



Free to Be Kids

Growing **children's** emotional health

Thrive Outside Volunteering Lead &
Residential Project Co-ordinator
Recruitment Pack

Thank you for your interest in working for Free to Be Kids (colloquially known as 'Free to Be' by our staff, children and volunteers). Our mission is to help some of the most disadvantaged children and young people in London to increase their sense of their own capacity, ultimately helping them to change their stories about who they are and who they can be.

Our main Thrive Outside programme takes particularly disadvantaged children on week long countryside breaks, helping them to feel special, valued, brave and successful. For those most in need, we provide follow on support through further small group residential or one to one mentoring. Last year we provided 165 residential breaks for disadvantaged children who would otherwise have had no respite from very challenging home circumstances. By 2020 we aim to increase this number to approaching 300.

We founded Free to Be in late 2015, and have grown from being entirely volunteer-run, to becoming an established organisation with fantastic outcomes. Over the last year we have gained accreditation from London Youth, secured salary funding to employ the charity's first two staff members, and had our work endorsed by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, through his Young Londoners Fund, and by The Fore Trust, who identify and incubate exceptional early stage charities. The successful candidate will help us take our next major step forward - leading on significantly growing our 100 strong volunteer pool. They will also coordinate/take other prominent roles on approximately seven residential projects each year, helping create incredible experiences for children who really need our support.

If successful, you will be joining our team at a particularly exciting time - working alongside us, the charity's Founders, to grow and develop our Thrive Outside programme. You'll be at the centre of our work, gaining significant experience and in-depth insight into varied aspects of charity management, as you help us to create the foundations for the charity's ongoing success and growth.

Free to Be is a charity built around the core idea that people coming together with passion and commitment can achieve incredible things for vulnerable children. We are proud of our determination and can do approach - our staff and volunteers go the extra mile, whether it's sticking with a young person through the wind and rain as they figure out a problem, or learning new skills ourselves to respond to challenges as they arise. If this approach resonates with you too, we look forward to receiving your application!

Rachel Nichols & Mike Gee, Co-Founders

“ We believe in childhood, muddy trainers, new challenges, self expression, and real human relationships. Our aim is to open up a sense of adventure, freedom and possibility for children who are struggling, whatever life's circumstances. ”

-From our website



Job Description

Thrive Outside Volunteering Lead & Residential Project Co-ordinator

Salary: £28,000 (With potential to rise above £30,000 over the employment period)

Hours: 37 hours per week

Leave: 46 days per year, inclusive of bank holidays and pre-set reward days. (Yes, we know how generous this is! But we ask a lot in return - see note 1)

Working pattern: Flexible outside core hours. (See note 2)

Contract Length: Fixed Term until October 2021, with potential for extension.

Reports to: Leadership team

The position is based in Central-South London, at our shared office space. Optional home working may be possible for one day per week after successful probation. In addition, attendance at a minimum of 7 six night residential projects per year is a core component of this role. (See note 3.)

Job Purpose:

The position is a dual role. You'll lead on all aspects of volunteer recruitment, management and support - aiming to double our pool of committed regular volunteers from a little over 100 now, to approaching 200 by 2021. You'll also help lead at least 7 of our residential projects across each year - working on the ground with the kids, leading the volunteers, and helping make the projects special, safe and transformative for vulnerable children.

Key Responsibilities:

Volunteering lead (approx. 60% of workload)

Our current volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds, with large numbers of university students, young professionals and teachers and a growing group of semi-retired or retired people. This role will involve creating new relationships with potential volunteer recruitment sources, including universities, community volunteering hubs and employers, and ensuring high volunteer retention by supporting and developing our existing volunteers, making sure they feel valued, included and right at the heart of the Free to Be team.



- Take lead responsibility for volunteer recruitment and support, thinking creatively and inventively about how to engage 50 new volunteers each year whilst maintaining existing volunteer involvement.
- Build new, and manage existing, relationships with potential volunteer recruitment sources, such as universities, employers and community volunteering hubs. Provide a vibrant and welcoming presence at recruitment fairs and networking events, to raise awareness and act as an ambassador for the charity, finding and inspiring people with the right skills and mindset to come and be part of our team.
- Create and manage high quality communications and social media posts to raise awareness of our volunteering opportunities.
- Provide friendly assistance and efficient support to all volunteers, existing and new, ensuring they complete all safer recruitment processes and training.
- Lead on matching volunteers to projects, and maintaining accurate records for all volunteers using our administrative processes.
- Alongside Free to Be's Leadership Team, oversee training for all volunteers - both liaising with external providers and creating, organising and delivering our in house training programmes.
- Gather feedback and evaluation from existing volunteers to feed into our ongoing development.

Thrive Outside Project Coordination (approx. 40% of workload):

Our residential projects are immersive, exhausting in all the right ways, and full of opportunities for children to feel included, valued and successful. Children usually spend 5 days at a time with us - many will paddle in the sea for the first time, play hide and seek in the woods, build rafts, canoe across lakes, visit farms, forests, ruined castles and splash through streams. A small number of projects are camping based, but most run from a variety of residential centres which we hire across the South-East of England. The majority of these projects take place between Easter and the end of October half term, particularly in the July-August school holidays.

We want you to play a key part in at least 7 such projects a year. Initially spending time in the different project roles (working intensively with small groups of children; providing floating support to the project co-ordinators; perhaps overseeing catering or driving our minibuses). Once you are familiar with the way projects work, we will support you to progress to lead and coordinate them, working alongside a member of our Leadership Team or an experienced volunteer. This will involve managing teams of between 5 and 25 volunteers, to oversee the wellbeing of between 10 and 40 children and young people per project.

Jointly with the other project co-ordinator, you will:

- Take lead responsibility for the organisation, structure, and safe running of the project.
- Provide leadership, support and direction to the project's volunteer team. Setting the tone and ethos of the project, understanding and modelling Free to Be's approach to supporting young people, and leading the team to create the best experience possible for the children
- Build excellent working relationships with Free to Be's children and young people, ensuring they feel welcomed and included and that their safety and support needs are fully met during the project.
- Support the volunteer team to respond effectively and in a positive manner to children's presenting behaviour, risk issues (including safeguarding issues), or other challenges which may arise.
- Liaise with the paren/carers of Free to Be children, building positive and supportive relationships, understanding many may have been let down by statutory or other organisations in the past.
- Work to ensure safety and quality standards on residentials are of the highest level by ensuring Free to Be's policies and processes, (including safeguarding, health and safety) are implemented at all times and issues are efficiently and constructively problem-solved, with the support of the leadership team.
- Be the ultimate problem solver on the project - anything can happen, and frequently does!

As a small but fast growing charity, we may also, from time to time, ask you to step in and support with other tasks in line with the development of the organisation.

Important Notes about this Position:

“An amazing part of working with Free to Be is the community you become part of. I've met so many funny, passionate and positive people through this organisation.”
- Volunteer

Note 1: Leave consists of 25 days annual leave, 13 reward days which are pre-set by Free to Be (usually a fortnight in mid-late September and 3 days at Christmas) and the 8 bank holidays. Where bank holidays fall during a residential, alternative dates will be agreed in lieu. Due to Free to Be's core work falling in the Easter and Summer school holidays, leave at these times of year is restricted.

Note 2: Weekend and late working is an ordinary part of Free to Be's residential projects. All staff attending a residential are given two 'rest days' (in effect days off) which are always taken immediately after return from a residential. We do not run a time off in lieu system in relation to residentials and the significant extra hours worked during these times are rewarded via the 13 pre-set reward days in September and at Christmas each year.

Note 3: Attendance at 7 residential projects each year (totalling approximately 45 days and nights) at various locations across the South of England is a requirement of the role. Some additional non-overnight travel to represent Free to Be at volunteer fairs across the South is also required. Car use or ownership is not required.

Safeguarding, Equality & Diversity and our Code of Conduct

As a charity working with vulnerable children, some of whom will at times display behavioural challenges and all of whom will have experienced real hardship within their childhoods, we uphold the highest levels of safeguarding practice. We will support you to develop knowledge and skills in this area as it is a requirement of the role that you respond effectively, safely and robustly to safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection issues arising within your work with Free to Be.

We require all staff to work in accordance with Free to Be's Code of Conduct, values, ethos and core principles and to build positive and respectful relationships with all other staff, volunteers, children, their families, and other organisations encountered as part of your work with Free to Be.



Person Specification:

We're looking for someone a little bit different. We believe this is an exciting role with a rare combination of management responsibility in an ambitious and growing charity, and opportunity to develop your skills in working with particularly vulnerable children. It would suit someone with a genuine drive to work in the charity sector, who has some experience already, but who is perhaps stepping into a paid management role for the first time. They have likely held some level of responsibility previously in other organisations, potentially on a voluntary basis. Certainly, they will have a real passion for, and experience of, working with disadvantaged children. More than anything else, we're looking for the right person, whatever their past experience, who is passionate to go the extra mile in joining our growing Free to Be family.

| Qualifications | Essential/Desirable |
|---|---------------------|
| Degree (any subject, at least 2.2 or above), or equivalent other qualification. | <i>Essential</i> |
| Core Skills | |
| Excellent people skills – from running training with a room full of people, to coaxing an upset and angry 10 year old out of a stressful situation, you need to be a real star at building relationships with a very diverse range of children and adults. | <i>Essential</i> |
| A natural strength in relating to children. | <i>Essential</i> |
| Capacity to speak and write with passion, conveying key messages simply and persuasively. | <i>Essential</i> |
| Flexibility – we can't stress how key this is. Our shared responsibility is to do whatever it takes to deliver the projects our children need. This can involve stepping into unfamiliar areas of work, doing the unexpected, out of hours working, and taking a dynamic, proactive role to Make Things Happen. | <i>Essential</i> |
| Resilience and capacity to stay positive, showing persistence and creativity when things don't go to plan. | <i>Essential</i> |
| Good situational judgement. We will develop your knowledge around subjects like safeguarding and working with complex young people but you need existing skills in making balanced, sensible, but sometimes quick, decisions in fast-paced environments. | <i>Essential</i> |
| Organisation - you must be able to work quickly and accurately, prioritising competing demands, and managing your time efficiently. | <i>Essential</i> |
| Able to work both independently (sometimes remotely) and as part of a tight knit team. | <i>Essential</i> |
| Keen to take on responsibility, to grow, and to develop. | <i>Essential</i> |
| Demonstrable skill in working with children with more complex needs. | <i>Desirable</i> |
| Clean driving licence and willingness to drive a minibus on occasion. | <i>Desirable</i> |
| Previous Experience | |
| Previous experience working directly with children aged 8-16. | <i>Essential</i> |
| Must be able to demonstrate having taken on positions of responsibility and leadership, playing a key role in making things happen, (this may have been on a voluntary basis). | <i>Essential</i> |

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| Project management – taking the lead organising a group of people to get a task done, whether or not it relates to children. | <i>Essential</i> |
| Prior experience in recruitment and support of volunteers. | <i>Desirable</i> |
| Prior involvement in leading and organising university societies/groups – significantly increasing student volunteering across multiple universities is a key target of the role. | <i>Desirable</i> |
| Experience of working directly with children with emotional or behavioural needs, or who have other complex life circumstances. | <i>Desirable</i> |
| Prior experience of residential project work with children | <i>Desirable</i> |
| Responsibility for managing groups of children whether on residentials, on outings, or via other activity. | <i>Desirable</i> |
| Knowledge | |
| Knowledge of, and strong interest in, issues impacting the adversity faced by the families Free to Be supports and the children's charity sector more broadly. | <i>Essential</i> |
| Good familiarity with MS Office, Google Suite and Skype. | <i>Essential</i> |
| Social media savvy – able to create effective content on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram | <i>Desirable</i> |
| Other | |
| A genuine, and demonstrable, interest in a career working with vulnerable children. | <i>Essential</i> |
| Able to be away from London for a minimum of 7 week long residential projects per year. | <i>Essential</i> |
| A sense of adventure and desire to be part of something powerful and immersive which makes a real difference to children who need it. This is not a typical role, and to succeed you will need to be looking for more than just career progression. | <i>Essential</i> |
| A passion for nature, the outdoors and/or work with animals, and a belief in the value these mediums bring to work with vulnerable children. | <i>Desirable</i> |
| An ability to 'rough it' a little whilst away on residential projects - you'll need to be happy camping and staying in relatively basic group accommodation (think bunk beds or air mattresses and communal bathrooms!), | <i>Desirable</i> |



Staff Benefits:

As a Free to Be staff member, you'll benefit from:

- Generous holiday allowance (see Job Description for details)
- Paid sickness, and emergency leave (up to 10 days per year)
- Perkbox membership, with access to half price cinema tickets, discounts of up to 20% at local restaurants and a range of other rewards to supplement your salary and recognise your commitment.
- Enrolment in NEST pension scheme - Free to Be pay annual employer contributions equivalent to 3% of your base salary, rising by 1% for every two years of service, up to a maximum of 5%.

“Free to Be has really changed my life. The attention I got from the adults was just unreal. I could actually trust someone outside my family and that was really helpful. Before, I wasn't really an outgoing person, but it's weird because now I'm motivated to do things - it unlocked that door for me.”

- Jordan, Young Leader, 15

How to Apply:

Please complete our [application form](#) and send it by email to employment@freetobekids.org.uk. The closing date for applications is **Thursday 31st January 2019**.

Interviews will be taking place on **7th and 8th February**. We may ask potential candidates to return for a second interview the following week. We aim to confirm appointment by 15th February with a planned start date of mid-late March.

The role requires an Enhanced DBS check. Whilst a previous conviction will not necessarily prevent you from joining our team, we would expect you to disclose any convictions or cautions as part of your application. The appointment is subject to references (taken up after offer). We will also need to obtain proof of your right to work in the UK prior to appointment.

If you have any questions about the role, you can contact us by emailing the above address and we'd be happy to arrange a chat over the phone. We look forward to hearing from you!



Further Information about our work:

Thrive Outside is Free to Be's main programme for children and young people. It uses therapeutically structured residentials to support children and young people to develop self-confidence, build capacity to overcome challenges and create a sense of belonging. Gateway residential projects, based in countryside settings, engage and build relationships with children and young people at the start of their involvement with Free to Be. Nature based activities, time spent with animals, cooking and the arts are used as vehicles to engage children in relational work alongside high ratios of adult volunteers. The intensity, sense of immersion and belonging built through these projects allow Free to Be to assess children's core needs, whilst also building trust and positive relationships, creating a valuable opportunity to understand and begin to work alongside children who may struggle to engage with more traditional, clinic-based interventions.

Having engaged children and young people through a Gateway residential, longer term Journey Plans are then created for the highest need children who need ongoing support. These are tailored to need and may consist of recurring respite, individual mentoring, or follow on more specialised, residential work through sequenced series of Journey Projects across the year. Journey Projects have a focus on developing confidence, relational skills and self-belief in young people who schools or other referrers see as particularly at risk. They have an adult to child ratio approaching one to one.

The majority of children we work with are aged 8 – 14. Most are referred to us by schools, local authority social workers, other family support organisations or parents/carers who self-refer. Most children and young people we support are in mainstream school, though many are struggling to manage and some may be at risk of exclusion. All have experienced hardship including severe poverty, housing instability, parental difficulties with drugs or alcohol, historical trauma or abuse. As a result, some display a level of behavioural difficulty, but never at a level of requiring specialist knowledge or skills, and training and support in responding to such challenges will be provided. Familiarity in working with disadvantaged children will provide a good foundation for this role.

You may also like to have a look at:

Our website: www.freetobekids.org.uk

Our latest Impact Report which is available [here](#).

Our Code of Conduct, Safeguarding and behaviour policies: extracted from our Policy Handbook [here](#).

Our volunteering recruitment video: available on the volunteering page of our website or on [Youtube](#).





www.freetobekids.org.uk

