

# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## What does birth support look like for Birth for Humankind (BFH) clients?

The role of the primary doula is to provide support & education to clients before, during and after the birth. Ideally we aim to provide:

- 2-3 visits before the birth
- 1-2 visits after the birth
- 24/7 on-call availability from 38 weeks of pregnancy until you have attended the birth

## What does postnatal support for BFH clients look like? Extended Postnatal Support [EPS]

Volunteer Doulas providing EPS will offer clients a total of 12 hours of support over a six to eight week period [to be negotiated between the doula and the client] after the birth of the baby. For example, this support might include 2 x 2 hour meetings in the first 2 weeks, then 1 hour per week for the next 4 weeks.

## What support will I receive from Birth for Humankind?

Birth for Humankind will provide:

- Induction training and professional development opportunities to meet Birth for Humankind requirements in working with specific client groups and specific environments, such as public hospitals;
- Supervision and debriefing;
- Opportunities to work supportively and collaboratively with other volunteer doulas wherever this is appropriate to meet the needs of the clients;



## CONTINUED...

- Templates for all required reports, including antenatal and postnatal reports, birth report, EPS report;
- Access to childbirth education resources in English and other languages to use with your clients;
- A guided but flexible format for service delivery and respect for doulas' skills, knowledge and time;
- Networking opportunities with Birth for Humankind doulas and staff;
- Independent, confidential counselling and debriefing for any doulas who have faced challenging situations in their work with Birth for Humankind clients;
- Expense allowances for work with each client you have supported.

## What qualifications do I need to become a volunteer doula?

You must have successfully completed a comprehensive doula training course such as our [Foundational Doula Training](#). Your training MUST include the practical component of providing birth support to 3 clients as a student. Our Foundational Doula Training provides mentorship and the practical component to achieve this.

Alternatively, you may have successfully completed a Postnatal Doula Training, with the practical component of supporting 3 clients as a student. This would mean you would only provide postnatal support as a volunteer doula.

## Do I need to be a qualified midwife to be a volunteer doula?

You can be a practising or non-practising midwife or a retired midwife to join our Volunteer Doula Team. The main criteria is that you have provided birth support in a professional capacity to a minimum of 3 clients.



## CONTINUED...

### Can student midwives volunteer?

Yes! We accept student midwives for volunteering.

If you are in the first year of your midwifery studies, we ask that you have attended at least 3 births in a professional supporting role (not just observing), so it would be likely that you would be at the end of your first year.

We are unable to accept student midwives in their final year of studies as the workload is too high and it becomes too difficult for students to volunteer.

Please note, if you are a midwifery student and join the Volunteer Doula Team, you are not able to count clients you support as Continuity of Care Experience [CoCE].

### What's the time commitment per client?

We respect and value your time as a volunteer and we understand that it's not always easy to juggle supporting births with existing life commitments. When you join Birth for Humankind you become part of our Birth for Humankind family.

We estimate **22 hours per client** for birth support which includes 3 antenatal visits, oncall/labour & birth and 2 postnatal visits.

For EPS, you would spend **12 hours plus travel time** per client over 6-8 weeks



## CONTINUED...

### What's the minimum amount of birth or extended postnatal clients that I need to take as a volunteer?

As a volunteer doula, you will be committing to providing primary doula support to **two clients** through their pregnancy and births OR postnatal period, over a 12 month period.

This does not have to be supporting clients in an on call capacity only. You could, for example:

- Support 2 clients for extended postnatal support only
- Support clients for antenatal support only
- Support clients for booked caesarean section
- Support a client through an abortion

### Do I have to do any additional training to join the Volunteer Doula Team?

Once you've done your doula training (with us or a different organisation), you will need to attend 3 births as a doula to be fully qualified. If you do your training with us, you will be able to support 3 of our clients with the mentorship of one of our qualified doulas.

Every aspiring volunteer needs to do our 'Volunteer Doula Induction Training), consisting of an online component (about 8 hrs) and a face to face component (1 day/8hrs). This training runs 2-3 times per year (dates on our website) and it is designed to provide all the skills necessary to provide clients with doula support in a trauma-informed and culturally-safe manner.



## **CONTINUED...**

### **How soon after Volunteer Doula Induction Training can I start supporting clients in birthing?**

Once you have completed the application process and Volunteer Induction Training, you can be matched with a client at the end of the in-person training session.

### **Are there volunteer back-up doulas?**

Yes! Wherever possible, we try to find a back-up doula for each client. That way the primary doula is always supported by her back-up. This gives the client more coverage during on-call periods and more flexibility to the primary doula in case she needs it.

### **What does a Doula Group Practice (DGP) model look like?**

We encourage all of our doulas to work within a DGP model where possible, particularly if they want more support and do not have the capacity to be on-call full time.

The DGP is made up of 4 doulas who each have their own client (doulas still choose their own client). All clients within the team will be either booked at the same hospital or within the same area and due the same month.

If any of the doulas have a commitment within the on-call period and need to go off-call for a period of time (for example appointments, occasional work shifts, illness), they communicate this to the other doulas, via whatsapp group, with the plan being that one of the other doulas will be on-call to cover for their client during that time. This typically works well as the doulas are already on-call to support their own clients

This opportunity allows for knowledge building and peer-to-peer connection

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us  
[info@birthforhumankind.org](mailto:info@birthforhumankind.org)