

Description of the work 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 home helping to prevent family crisis or breakdown.

Title

Home-Start Volunteer

This work requires a high level of commitment and reliability and will be supported by the Home-Start co ordinator(s).

Purpose of the work

Home-Start volunteers are expected to work towards the increased independence of the family by:

- offering support, friendship and practical help
- visiting the families in their own home, 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 children
- 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 co ordinator who is in turn responsible to the Management Committee

Hours of work

- initial course of preparation, normally lasting 40 hours over a number of weeks
- minimum of three hours per week according to the family's needs
- regular support/supervision

POTENTIAL VOLUNTEER ENQUIRY/description.

- ideally a commitment of two years or more

Duties

- to be familiar with and committed to the Home-Start ethos as specified in the *Constitution and Standards and Methods of Practice*, the *Home-Start Agreement* and the *Policy and Practice Guide*
- to understand and implement Home-Start's policies on:
 - confidentiality
 - equal opportunities
 - looking after children in the absence of their parents
 - child protection
 - health & safety
- to be introduced to and support a family or families by visiting regularly (usually at least once per week) for as long as is necessary
- to share information with the co ordinator and contact the co ordinator 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 co ordinator as requested
- to keep records of visits to families as requested by the co ordinator
- to attend support, supervision and training sessions as co ordinator 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 the 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 co ordinator, other volunteers and the Management Committee, and, through the co ordinator, other professionals involved with the family. The Management Committee membership includes two representative volunteers. There are also opportunities for self development and social contact with others from Home-Start.