

Home-Start Wirral News



Support and friendship
for families

March 2016

Newsletter for Home-Start Wirral Volunteers

Welcome to our first Volunteer newsletter

We currently have 126 volunteers and without you Home-Start Wirral would not exist. There are so many different volunteer roles now - Family Support, Bump-Start, Home Play, Breastfeeding Peer Support, Groups, Charity Shop, Handy Man and Trustees. All playing your part to help Wirral children have the best start in life. We genuinely believe that the volunteer delivery model that we use brings something very special to the organisation, enabling us to have an amazingly diverse group of people representing Home-Start Wirral. The wide range of skills, experience, commitment and time you offer us is priceless. **Thank you!**

We hope you enjoy reading our new Volunteer Newsletter, catching up with what has been happening in the organisation and what lies ahead. This first one is quite long because we have quite a lot to update you about! Future newsletters will only be a maximum of 2 pages, which we aim to get out to you quarterly.

We welcome your feedback so please let us know what you any ideas for things you would like to see in future issues.
Just email us at admin@homestartwirral.co.uk

Bev Morgan, CEO

We are on the move!

Our main office has been based at 30 Argyle Street in Birkenhead for some years now, and in 2013 we took on our second base, The Home-Start Hub.

Like many charities now we are finding it harder and harder to raise the funds we need to be able to continue to support families in need, and so we are constantly looking for ways to reduce our expenditure.

One way that we can make some savings is to give up our premises in Argyle Street. Our landlord, Wirral Methodist Housing, have been great but to continue to pay rent and utilities there and the Hub is no longer an option for us. We really have no choice but to move out, so because we own The Home-Start Hub we plan to make that our permanent base for all staff.



For those of you who have visited the Hub you will know that there isn't much space, because we have no intention of losing the wonderful play rooms that we have there. So staff will be moving in to the building but there will not be enough desks for everyone, but most of the staff work part time so some of the staff from the family support and breastfeeding teams will also be hotdesking from other venues on certain days. You can still reach them via the office because the admin team will pass on any messages, you will also be able to contact the co-ordinators directly on their mobiles. Your co-ordinators will be in touch to ensure you are kept up to date.

Whilst we settle in we hope there won't be too much disruption, but please bear with us whilst we go through the moving process. We will be moving out of the Argyle Street office on **Monday 21st March**.

Currently we have 3 different telephone numbers, one for Family Support, one for Breastfeeding Support and the third is the Hub telephone number. Moving to the Hub does mean that we will just have one phone number **0151 608 8288** from **Thursday 18th March** so please make a note of this new office number.

New Initiative - Supporting Deaf Parents

It is important to us at Home-Start Wirral that we make our services available to a wide cross section of our local community. We continually strive to eliminate any barriers for families accessing our services. Our latest initiative is to ensure deaf/hard of hearing family members are not disadvantaged when looking for help and support at Home-Start Wirral. Please view the video clip in BSL (British Sign Language) on our Home-Start Wirral News Facebook page.

<https://www.facebook.com/Home-Start-Wirral-News-643059492436840/>

There will be other video clips very shortly on our website, giving information on Breastfeeding Support, Family Support, The Birkenhead Foundation Years Project, the 'Charity Shop' and all our services at 'The Hub'.

In addition to this Action for Deafness has provided us with funding for an interpreter to work with us when a parent who is deaf is referred to one of our projects. The funding is also enabling us to get two of our staff, Emma Hibbs and Karen Jones, trained up to level 2 in British Sign Language.

Deaf Awareness training will also be available to all our volunteers this year. If you are interested in attending this please let us know.

Staff News

A new baby - Sara Atherton, our Breastfeeding Peer Support project lead, had a lovely baby boy in October. Mum and baby Sebastian are both doing well and we look forward to seeing her back at Home-Start Wirral in a few months when she returns to work after her maternity leave



Cuts to staff hours - Unfortunately due to funding difficulties some staff hours will be reduced, from 1st April, in the family support team. Suzy, Steph, Karen and Tarnya will all be going down to 2 days a week which means that their caseloads will have to be reduced.

If you are volunteer supported by one of these members of staff they will be talking to you about the changes to ensure you know what days/hours they are working, and who you should contact when they are not in work.

We will also be introducing Group Support sessions for all Family Support Volunteers from April, which will give you the opportunity to meet up with your co-ordinators, fellow volunteers and talk through issues re: the families you are supporting. This will also give staff who are working fewer hours the opportunity to meet up with you regularly. Please make sure you sign up for these sessions when the dates come out soon.

Investors in Volunteers Latest Update

We have now submitted our Investors in Volunteers Self Assessment and we will shortly be starting on a new Development Plan. Volunteers will be able to make a valuable contribution to this process, with your feedback and opinions helping us to enhance our volunteers' experience and encouraging more people to volunteer with Home-Start Wirral in the future.

Thank you to everyone who completed the Volunteer Survey, and to everyone who attended the Volunteer meetings. Your contributions and comments are very much appreciated. The findings from the Volunteer Survey and suggestions from the meetings will be published in the next newsletter.



Your Volunteer Champion



I would like to introduce myself to both current and potential volunteers, as the new volunteer representative on the Home-Start Wirral, board of trustees.

Please don't let the title put you off, I have been a volunteer for the past two years, something which I have thoroughly enjoyed and wish to continue. Family support volunteering has enabled me to fully appreciate the commitment and time given freely by so many.

When the opportunity arose for me to represent volunteer interests on the board of trustees, it seemed the ideal opportunity for me to establish myself as a 'champion' for volunteers and someone all volunteers could contact to help them enjoy their involvement with Home-Start Wirral and take advantage of any opportunities open to them.

I look forward to hearing from anyone with questions, ideas, worries or concerns that I can in anyway help with. Whether you are an established volunteer or someone just thinking about volunteering, I am more than willing to help.

John

e-mail: johnjones@homestartwirral.co.uk

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First Home-Start UK National Volunteer Awards

Later this month Home-Start UK are holding their first ever National Volunteer Awards, to celebrate the commitment and achievements of volunteers on a national stage. 18,422 men and women from all walks of life volunteered for Home-Start last year, making a real difference to 29,170 families and 63,308 children. An amazing achievement that should be celebrated.

In September all of the 288 Home-Start's across the UK were asked to nominate volunteers for 12 different categories for the Awards, and in February the judging was carried out by Home-Start UK's ambassadors - supporters who come from a wide range of businesses, charities and occupations.

The winners will be presented with their awards by TV presenter Kirstie Allsopp and news reader Alasdair Stewart OBE at the gala dinner of the Home-Start convention in late March. Both hosts are national ambassadors for Home-Start.

Unfortunately none of our Home-Start Wirral nominees were successful, but we are delighted to tell you that one of our volunteers has been named runner up in the Young Volunteer category.

Well done to Ralph who volunteers at our Charity Shop. Ralph is 23 and has volunteered at the shop since August 2013.

Sara Forfar, Charity Shop Manager:

"We are really proud of him and pleased that he has stuck with us since day one. Like all our volunteers, he has skills and qualities that he brings to his role. Ralph is very organised, methodical and reliable plus he is never daunted - even when we have a massive amount of books for him to plough through."



Family Support Update

Thank you to all our family support volunteers who continue to provide amazing support to local families.

Home visiting family support is the core work of Home-Start, but unfortunately each year it gets harder and harder to secure funding for us to continue. Particularly because funders now are looking to fund specific new projects and not core work. This is why we are always looking for new fundraising ideas and for support with these.

We do, thankfully, have funding from Lloyds for our new project supporting parents who have mental health difficulties; and The Foundation Years Trust is funding the Bump-Start, Home Play and Play Services projects, but they are only available for families living in the Birkenhead District.

Our Family Support group for parents, Better Together, is thriving and making a real difference to isolated parents who attend the group at the Hub.

Hub Update

In December the Hub was broken into causing several thousands of pounds worth of damage. Fortunately they did not manage to steal anything but the mess and damage they left behind was distressing to all staff, volunteers and families who attend groups at the Hub.

Thankfully everyone pulled together to get things back to normal very quickly and the publicity in the Wirral Globe and on social media following the break in even led to some donations which was very much appreciated.

Despite the bad news about the break in the Hub continues to thrive with many new groups now running. Please take a look at the Hub page on our website:

<http://homestartwirral.co.uk/frontpage/the-hub/>

Some Very Sad News

We were both shocked and deeply saddened to hear that one of our wonderful volunteers sadly passed away recently.

Anne Martin had volunteered for Home-Start since 2009. During this time Anne had supported 11 families. 9 through our core family support work and for the past two years Anne has given her time to the Bump-Start Project.

Anne was a great believer in Home-Start and always managed to find a connection and relate with every family that she supported. Anne was fantastic at motivating families to get out and about, her most recent family discovered a new love of the swimming baths thanks to her! Anne really believed in every family she came across and she will be hugely missed by all at Home-Start.



Breastfeeding Peer Support Update

Thank you to all our wonderful Breastfeeding Peer Support Volunteers, who working alongside our staff team, have supported 1,095 families through antenatal and postnatal services in the last 12 months.

90% of the mums we supported initiated breastfeeding and 47 % of those mum's fed their baby for 6 weeks or more.

That really is amazing, well done!!!

Charity Shop Update

Most of you will hopefully be aware by now that our Charity Shop moved last year, just a few doors up from where we used to be.

The shop has a fantastic team of volunteers who are working hard to sort and sell the donations we receive. With all the funds raised coming back into the organisation to enable us to carry on supporting Wirral families.

If you haven't visited the shop yet please take a look, it really is worth a visit!

48 Upton Rd, Claughton Village, CH41 0DF

Wirral Coastal Walk

This fundraising event takes place on Sunday 12th June, so please join us to help raise some much needed funds. Everyone is welcome, why not make a day of it and involve your friends and family.

The walk starts at Seacombe Ferry and finishes at the Wirral Country Park Visitor Centre at Thurstaston, which is 15 miles, but you can choose to do a shorter walk of either 4 or 10 miles.

As in previous years, it is sure to be a fun day out for all the family and a fantastic opportunity to raise valuable funds for Home-Start Wirral, so we hope to get as many volunteers signed up as possible.

If you want to put your name down for a sponsorship form email us at admin@homestartwirral.co.uk or the office on 0151 647-836

Do you want to find out a bit more about Home-Start Wirral?

Why not have a look at our website www.homestartwirral.co.uk

Dave Caswell, one of our Family Support Volunteers, does a great job of keeping our website up to date. Please take the time to have a look at what a great job he is doing.

We also have two facebook pages you can join:



https://www.facebook.com/Home-Start-Wirral-Charity-Shop-342827682514397/timeline?ref=page_internal

<https://www.facebook.com/Home-Start-Wirral-News-643059492436840/>

You can also keep in touch with what is happening with Home-Start throughout the UK, and internationally:

Home-Start UK website - www.home-start.co.uk

or you can join the facebook community page for Home-Start UK www.facebook.com/homestartuk