in further detail into the aforementioned areas.

Health Screening Questionnaire: This element will cover the following areas: physical, mental and emotional health and be used to see if there are any issues that need further discussion or to be worked around by reasonable adjustment.