

Role of a volunteer

Home-Start is a voluntary organisation in which volunteers offer regular support, friendship and practical help to young families facing challenges with parenting, helping to prevent family crisis or breakdown.

We stand alongside families so that parents do not feel alone in the critical task of raising children and support them to give their children the best possible start in life.

Providing practical and emotional support to local families with children under the age of 12 years, volunteers are matched with a family following identification of volunteer strengths and the children/s and parent's needs and carry out weekly visits or telephone calls to meet the family's needs.

Home-Start Volunteer

This work requires a high level of commitment and reliability and will be supported by the Family Services Co-ordinator, who is in turn responsible to the Board of Trustees.

Volunteers Involvement

Home-Start volunteers are encouraged to work towards the increased confidence and independence of the family by:

- ❖ offering support, friendship and practical help
- ❖ 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
- ❖ encouraging 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
- ❖ attend an initial course of preparation, one day a week for 5 weeks
- ❖ visit for a minimum of 2-3 hours per week according to the family's needs
- ❖ receive regular support and supervision from the Co-ordinator
- ❖ A commitment for at least 6 months

Volunteers need:

- ❖ to be familiar with and committed to the Home-Start ethos and policies and practices
- ❖ to understand and implement Home-Start's policies on:
 - ❖ confidentiality
 - ❖ equal opportunities
 - ❖ looking after children in the absence of their parents
 - ❖ child protection
 - ❖ health and safety
 - ❖ Safeguarding
- ❖ to be introduced to and support a family by visiting regularly (usually once per week) for as long as is agreed
- ❖ to share information with the Family Services Co-ordinator and contact the Family Services Co-ordinator immediately if there is concern about the physical or emotional well-being of any member of the family
- ❖ to take part in reviews with the family and Co-ordinator as requested
- ❖ to keep records of visits to families as requested by the Co-ordinator
- ❖ to attend support, supervision and training sessions as arranged by the scheme
- ❖ to submit travel and telephone expenses on a regular basis, which will be paid at the agreed rate by the Board of Trustees
- ❖ to inform their insurance company that the car is being used for voluntary work with Home-Start for which expenses are paid
- ❖ to have good communication skills with Home-Start staff and families.
- ❖ to have a friendly disposition and be open and honest and non-judgemental .
- ❖ to have a good understanding and awareness of professional boundaries and ensure these are adhered to at all times

This is exciting and rewarding voluntary work which requires energy, commitment, reliability, creativity and a sense of humour.

All volunteers can expect the support of the Family Services Co-ordinator and the Board of Trustees. There are also opportunities for self-development and social contact with others within Home-Start.