



## Volunteer Postnatal Companion: Role Description

### About Amma

Amma Birth Companions is a Glasgow charity that provides care, information, and advocacy to pregnant people and new parents with limited support. Our services are free and include birth and postnatal companionship, peer support, and education.

Our clients include those who are seeking asylum, refugees, survivors of human trafficking, and individuals from other marginalised groups.

We aim to create a nurturing space where individuals feel seen, informed, and empowered in all aspects of their birth and early parenting experiences.

### The Role

Postnatal companions work voluntarily to “parent the parent” by providing practical and emotional support to parents during the postnatal period.

Clients are typically assigned a small team of companion volunteers according to their individual needs and preferences. Each case is overseen and coordinated by a Perinatal Team Leader, who will ensure that safe, appropriate and trauma informed support is always provided. All volunteers are managed by our Volunteer Manager. Across the organisation, we have several experienced doulas, midwives and infant feeding experts who can assist as necessary.

PCs provide postnatal support for a few weeks following birth. The level of support PCs provide is gradually reduced over this timeframe until parents are ready to confidently exit our service or transition to peer support. The aim of this role is to help ensure parents’ physical and emotional wellbeing, so they feel empowered to care for themselves and their babies.

Support is tailored to each client and would usually include:

- Building a relationship of trust and a safe space for open discussion
- Helping with infant feeding
- Assisting with shopping and other domestic tasks (e.g., food preparation)
- Caring for other children to allow parents to rest or attend to their baby, or caring for the new baby so the parent can rest, bathe, or eat (volunteers are never left alone with children)
- Accompanying parents to medical appointments or baby wellbeing checks
- Informing the staff team when onward referrals are necessary to ensure clients’ needs are met by the most appropriate agency
- Connecting parents with local parent/baby groups and the Amma Family peer support group
- Using an interpreter to overcome language barriers
- Keeping thorough records using our client database

## Other considerations

- Flexibility is needed in care provision and the end of the postnatal period may vary according to the individual needs of the parent and their baby. Postnatal care is also about empowering the parent to care for their baby and themselves to ensure their longer-term physiological and emotional wellbeing.
- For most parents and babies, the postnatal period is uncomplicated. However postnatal care is also about recognising any deviation of a parent or baby's expected recovery following birth, or any adverse changes in health and wellbeing, and investigating and intervening appropriately.

## Process and Time Commitment

- We request that each PC support a minimum of three clients per year, working as part of a team. Due to the level of training provided, we ask that PCs commit to a minimum of one year of volunteering.
- Parents can be referred to Amma at any point in their pregnancies, but PC support will largely take place after the baby is born. Parents who are referred to Amma are typically paired with birth companions for support during pregnancy and birth, and may also attend antenatal classes.
- PCs are paired with parents based on their availability, experience or language and should ideally meet with them at least once before the baby is born.
- Postnatal support includes a combination of in-person visits, phone support, and outings. The level of support offered by the PC reduces as the weeks go on and clients are invited to attend the Amma Family Peer Support group which will continue long after the one-to-one companionship ends.

## Qualities and Skills

### Essential:

- A caring, compassionate, non-judgmental, and calm disposition
- Confidence to advocate when necessary
- Ability to manage confidentiality and boundaries
- Good spoken and written English
- Able to attend approximately 40 hours of face-to-face induction training supplemented with self-directed online learning
- Able to write up clear notes on a computer
- Committed to attending monthly peer support and ongoing group learning sessions
- Belief in Amma's values including a commitment to anti-racism and inclusivity
- Self-motivation, emotional resilience, a flexible approach, and the ability to effectively manage your own wellbeing
- Willingness to follow health and safety guidance including government guidance on Covid-19
- Willingness to support people within a home setting and within other accommodation across the city. This also includes volunteering in homes that are only accessible by stairs.



### Desirable:

- Speak other languages spoken by Amma's client group
- Knowledge of refugee/immigration issues
- Knowledge and/or lived experience of postnatal care
- Experience of supporting people facing issues related to the asylum process, mental health and/or trauma
- Knowledge about postnatal mental health challenges

### Training, Support and Supervision

Reflective and supported practice are essential for the safety and wellbeing of both BCs and the clients they support. Whilst this is a very fulfilling role, the emotional impact of supporting parents with complex needs can be significant.

Therefore, we put the following in place:

- Essential induction of approximately 40 hours of face-to-face induction training supplemented with self-directed online learning
- A period of shadowing before the BC starts to actively support clients
- Ongoing support from an experienced mentor
- Monthly peer support sessions led by a clinical supervisor
- Ongoing skills development opportunities
- Regular opportunities to connect with and befriend other Amma volunteers
- The provision of an Amma phone to enable safe and bounded working

### Expenses

Amma will cover reasonable out of pocket expenses for travel, food and (in exceptional circumstances) childcare.

### Become a certified trauma-skilled Amma Doula

Our birth and postnatal companions are trained to deliver trauma skilled support to clients with highly complex needs. The skills, knowledge and experience gained through Amma goes beyond what many doula training programmes can offer. In recognition of this and knowing that many of our volunteers also wish to support birthing people outside of Amma, we offer Amma Doula certification to volunteers who:

- Complete Amma's induction training programme
- Attend 70% of supervision sessions over a one-year period
- Attend 70% of group learning sessions over a one-year period
- Have provided 1-1 support to a minimum of three birth or postnatal clients
- Complete a reflective assignment