



Little Hearts Matter

Youth Support Volunteers

The support of children, teenage and adult members sits at the very heart of the work of the charity.

As our youth members grow older they start to notice the differences between themselves and their peers, question their future and look for advice on how to manage their day to day lives with half a working heart.

They are in search of information, a greater understanding and most of all care and support from people who understand their journey.

Although the LHM team have travelled the path with many members and have collected knowledge and understanding along that journey they can never say they have lived with the challenges that living with half a heart brings.

It is so important to be able to offer members the special support that comes from young adult members that have travelled the same journey as themselves, being able to see the achievements and milestones others have made with a single ventricle heart can create confidence at an otherwise very daunting time.

There are a number of opportunities for members to become Youth Support Volunteers.

Youth Social Media Support Services

Youth Support volunteers are there to offer:

- Insight into life with single ventricle heart disease.
- A listening ear in times of stress and worry.
- A signposting service to other support or information services.
- Report/refer concerns about members' worries to the main office team.
- An ability to answer queries on the open/closed youth pages as well as chat groups.

Youth Specialist one to one support

The LHM team like to offer one to one specialist support. Sometimes a young person approaches the charity wanting to talk to someone that understands. Being able to refer to a safe young adult that can impart knowledge, support and

understanding at these times can really help alleviate feelings of isolation and sadness.

Are there any restrictions on who can become a Youth Support Volunteer?

We are looking for young adults that are living with a single ventricle heart or used to and have been the recipient of a heart transplant and are LHM members.

All Youth Support Volunteers must be aged 18 or above.

All Youth Support Volunteers must be able to fill out and provide an LHM enhanced DBS.

The LHM service team run volunteering training events where Adults with a SVHC can chat to other volunteers and the LHM team to discover if the Youth Support Volunteer role is a good fit for them.

As this role involves working with young people under 18 training with Lexie will be required.

Normally personal experience is a huge asset but the LHM team like to wait until a potential volunteer is at least two years from their own initial, often emotional, experiences before they train to become a volunteer supporter.

All volunteers are able to take a step back from their support role if their personal journey becomes challenging. For example they become unwell, another family member is unwell or stressed or if the volunteer themselves needs a break from the support role.

Some of the attributes LHM would be seeking are:

- Being able to listen.
- Being able to provide support and encouragement.
- Being able to follow the LHM safeguarding protocol should an incident arise
- Being able to support and care in a professional way.
- Ability to signposting to specialist support.
- Being able to share personal experiences without dominating a conversation.
- Understanding when it is a good idea to seek support.
- The ability to cope with the emotions of members seeking support.

If you are interested in becoming a Youth Support Volunteer just give Lexie a ring on 0121 455 8982 or email her on lexie@lhm.org.uk

Thank you.