

Role of a Home-Start Volunteer

Home-Start is a voluntary organisation in which volunteers offer regular support, friendship and practical help to young families under stress in their own homes helping to prevent family crisis or breakdown. Volunteers, who are parents or have parenting experience understand that sometimes family life can be tough and that is why their support can be so valuable in helping another family. Volunteers are central to the Home-Start service; we could not offer families the same support without them.

Home-Start volunteers give a high level of commitment and reliability and in return, receive high quality preparation and ongoing training, supervision and support from the Home-Start Co-ordinator(s)

What do Home-Start volunteers do?

Home-Start volunteers aim to build the confidence and independence of the family by:

- Offering support, friendship and practical help
- Committing to a minimum of 2-3 hours per week home-visiting according to the family's needs
- Visiting the families in their own homes, where the dignity and identity of each individual can be respected and protected
- Reassuring families that difficulties in bringing up children are not unusual
- Emphasising the positive aspects of family life
- Developing a relationship with the family in which time can be shared and an understanding developed, providing a regular, reliable presence in that family
- Drawing on their own experience of parenting to encourage parents' strengths and emotional well-being for the ultimate benefit of their own children
- Encouraging families to widen their network of relationships and to use effectively the support and services available in the community

What is the time commitment?

In addition to weekly home visiting:

- Attendance at the initial course of preparation, normally lasting 40 hours over 10 weeks
- Attendance at regular support group meetings as requested by the scheme
- Attendance at supervision sessions with the Co-ordinator according to Home-Start guidance, every 4-6 weeks
- Attendance at regular training sessions
- A commitment of a minimum of one Year after training

What are the responsibilities of a Home-Start volunteer?

We ask all our volunteers:

- To commit to the Home-Start ethos and to understand and implement Home-Start's policies on:
 - Confidentiality
 - Equal opportunities
 - Looking after children in the absence of their parents
 - Safeguarding / Child protection
 - Health and safety
 - Lone Working
- To undertake all sessions of the preparation course, provide two suitable references, and complete a DBS check at enhanced level
- To sign their acceptance and understanding of the Home-Start Safeguarding/Child Protection Code of Conduct
- To be introduced to and visit a family regularly (usually 2-3 hours a week) and to work towards identified aims of support as agreed with the family
- To share information with the Co-ordinator and contact the scheme immediately if there is concern about the physical or emotional well-being of any member of the family
- Ensure that the child's needs and experience are at the centre of their thinking and they act on concerns about their welfare
- To keep essential records of visits to families and submit monthly
- To attend regular 1:1 supervision sessions according to Home-Start guidance
- To attend ongoing support and training sessions as arranged by the scheme
- To submit travel and telephone expenses monthly, which will be paid at the agreed rate by the trustee board
- To inform their insurance company that the car is being used for voluntary work with Home-Start for which expenses are paid
- To provide Home-Start with sight of their relevant tax, MOT and insurance cover for the car as requested

What will Home-Start do for me?

In return for your hard work and commitment, you will receive:-

- Excellent preparation for your role, through the accredited preparation course
- Formal and informal support from the Co-ordinator, other volunteers and the trustee board
- Opportunities for self development and ongoing training
- Social events and the opportunity to get more involved in the scheme if you would like (e.g. fundraising, promotional events, being a trustee)
- After you've volunteered for 12 months we will provide a reference
- The opportunity to be involved in a vital local service and to be part of a national and global network

This is exciting and rewarding voluntary work which requires energy, commitment, reliability, creativity and a sense of humour. We look forward to hearing from you!