

Introduction to Volunteering

Home-Start UK

Home-Start is a national organisation with over 350 schemes throughout the UK. There are also schemes in Australia, Cyprus and Germany; in fact they are sprouting up in countries all over the world. The first scheme was established in Leicester in 1973. Home-Start has had a fairly low profile; however we do actually support roughly the same amount of families as the NSPCC.

Our Trustees

*Chair:
Pam Burton*

*Treasurer:
Roger Bottomley*

Home-Start Calderdale

Home-Start Halifax was launched in September 1999 covering mainly the North Halifax area of Calderdale. In April 2006 additional funding was given to enable Home-Start to broaden the support area to cover the whole of Calderdale, therefore all families living in Calderdale can now benefit from Home-Starts unique home visiting volunteers to get the support they require. The name of the scheme changed from Home-Start Halifax to Home-Start Calderdale, this was necessary to reflect the area covered.



The scheme is constantly growing and many more families in Calderdale are able to benefit from the support of a Home-Start volunteer. We currently have over **100** home visiting volunteers!

We also have **5** Trustee volunteers and **13** paid staff.

The staff are:

Scheme Manager
Office Manager
Data Manager & Admin Assistant
Co-ordinator for the BME Community
Co-ordinator For the Lower Valley
Co-ordinator for North & East Halifax
Co-ordinator for the Upper Valley
Co-ordinator for Central Halifax
Co-ordinator for Families with Disabled Children
Co-ordinator for Families with Mental Ill Health
Family Group Worker
Families Matter Key Worker
Families Matter Key Worker

Linda Crowther
Gail Lumb
Nicola Lowney
Sanham Aurangzeb
Samantha Gallagher
Faye Herbert
Charlie Johnston
Maxine West
Linda Powell
Louise Wyatt
Carol Mitton
Kirsty Whitham
Olga Willoughby

Role of a Home-Visiting Volunteer

After receiving this information pack it is your choice to decide if you could offer your skills as a parent, to make a difference to a family living in Calderdale. Every family supported by our team of volunteers has individual needs and each volunteer has individual skills therefore our co-ordinators need to carefully match your skills, ability and confidence to the family's needs. Some areas of support may include reassurance that the parent is doing a good job, practical help or just a listening ear. Some parents need someone to talk to, help to gain confidence to get out of the house or managing children's behavioural problems.

As a Home-Start volunteer you will visit the same family in their own home every week for a couple of hours. Support is offered to families for as long as they and the volunteer feel it is needed. Sometimes this support can be for a few weeks, but sometimes it can be up to a year or more. As Home-Start works with children and vulnerable

people it is important to keep up consistency with the visits in order to build up trust. Home-Start offers a befriending service, emotional support with possibly some practical assistance. However this does not mean that you will be babysitting, home helps or run a taxi service. It is your aim as a Home-Start volunteer to enable the family to manage on their own and not to rely on you. **Example** – If the family you support does not have a car, taking them to the park in your own car will not enable them to manage independently. However helping the family on the bus or motivating them into walking enables them to see that it is manageable on their own.

Home-Start asks for a minimum commitment of 12 months from a volunteer. However we understand your own personal circumstances may change and you may be unable to commit. You can discuss this at any time with a Co-ordinator.

If you feel at this point that home-visiting might not be for you, but that you would still like to help, we would welcome your interest in becoming a trustee on our management board. If you feel that this is for you, please let us know and we can give you details on what that role would involve.

All out of pocket expenses are reimbursed, you are able to claim for bus fares, mileage, phone calls, and stamps used for Home-Start purposes. The Co-ordinators will bear in mind the area that you live in and where your family lives. We will aim for it to be as easy as possible for you to get to visit the family supported.



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Meeting a Co-ordinator & the Application Form



One of the first steps to becoming a Home-Start volunteer is to speak to one of our Co-ordinators to make an appointment for them to visit you in your own home. The aim of this visit is to give you a chance to understand fully what is expected of a Home-Start volunteer and what benefits you will get from your volunteering experience.

During this visit you and the Co-ordinator will complete the application form but this does not mean you have agreed to become a volunteer; it is an expression of interest. It is also fine if you would prefer time on your own to complete the form after the Co-ordinator has left and then post it into the office.

It is after this meeting you decide whether you would like to attend the Home-Start Preparation Course. Various courses run throughout the year, both during the week and Saturdays, so please state the best time for you to attend a course

The application form asks you to disclose any criminal offences you may have. If you do disclose information about your past, it does not mean that you automatically cannot be a volunteer. We will discuss the circumstances surrounding the incident and may seek further information before making a decision. You can always phone to discuss it if you are not sure. It is always better to be honest at this point rather than be found out at a later date. (Please see policy sections in Criminal Records Check)

References

You are required to provide 2 referees on the application form. Home-Start Calderdale will then write to the referees asking them to provide a reference for you. Please seek permission from the referee before submitting their details to Home-Start Calderdale. **The referees must not be related to you and preferably one who knows you on a personal level and another on a professional level.**

Disclosure & Barring Scheme Check

Your application will be subject to an enhanced check with the Disclosure & Barring Scheme (which used to be known as the Criminal Records Bureau). This will involve giving us personal details such as driving licence number, passport number etc. Please disclose any convictions on your application form. A copy of the result of the records check will be sent to your home. We then ask that you inform us upon receipt so that we can verify your status. Please read sections 3-5 of the Recruitment of Ex Offenders Policy over the page.

Policy for the recruitment of ex offenders

The Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 makes it an offence to apply for, offer to do, accept or do any work with children (paid or unpaid) if disqualified from working with children. Disqualification can arise from inclusion in either the list of those considered unsuitable to work with children held by the Department of Health or the Department of Education and Employment. In addition the courts can disqualify those convicted of serious offences from working with children

The Charities Act 1993 disqualifies individuals who have convictions for offences involving deception or dishonesty from acting as trustees.

Subject to the above, Home-Start Calderdale will consider applications for recruitment from individuals who have a criminal record to a paid or unpaid position within the organisation on their merits but the safety of children, vulnerable adults and families will be paramount and the overriding consideration in determining the matter.

Section 4 – Policy for the recruitment of ex offenders

A criminal conviction may not necessarily be a bar to being an employee or volunteer for Home-Start. Certain offences are, however, so serious that in the light nature of Home-Start's work, the existence of a conviction for such an offence will normally preclude the applicant from involvement in the organisation on a paid or unpaid basis:

- Offences against children or against a person
- Sex offences
- Benefit Fraud
- Theft when in a position of trust
- Offences where weapons were used
- Supplying drugs
- Offences involving violence
- Serious motoring offences involving imprisonment
- Burglary
- Arson with intent to endanger life

Preparation Course

The preparation course helps to utilise your own skills as a parent, enabling you to help others. The course is enjoyable and a good way to meet other people. It enables you to discover your own strengths and hopefully you will gain a new found confidence. It is up to you how much you want to write and how much you want to say, but usually as the group get to know each other we have difficulties in keeping people quiet!

The preparation course is over 40 hours in total - one 4 hour session per week for 10 weeks. The sessions are usually held in school hours so that people are still able to drop off and collect from school. Refreshments are provided but you will need to bring your own lunch.

During your attendance on the preparation course your references and criminal record check will be processed. This is done to enable you to support a family as soon as possible after completing the course.

Suite 2.11, Holmfield Mills, Holdsworth Road
Holmfield, Halifax, HX3 6SN
Tel: 01422 242124 Fax: 01422 243618
Email: info@homestartcalderdale.org.uk

Satellite Office: Nanholme Centre,
Shaw Wood Rd, Todmorden, OL14 6DA
Tel: 01706 816823
Email: charlie@homestartcalderdale.org.uk



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for families

Home-Start
Calderdale

End of Preparation Course Interview

On the last session of the preparation course your co-ordinator will arrange a suitable time for both of you to get together for your End of Preparation Interview. This interview is an opportunity for you to discuss any concerns you may have and also your chance to say what you are not willing to accept i.e. smoking, dogs, cats, any specific issues.

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We hope this may answer some of your questions. Please phone the office if you require any further information. 01422 242124



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www.homestartcalderdale.org.uk

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