



Hello!

Thank you for your interest in
Family Volunteering Club (FVC).

We are on an exciting and ambitious journey to enable children and their families in towns, cities and villages across the UK to spend time volunteering together in their community. We are currently expanding our work to have a national impact. We are looking for support from partners who believe in our mission, and hope this document serves as a good introduction to our work. Our [website](#) and [Instagram page](#) have more images and videos which help bring the project to life.



It was so brilliant. I loved getting to know one of our local charities and feel really inspired to do more volunteering with my daughter in future. Thank you!



About

Imagine a society in which **every child understood** from a young age that their voice would be listened to, that **they could make direct positive change to issues that mattered to them**, and that helping in your community is important- and fun! FVC is doing just this.

FVC is a pioneering project, creating regular, fun and impactful volunteering programmes specifically designed for young children and the adults in their lives. From gardening in community spaces and organising clothes donations to connecting with isolated older members of the community and helping at food banks, we create opportunities for children and their grown-ups to learn about and practically support local causes.

We want to make civic participation as accessible, easy and part-and-parcel of family life as, for example, going to a sports lesson, or to the park.

We prioritise working in areas where children's voices are the least heard, where there are higher levels of deprivation, and where we feel we can make the biggest impact.

Our structured, 90-minute long sessions are led by a trained FVC facilitator. They typically start with a chance for the participating families to meet each other, and an introduction to the host organisation and their work. Families then have the opportunity to help with two or more hands-on tasks, from litter-picking to packing boxes to planting bulbs, with plenty of time to have fun and socialise during this time. Sessions end with a group story and snacktime.



I loved exposing my child to gardening – something we can't do in our flat! And spending time with other local parents doing something fun.



Children are empowered to learn- in an age-appropriate way – about important societal issues, get hands-on in making a practical difference, and understand the role that they can play in making positive change to issues that matter to them. We run sessions during the week for under 5s, and weekend / school holiday sessions for primary-aged children as well as under 5s (sibling groups often attend).

The project began in south London, where it continues to grow. We are now also delivering locally-run programmes in Stevenage, Abergavenny and Fenland. We are currently developing new pilot programmes for 2025 in Manchester and Birmingham. The model we have developed is highly replicable and we have had interest from over 30 other towns, boroughs and cities across the UK. We have ambitions for this to become a national project, benefitting thousands of children every week.

The challenges

We're living in a time full of change and challenge for people and the planet. Food poverty, climate change, isolation of marginalised people, homelessness – many of us are worried about these issues and our children are aware of them, too. **Engaging with these issues through voluntary work is a key step to helping make a difference at a local level.** However, some groups are currently unable to participate in volunteering – among them, families.

NCVO's Volunteering: A Family Affair? finds that volunteering rates drop when people have a baby. However, if a parent spends time volunteering, their child is more likely to do so. People with caring responsibilities often disengage with community participation; statistics show that the third most common barrier to volunteering is 'I have to look after children' (DCMS Community Life Survey, December 2024) and very few volunteering programmes allow young children to attend. We see that a large proportion of our population want to help in the community, but are unable to.



It was great! Love my son helping “the real world” and learning to help others so young.

Research is also clear about the great benefits of civic participation in young children. If a child is involved with social action before the age of 10, they are more than twice as likely to develop a ‘habit of service’ for later life than someone who starts after the age of 16, and if a child is involved in volunteering before the age of 13, their risk of having poor mental health is reduced by around 28 per cent. The Royal Foundation launched their campaign Shaping Us in 2023, recognising the crucial importance of the first 5 years of life. We know that positive early social and emotional development is considered critical for life chances, and that the ages of 4-11 are pivotal for shaping civic, social and political behaviours.

Crucially, Family Volunteering Club exists outside of the school system to enable family groups to participate together in their leisure time. When we create opportunities for children and adults to volunteer together, we unlock the skills, life experience and passion of adults and the energy, fresh ideas and engagement from a new generation of volunteers. We are investing in the future of the voluntary sector, and the future of our society.

Whilst the potential benefits of the programme are clear, there is nothing out there to help bridge this gap between a keen, untapped group of volunteers and the communities that need them – except Family Volunteering Club. FVC is well-positioned to grow as an inclusive, flexible and accessible programme for civic participation for families, helping nurture the next generation of global citizens.

Positive impact



FVC helps young children to:

- Feel **pride** in and connection with their local area – making it a place they want to spend their time and improve
- Learn **new skills** within a structured environment, which bolsters **school readiness** among under 5s
- **Have fun** with their parents / carers, bonding as they do enjoyable, altruistic work together
- Understand the power of their voice / actions and the **positive role** that they can play in their community, establishing foundations in civic participation for later life
- **Learn** about important societal issues in an age-appropriate way and begin to reflect on how things could be different
- Meet **new friends** and do fun, positive community work
- Build their **confidence**, nurturing a belief that they can make a difference, perhaps igniting a spark in them to engage further with a particular societal issue.

Adult participants can:

- Increase their **confidence** and meet other families / make new friends – a particular benefit for parents who have experienced isolation or mental health challenges after having a child
- **Give their ideas, time and energy** to local causes that matter to them
- **Have fun** with their child at the same time as doing something positive in the community, increasing child and parent attachment
- Develop new **practical skills**, helping with job readiness.



And for the local area:

We are supporting charities and causes to engage with families in their community and giving them extra people-power to complete essential volunteering tasks. We are helping organisations to upskill and think creatively about how they can welcome family groups to engage with their causes. This can lead to increased awareness of their work, gaining them new supporters (financial, advocacy or further volunteering) as well as connecting them with potential new users of their services.

FVC programmes are creating dynamic local networks of charitable organisations and local service providers including the local authority, family centres and social prescribers, who are working together to create a positive programme which transforms opportunities for local families to participate in their community.

The team and our journey so far

Family Volunteering Club was established in 2019 by Maddy Mills, a mum of two. Maddy's background is in the culture and community sectors, having worked in roles including: Producer at Southbank Centre, Festivals Manager at Kew Gardens and Director of Entelechy Arts. For 10 years Maddy was a regular volunteer with two charities working with homeless communities in London, but after having a child she had to stop – her availability changed and she wasn't able to take her son along. It became apparent that this was an issue for lots of parents and carers, and so she created Family Volunteering Club in response.

Maddy piloted FVC in autumn 2019 with organisations including: London Transport Museum, Draper Together, Ronald McDonald House and Bankside Open Spaces Trust and it was an immediate success. The programme has grown due to demand, with modest funding from Comic Relief, National Lottery, Postcode Lottery and Marks & Spencer, who recognised the potential for national reach. Pears Foundation came on board in 2023 to support some core costs and we also currently have support from organisations including Awards for All, The Evelyn Trust and City Bridge Foundation.



Our free sessions are often fully booked, and we receive unanimously positive feedback. We have partnered with different-sized causes including: Little Village, The Felix Project, Bee Urban, The Red Shed, Longmeadow Food Hub, Roots and Shoots and MYSocial.

At the end of 2022, Maddy left her role at Entelechy Arts to focus on growing FVC. Some key achievements since include: the delivery of pilots in Stevenage and Abergavenny, securing a pilot in Fenland, building strategic partnerships, taking part in The Big Help Out (supported by Mishcon de Reya LLP), appearing on radio and TV (**including live on BBC Breakfast**), **welcoming National Lottery CEO David Knott** as FVC was selected to be the backdrop for the National Lottery Community Fund's Corporate Strategy Launch, recruiting Trustees, and achieving charitable status. We are often invited to participate in sector events and podcasts around innovation and best practice, were a finalist for the prestigious Stephen Lloyd Award and also part of **The Funding Network's Festive Connector** in December 2024.



Our trustees

Our trustees bring a wealth of experience and networks to the organisation.



Jo Daniels

Head of Community at Marks and Spencer with responsibility for community and charity partnerships. Jo was previously Executive Director with Business in the Community.



Kerry Glencorse

Previously a literary agent and philanthropy manager, Kerry is now Senior Partnerships Manager at The Fore.



Salma Latif Hamid

A coordinator, campaigner and activist for organisations including The Trussell Trust, Food Justice Network and Birmingham Fair Housing Campaign. Salma is also a qualified primary school teacher.



Chinwe Russell
Co-Chair

A Nigerian-British entrepreneur and artist, with a background in business development, finance, and the arts, blending creativity with strategic insight.



Katy Sparrow Robins
Co-Chair

Founding CEO for Babyzone, a start-up early years charity. Before that, Katy was Head of South of England at Save the Children UK.

Our mission

is a big and bold one:

to build accessible and inclusive programmes within communities across the UK, transforming opportunities for families to participate in local social action



We are empowering young children to understand the role they have in their community, giving them new skills and opportunities in civic participation and experiencing all the physical and mental benefits that this brings.

We are building a national programme which will give hundreds of families every week the opportunity to participate in regular, fun, impactful, child-friendly volunteering sessions. Adults and children from all backgrounds will spend their time together, making positive change in their community and being inspired to stay involved with civic participation throughout their lives, hopefully helping to strengthen wider society in generations to come. The model of growth is robust, the time is now, and we are looking for partners to support us.

Thank you for your time!

Contact



maddy@familyvolunteeringclub.co.uk



www.familyvolunteeringclub.co.uk