

Volunteer Policy

Introduction

This policy sets out the broad principles for voluntary involvement in Home-Start Wirral. It is of relevance to all within the organisation, including volunteers, staff, members, and those elected or appointed to positions of responsibility.

This policy is endorsed by the Board of the organisation and will be reviewed annually to ensure that it remains appropriate to the needs of Home-Start Wirral and its volunteers. Our Trustees, responsible for the governance of the organisation, are also volunteers.

Principles

This Volunteering Policy is underpinned by the following principles:

- Home-Start Wirral will ensure that volunteers are properly integrated into the organisational structure and that mechanisms are in place for them to contribute to the support Home-Start Wirral offers to families in our community.
- Home-Start Wirral does not aim to introduce volunteers to replace paid staff.
- Home-Start Wirral expects that staff at all levels will work positively with volunteers and, where appropriate, will actively seek to involve them in their role within the organisation.
- Home-Start Wirral recognises that volunteers require satisfying tasks and personal development and will seek to help volunteers meet these needs, as well as providing the training for them to do their role effectively.
- Home-Start Wirral and its staff are committed to equality and diversity with all its volunteers irrespective of background or ability, and we ensure that all are treated equally and fairly and will strive to minimise any barriers to volunteer involvement.
- Home-Start Wirral recognises that all our volunteers undertake important tasks that contribute enormously to the organisations success.

Practice Guidelines

The following guidelines deal with practical aspects of the involvement of volunteers. More detailed information, including copies of the various documents referred to, is provided in the Volunteers Handbook.

Recruitment

Volunteers do not need specific qualifications; it's their life experiences, attitudes and interpersonal skills that matter. All prospective volunteers are carefully recruited and will be interviewed to establish the most appropriate volunteering area, and how best their potential might be realised. Where the individual does not meet our criteria we will encourage them to explore alternative, more suitable volunteering opportunities. Further details can be found in the [Volunteer Recruitment Policy](#).

We ensure our recruitment and selection process is as simple, flexible and transparent as possible to meet individual needs.

Volunteer Role Descriptions

Each volunteer will have a volunteer role description outlining the specific tasks they will be undertaking. Each volunteer will also receive a volunteer's handbook containing additional, relevant information.

Expenses

All volunteers will have their travel and other expenses reimbursed, including attendance at the volunteer course of preparation and subsequent training and peer support sessions.

Induction and training

- All family support and breastfeeding volunteers will complete a 10 week induction Course of Preparation.
- All family support, breastfeeding and group volunteers will complete annual safeguarding refresher training.
- All family support, breastfeeding and group volunteers will complete annual confidentiality and data protection update sessions.
- All family support, breastfeeding and group volunteers will complete child poverty awareness training.
- All family support, breastfeeding and group volunteers will be required to attend a minimum of 3 additional ongoing training sessions a year.
- All other volunteers, including Charity Shop, will receive induction and training to meet the requirements of their role.
- All volunteers will be offered shadowing opportunities as part of their induction.
- All volunteers will have the opportunity to access ongoing training opportunities provided by the organisation to enhance their personal development.

Support

All family support, breastfeeding and group volunteers will have a coordinator as their main point of contact, Charity Shop volunteers will have the Shop Manager as their first contact. They will undertake recorded supervision every 6 weeks to receive feedback on progress, emotional support, discuss future development, and raise any concerns.

All volunteers will be invited to attend peer support sessions which are planned throughout the year. Family Support and Breastfeeding volunteers will be required to attend at least three of the sessions over a twelve month period.

The Volunteer's Voice

Volunteers are encouraged to express their views about matters concerning Home-Start Wirral and its work. There are 2 volunteer representatives on the Board of Trustees, one of whom is the Volunteer Champion; there is also a Quality and Development Manager to assist the Volunteer Champion, as well as Investors in Volunteers steering group who can all support volunteers during their time with the organisation

Insurance

All volunteers are covered by Home-Start Wirral insurance policy whilst they are on the premises or engaged in any tasks on Home-Start Wirral's behalf.

Health and Safety

Volunteers are covered by Home-Start Wirral's Health and Safety Policy, a copy of which is in the volunteer's handbook. Appropriate risk assessments are carried out before a volunteer visits a family's home. Lone working and safer working practise is also included in the volunteer preparation course. Further information can be found in the organisations Health and Safety Policy.

Equal Opportunities

Home-Start Wirral operates an equal opportunities policy in respect of both paid staff and volunteers. The organisation is committed to recruiting volunteers and staff from a broad diversity of backgrounds, ensuring where ever possible, it reflects the diversity in our local community and the families we support. Volunteers will be expected to have an understanding of and commitment to our equal opportunities policy which is included in the course of preparation.

Problem Solving

We aim to identify and solve problems at the earliest possible stage. A procedure has been drawn up for dealing with complaints either from or about volunteers as outlined in the volunteer's handbook.

Confidentiality

It is essential all volunteers understand and maintain the Home-Start Wirral's confidentiality policy and procedures, recognising we are often the recipients of information of a personal and private nature. All volunteers will be bound by the same requirements for confidentiality as paid staff, and are expected to sign the organisations confidentiality policy and data protection policy.

Rights and Responsibilities

The organisation recognises the rights of volunteers to:

- Know what is (and what is not) expected of them
- Receive appropriate training
- Have adequate support in their volunteering
- Have safe working conditions
- Be insured
- Know their rights and responsibilities if something goes wrong
- Receive relevant out-of-pocket expenses
- Be free from discrimination
- Be offered the opportunity for personal development.
- Receive appreciation

The organisation expects volunteers to:

- Be reliable
- Be honest
- Be committed
- Respect confidentiality
- Make the most of training and support opportunities
- Carry out tasks in a way that reflects the aims and values of the organisation
- Work within agreed guidelines and boundaries
- Respect the work of the organisation and not bring it into disrepute
- Comply with the organisation's policies.

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.