

**Information for Partners  
and Referrers**



**Support and friendship  
for families**

**Home-Start Stoke-on-Trent:**

**Who We Are?**

## **WHAT IS HOME-START?**

Home-Start Stoke-on-Trent is a voluntary organisation providing practical help and support to families with at least one child under the age of five years, and who are experiencing difficulties and stress.

## **HOW DO WE SUPPORT FAMILIES?**

### **Volunteers**

Volunteers are trained and supported to provide friendship and support to families in their own homes.

### **Family Groups**

Families who do not wish to receive one-to-one-support at home may be offered a place in a family group session, once a week. Groups provide peer and social support to parents and opportunities to undertake learning if they choose to while their children are cared for and stimulated in our crèche which is Ofsted registered and inspected.

### **Family Support Workers**

Where families have more urgent and complex needs and where it may be inappropriate to place a volunteer, a family support worker is available to provide time limited support at shorter notice.

## REFERRALS

### The process

- Referrals can be made by anyone living and working with families, families themselves may self-refer. Referrals will only be actioned once they are received on the appropriate referral form, except where it is a self-referral in which case the co-ordinator will undertake a home visit as soon as possible to complete the referral form with the parents where this is required.
- Referrals are delegated to co-ordinators on receipt, or to a specific project depending on their address and needs.
- Co-ordinators will make an appointment to visit a family at home to discuss and agree whether Home-Start is acceptable and appropriate, within two weeks of receiving the referral.
- If a family does not accept Home-Start support their wishes are respected and the referrer is informed in writing.
- If the family and co-ordinator agree that Home-Start is appropriate and acceptable, the type and level of support is then discussed and agreed
- If a volunteer is required, the co-ordinator will 'match' an appropriate volunteer with the family based on skills, confidence, availability and much more. The co-ordinator will then take the volunteer along to the family and introduce them.
- The volunteer is provided with a plan of action, to be undertaken as agreed with the family, as their focus for their visits and the support they provide. They then decide together when the visits take place, how long they will last and what will happen on each visit.

- The volunteer completes a contact form including brief details of activities carried on each visit throughout the month, which is sent back to Home Start along with an expenses claim form.
- The co-ordinator has one-to-one contact with the volunteer at least once every two weeks.
- Volunteers are invited to attend monthly training/support meetings.

### **The criteria**

- Referrals must be made on correct forms.
- The family has to give consent prior to the referral being made.
- The family has to be prepared to be co-operative
- There must be a child under the age of 5 years old in the family.
- Families must live in the city boundaries.
- There are some situations where additional discussion with managers is required, these include:
  - ◇ Domestic Violence
  - ◇ Suicidal Feelings and severe mental health issues/ depression
  - ◇ Safeguarding Children

## **VOLUNTEERS**

### **Home-Start volunteers:**

- have to be either natural parents or have significant parenting experience as either a foster parent, adoptive or step parent
- come from all walks of life and backgrounds
- are sensitively screened and recruited
- must complete the 10 week Course of Preparation
- must provide two references
- have CRB clearance at enhanced level
- are offered ongoing training and support

## **FAMILIES**

### **Home-Start families:**

- are referred either by themselves or by another party
- live in the City boundaries
- have at least one child aged under 5 years; this does not mean that the focus of support is always on the relationship with the youngest child, it is very often older siblings who are the focus
- must be prepared to be co-operative
- must be willing to accept support
- must give their consent for the referral

## **PROJECTS**

We operate a number of projects across the city and also have teams of paid workers, co-ordinators and family support workers, and volunteers. Families also have access to a days session at Family Group and crèche at the Family Centre.

### **CO-ORDINATORS**

Karen Davies

Pat Hamilton

Eileen McCarthy

### **FAMILY SUPPORT WORKERS**

Tracy leach

Sheila Williams

Marie Bailey

Jody Gibbons

Gemma Birks

Pat Barcroft

Lisa Stubbs

Assia Raja

Marie Dobson

### **Admin**

Sue Gater

Shahnaz Hussain

Teresa Chidlow

### **Creche Staff**

Kirsti Allport

Katie Pointon

Shabana Sadiq

### **Scheme Manager**

Chris Pointon

### **Finance Officer**

Laura Bird

## **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Monitoring and Evaluation is undertaken using the standard tools/framework provided by National Home-Start.

Referral forms indicate the needs of each family and where support is required.

These needs are monitored for progress at quarterly review, the reviews include feedback from family, volunteer/support worker, referrer and crèche workers, and information is recorded on the forms.

The reviews provide an opportunity to identify any additional needs that may arise.

At the end of the support and relationship an endings evaluation is undertaken where the co-ordinator and family together evaluate the overall support they have received, the progress made and their general satisfaction with the service. This also involves collating feedback from the referrer if still involved, volunteer/support worker and crèche worker.

## **POLICIES**

Home-Start works to various policies and procedures that ensure the highest quality and standard of service. The main ones that may affect the way in which we work with partners include:

- **Confidentiality**

Any information and/or discussion about a family will only be had with the co-ordinator and not volunteers. It is imperative to maintain a trusting relationship between family and volunteer in order for support to be most effective. Co-ordinators will attend any necessary and appropriate meetings, gaining information from volunteers and the family prior to meetings.

- **Safeguarding Children**

All concerns regarding the welfare and safety of the child/children will be reported to designated safeguarding persons within the scheme. Concerns will be referred on to the appropriate agencies in line with the Child Protection Policy.

- **Equal Opportunities**

Home-Start Stoke-on-Trent will challenge any discriminatory practice and language and may refuse to work with any partner/practitioner who displays or uses discriminatory practice.

- **Health and Safety**

The health and safety of workers, paid or unpaid, is of paramount concern to Home-Start as lone-working is a feature of our work. Therefore all situations are assessed for risk and danger prior to support being put in place. There are some situations that will be considered unsafe for workers including domestic violence, etc. Additional consideration will be given to accepting referrals of this nature and workers will be withdrawn from any situations that become dangerous during their involvement with a family.

**Home-Start Stoke-on-Trent  
The Family Centre  
Eastwood Road, Hanley  
Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 3LR**

**tel: (01782) 280850**

**fax: (01782) 269251**

**e-mail: [admin@homestartstoke.org.uk](mailto:admin@homestartstoke.org.uk)**

**[www.homestartstoke.org.uk](http://www.homestartstoke.org.uk)**

Home-Start Stoke-on-Trent is a Company Limited by  
Guarantee registered in England and Wales. Company No:  
05122087  
Registered office as above  
Registered Charity No: 1104245