

Role description of a Home-Start Volunteer

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

Purposes of the work:

Home-Start volunteers are expected to aim to increase 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 family.
- Encouraging families to widen their network of relationships and to use effectively the support and services available in the community.

Responsible to: The Home-Start Coordinator who is in turn responsible to the Management Committee.

Time Commitment

- Initial course of preparation, normally lasting 4 to 5 hours per session once a week, for approximately 10 weeks.
- Visiting a family for approximately 2-3 hours per week according to the family's needs and volunteer's availability.
- Ongoing support/supervision from the Coordinator.
- Ideally a commitment of 1 year or more once training is completed.

Duties

To be familiar with and committed to the Home-Start ethos as specified in the *Standards and Methods of Practice*, the *Home-Start Volunteer Agreement* and the *Home-Start volunteer Guide*.

- To understand and implement Home-Start's policies on:
 1. Confidentiality
 2. Equality & Diversity
 3. Child protection
 4. Health and safety

- To be introduced to and support a family or families by visiting regularly (usually at least once per week) for as long as necessary.
- To share information with the coordinator and contact the coordinator 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 coordinator as requested.
- To keep records of visits to families as requested by the coordinator.
- 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 Management Committee.
- To inform their insurance company that their car is being used for voluntary work with Home-Start for which expenses are paid.

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 coordinator, other volunteers and the Management Committee, and through the coordinator other professionals involved with the family. The Management Committee membership is committed to including up to two representative volunteers. There are also opportunities for self-development and social contact with others in Home-Start.