

# Home-Start Wirral

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*Registered Charity Number 1139517*

*Company Number 7314767*

**Home-Start offers friendship and informal support to parents with young children, in local communities throughout the UK, so that every child can have a good start in life.**

The logo for Home-Start features the word 'Home' in orange and 'START' in orange, with a purple stick figure integrated into the letter 'A' of 'START'.

Home  
START

**Support and friendship  
for families**

**VOLUNTEER HANDBOOK**  
**Group Volunteers**

## WELCOME

This handbook has been designed to help you on your journey as a volunteer for Home-Start Wirral. The time and commitment you give us is invaluable and we want to be there to support you every step of the way!

You will be required to sign a volunteer declaration (on page 8) to confirm you have read all the information provided in this handbook, so please read all the information carefully, and ask a member of staff if you are unsure of anything, we are always on hand to offer guidance and support.

A copy of your signed declaration will be held in your volunteer file in the Home-Start office.

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## ABOUT US:

### Our Mission Statement

*Home-Start Wirral believes that every parent should have the support they need in order to give their children the best possible start in life.  
We aim to work in partnership with parents by supporting and encouraging them through the difficulties of family life.*

### Our History

Home-Start is a family support charity. Volunteers offer regular support, friendship and practical help to families under stress in their own homes to prevent family crisis and breakdown.

Home-Start Wirral now operates throughout the borough of Wirral and was originally set up in 1999 by members of the local community as a response to the needs identified in a social audit carried out by Charing Cross Methodist Neighbourhood Centre. It was then known as Home-Start Birkenhead.

Home-Start Wirral has grown and developed over the years, securing the funding to provide family support to parents and children throughout Wirral, and providing additional services such as Breastfeeding Peer Support and Group Support, including specialist support for children with complex needs. In 2013 we opened our Charity Shop in Claughton Village, a first step into trading to generate income for Home-Start Wirral. Our volunteers play an important role and are an integral part of all aspects of our Home-start services.

### What we do

Each Home-Start organisation is an independent voluntary organisation which works towards the increased confidence and independence of the family by:

- Offering support, friendship and practical assistance
- Visiting families in their own homes, where the dignity and identity of each individual can be respected and protected
- Providing a variety of universal and targeted groups
- Providing breastfeeding peer support in Arrowe Park Hospital and in the community
- Reassuring parents that difficulties in bringing up children are not unusual and encouraging enjoyment in family life
- Developing a relationship with the family in which time can be shared and understanding can be developed; the approach is flexible to take account of different needs
- Encouraging the 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 within the community.

#### **The objects for which Home-Start was established are:**

- To safeguard, protect and preserve the good health, both mental and physical, of children and parents of children.

- To prevent cruelty or maltreatment of children.
- To relieve sickness, poverty and need amongst children and parents of children.
- To promote the education of the public in better standards of childcare; principally but not exclusively within the area of Wirral.
- To safeguard, protect and preserve the good health, both mental and physical, of Children and parents of children.

## Values

In all external and internal dealings Home-Start organisations and Home-Start work within and demonstrate the essential ethos of:

- Choice
- Openness
- Flexibility
- .....and enjoyment!
- Partnership
- Encouragement
- Responsiveness

All relationships are based on good communication, respect and trust.

## Approach

The voluntary ethic permeates the whole organisation:

- Each community chooses to develop a Home-Start organisation
- Volunteers choose to volunteer for Home-Start
- Families choose to have Home-Start support.

To Home-Start every family is special and we respond to each family's needs through home-visiting support and a variety of additional services.

Home-Start organisations are rooted in the communities they serve – managed locally but supported by the national organisation which offers direction, training, information and guidance to organisations to ensure consistent and quality support for parents and children wherever they are.

Home-Start has a proven, lasting, positive impact on the development of children and on the health and welfare of the family.

## Volunteer Charter

This Volunteer Charter contains our mutual hopes and expectations to make sure you are able to help in the voluntary work of Home-Start and that you feel that Home-Start recognises and values your contribution. As a volunteer you are one of a key group of people playing a crucial role in enabling us to provide Home-Start support for children and families. Our responsibilities to you and your responsibilities to Home-Start are summarised below.

### Our responsibilities to you:

We aim to treat all volunteers with respect and undertake our responsibilities to them fairly and recognise that each offers their own unique qualities and has their own needs for support. We will ensure volunteers have:

- Comprehensive and up-to-date information about Home-Start Wirral.
- An individual interview with a member of the team before commencing the course of preparation

- Training to prepare you for the role and opportunities for on-going training to support your volunteering role
- Clarity about the role and task and who is responsible to you and who will provide support if there are any problems
- Sufficient information about the family or group to prepare you for visiting
- Information about any safety issues
- Effective supervision of voluntary activities within the organisation and support for individual volunteers.
- Reimbursement for agreed out-of-pocket expenses
- An annual evaluation of your work with Home-Start
- Opportunities to evaluate, comment on and contribute to the work of Home-Start, on-going training and the course of preparation
- An understanding of how to raise problems or make a complaint
- Information about and access to the Board of Trustees
- Opportunities to join with other volunteers for outings, parties and other social events.
- Volunteers will be treated fairly and offered equal opportunities appropriate to their individual skills.

#### Your responsibilities to us:

- To perform your volunteer role to the best of your ability and within the *Standards and Methods of Practice of Home-Start* and the *Home-Start Policy and Practice Guide*.
- To offer positive, caring support to families under stress
- To visit the families or group, or attend the shop as agreed, and let us know if you cannot as early as possible.
- To attend the course of preparation/induction training, on-going training, individual support and supervision sessions.
- To inform us of any problems, difficulties or changes within the families or groups being visited, or within your own circumstances which may affect your volunteering with us.
- To maintain the Home-Start guidelines on confidentiality
- To be aware of and work within Home-Start's guidelines on safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.
- To understand and follow Home-Start's policies on safeguarding children, equal opportunities, health and safety as well as other policies relating to your volunteering, which are in the handbook appendix.
- To keep Home-Start records as requested and to return them promptly to the coordinator on a monthly basis.

In order to respect the children with whom Home-Start works and to reduce the likelihood of abuse taking place, all Trustees, staff and volunteers must be familiar with Home-Start Wirral's safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children policy and agree to sign the Home-Start Wirral Code of Conduct in the Appendix.

## Volunteers resting or leaving the Organisation

Home-Start Wirral recognises that, as volunteers, you may at some time need to take some time out due to personal commitments or difficulties. Likewise, for whatever reason, you may decide it is time to leave the organisation. Home-Start Wirral aims to maintain a flexible & sensitive approach to supporting you, but places a limit of 6 months on any rest period. Each resting volunteer will be contacted after 3 months to discuss their future commitment to the scheme. In circumstances where the volunteer knows their predicament will be resolved within a short time, it may be possible to extend the rest period but not beyond a further three months. If you are a home visiting volunteer and you decide you would like to leave the organisation, please notify us as soon as possible so that arrangements can be made to bring support to an end with your family over time. If you return to the organisation after an absence of 12 months or more, as a family support, group or breastfeeding volunteer you will be required to attend the preparation course again and also complete a new enhanced DBS check. Copy of the volunteer resting policy can be found in the appendix.

## Volunteer Complaints Procedure.

Home-Start values its relationships with volunteers and should a problem arise where the volunteer feels aggrieved, the following procedure should be followed in order to settle all individual complaints and to avoid disputes between Home-Start and the volunteer.

**Stage One** A volunteer is encouraged to raise informally with the Coordinator any matter of concern at the earliest opportunity thereby enabling matters to be resolved without difficulty. The coordinator will investigate the matter on behalf of the volunteer and respond to the volunteer within seven working days of the issue being raised, if possible, with the Coordinator.

**Stage Two** If the matter is not resolved, the volunteer may refer the matter to the CEO either verbally or in writing. The CEO will acknowledge promptly the complaint either verbally or in writing and advise the volunteer how the complaint will be investigated and the timescale involved. The CEO will endeavor to produce a written statement of the complaint and the result within 28 days of referrals.

**Stage Three** If the matter still remains unresolved the volunteer may refer the matter to the appeal committee. This panel, which should be specifically convened to hear the volunteer's complaint, should consist of the chair of the trustees, and two other trustees. None of the members of the appeal committee should have been involved in any prior stage of the complaints procedure. If the chair has been involved, the deputy chair or treasurer should act in place of the chair. The appeal committee will meet if possible within 15 working days of the referral to consider the facts of any unresolved complaint and decide the outcome. The volunteer is entitled to attend the hearing to put forward his/her complaint and may be accompanied by a representative.

NB: If the volunteer feels unable to raise his/her complaint with the Coordinator, as the volunteer's complaint relates to or is associated with the Coordinator, the volunteer should proceed directly at Stage Two or Three.

## Expenses Guidelines

Full guidance is given in the Expenses Policy. Some volunteers may feel that they are taking money out of the organisation when they are only travelling “a few miles away”. All expenses incurred by our volunteers have been budgeted for each year, and we do have funding provision for all our volunteers’ expenses no matter how small, so please complete your expenses forms every month. If it is easier for you then they can be completed either electronically, posted or hand delivered when you have your supervision. We can also help you complete your forms if that is easier. Please speak to the team if you would like assistance completing your forms. All expenses wherever possible are paid electronically straight to your bank account.

The organisation will reimburse volunteers for approved expenses wholly and necessarily incurred in the course of their volunteering. Reimbursement is controlled and managed to ensure that volunteers neither gain nor lose expenses.

## Volunteer Declaration

Name:.....

- I have read and understand the contents of the volunteer handbook and I will undertake the responsibilities and adhere to the procedures outlined in this handbook. I have discussed any concerns I have regarding the contents of this handbook with my Coordinator.
- I have read and understand the information held in the volunteer charter.
- I also agree to have regular support and supervision meetings and to ensure that my paperwork (expense forms and diary sheets) will be completed and produced during my support and supervision sessions.
- I will also agree to inform the scheme if I am unable to visit my family/attend group/the shop or if I am planning to take a break from volunteering with Home-Start Wirral. I will also agree to inform Home-Start Wirral immediately if I am going through any personal issues that may affect my commitment to the organisation.
- I also agree to attend personal development courses when required.
- I agree to attend mandatory refresher training for Safeguarding and Confidentiality
- I will also ensure that I will contact Home-Start Wirral immediately if I have any concerns or to report any incidents that have occurred whilst I have been visiting my family, or whilst in a group or at the Charity Shop.
- I also agree to share any relevant DBS applications and certificates
- I have completed (if applicable) the organisations declaration of interest
- I have read and signed (where appropriate) the following policies as required by Home-Start Wirral:-
  - Volunteer Confidentiality policy [ ]
  - Code of Conduct [ ]
  - Health and safety [ ]
  - Safeguarding Children Policy [ ]
  - Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults Policy [ ]
  - Information Sharing Policy [ ]
  - Volunteer Policy [ ]
  - Volunteer Resting Policy [ ]
  - Social Media Policy [ ]
  - Expenses Policy [ ]
  - Volunteer Commitment Letter [ ]
  - Volunteer Role Description [ ]

Signed:.....

Name:.....

Date:.....

A copy of this declaration will be held in your volunteer folder at the Home-Start office.



## Appendix 1

### GROUP VOLUNTEERS

The following section of your hand book has been developed specifically for Group Volunteers at the Home-Start Hub and a number of additional premises.

#### The Role of a Group Volunteer

To help give children the best possible start in life, Home-Start supports parents as they grow in confidence, strengthen their relationship with their children and widen their links with the local community. Home-Start offers support, friendship and practical help to parents with young children in the local community. Groups differ in the type of support on offer, the targeted groups at the Hub focus on supporting children's early development whilst providing respite for parents, Stay and play groups focus on parenting skills and promoting a positive home learning environment.

The role of a Group Support volunteer requires a high level of commitment and reliability and will be supported by the group facilitator, and Project Lead.

#### **Overall purpose of the role**

1. To provide care for children age 0-7, many with complex's needs.
2. To promote, support and develop the 3 prime areas of learning and development( according to the EYFS)
  - Personal, social and emotional development
  - Physical development
  - Communication and language
3. To see each child as an individual, helping them to reach their full potential.

#### **Key tasks**

- To help with the setting up of the play room creating an environment to promote the 3 prime areas of learning and development.
- To assist in providing quality care for children 0-7
- To assist in providing a safe and suitable play environment for children attending the centre
- To share information with the group facilitator if there is a concern about a family/child attending a group
- To assist in the preparation of snacks and in the cleaning of the play room and all equipment
- To support the team in all duties including the cleaning up of the playroom after sessions.

#### **Other duties**

- To observe the rules of confidentiality and safeguarding at all time
- To abide by the guidelines of health and safety in the work place
- be familiar with policies and procedures
  - have up to date safeguarding training
  - be confident to follow the fire procedures and drill

This list of tasks is not exclusive and duties may be varied from time to time within the scope and purpose of the role.

### **Support for Volunteers**

The Group Staff, and Project Lead, who are in turn responsible to the CEO, support volunteers in their role offering regular one to one supervision every 8 weeks. The volunteer also has a dedicated administration team who are available to offer support in completing volunteer paperwork. Volunteers are also requested to attend group support every term, this will give you an opportunity to meet other volunteers, be kept up to date with relevant information relating to Home-Start and the Hub, and training when required

### **Commitment required**

- Initial course of preparation – all volunteers need to be prepared to offer their support to families and groups. The following key sessions must be completed:
  - Introduction to Home-Start Wirral
  - Safeguarding
  - Commitment and Boundaries
  - Confidentiality
  - Values and Attitudes

Additional sessions are available on the course of preparation but these are optional for group volunteers.

- Shadowing – Volunteers will shadow a member of staff for 4 consecutive weeks and feedback will be given after each session. (Volunteers are never left unsupervised with children as all support is offered within a group setting)
- Commitment to a set day/time to attend a group:
  - Commit to 3 hours a week unless pre-arranged with Group leader and Complex needs coordinator, preparation and reflection are vital to providing good practice and as a volunteer you are expected to take part in both of these aspects of the role.
  - Commit to being reliable and understand the importance of reliability to the children and families.
  - Please provide us with as much notice as possible in regards to sickness, holidays and appointments which will affect you from being able to be attend your session so we are able to provide cover and continue with the group
  - If unable to attend on the day please let us know by 8 30am if you support a morning session or 10.30 for an afternoon session, this allows us the time to provide cover for you, allowing the group to able to go ahead with your absences. The later we are informed the less likely the group will run.
  - To be flexible within the working practices of the setting, be prepared to help where needed including to undertake domestic jobs within the setting eg preparation of snack, cleansing of equipment.
  - Be clear about the importance of confidentiality but also able to recognise the importance of sharing vital information and how this is essential for the well-being and safeguarding of the child and family.
  - Be committed to working as part of a team

- Dedicated to promoting and stimulating children's development to help support children reach their full potential
  - Committed to keeping professional boundaries when supporting families.
- To accept regular support and supervision in respect of their voluntary activity.
  - We recognise that volunteers may stop volunteering at any time but we would expect and hope they would be able to offer their time to Home-Start for at least 12-18 months.

### **Home-Start Volunteer Person Specification**

**Becoming a Group Volunteer is simple and rewarding.**

**All we ask of our volunteers is that they should:**

- Have a positive attitude to supporting people of any gender, family status or sexual identity, or who are from any ethnic origin, culture or religion, or who may have a disability
- Demonstrate a sensitive and caring attitude towards others
- Have a non-judgmental attitude
- Be clear about confidentiality and when a confidence remains so, but be able to decide when disclosure of a confidence is essential to the well-being of a child
- Be reliable and understand the importance of reliability to the role
- Have good communication skills including an ability to listen
- Understand the need for support
- Have a warm and open personality and a sense of humour
- Have time and enthusiasm for Home-Start
- Be able to work as part of a team
- Be prepared to keep records as requested by the organisation.
- Be prepared to engage in ongoing group support session.

### **Volunteer Support and Supervision Sessions.**

It is vital that all our volunteers receive regular support and supervision every 8 weeks. The support and supervision sessions are your opportunity to discuss any concerns or worries that you may have regarding volunteering. It is also an ideal time for you to discuss any training opportunities, or feedback and to touch base with the organisation to get up to date info on events happening and also to hand in your expenses. There will also be an opportunity for you to meet up and share good practice with other volunteers by attending ongoing training where you will have the opportunity for peer support. These are planned throughout the year and all volunteers are encouraged to attend as many as possible.

It is extremely important that you submit your volunteer monthly diary and expense forms at your support and supervision meeting with your Coordinator. Expenses will only be reimbursed when your Coordinator has signed your expenses form at your support and supervision session, and all receipts in relation to your expenses has been included. All the information on your forms must be clear, concise & factual. They provide a vital overview for the Coordinator of all your visits with your family.

## CONTACT DETAILS:

**The Hub - Telephone: 0151 608 8288      email: [admin@homestartwirral.co.uk](mailto:admin@homestartwirral.co.uk)**

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