

Home-Start Edinburgh West and South West

Volunteer Information Pack



Home-Start Edinburgh
West and South West
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What is Home-Start?

Home-Start is a national charity that recruits and trains volunteers to help families with young children. Home-Start works in local communities where volunteers are recruited, trained and matched with families.

Volunteers, who know about being a parent, support other parents by visiting in their own homes for a couple of hours a week. Volunteers can also support families in groups.



Why do families need Home-Start?

Families ask for Home-Start help for all sorts of reasons. These can include isolation, bereavement, multiple births, illness, disability, or just finding parenting a struggle.

Is there a typical Home-Start volunteer?

Volunteers come from all walks of life from young mums to grandparents. Friendliness and a caring attitude are essential as well as an understanding of the pressures of parenting. Volunteers are non-judgmental, reliable, have an understanding of confidentiality, and also have, as one of our volunteers said: 'a sense of humour and a positive attitude'!

What do volunteers do?

Home-visiting volunteers visit families in their own home for two to three hours per week. What a volunteer does during a typical visit will depend on the needs of the family, but could include spending time listening to a parent, finding out about local services, help with routines, playing and reading with the children, visits to the local park, or being an extra pair of hands. Volunteers can also help at facilitated groups such as PEEP, or can be a Home-Start 'ambassador', including helping at themed events, raising awareness in the local community or with particular groups including dads, or young mums.

What training and support will I get?

All volunteers will be asked to complete an application form giving two independent referees, and be asked to undertake a PVG check. Volunteers will attend a Preparation course which will be held once a week for five or six weeks, to help you to prepare for any situations you may meet as a home visitor. The co-ordinator will then carefully match you with a family, and introduce you to them. We also run a short course for volunteers who wish to assist at groups, over one day, or two short days. You will receive regular one-to-one support from the co-ordinator, and on-going training opportunities, such as Play @ home, mental health awareness, addictions awareness, plus regular support groups and social events with other volunteers. You will also receive out-of-pocket expenses.

What will I get out of it?

Our volunteers talk about the huge personal satisfaction they get out of supporting other parents. They also talk about a boost to their own self-esteem and confidence, the friends they have made, and also how the experience they gain can help their career in related jobs.



‘Being a Home-Start volunteer has introduced me to a range of new and interesting experiences’

‘I would recommend it to any parent who feels they have something to offer a fellow parent-in-need!’

(HSEWSW volunteers)



Person Specification for a Home-Start Volunteer

All Home-Start volunteers should:

- Be a parent or have parenting experience, or have experience of working with children
- Have a positive attitude to working with 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-judgemental 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 family.
- 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 a member of a team.
- Be prepared to keep records as requested by the Scheme

What Home-Start Edinburgh West and South West families have said at the end of support:



'It was great to have someone who understands you and your child's needs. The help and advice I received was brilliant and the help my son was given helped us out a lot'

'It has given me the support to attempt trips out and about that I normally wouldn't have attempted. A fantastic and positive person to have around'

'The feeling that 'you are not alone' we are there for you to talk to or for any kind of help - that assurance and support I got from Home-Start'

'My volunteer made me feel comfortable to talk about private matters and gave me more confidence to be more social with others'

(HSEWSW families)

The Preparation course

The Preparation course takes place over five weeks, for one day a week for four hours, to help you prepare for the role of a Home-Start volunteer.

The course will include the following topics:

- Introduction to Home-Start
- Role of the Home-Start volunteer
- Home visiting
- Commitment and boundaries
- Personal safety awareness
- Values and attitudes
- Family life and supporting parents
- Play
- Listening to parents
- Confidentiality
- Child Protection



The group training over one day or two half days includes:

- General HS information and ethos
- Roles, responsibilities
- Expectations and boundaries
- Confidentiality, Child Protection, Code of Conduct
- Values and Attitudes
- Group Dynamics, inclusion and conflict
- Group Development and Enabling Change
- Leadership and Learning Styles
- Communication and Listening Skills
- Resources and ideas

What the volunteers say:

'I very much enjoyed the Prep course, it was enjoyable and fun with great content'

'The start of a new chapter in my life, meeting new people, discussing topics of interest to me in preparation for new challenges in my role as a volunteer'

'Great personal development course'

'Realise I have valuable skills, and appreciate the difficulties families face more than before'

'Helped me to gain confidence in myself'

'The training has been great - thank you!'

Home-Start – a family's story:

We were told at my 13 week scan that we were expecting triplets. It was at this point that my life was turned on its head. How would we cope? What would happen to my eldest son Rory? Would we ever sleep again? How could this happen? All my friends kept telling me you will need to get help, this only adding to my list of worries as on paper there was no help out there or, if it did, it was going to result in us remortgaging our flat.

It was at this point I found out about Home-Start, the only organisation that was willing to offer a helping hand and a friendly ear. I got in contact immediately. My initial nerves were soon put aside when we met our Home-Start volunteer Janice who was to come round once a week for 4 hours. Janice has been working with children all her life and it shows as all my kids think she is just great. She is hugely supportive, always ready to pull her sleeves up, has never been phased by the craziness that a triplet lifestyle can bring and has never judged my parenting skills. I have asked for advice on a number of occasions but just love it when she says "whatever works for you". For me, even just to have some adult company with an open and impartial ear has been a welcome break.

Janice has really blended into our routine and having an extra pair of safe hands has been a lifesaver. I still find myself looking at my watch and thinking, it's ok, only 1 more hour to survive until Janice arrives..... phew! I cannot thank Home-Start, and more importantly Janice, for all their help and support over the past year and a half.



A volunteer's story

Being a Home-Start volunteer has introduced me to a range of new and interesting experiences.

The families I have supported have lived locally so we can share experiences of local amenities and activities.

I was with my first family for 2 years and this gave me the opportunity to see the children grow and develop their personalities. As there were 4 children under 4 years old I had an insight into amenities and activities.

The amount of stamina needed to get through the day, not to mention the number of nappies and the organisational skills needed to feed and bath 3 babies at the same time.

A sense of humour and a positive attitude was a strategy developed over the 2 years.

My second family also have 4 children under 4 years but this experience is completely different and I enjoy the diversity.

There are opportunities for relevant training with other volunteers and as an individual.

One of these courses has enabled me to become involved in a parent and baby group in the local community high school. More diversity.

Then there are the social events. Volunteers and staff getting together for a meal, a drink and a good blether.



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