

INVESTING IN VOLUNTEERS FINAL REPORT



ORGANISATION:	Home-Start Wirral
liV HOST ORGANISATION:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> NCVO <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Development Scotland <input type="checkbox"/> WCVA <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteer Development Agency (N Ireland)
ASSESSOR:	Dane Gould
NAME OF LEAD ASSESSOR:	Janet Lewis - Jones
ASSESSMENT DATE(S):	14th Sept 2016. 1.5 days was allocated for the assessment but the assessment was completed over one long day of interviews
1ST ASSESSMENT/RENEWAL:	1st assessment
ASSESSMENT OUTCOME:	Met
CONDITIONS IF ANY:	
DATE CONDITIONS MET:	
FINAL ASSESSMENT DECISION:	MET

ORGANISATION SUMMARY:
<p>Home-Start Wirral is a voluntary organisation that recruits and trains volunteers to support families in Wirral; their multi-purpose Head Office is called The Hub. Home-Start's core service is to provide home visiting support to families with at least one child under the age of five. Home-Start Wirral also offers volunteering opportunities in their charity shop, and at their many group sessions, as well as at their Hub supporting families with additional/complex needs. All volunteers are offered comprehensive training within Home-Start Wirral as well as the opportunity to gain vocational qualifications such as child-care and customer services. The organisation is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee. There were five active volunteer roles at the time of the assessment; Family Support volunteer, Group volunteer, Breastfeeding volunteer, Bump Start volunteer and Charity Shop volunteer.</p> <p>Family Support volunteers all have experience of bringing up children and give emotional and practical help to any parent with at least one child under five in their own home. Group volunteers are part of a special team that provide creative and stimulating play opportunities for children with complex needs in a safe environment at the 'The Hub'. Breastfeeding volunteers all have experience of breastfeeding, and give emotional help and guidance to help to any new mum living in the Wirral area, by communicating with the family in their own home, at hospital, in groups and over the phone. Charity Shop volunteers raise funds to support the families that Home-Start Wirral work with. One of the ways they do this is by selling a wide range of items in the Home-Start Wirral Charity shop. Bump-Start volunteers support families through pregnancy, the birth experience and during the first year of their baby's life.</p> <p>The CEO has overall responsibility for volunteers with support from the Operations Manager, and the CEO was the liV lead. An liV steering group was established during the liV development process and was made up of members of staff, volunteers and</p>

Trustees, including a Trustee who is the 'Volunteer Champion'. Home-Start Wirral have wanted to go for the liV kite mark for a number years, and were able to do so by successfully securing funding through the Lloyds Foundation Enhance programme.

Home-Start Wirral have a number of staff that lead on the day-to-day management of volunteers. These comprise of a Charity Shop Manager, a Lead Coordinator at the Hub, and Coordinators who oversee the Breastfeeding Support service and Family Support service. These key people have the responsibility of supporting volunteers on a daily basis as well as carrying out their support and supervision sessions. The 'Volunteer Champion' on the Trustee board also offers support and advice to volunteers. Home-Start Wirral values working in partnership with a range of voluntary and statutory agencies. This statement is from their website; 'The volunteer's friendly support is not a substitute for professional services and the best results are achieved through an active partnership between voluntary and statutory agencies and Home-Start Wirral'.

Home-Start Wirral's management structure is headed by the CEO who is responsible to the Board of Trustees for the operation and development of the organisation and on advising the Board on strategy and policy issues. The CEO line manages all staff that have managerial responsibilities for volunteers. At the time of the assessment there were 73 active volunteers.

SAMPLING RATIONALE

The rationale was to interview a sample of volunteers, which would cover each of the volunteer roles and include volunteers working in different locations. Those interviewed represented a range of ages, length of service, gender, ethnicities and ability; and volunteers were sampled from 100% of the volunteer roles. A list of volunteers and staff was supplied to the assessor and interviewees were chose from this list, though interviewees were dependant on who could make themselves available for the assessment day.

Nine members of staff were interviewed and all interviews were face-to-face. The CEO was interviewed individually. Two Administrative members of staff that have no supervisory responsibilities, but have contact with volunteers were interviewed in a pair. A Group Worker and a Charity Shop Assistant who work alongside volunteers, but don't manage them, were interviewed in a pair. Three Coordinators and the Charity Shop manager, who all manage and supervise volunteers, were interviewed in a group of four. The majority of staff members interviewed have been volunteers at Home-Start Wirral and one member of staff was currently still volunteering at Home-Start Wirral. She was interviewed in her capacity as a staff member and as a volunteer. Two Trustees were interviewed in a pair, both were involved in the liV Steering group and one Trustee was the Volunteer Champion. Fourteen volunteers were interviewed, and all interviews were face-to-face. Interviews took place in one group of three, four pairs and two individually. One pair of volunteers interviewed are involved in the liV Steering group. Interviews with volunteers and members of staff took place at The Hub.

NUMBER OF SITES, BRANCHES, LOCATIONS:	1
NUMBER INCLUDED IN INTERVIEW SAMPLE:	1

NUMBER OF VOLUNTEERS:	73
NUMBER INTERVIEWED:	14 (including member of staff)



NUMBER AS % OF TOTAL:	19%
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NUMBER OF VOLUNTEER ROLES:	4
NUMBER OF ROLES SAMPLED BY INTERVIEW:	5
NUMBER AS % OF TOTAL:	100%

NUMBER OF STAFF:	19
NUMBER INTERVIEWED:	9

WERE TRUSTEES INTERVIEWED? YES NO

WRITTEN EVIDENCE

Submitted with Self-assessment: The Volunteer Policy, Course of Preparation - training course programme, Family Support role description

At Assessment Visit: Various pieces of evidence that included, insurance certificates, leaflets, publicity and the new information management system called 'Lamplight'.

INDICATOR 1

There is an expressed commitment to the involvement of volunteers, and recognition throughout the organisation that volunteering is a two-way process which benefits volunteers and the organisation.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

The commitment to volunteering, and recognition that volunteers are essential and integral to Home-Start Wirral is strongly communicated throughout the organisation. The Volunteer Policy sets out the organisation's values, principles and its aims and objectives for volunteering and includes its commitment to equal opportunities. Volunteers are included in all relevant organisational policies such as Diversity and have their own specific policies and procedures relating to the volunteer programme such as the procedures referenced in the Volunteer Policy, for example, confidentiality, health and safety, safer recruitment, lone working and expenses. Home-Start Wirral staff, volunteers and Trustees regularly review all policies and procedures that relate to volunteers. The Volunteer Policy was reviewed and updated during the liV development process and was approved in April 2016. The next planned review date is April 2017.

Home-Start Wirral emphasises the importance of volunteers to the organisation in a range of media for example this statement from their Volunteer Policy under the 'Rights and responsibilities' section; 'Home-Start Wirral greatly benefits from the wide range of skills, experience and enthusiasm that volunteers bring to the organisation. We believe that volunteers should be able to gain personal benefits and be able to grow/develop as a result of their volunteering experience. We are committed to managing our volunteers through a relationship of mutual trust and respect, with the aim of ensuring that the needs of both parties are met and that the volunteering experience is both positive and fulfilling.'

All staff interviewed were aware of the volunteer policy and emphasised the enthusiasm and commitment volunteers demonstrate and the new perspectives, skills, knowledge



and experience they bring to the organisation. Staff members and volunteers emphasised the role and impact that volunteers have and the importance of volunteering for personal development, increasing their confidence and employability. The Trustee, the CEO, members of staff and volunteers interviewed positively expressed how involving volunteers has many benefits for Home-Start Wirral, and the importance of managing them well, for example, “The quality of support for volunteers is paramount” (CEO) and “liV has given us a really good structure and framework which has been great. Peer support was highlighted through the process and has been reintroduced, the newsletter too – it has helped with all things volunteering” (Trustee). Members of staff said, “Being a volunteer really helps my role as a member of staff as I have that understanding of how volunteers want to be treated”, “Home-Start wouldn’t be here without volunteers, they are the spine, a massive part of the organisation”, “Being a volunteer here was a definite insight into the organisation and does help to give a better understanding of everything” and “Volunteers are amazing!” (Staff Members).

Volunteers spoke about their contribution to Home-Start Wirral and all positively identified the benefits to them, the organisation and service users, “Volunteering is so rewarding, seeing the children develop, I feel really good”, “I wanted to give something back, to do something with people in the local community and Home-Start has been ideal”, “I feel that we can reach out to the community more so than staff”, “I want to be a Lactation Consultant and volunteering has given me confidence and experience to feel as if I might be able to do that”, “It’s been a good social thing for me – has given me an identity” and “Volunteering has had a real positive impact on our school work. Being in the shop, you have to interact with volunteers and customers you have never met before, that’s been the best thing. Also, my self-confidence has improved and it’s helped me with interviews at school” (Volunteers).

Volunteers are widely consulted on the development of the volunteer services on an ongoing basis; this includes gathering ideas from volunteers directly and collating information collected from formal and informal feedback to help to develop the services, through consultations, Annual General Meetings, management and service team meetings. Home-Start Wirral volunteers were part of the liV Steering Group during the liV development process, and the group will continue to meet every six months, “We have wanted to do liV for years now and managed to secure funding through the Lloyds Foundation Enhance programme. It’s been a great opportunity to stop and see where we are” (CEO). The Volunteer Champion continues to establish a strong bond with volunteers, for example, through supporting volunteers and getting feedback from them, “The Volunteer Champion is great and we can contact him any time – works really well” (Volunteer).

INDICATOR 2

The organisation commits appropriate resources to working with all volunteers, such as money, management, staff time and materials.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

Responsibility for volunteering and improvement of the quality and consistency of volunteer management within Home-Start Wirral lies with the CEO. All coordinators, the Hub project lead and the Charity Shop manager have responsibility for recruiting, selecting, supporting and managing volunteers. This also includes the delivery of their induction and training. The organisation ensures that staff members who support volunteers have the necessary knowledge and experience through the recruitment

process, induction, appraisal and ongoing training (both external and internal) including volunteer management training. Coordinator induction training includes 'Working with Volunteers' and 'Supervising Volunteers', "Staff do 'Supervising volunteers' training, and 'Train the Trainer', child poverty training, keep up to date with safeguarding, they can also do a NVQ in customer service and they are developing a new e-learning module, so, lots going on for staff" and "The Board of Trustees agreed to pay for me to complete a Masters in Voluntary Sector Management at the CASS Business school. It was fantastic, I was able to draw on such a wealth of experience and cascade that back through the organisation" (CEO). "In a way, managing volunteers is everyone's responsibility. We value them so much, they are part of the whole team" and "The Family Support training, when I was a volunteer really helped me with managing volunteers" (Staff member).

One-to-ones with staff members who supervise and support volunteers take place regularly to ensure the quality of work is maintained, current procedures are up to date and training needs are identified. All volunteers interviewed praised members of staff and these comments sum up much of the feeling expressed by volunteers, "Everyone is so friendly, the staff are fab – so welcoming" and "It's easily the best place I have volunteered" (Volunteers). As volunteer involvement is integral to service delivery, 'volunteer issues' is a standing item on a variety of agendas and volunteering is discussed at meetings at all levels in the organisation, for example, supervision sessions, management team meetings and at Board level, "It's great that we are all now in one building, so we see much more of each and we can plan other projects" (Staff Member) and "All coordinators and staff are fantastic!" (Trustee).

Home-Start Wirral's current strategic plan includes objectives for volunteer involvement in sections 2, 3 and 4 as well as the Home-Start UK Quality Assurance standard 5. This plan is reviewed regularly and progress is reported to the management committee, "Strategically, we are developing more volunteer roles, especially around Reception. We always develop roles to meet people's needs and try to develop other roles for people who might not be able to continue in a particular volunteering role" (CEO). "Being a Trustee has given me the bigger picture so I understand why things happen" and "Strategically, the organisation has been really flexible, we have had to be flexible and it's working for us. We are looking at partnerships and joint funding bids, all part of this new flexibility" (Trustees). The organisation has a variety of funding streams and contracts in place that contribute to the running of the volunteering services, "We also get involved in a range of fund raising events. At the last one we managed to raise £800" (Volunteer). Staff confirmed that all funding bids include expenses for volunteers. A Volunteer Expenses Policy is in place and volunteers confirmed that they had the resources to carry out their roles.

While members of staff who supervise and manage volunteers have had supervising volunteers training at Home-Start Wirral, the liV assessment day highlighted the desire for some refresher training in this area for staff that supervise and manage volunteers. 'Dealing with conflict' was one area mentioned by more than one staff member. It is suggested that Home-Start Wirral look into refresher training so that staff feel confident and comfortable managing volunteers and volunteers are receiving the best support possible.

INDICATOR 3

The organisation is open to involving volunteers who reflect the diversity of the local community and actively seeks to do this in accordance with its stated aims.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

Home-Start Wirral shows a strong commitment to involving volunteers from all backgrounds and its volunteer team is reflective of the communities in which it works. This was evident from the organisation's volunteer base and from the range of volunteers who were interviewed. The Volunteer Policy set out its values with regard to equality of opportunity and highlights the importance of diversity, this is also covered within staff and volunteers' induction and training. Volunteers take a 10-week 'Course of Preparation' training course and equality and diversity is covered on this programme in the 'Values and Attitudes' section. Staff and volunteers appreciate and value the diversity of the volunteer base, "We have a wide range of age ranges", "We have a lovely volunteer who has Down's Syndrome and we have found him a role in the kitchen" (CEO) and "We have a wide range of volunteers in the shop – it's important" (Staff member). Home-Start Wirral promotes its volunteering opportunities through a range of media that includes their own website, local development agencies and networks, the press, workshops, information stalls, presentations at colleges and universities, newsletters, and community settings. Volunteers interviewed had learned about opportunities at Home-Start Wirral from a variety of sources, "I saw an advert in the local paper for the role" and "I heard about it from a friend, it sounded right up my street" (Volunteers).

Photographs, images and descriptions in the organisation's publicity material, annual reports, displays, internal and external publications all depict the diversity of people involved with Home-Start Wirral, and this information is regularly reviewed and updated. Their web site has a dedicated 'Volunteering' section that outlines the volunteer programme, the roles available and how to apply. At the time of the assessment, a new information management system called 'Lamplight' was being populated. Among other things, the system (which was demonstrated to the Assessor) enables the organisation to collect, input and quickly analyse data on the diversity of volunteers in order to use this to inform recruitment.

INDICATOR 4

The organisation develops appropriate roles for volunteers in line with its aims and objectives, which are of value to the volunteers.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

There are role descriptions for each volunteer role at Home-Start Wirral that set out the necessary skills; attitude, experience and availability needed to carry out the role and volunteers and staff interviewed confirmed this, "We all have volunteer role descriptions and it's great that we do, it's a useful reminder for me" and "Our role description is embedded in the handbook" (Volunteer).

There are a range of roles and tasks available for volunteers across Home-Start Wirral that people can do to fit their skills and aspirations and the organisation is proactive in developing and adapting volunteer roles to suit the needs, abilities and interests of individual volunteers, and actively encourages volunteers to develop in their own roles,

There were many comments from volunteers on how good Home-Start Wirral are at

involving volunteers in developing roles, the flexibility they have within their roles and how they actively encourage volunteers to develop in their own roles, “My role is very flexible. We show mothers how to mother, so we do all kinds of stuff. There’s a lot of talking involved” (Volunteers).

Volunteers are given the opportunity to discuss and review their needs and abilities during their support and supervision sessions. They are also reviewed during the volunteer matching process for family support, “We are looking into developing ‘safer’ volunteering roles that volunteers could more easily ‘dip into’. More Admin assistant roles are part of this development” (CEO).

INDICATOR 5

The organisation is committed to ensuring that, as far as possible, volunteers are protected from physical, financial and emotional harm arising from volunteering.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

Home-Start Wirral’s commitment to ensuring the safety of volunteers is set out in its Volunteer Policy. Each volunteer role has a risk assessment and it is regularly updated when new risk factors are identified. The Volunteer Policy gives information about health and safety, confidentiality, expenses and volunteer support, this is also covered in induction and training, for example, “We do all of the health and safety stuff, it’s all very thorough and professional. If the kids are going to go outside we have to check that there’s no faeces around, no broken glass. Inside, we have to check the temperature of the room - we have to check everything!” “We do risk assessments on everything – it’s really important that everyone feels safe here” and “I’m on my own in the shop sometimes and we did lone working in all the training” (Volunteer).

Risks are also considered for issues specific to individuals and all volunteers were confident that their wellbeing was paramount. Support through the coordinators, managers and other members of staff and by other volunteers is provided regularly. All volunteers are covered by Home-Start Wirral’s Public Liability insurance whilst they are on the premises or engaged in a volunteer role outside of Home-Start Wirral. An induction checklist is completed to ensure volunteers are aware of the specific procedures that relate to their volunteer role. Volunteers are made aware of the risks involved in their role at induction and general training and at their role specific training,

There is a policy on the reimbursement of volunteers’ out of pocket expenses and this process is set out in the Volunteer Policy and volunteers interviewed described how they are strongly encouraged to claim, “We can claim expenses, it’s really easy to do” (Volunteer). Volunteer’s details are kept in line with the requirements of the organisation’s data protection policy. Individual’s personal files are kept in a locked filing cabinet throughout the duration of their time as a volunteer. All electronic documents are password protected. Volunteers are included in all Home-Start Wirral’s policies and procedures in respect of data security and appropriate use. The Data Protection and Security sub-committee meeting quarterly to review the organisation’s current processes. Both these areas are covered on the volunteer ‘Course of Preparation’ under the ‘Confidentiality’ and ‘Commitment and Boundaries’ sections. All volunteers interviewed were confident that their information is kept securely.

INDICATOR 6

The organisation is committed to using fair, efficient and consistent recruitment procedures for all potential volunteers.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

A recruitment pack that includes an application form is sent to anyone expressing an interest in volunteering with Home-Start Wirral. This covers, for example, the roles available, an introduction to the work of the organisation, the recruitment process and the organisation's expectations of volunteers, "More volunteers are coming to us for work experience and this is definitely a trend. Lots of volunteers go onto employment and many have gone on to work at Home-Start – we always have a waiting list" (CEO). The application form asks, amongst other relevant questions, why the potential volunteer is interested in becoming a volunteer.

Prospective volunteers are invited for an initial one to one meeting where the process for becoming a volunteer is explained. During the interview, information is gathered from the volunteer to identify what their skills, strengths and interests are and what they were hoping to gain as a volunteer. The interview also enables placement opportunities to be identified to fulfil and meet their needs, "There is a matching procedure with families. The coordinator meets with the families and considers who might be a best match for that family so they have families in mind when you are being interviewed. They ask you about the kinds of families you might want to, or not want to be matched with", "Staff look at the family's needs and match us with the family, then we have a three-way meeting" (Volunteers) and "We are very flexible when it comes to interviewing, we often go out to meet volunteers at their own home or a place that suits them" (Staff Member).

Prospective volunteers also have an opportunity to meet existing volunteers to find out more about the individual services and activities at the organisation, before making a choice and starting their volunteer role. Volunteers interviewed described the recruitment process consistently and were very positive about it, "I had an informal chat with staff, I felt very comfortable. We talked about my experience, qualifications, what I wanted to get out of volunteering – it was easy and I love it here!" (Volunteer) and "At the shop, we have 'taster' sessions for volunteers to explore the role a bit more" (Staff Member).

Breastfeeding Support, Family Support and Group volunteers coming into contact with vulnerable adults and children must undergo a fully enhanced DBS application, and under no circumstances are they allowed to volunteer until this has been obtained. These volunteer placements are subject to successful enhanced DBS clearance and the completion of references from two individuals, "We can't start until our DBS has cleared" and "The DBS check was very straightforward" (Volunteer). Should the applicant be unsuccessful, the volunteer will be contacted and the organisation will try to identify alternative routes for the applicant and signpost them to other organisations. Having a criminal record does not necessarily mean that a volunteer opportunity will not be offered. A risk assessment will be carried out in line with the convictions disclosed; the outcome of this will be discussed with the potential volunteer. The risk assessment supports both management and the volunteer by putting measures in place to safeguard service users and support the volunteer applicant.

INDICATOR 7

Clear procedures are put into action for introducing new volunteers to their role, the organisation, its work, policies, practices and relevant personnel.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

All new volunteers are introduced to relevant paid Home-Start Wirral staff, their supervisor and other current volunteers, and are provided with the necessary information, induction and training to carry out their role, “As we worked through liV, we developed new volunteer handbooks for all our services, they work really well”, “We have on going personal development opportunities for volunteers for example, Cultural Awareness training where volunteers get to meet volunteers from other services and staff can go to this training too” and “Volunteers shadow staff and other more experienced volunteers” (CEO).

Induction checklists are used to ensure all aspects of induction have been covered for all roles and volunteers are required to sign a confidentiality agreement. The volunteer induction pack, which includes key policies that are relevant to volunteers, is used throughout the induction, “We do lots of training for volunteers and there’s a lot of ‘on the job’ training too – it’s very thorough”, “For the mental health project we have added extra sessions to the COP training – that’s worked really well”, “Some volunteers may not be ready for volunteering, so now we look at whether they are ready to volunteer – it’s good for them, us and the organisation” and “We are looking into ‘tiered’ training too for our longer accredited training programmes” (Staff Members).

Volunteer training introduces a number of policies to the volunteers, such as safeguarding adults, confidentiality, code of conduct, lone working, risk assessments and equal opportunities and diversity. The training includes group activities and an opportunity to feedback at the end of each activity. Volunteers were unanimously positive about the quality of this training enabling them further to enhance their knowledge, experience and skills, and were especially positive about the ten-week ‘Course of Preparation’ programme, “I did the amazing COP training programme but I was still able to volunteer with the group so I was learning loads through the training and volunteering, at the same time”, “The training was fantastic and you can get extra training if you want it – amazing!” “We did the ten week course that involved basic training on what we needed to know for example, lone working, safeguarding and all the policies and procedures”, “We did ethics, values, non-discriminatory practice, role-play scenarios and safeguarding – it was so in depth, I loved it!” (Volunteers).

All volunteers explore what the role of a volunteer is and what Home-Start Wirral’s expectations of volunteers are. Issues of professionalism, conflict, confidentiality, equality and diversity, and child protection are covered and scenarios are used to explore the issues of boundaries, “We did boundaries of the role in the training, things like ethical considerations” and “Did a lot on boundaries, confidentiality, that kind of thing – it’s essential” and “In the shop I did a stack of training, things like; sorting, tagging, health and safety, using the steamer, using the till – it was all fine” (Volunteers).

Home-Start Wirral’s Volunteer Policy informs volunteers of how to raise a complaint if needed, to voice concerns and also to suggest any possible solution or outcome. Volunteer comments showed that they understood what they would do if they wished to complain about any aspect of their volunteer experience, for example, “If volunteers have any problems they can come to us anytime” and “There is a clear procedure if we

have any issues with volunteers. Usually, it can be sorted straight away but if it's something that could be sensitive then I communicate with my line manager" (Staff Members). "Any problems, there is always someone there, so much support. They say to us, 'anything you need just let us know'", "We cover problems and issues in the training. I would go straight to my supervisor, there's always loads of people available for support" and "We all know what to do whether we are volunteers or staff" (Volunteers).

INDICATOR 8

The organisation takes account of the varying support and supervision needs of volunteers.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

Home-Start Wirral's commitment to providing support for volunteers was evidenced throughout the interviews with staff and volunteers and in the Volunteer Policy and the Volunteer Charter. Support available to volunteers is outlined during induction and training and all volunteers have a named member of staff. Support and supervision is provided regularly on a one-to-one basis and group meetings also provide an opportunity for volunteers to discuss difficult situations and receive peer support. Volunteers engaged with service delivery are offered a range of ongoing support from staff via telephone calls, e-mail, and face-to-face meetings and supervisions. Volunteers rate volunteer support and supervision sessions very highly and volunteers interviewed confirmed this, "Staff are very supportive, can go to anyone, they are all so nice and so well trained", "I have supervision every six weeks. My coordinator comes to my house, asks me what support I need, all the paperwork, reports and debriefs – excellent!" "At supervision, I discuss lots of different things and one is around how my role is developing, so we feed into this development", "I have supervision every six weeks and we have group supervisions too", "The manager is great with volunteers, she gives us fantastic support" and "Staff are always there for you, always welcoming – I feel like they are my friends" (Volunteers).

All staff members interviewed confirmed their commitment to supporting volunteers and emphasised their commitment to ensuring the emotional wellbeing of volunteers, "We always have a reflection and debrief at the end of sessions so we can receive and give immediate feedback" (Staff Member). "We always have a debrief at the end of the session so we are able to deal with any emotional stuff straight away", "Nothing is too much trouble for them, it feels like a family here", "This is always available. They ask me if I'm alright and if I want to continue" and "They make it clear that they want us to be happy – makes you feel good about yourself" (Volunteers).

Volunteers are made aware that they can refuse any unnecessary demands and can discuss these further with their supervisor. Volunteers can also request further support, training and shadowing opportunities to enable them to carry out their roles. Volunteers knew about the boundaries of their roles and could refuse anything that was outside of their skills or capacity and this is covered in the induction process, for example, "We covered all of this in the training. Sometimes you have a to draw a line, you need to know what you can and can't do, and if you are unsure you just contact your supervisor, or any member of staff – even the CEO" (Volunteers).

Volunteers are regularly asked to provide feedback on their experiences including recommendations, complaints and compliments through, for example, feedback at the end of training sessions, the use of feedback forms, their comments in team meetings,

surveys and in their supervisions. They were very confident about giving feedback to the organisation and being listened to, “We have a closed facebook group where we can post questions and get immediate responses from volunteers and from members of staff” (Volunteer). All volunteers interviewed confirmed that Home-Start Wirral keep them informed about what is happening in the wider organisation. They also identified various ways that they received information and updates, for example, through the website, meetings, reviews, events, consultations, by email, post, text messages and phone calls, “We find different ways to communicate with volunteers” (Staff Members) and “As volunteer champion, I have made lots of communications with volunteers, I let them know why things are happening, that they can contact me anytime. I have my section in the newsletter where I write articles and ask for responses. I’m trying to contact all volunteers so they know who I am and my role. I’m really enjoying it” (Trustee – Volunteer Champion).

INDICATOR 9

The whole organisation is aware of the need to give volunteers recognition.

SUMMARY OF PRACTICE

Home-Start Wirral demonstrates that it understands the need to recognise volunteers, for example, in its Volunteer Policy, and volunteers are shown appreciation through various formal and informal mechanisms. Those that were identified included, attendance at a range of Home-Start Wirral meetings, through supervisions, access to accredited training, being routinely thanked at the end of each volunteering session, the support available from staff members, ‘thank you’ cards, training certificates and evaluations. Volunteers interviewed feel very valued by Home-Start Wirral and all said they felt appreciated by both staff and the people they support, “We really value volunteers, we thank them every day. Families give us great feedback about volunteers too and we give the volunteers that feedback – it’s very valuable and powerful stuff”, “liV will enhance everything that we do” and “Being able to contact the Volunteer Champion is great for volunteers – works well” (CEO).

Staff members said, “We are involved in making thank you cards for volunteers, we organise events, we welcome volunteers – it’s like a big family”, “We are always looking to find people’s strengths and then build on those strengths”, “I had a volunteer who wouldn’t even leave her house two months ago and now you wouldn’t recognise her, her confidence has boomed. Incredible to see, we really value them” (Staff Members). Volunteers said, “We are very valued, there’s afternoon teas, social get-togethers, thanks you cards – it’s lovely here”, “I feel very valued. The whole team do everything they can to make people feel valued – I get so much satisfaction from volunteering” (Volunteers).

Volunteers are asked at one to one meetings and group sessions for their views on the organisation’s work and are able to make their views known and participate in decision making. Volunteers are part of the on-going liV Steering group and two Family Support Volunteers are Trustees and are central to the decision-making process of the organisation. The Trustee Volunteer Champion is also a direct point of contact for volunteers and can be easily contacted by phone or email, “On the liV Steering group, volunteers from each service were involved in developing the new volunteer handbooks” (CEO) and “Our views are definitely taken on board. We are part of the liV steering group and a lot of things we discussed came about, like the newsletter for example” (Volunteer).



Volunteers are provided with, and encouraged to access, additional training and learning. Shadowing opportunities are offered across the organisation as part of inductions. Training needs are discussed in supervision and volunteers regularly take up further training opportunities so that they can increase their skills, knowledge or interest in an area or for personal development.

All volunteers interviewed had taken advantage of a number of training opportunities and had learned a variety of new skills, "I did NVQ Level three training, bereavement, stress management, ADHD, mental health and Makaton (uses signs and symbols to help people communicate) training – amazing", "We do refresher training and do three courses a year, you build a portfolio of training and there's extra training if you have an interest in other areas", "We do peer learning from each other and the coordinator and have lots of refresher training too", (Volunteers). "There's always training available – loads of training" and "We track what volunteers do, their training, so we know how they are progressing" (Staff Members).

A number of volunteers have gone on to secure paid roles within Home-Start Wirral or other organisations. Volunteers interviewed were aware that Home-Start Wirral could provide references for them and this process is outlined in the Volunteer Policy. Volunteer's leaving the organisation are asked to attend an exit interview where a standardised exit questionnaire is completed, and opportunities for the volunteer to provide feedback about their experience are sought.

IF APPLICABLE:

SUMMARY OF SUGGESTIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT (IF ANY)

2.2: While members of staff who supervise and manage volunteers have had supervising volunteers training at Home-Start Wirral, the liV assessment day highlighted the desire for some refresher training in this area for staff that supervise and manage volunteers. 'Dealing with conflict' was one area mentioned by more than one staff member. It is suggested that Home-Start Wirral look into refresher training so that staff feel confident and comfortable managing volunteers and volunteers are receiving the best support possible.

SUMMARY OF HOW CONDITIONS WERE MET

OR

SUMMARY OF WHY ORGANISATION HAS NOT MET THE STANDARD

