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| Volunteer Role | ASN Helpline Volunteer – Polish and English speaking |
| Team | Operations |
| Time Commitment | One week shift, approximately every 5 weeks |
| Length of Role | Indefinite, request one-year commitment |
| Location | Remote based, must be able to travel to central London for in person team meetings 1-2 times per year, usually held on weekday evenings. |

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| Role Description |
| Thank you for your interest in becoming a helpline team volunteer with Abortion Support Network. ASN is a largely volunteer-run charity that provides practical information on the least expensive way to arrange travel and abortion, money towards the cost of abortion and travel, and, when needed, accommodation in volunteer homes or in paid accommodation. We currently provide this service to people resident in Ireland, Northern Ireland, the Isle of Man, Malta, Gibraltar and Poland.  Where requested, ASN also gives information on the reputable online providers of early medical abortion pills that are safe (according to the World Health Organisation, amongst others) but could result in criminal prosecution in clients’ country of residence.  ASN was established in a manner similar to other practical support networks that exist in the United States, and currently works in partnership with abortion support groups in Germany, Holland and Poland.  It’s hard to put into words what exactly the role entails, but we’ll give it a try. After you’ve read the following, you can decide if think you’d enjoy working with us. All prospective helpline volunteers undergo an interview and a reference check, followed by a helpline team training and a safeguarding training. There will be many opportunities to ask questions.  ASN does not have an office. We have few staff and count on our volunteers. We have volunteer fundraisers, IT support, social media folk, marketing people – everything you’d expect a charity to have. Our frontline volunteers are the helpline team, accommodation team and our volunteer hosts, who (when there isn’t a pandemic on) put clients up in their homes.  Our client services are managed by a helpline that runs using an App that can be downloaded onto any smartphone, and some documents (client database, manual, etc) that are kept on a shared drive. The phone team has grown as ASN has grown, from 1 person to 4, 8, 12. As call volume has increased, we are moving to a team of 15, with 3 people on shift at any one time, splitting the shift, to prevent overload and burnout, and to ensure our volunteers have the time to give each caller the attention they deserve.  In the current landscape, (post Repeal Ireland, post Tribunal Poland) and with both recent and planned launches to other countries, ASN is playing things by ear, and this role is best suited to people who enjoy working flexibly, reactively and responsively - problem-solving and learning as they go.  Helpline shifts last for one week, from Tuesday evening to Tuesday evening. Shifts are agreed by the team and of course the schedule can be changed as necessary by swapping shifts. Helpline volunteers can be remotely based. However, you must be able to attend 6 team meetings per year. While most of these meetings are now held by video conference, once or twice per year in person meetings are required for reasons of team building and self care. In person meetings will only occur again once it is safe.  Helpline volunteers have the following responsibilities:   * First point of contact for people who call or email ASN seeking help * Providing practical information such as clinics, least expensive methods of travel, info about reputable family planning clinics, etc * Assessing financial need and awarding grants * Liaising with our partner clinics to arrange funding * Informing relevant people of any grants given * Ensuring that any client needing to stay overnight is passed over to the accommodation coordination team * Attending 6 mandatory team meetings per year on the first Monday of every even numbered month   It sounds like a lot, but you will be trained, provided with an instruction manual, and will have support from other members of the helpline team, the other people on shift with you, and either ASN’s Founder or Service and Volunteer Coordinator, one of which is always on call to support the helpline team.  ASN’s helpline is the link between people in difficult circumstances and the funding and information that can help them, and, while we do have some rules and regulations, at the end of the day we are dealing with human lives and all of the complexities that can arrive when you step into someone else’s life. One of the most invigorating aspects of having the phone is that no two calls are the same.  **One of our former helpline volunteers had this to say:**  ''Being a phone volunteer for ASN is one of the most rewarding things I have ever done. I have never felt so useful, just being able to do something, however small, to offer logistical or financial support to people often in utter despair over a situation that they shouldn't have to face in this way. At first, I was nervous about whether I would be of any use, or able to handle the difficult calls, but the rest of the team are always incredibly supportive so I never felt alone. Also, I soon realized that almost all the callers mainly need just a calm, supportive, non-judgmental voice at the other end of the phone, and all the rest is a bonus. Very quickly, after hearing just a few of the stories and circumstances, you realize just how badly this service is needed. We play a small but incredibly vital role helping to alleviate the distress of clients of all ages, who are generally in crisis and feel totally alone - we are a strong sole voice of help they do not need to be afraid of.”  **How much time will it take?**  All our helpline volunteers have “day jobs”, and this role is manageable around work and other life commitments. We would not recommend this role, however, for someone who would never be able to make a call during the workday, or who could not ever send a text or check email. We are a helpline and not a hotline and try and respond to all calls and emails within 24 hours. Most of our volunteers do not answer live calls but respond to voicemails and emails. However, emergencies do take place, and if, for instance, there were 5 missed calls from the same number in a short space of time, we’d expect you to either be able to check the message or send a text to the other people sharing your shift or to the manager on call to make sure things are ok. Overall, you can expect to spend 1-3 hours per day during weeks you are on shift. |

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| Skills/Knowledge/Experience |
| **Required**   * Fluency in written and spoken Polish and English * Pro-choice ethos * Empathy * A good sense of humour * Ability to think on your feet * Able to work independently * Able to work as part of a team   **Desired**   * Experience of dealing or working with people at risk or in crisis   **Other**  There are no essential skills or knowledge required for this role although if you have experience of working with vulnerable or at-risk people and/or an easy going nature that’s a bonus. A sense of humour, compassion, the ability to think on your feet and a general acceptance of chaos are also helpful. |

TO APPLY: Please download the ASN volunteer application form at [www.asn.org.uk/volunteer](http://www.asn.org.uk/volunteer) and email your completed application form to rhi@asn.org.uk