A quick guide to becoming a home visiting volunteer

- You must be a parent or have parenting experience.
- As a home visiting volunteer you will support a family in their home for around two hours each week.
- You should be able to commit at least six months of your time to Home-Start.
- You should have a non-judgemental attitude and understand about the pressures of bringing up a family.
- You will have to attend our free Volunteer Preparation Course with other new volunteers before meeting your first family.
- Expenses are paid during training and while you support a family, and help with childcare costs may also be available.
- If you want to, you may be able to take up the option of your training being formally recognised through accreditation with CERTA.
- You must understand that your support for families is completely confidential.
- You will have to undergo a DBS/PVG/Access NI check at enhanced level.
- You will be supported by your local Home-Start during the time you are visiting families.

How can I find out more about becoming a home visiting volunteer?

Contact your local Home-Start for an informal chat:

Home-Start Reading
7 Southcote Parade
Southcote Farm Lane
Reading, RG30 3DT
T 0118 956 0050
F 0118 956 8800
E office@home-start-reading.org.uk
W home-start-reading.org.uk

Visit our website to find out more and locate your local Home-Start: www.home-start.org.uk

Call our free information line: 0800 068 63 68

Across the UK thousands of Home-Start volunteers visit families at home each week, supporting parents in situations as diverse as isolation, bereavement, multiple births, illness, disability or who are just finding parenting a struggle. They provide non-judgemental practical and emotional support and help build the family's confidence and ability to cope. Home-Start runs more services and has more volunteers supporting more families than any other family support charity in the UK.

All local Home-Starts are supported by Home-Start UK, which provides training for staff, volunteers and trustees, information and guidance on governance, legal and human resources issues and help with fundraising and communications.

The Queen's Diamond Jubilee Volunteering Award 2012

Registered office:
Home-Start UK
8-10 West Walk, Leicester, LE1 7NA
T 0116 258 7900
E info@home-start.org.uk

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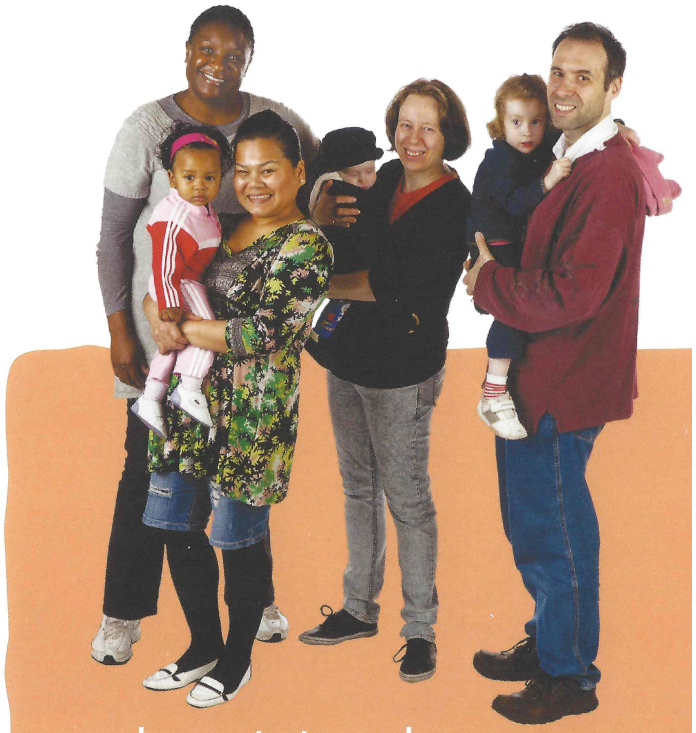
Volunteer15

Home Start
Support and friendship for families

Supporting families

...a guide to being a home visiting **volunteer**



www.home-start.org.uk
Freephone: 0800 068 63 68

Volunteer for Home-Start and make a difference to a family in your community

...your questions answered

What is Home-Start?

Home-Start is a national charity available in hundreds of local communities. We recruit and train volunteers to help families with young children. Our volunteers, who know about being a parent, support other parents by visiting them in their own homes for a couple of hours each week. We also run support groups and hold social events for families.

What kind of families would I be helping?

All kinds of families can find it hard to cope for all sorts of reasons, maybe because of the illness or disability of a child or because of a parent's post-natal illness, bereavement or loneliness. At Home-Start we support any parent with at least one child under five who asks for our help. Our supported families, like our volunteers, come from all walks of life.

Can my support and friendship really make a difference?

Yes. All parents know that those early years before school are vital in a child's life and at Home-Start we believe parents have the key role in creating a secure childhood for their children. It's just that sometimes they need a bit of help...***your*** help.

As a volunteer what would I actually do?

Usually you visit a family in their own home, once a week for a couple of hours. How you help is really down to the family. Volunteers support parents as they learn to cope, improve their confidence and build better lives for their children. Simple things make a big difference: listening, getting out of the house, or helping sort a problem a parent can't face alone.

Do I need any qualifications to be a volunteer?

The only real 'qualification' is experience of bringing up children. Friendliness and a caring attitude are essential as well as an understanding of the pressures of parenting. We value people who don't judge others; people who will respect the fact that they have been invited into a family's home; people who will treat a mother or father as an equal.

Do volunteers get any training?

Yes. The recruitment, induction, training and support of all our volunteers is really important. You will be supported during your training and throughout your contact with families. Home-Start's highly rated Preparation Course is also accredited by CERTA. If your Home-Start offers this accreditation you will be able to gain credits and get formal recognition of your training.

What would I get out of volunteering for Home-Start?

Knowing you have helped; a boost to your self-esteem and confidence; even a foot on the ladder towards a job. See what Philippa says in her story.....

Can I help without visiting families?

Yes. Local Home-Starts also need volunteers to help run family groups and social activities and to help raise funds. They also need volunteer trustees to help manage their work.

Philippa, a mother of three and a Home-Start volunteer...

"Home-Start appealed to me because it was a charity devoted to the family. I felt I had a great deal of experience in this and therefore something to offer.

When I met my first family I immediately warmed to them. Although I was asked to give practical help, it soon became apparent that the mother needed emotional support as well. It took some months for her to talk about this, and it really felt like a breakthrough.

> When a child tells you he loves you... it feels wonderful

The most obvious reward is the sense of helping people. Being a volunteer can occasionally be emotionally draining, but there are also poignant moments; for example when a child in your Home-Start family tells you he loves you, or the mother says she doesn't know how she would manage without you, it feels wonderful.

As a Home-Start volunteer I never feel isolated. I am part of a team and know that if I encounter any difficulties I can contact my Home-Start organiser at any time for support. I have found being a volunteer for Home-Start an extremely positive experience."

Read more volunteer stories:
www.home-start.org.uk/volunteer