

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 (PCs) work voluntarily to provide practical and emotional support to parents during the postnatal period.

PCs generally work as part of a small team of companion volunteers which may include birth and/or pregnancy companions. 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 from one to eight weeks following birth, depending on the complexity of the clients' needs. The level of support PCs provide is gradually reduced over this timeframe until parents are ready to confidently exit our 1:1 service and/or transition to peer support. We aim to let PCs know in advance of taking on a new client how long the support is anticipated to last and assign volunteers according to availability.

Support is tailored to each client and may include:

- Postnatal planning during pregnancy
- 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

Process and Time Commitment

- We request that each PC support a minimum of **two clients per year** (up to a maximum of four 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.**
- PCs carry out an average of three visits following birth (approximately 10 hours), but more time may be required for clients with particularly complex needs. Whenever possible we will aim to share responsibilities amongst a wider support team.
- Parents can be referred to Amma at any point in their pregnancies, but PC support will generally take place after the baby is born.
- Although PCs are not expected to be 'on-call', some degree of flexibility is needed to account for the fact that babies may arrive before their expected delivery date.
- 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.

Qualities and Skills

Essential:

- A caring, compassionate, non-judgmental, and calm disposition
- Ability to work as part of a team
- 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.
- Able to support individuals safely and confidently with an extensive history of trauma (if you are currently undergoing recovery from trauma, please consider your own wellbeing before applying to this role)
- Able to travel to Glasgow and support clients across Greater Glasgow

Desirable:

- Ability to speak other languages
- 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 PCs 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 PC starts to independently 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