Managing Referrals

Managing Referrals and Waiting Lists
Policy statement
Home-Start Calderdale is committed to providing a safe, efficient and responsive service to local families with at least one child under five. Referrals are accepted with the consent of the family. The range of referrals or self-referrals accepted is not limited, except where the resources available are not adequate to meet the number or complexity of cases. Waiting times are carefully managed and referrers and families are kept informed.

Procedures

1. Referral packs, including a copy of the referral policy and procedures, are circulated to referrers to raise awareness of the service where necessary.

2. Referrers are encouraged to access our website to gain information about the service and to access referral forms

3. Regular contact with referrers ensure that they are aware of the referral criteria and capacity of the scheme

4. Should the Home-Start referral list be closed, or a locality within it, a letter will be sent along with the returned referral form, explaining that the service is at capacity and that the list is closed. Another letter will be sent to the same referrers at the point of reopening

5. Once a referral is received Home-Start will strive to ensure that a family is contacted within 2 weeks

6. The referrer is informed by letter that a referral has been received, that a volunteer has been linked to a family and when support has come to an end. An evaluation form is also sent with an endings letter. Co-ordinators, with consent from families, will strive to maintain ongoing communication with referrers who continue to work with a family as the need arises. The referrer will be informed that until they receive a letter informing them that a volunteer has been matched, the family are on the Home-Start waiting list.

7. If a family is waiting to be linked to a volunteer the co-ordinator will maintain required contact with the family (by phone or visits). The date of the initial visit will be shown on the family board to indicate length if time a family has been waiting. The family file will show the date of the last contact for monitoring purposes

8. If support is interrupted due to a volunteer leaving or resting, the co-ordinator will inform the office manager who will inform the referrer by letter. Another letter will then be sent when an alternative volunteer has been linked. The family board needs to reflect the date that the family went back onto the waiting list.

9. Families who have been waiting for a match for more than 3 months are reviewed by the co-ordinator again to assess whether Home-Start support is still required or whether the family could be referred elsewhere. A conversation is also had with the original referrer, should they still be supporting the family, based on the outcome to keep them informed of the course of action. This is all documented in the family file

Suite 211, Holmfield Mills, Holdsworth Rd
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

10.   Should a family wish to stay on the waiting list the referrer is made aware, should they still be supporting the family. Good practice would indicate that a family is not kept on the waiting list for any more than a further 3 months. Any more waiting time needs to be discussed and agreed with the Senior Co-ordinator

11.   The family's expectations are managed, so that from the initial visit onwards they have a good understanding of how the referral is likely to progress and when they will be contacted by the scheme

12.   For self referrals, permission from the family will be requested to contact their health visitor to inform them that Home-Start support is being accessed.

13.   Trustees will be made aware of any decision to close the referral list. Although Home-Start Calderdale find this course of action undesirable, it is sometimes the pragmatic course of action in the event of reaching service capacity.

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