

## Description of the work of a Home-Start volunteer

*“Home-Start is a voluntary organisation committed to promoting the welfare of families with at least one child under 5 years of age. Trained volunteers offer support, friendship and practical help to families experiencing stress or difficulties”*

### Title

Home-Start volunteer

This work requires a high level of commitment and reliability and will be supported by the Home-Start organisers/co-ordinators

### Purposes of the Work

Home-Start volunteers are expected to work toward the increased confidence and independence of the family by:

- Offering support, friendship and practical help.
- Visiting families in their own homes where the dignity and identity of each individual can be respected and protected.
- Reassuring families that difficulties in bringing up children are not unusual.
- Emphasising the positive aspects of family life.
- Developing a relationship with the family in which time can be shared and an understanding developed.
- Encouraging parents' strengths and emotional well being for the ultimate benefit of their own children.
- Encouraging families to widen their network of relationships and to use effectively the support and services available in the community.

### Responsible to

The Home-Start Scheme Manager/Co-ordinator who is in turn responsible to the Management Committee

### Hours of Work

- Initial course of preparation, normally lasting 40 hours over a number of weeks.
- Minimum of 3 hours per week – but according to the family's needs.
- Regular support/supervision
- Ideally a commitment of 2 years or more

### Duties

- To be familiar with and committed to the Home-Start ethos as specified in the Constitution and Standards and Methods of Practice, the Home-Start Agreement and the Home-Start Policy & Practice Guide.
- To be introduced to and support a family or families by visiting regularly (usually at least once per week) for as long as is necessary

- To understand and implement Home-Start policies on:
  - Confidentiality
  - Equal Opportunities
  - Looking after children in the absence of their parents
  - Child Protection
  - Health & Safety
- To share information with the Co-ordinator and contact the Co-ordinator immediately if there is concern about the physical or emotional well being of any member of the family
- To take part in reviews with the family and the Co-ordinator as requested
- To keep records of visits to families as requested by the Organiser
- To attend support, supervision and training sessions as arranged by the Scheme.
- To submit travel and telephone expenses at the agreed rate by the Management Committee
- To inform their insurance company that the car is being used for voluntary work with Home-Start for which expenses are paid.

This is exciting and rewarding voluntary work which requires energy, commitment, reliability, creativity and a sense of humour. All volunteers can expect the support of the Co-ordinator, other volunteers and the Management Committee and through the Organiser, other professionals involved with the family. The Management Committee membership includes two representative volunteers. There are also opportunities for self-development and social contact with others in Home-Start.