

Stories of Interest Volunteer

Volunteer Title:	Stories of Interest Volunteer
Project:	NLHF: Voices Through Time: The Story of Care
Supervised by:	Volunteer Coordinator and Programme Archivist
Location:	Working from home Occasional visits to the London Metropolitan Archive and Coram campus office
Salary:	Voluntary
Commitment:	3 hours per week (worked flexibly) The project will last for 6 months

About Coram

Established by campaigner Thomas Coram as The Foundling Hospital, [Coram](#) is the UK's oldest children's charity and has been supporting vulnerable children for over 280 years. Coram helps children and young people develop their skills and emotional health, finds adoptive parents and upholds children's rights; creating a change that lasts a lifetime. We now help a million children and young people every year, continuing our work as the first children's charity and birthplace of children's social care in the UK.

About Voices through Time: The Story of Care

[Voices Through Time: The Story of Care](#) is a programme run by Coram and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, where we are revealing untold stories about the lives of children and young people at the Foundling Hospital.

The Foundling Hospital was the UK's first home for children whose mothers were unable to care for them, also known as 'Foundlings'. On the Voices Through Time programme we have digitised over 100,000 records from the Coram Foundling Hospital archive, and we'll be making them available online, so people can learn about its history and the history of children in care over time.

As part of the programme, we are transcribing the archive records through an online volunteer project. We are also running creative projects with young people who have been in care, where they explore the Foundling Hospital history and their own experiences of care through the archive records.

Your purpose:

To uncover, research and write the stories of Foundlings (children and young people at the Foundling Hospital) from the 1740s to the 1880s, using digitised records from our archive.

Your main tasks and responsibilities:

- Learn about the Foundling Hospital and its history, through Coram articles, secondary sources and talks
- Get to know Coram's Foundling Hospital archive, using the archive records, catalogue, research guides and participating in online talks and trainings
- Research the lives of Foundling children and young people, using the archival documents and other public records, plus secondary material that reveals the historical context of the time
- Write an article telling the story of the Foundling you've researched, to be published online
- Attend regular sessions with the Archivist and Volunteer Coordinator to learn, develop your skills and update on your progress
- Share about your Foundling story and your experience of researching on social media, our website and to volunteers and staff
- Fully commit to the volunteering role: dedicate time each week to carry out the research and writing, submitting your work by the deadlines set

Optional:

- Respond creatively to your Foundling story: through writing, art, photography, video or another creative form
- Encourage and engage in discussion about the Foundling Hospital and the records in the volunteer message boards

The skills and experience you will need:

- A passion for history and an interest in learning about the history of the Foundling Hospital
- An interest in social history / archives / heritage / social care or other similar fields
- A respect for historic records and a willingness to learn how to use them
- Excellent writing skills
- Strong communication and interpersonal skills; an ability to work well in a team
- Good organisational and administrative skills; an ability to meet deadlines and maintain a record of your work
- An interest in telling the stories of young people who have been in institutional care

Desirable

- Experience of research in history or the social sciences
- An ability to read old handwriting
- An interest in getting creative with your research

What you can gain from volunteering:

By volunteering, you will have the opportunity to:

- Delve into our archive and access the fascinating Foundling Hospital records
- Gain experience of using primary source documents and working with archives
- Develop skills in research, writing and presenting
- Gain experience of palaeography (reading old handwriting)
- Learn about the history of The Foundling Hospital and the history of social care
- Receive guidance from archivists and historians about using and understanding historical records, and gain an insight into the field
- Take part in a unique public history project and connect with other young people who are interested in this kind of research
- The option to use and develop your creative skills in relation to History

Travel and food expenses will be paid on the days you are visiting the archive or Coram office.