Stork and the Bees

Volunteer Information and Agreement

We're delighted you would like to get involved with Stork and the Bees.

Volunteer support is much needed to keep the library going and very much appreciated. We aim to make your time with us as easy and enjoyable as possible, and hope you find volunteering with Stork and the Bees a rewarding experience. We find that spreading the joy and knowledge around carrying and reusable nappies is a privilege that brings huge satisfaction. Being able to assist families at any phase of their journey, enabling safety and empowering their decisions is a powerful way of supporting our community.

This document is designed to outline what to expect, what we offer you in return and how the group works. If you have any questions at any point, please speak to one of the committee members (Helena, Crystal and Sam).

About Stork and the Bees

Stork and the Bees is a not-for-profit constituted group that provides independent and impartial advice for parents, carers and the community about baby carriers, slings and reusable nappies.

Our monthly community baby library, incorporates slings/ carriers and reusable nappies. We also offer carrying consultancy. We aim to promote positive attachment and responsive parenting, through safe and comfortable use of carriers / slings. We are passionate about helping families find the right sling for them, which means it is well fitting, appropriate for their needs and that we support them to confirm the safety and comfort for both baby and adult when using the sling.

We truly believe in the positive power and benefits using a sling or carrier offers to the baby, the wearer, the family and indeed the whole of society.

We also seek to support families on their reusable nappy journey through offering advice in the choice, use and care of reusable nappies, and making low-cost kits and individual nappies available to hire.

Stork and the Bees began in 2016 and is run by a qualified carrying consultant, supported by a team of passionate volunteers all with personal experience of carrying, reusable nappies or both. We are working towards providing training for our volunteers to become certified peer supporters and/or consultants which will enable us to offer greater support to the community. Please see further note on training below.

Our services offer an opportunity for families to join a community where carrying children and using reusable nappies is the norm – for any number of practical, social, emotional and environmental reasons. For those wishing to begin their carrying or reusable nappy journey, or to progress, with support, onto the next stages, we offer education, practical tips and safety advice, with a large number of different slings, carriers and nappies for families to try.

We support families in carrying their infants and/or using reusable nappies from pregnancy, through the very early days and for as long as the parent and the child want to carry on, building friendships and forming positive societal engagements as we go.

We use an online portal called Lend Engine for all our transactions. This can be found at hire.storkandthebees.com

Our structure

We are constituted group, with a committee who govern the running of the group. If you would like to find out more about the committee, the positions or getting in volved in the running of the group, please speak to a committee member and see the Committee Roles and Responsibilities document.

We offer the following services:

- Low-cost hire of slings, carriers, reusable nappies and accessories – see the range at hire.storkandthebees.com
- Sale of some slings and carriers (Hana and ex-stock)
- Social library sessions
- Sling walks
- 1-1 consultations
- Workshops on various topics
- Email support
- Talks and demonstrations, e.g. at family centres, NCT sessions and baby shows

Volunteer Roles

There are several different voluntary roles available. An individual can hold more than one role at the same time.

The role of welcome / befriender and library administration

This role of 'welcome' is vital to allow our library sessions to successfully support families who visit us. This role includes:

- acknowledging those who attend as they arrive
- sharing an overview of how the library works
- asking clients to sign in at the library sessions
- ensuring clients are registered with our hire portal
- keeping track of items being hired and checking them back in (by writing details on the sign in sheet)
- making parents feel welcome,
- chatting with them about their child and support they are hoping for
- perhaps sharing some general babywearing / cloth bum tips (e.g. keeping warm in winter. This does NOT include offering advice in any form on use or safety of a carrier).

The role of the peer supporter

Peer supporters offer basic help and guidance to parents in finding a suitable sling for the age and stage of the child. This role requires at least six months of personal babywearing experience using a variety of slings and the undertaking of a one-day training course (paid for by the library, see notes below). Peer supporters help enable parents to feel confident in their chosen sling and can encourage parents to hire a sling if that would be beneficial.

Online representation

This role is ideal for those who would like to volunteer but who aren't able to commit to attending regular library sessions. For this we ask that you join us in our social media and engage with us by 'liking', 'commenting' and 'sharing'. Each of these things encourages a wider reach for us and help to spread the word and love. This is crucial to the success of the sling library as social media is the primary way parents find out about events/classes/organisations.

Other options for online engagement are in offering reviews for items that we have available for hire, or the activities we provide. First hand experience can be really useful for those new to this field, or curious to try something new. We have a growing number of reviews on our website and are always happy to receive more.

What we promise to you

Here is some information about some practical aspects of volunteering with Stork and the Bees and our commitment to you. (More information can be found in the appropriate policy as indicated.)

Free hires

As a volunteer we offer you free hire of any of the library stock, with our support in using it. All items will be allocated via our hire portal. You can choose any item you wish at any time but if client wishes to hire the same item, we'll ask you to return it and choose something else/ try it another time.

Supervision, support and training

All volunteers will be introduced to the Committee and will be given a named person to support them during their time with Stork and the Bees. This is someone with whom they can discuss their volunteering experience and share any issues or problems they're facing. We also have a team WhatsApp for our volunteers which is a supportive and safe place to share, support and help one another.

Through engaging with the library, you'll be exposed to a range of carriers and nappies, and conversation around them. This immersion will increase your background knowledge and we encourage questions and active engagement with any new items to become familiar with them, trying out any you'd like to learn more about. We will keep you up to date with new items which are to be included in our library stock and ensure you are happy with any new aspects of babywearing / events applicable to our library. If you wish to learn to use our hire portal, Lend Engine user guide can be made available alongside in-person guidance on using the system.

Where funding allows, we aim to provide periodic training through recognised training providers. This might include:

- Peer Support
- Consultancy
- First Aid
- Safeguarding

Training will be paid for by Stork and the Bees in full for volunteers who are able to commit to attending regularly. If for any reason you need to stop volunteering within 2 months of a single-day training course or within 5 months of a multi-day training course, a proportion of the training fees will be requested back.

Insurance

We have insurance cover for volunteer peer supporters and includes any work carried out by them in a volunteer capacity at sling library sessions, so long as they have been approved first (applicable appropriate training needed). We will provide adequate insurance at no cost to you that will cover you within your role of a qualified peer supporter volunteering for Stork and the Bees. Please be aware that the insurance is only valid whilst at our library sessions or other official events.

Health, safety and safeguarding

We do not want volunteers to undertake any activity on our behalf that could have an adverse effect

on their wellbeing. Therefore, a risk assessment has been carried out for each sling library session. In addition, the safeguarding of our volunteers and library users of the utmost importance. Please note that Samantha Griffin is the named safeguarding officer.

In accordance with Data Protection we will not pass on your details to any other organisation or company, without your consent.

What we ask of you:

As a volunteer, we ask you to:

- Read and acknowledge the primary purpose of Stork and the Bees, as stated in our Constitution
- Read and be familiar with our terms and conditions of hire
- Read and be familiar with the different service offered, including the library, sling walks, nappy kit hires and consultations.
- understand that you will be representing an organisation and a community committed to maintaining high standards of professional standard both at sling meets and online when engaging with clients and families at library sessions, sling walks, other events and on our social media
- Ensure you understand the role you are volunteering for and stick to it – we aim to be approachable, so when you require support, need questions answered or have feedback, please let us know and we will assist / respond as best we can.
- If you are a peer supporter, ensure you only deal with standard, basic babywearing cases as per your training
- As a peer supporter, ensure you are teaching using approved methods of sling use
- Make sure that safety is paramount in your mind, reporting any near misses or incidents to a committee member as soon as it is safe to do so.
- Offer feedback and ideas to the Committee so we can grow and improve the library where feasible

Commitment level

We ask that as a volunteer for us you attend at least one event per two months (library, sling walk, or online presence). This is to ensure that you are kept up-to-date with current slings in the library and any new practises and admin we are implementing. We understand that family life is very busy and so we remain flexible and grateful for any help you can give. We are a child friendly library and so your children are very welcome to come along with you while you volunteer for us, although they remain your responsibility while at library sessions.

The agreement is binding in honour only and is not intended as a legally binding contract and may be withdrawn at any time at the discretion of either party, neither does it intend any employment relationship to be created either now or at any time in the future.

This is an agreement in principle and not meant as a legally binding contract.

Volunteer role	On behalf of Stork and the Bees
Name	Name .....
Signed	Signed.....
Date	Date.....