

PRESS RELEASE

Home-Start Stoke-on-Trent is Awarded The Parents Charter Award

Home-Start is the first voluntary organisation in the City to be successfully assessed for the Parents Charter Award.

Parents and volunteers, interviewed by Margaret Elkes from the VAST Children and Families Engagement Team, told how they were completely satisfied with the service they receive and that they truly felt that Home-Start listened to their views and engaged them in the process of support. All in all they confirmed that they felt valued by the service.

Chris Pointon, Manager said, 'We are extremely proud to be the first voluntary group in the City to receive this award. It's really important for us to hear what other people think of our service and very reassuring to hear from the families and volunteers that that we are getting it right for them.'

The views of parents, their children and young people and also our wonderful volunteers who actually deliver our service, help us to ensure that our service is flexible and responsive to their individual needs. After 26 years of providing support to families in the City it shows that we are still getting providing what families want.'

The award will be presented to Home-Start at their AGM on 15th December by the Parenting Commissioner, Chris Welton, at the Floral Hall, Tunstall, from 12 till 2pm.

Anyone wishing to attend should please contact Home-Start on: tel: 01782 280850; e-mail: admin@homestartstoke.org.uk

Local Charity Takes National Lead in Support to Families in Need

Home-Start Stoke-on-Trent, the largest family support charity in the City, is one of only two trusts nationally to be allowed by its national governing body to extend its services to families with children aged between 5 and 13.

For over 25 years volunteers in the local scheme have provided friendly and informal practical and emotional support to families under stress, helping over 250 families each year and over 750 children. Home-Start traditionally supports families where there is at least one child aged under 5 years in the family. However the National Organisation, Home-Start UK, has now agreed the Stoke-on-Trent trust to extend its services to those families whose youngest child is in year 7, up to 13 years. The local trust will be piloting this work to inform the way Home-Start operates nationally.

Scheme Manager Chris Pointon says, 'This is really fantastic news for families in stress in the City. There are a number of initiatives to support families with under 5's, particularly the wonderful work being done in our Children's Centres. There is, however, a gap in family support services once those children reach 5 years. During our 25 years of working in the City, we have always worked with families where there are older children and so we are extremely confident that we can achieve the same outstanding results as we do with those families with under 5's. To start with, we are having to be very selective about referrals we take as we know that there is a great need for our service and that, once our partners hear about the lifting of the age restriction, we are likely to be inundated with referrals for families with older children who need help and support.'

The scheme intends to recruit more volunteers to help provide the enhanced service. Volunteers must be parents themselves and be able to support families in the evenings and at weekends, when older children are home from school.

For more information about the scheme go to their website www.homestartstoke.org.uk or e-mail admin@homestartstoke.org.uk or telephone 01782 280850

Aiming High Project

Home-Start Stoke on Trent offers emotional and practical support to families who have a child under the age of 5yrs, including those who have a disability.

With new funding from The Aiming High for Disabled Children we can now offer short breaks to carers of children with a disability.

Home-Start staff or parent volunteers can accompany their child to a fun activity to the local park, farm, cinema or an activity of their own choice.

Parent and siblings are welcome to join in the fun or can use the time to have a well deserved break from their caring responsibilities.

We also provide support and friendship in the families own home if they prefer, this can include playing, reading, to the children giving parents time to relax, knowing someone they can trust is spending quality time with their child.

Support can be given to access hospital appointments, assistance with form filling and grant applications. Extra support is available to those families in a crisis situation where maybe the child or parent is ill or admitted to hospital.

Coordinator Eileen McCarthy says already lots of parents have reported that they are feeling the benefit of our support

One of the parents said "I was able to go for a driving lesson knowing my son was in good hands and enjoying himself "

For more information call Eileen at Home-Start 01782 280850

Supporting Families through the Recession Project

Local Charity Championing Families Hit by the Recession

Home-Start Stoke on Trent, the largest family support charity in the City, is one of 20 schemes in the country to have been awarded funds by the Government to help support families who are affected by the recession.

Chris Pointon, Scheme Manager says, 'For over 25 years our volunteers, all parents themselves, have been providing friendly and informal advice to families experiencing stress and difficulties. The current recession means that there are now a number of families who are experiencing financial hardship for the first time, having been made redundant or had their working hours reduced. Many of these families do not know what they are entitled to, they do not know where to go for help and support, they may also be reluctant and embarrassed to access those services that will be of the greatest help to them. The Government has recognised Home-Start's unique expertise and the extra money will allow us to provide practical help and support, to signpost parents to beneficial services and accompany them to make sure they have the right advice and guidance'.

More information about this service and the work of Home-Start can be found on their website: www.homestartstoke.org.uk or e-mail: admin@homestartstoke.org.uk or telephone 01782 280850