

**INFORMATION**

We take safeguarding children seriously in our organisation

Home-Start is a national organisation with nearly 300 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.

Home-Start Bradford was launched in February 2000. In January 2010 Home-Start Shipley staff joined Home Start Bradford and we changed our name to Home-Start Bradford District. In October 2015 we received Big Lottery Funding to expand into the Keighley area and open a sub office. There are 7 paid workers at the scheme: Melanie Roberts-Saunders - Scheme Manager; Diane Hanwell - Admin Manager, Sabrina Hussain Admin Assistant and 2 Family & Volunteer Coordinators -, Julie Infield, Christine Gaffey. Our core service covers the Bradford District area. At 31/3/16 32 volunteers were linked to and visiting families and during the year (1/4/15 - 31/3/16) 23 volunteers were recruited and 40 volunteers left the scheme, with many going on to further education or employment. In the past year 96 families have been supported by a home visiting volunteer with a total of 259 children benefiting from this support (including 29 of whom had a disability). A total of 771 volunteer visits took place with a duration of 1734.5 hours.

Once you have been through the recruitment and selection process including a 40 hour course of preparation and have been accepted as a volunteer you will be matched with a family. It is expected that you will visit this family usually once a week for a couple of hours. We ask that volunteers are able to give at least 4 hours a week to Home-Start, plus travel time. Some volunteers visit more often, if they are able and the family requests this and some visit more than one family.



As a volunteer you will visit the same family each week and build up a "friendship". We offer a befriending service and emotional support with some practical assistance. This does not mean that our volunteers are free babysitters, home helps or run a taxi service. The type and depth of support you offer to a family will depend on the needs the family has expressed to the Family & Volunteer Coordinator. Great care is taken when matching volunteers and families and your skills, ability and confidence will be taken into consideration. We also ask for a minimum commitment of 12 months from a volunteer.

Most volunteers visit during the daytime, but some volunteers work full-time or have other commitments and visit the family at weekends or evenings. This is a time when some people feel most isolated and families do request this.



The families that we visit are all unique and have quite different needs, but all are in need of some support. Some are lone parents, some have partners who work away, some are new to the country or just to the area and will need to be shown around, introduced to other networks such as a parent and toddler group and above all need a friend with a listening ear. Some of the parents are suffering from postnatal depression or there is illness or disability in the family. There are as many reasons for some extra support as there are families!



All out of pocket expenses are reimbursed, you are able to claim for bus fares, mileage, any outings you take the family on, phone calls, stamps used for Home-Start purposes.



We support families living in the Bradford District, including Keighley. It is important to remember this if you are going to use public transport because it is unlikely that you will enjoy visiting a family if it takes you 2 hours and 5 bus rides to get there. The Family & Volunteer Coordinator will bear in mind the area that you live in and where your family live. We will aim for it to be as easy as possible for you to get there (on a bus route), having said that we don't like to match people who live too close as families feel this impinges on their confidentiality.



The first step to becoming a Home-Start volunteer is to complete the application form. We welcome interest from all sections of the community. You will have made a phone call to the office by now to say you are interested! Don't worry too much about the form, complete as much of it as you can, return it to the office and any missing gaps can be filled in when you meet with the Family & Volunteer Coordinator. Again, don't worry at this stage if you do disclose information about your past, perhaps you have a criminal conviction. It does not mean that you automatically cannot be a volunteer. We will discuss the circumstances surrounding the incident and maybe seek further information before making a decision. We wouldn't want to turn away a potentially good volunteer for a speeding fine they got 10 years ago. We are unlikely to accept someone who has convictions for violence, arson or any other Schedule 1 offences. 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.

As the work that we do is with children and vulnerable people and sometimes we can be left on our own with them, it is important that we do our utmost not only to protect the children, but also ourselves. This is why there is such a rigorous recruitment and selection process involved in becoming a volunteer. We take safeguarding children seriously at Home-Start.

There are 2 informal meetings or interviews to be conducted. These again are nothing to worry about and are quite relaxed. This is a chance for you to ask questions. The first meeting will usually be at the Thornbury Centre (which is the main Home-Start office) or at the Keighley sub office. After the first meeting you may be offered a place on the Preparation course. If successful the second interview will be in your own home - both will be with your Family & Volunteer Coordinator. The second meeting will be towards the end of the Preparation Course and will look mainly at how the course is going for you and what you feel you are most confident and least confident in doing. It's fine to say at this point if there are certain things you do not want in a family. Some people are uncomfortable with cats or dogs or very small babies! This information will help us to make a successful match with a family. Your application will be subject to an enhanced disclosure check with the Disclosure & Barring Service, a Social Services family check and we also seek 2 references. The references cannot be relatives, but it is ok to use someone whom you have known as a friend for at least 2 years.



The course of preparation helps to prepare you to visit a family. It is quite a long course, but most find it enjoyable and a good way to meet other people. There is very little writing to be done from the course and certainly no homework! It's 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! There are usually about 10-16 people on the course, which is often held at the Thornbury Centre or at a centre in the community. All Centres have facilities for disabled users. We can sometimes pay childcare expenses, but only to REGISTERED childcare.

The courses are held over 40 - 50 hours in total; this usually translates to one 5-hour session per week for 10 weeks but sometimes is 2 sessions per week over 5 weeks. The sessions are usually held in school hours so that people are still able to drop off and collect from school. We do not usually hold the course in school holidays. If there is enough demand an evening course can be organised. Light refreshments are provided.

Once placed with a family you will have regular one-to-one supervision with your Family & Volunteer Coordinator. Regular Volunteer Ongoing Training & Support Meetings (VOTS) are held when additional training is given (some sessions are compulsory e.g. Safeguarding Update). This is also an opportunity to meet with other volunteers and you can give and receive advice with relating to family visits. A newsletter is sent out quarterly and occasional social events are held.

To become a Home-Start volunteer can be quite a long process, but this helps us to get to know each other well and hopefully make a good match with a family. This is exciting and rewarding voluntary work which requires commitment, reliability, and a sense of humour!



We hope this may answer some of your questions - any others you may have can be answered when you meet one of the Family & Volunteer Coordinators, alternatively 'phone the office (01274 666711) and a member of the Home-Start Team will be happy to speak with you.

(information for potential volunteers - vol apps 5/16)