

Further information

<i>Volunteer activity</i>	Counsellor for Childline
<i>What I do</i>	Working at the Liverpool Street base for London Childline, I answer the phone and responding to the MSN service online to any children that call.
<i>Time commitment</i>	Four hours a week. I do a session on a Wednesday evening from 9pm – 1am. The centre is open 24/7 and operates a number of four-hour sessions through the day and night. The evening sessions are the busiest for children calling and also the hardest to get volunteers to cover.
<i>Why I do it</i>	<p>I thought that it would give me skills and incite into talking to children and young people that would help me with my own kids. In fact it has given me much much more, the organisation is full of fascinating people with a wealth of professional expertise.</p> <p>Most of all you really can help children. Some evenings there are up to 100 kids waiting to talk to someone with nowhere near enough counsellors. I talk to children who have just run away from home, who are being abused or bullied and am constantly staggered by their thoughtful and insightful approaches. Just by exploring the options that they have available and providing them with empathy and time to be listened to, they make brave and difficult choices which will help them get out of the difficulties that they are in.</p>
<i>Downsides</i>	<p>The downside is when you look at all things you have going on in your life it is often hard to see how you can find the time for this each week, but the value that is placed in the volunteers, and the sharp reminder that if you don't go, those kids will have no one to talk to that night, makes the commitment easy.</p> <p>Not all calls end as you would wish, the feeling that you should jump in the car and rescue kids from situations is very hard to suppress sometimes and inevitably sometimes the situations are not resolvable.</p>
<i>What to do next</i>	<p>The Childline web site has details of how to register to be a volunteer. There are regular information days. The process of becoming a volunteer counsellor requires that you have an interview and then attend a course which is held over about ten weeks, for 4 hours a week, usually at the time of the shift that you have opted to attend.</p> <p>http://www.nspcc.org.uk/getinvolved/volunteer/childline/childlinevolunteering_wda56391.html</p>