Person specification and role description for a Home-Start volunteer

Person specification
A Home-Start volunteer should:

- be a parent or have parenting experience
- be prepared to undertake the Home-Start preparation training course
- understand why families may need support from Home-Start
- have a knowledge of child development or willingness to undertake training
- have a positive, non-judgemental attitude to working with people of any gender, family status, sexual identity, or who are from any ethnic origin, culture or religion, or who may have a disability
- demonstrate a sensitive and caring attitude towards others
- have a clear understanding of the confidential nature of the Home-Start service, and not to break confidences shared by the family, other than when disclosure is essential in order to protect the wellbeing or safety of a child
- have time and enthusiasm for Home-Start, be reliable and understand the importance of reliability to the family
- have good communication skills including an ability to listen
- have a warm and open personality and a sense of humour
- be prepared to keep records as required by the scheme
- be prepared to attend supervision (normally every four to six weeks)

The role of a Home-Start volunteer

Home-Start is a voluntary organisation in which volunteers offer regular support, friendship and practical help to young families under stress in their own homes helping to prevent family crisis or breakdown. Volunteers, who are parents or have parenting experience understand that sometimes family life can be tough and that is why their support can be so valuable in helping another family. Volunteers are central to the Home-Start service; we could not offer families the same support without them.

Home-Start volunteers give a high level of commitment and reliability and in return, receive high quality preparation and ongoing training, supervision and support from the Home-Start Co-ordinator(s)

What do Home-Start volunteers do?

Home-Start volunteers aim to build the confidence and independence of the family by:

- offering support, friendship and practical help
- committing to a minimum of 2-3 hours per week home-visiting according to
- the family's needs
- visiting the 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, providing a regular, reliable presence in that family
- drawing on their own experience of parenting to encourage 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

What is the time commitment?

In addition to weekly home visiting:

- attendance at the initial course of preparation,
- attendance at supervision sessions with the coordinator according to Home-Start guidance, normally every 6 -8 weeks
- A commitment of 1-2 Year/s

What are the responsibilities of a Home-Start volunteer?

Home-Start asks all volunteers to commit to the Home-Start ethos and to understand and implement relevant Home-Start's policies which will be explained at the volunteer preparation course, also:

- to undertake all sessions of the preparation course, provide two suitable references, and complete a DBS/PVG/ACCESS NI check at enhanced level
- to sign their acceptance and understanding of the Home-Start Safeguarding/Child Protection Code of Conduct
- to be introduced to and visit a family regularly (usually 2-3 hours a week) and to work towards identified aims of support as agreed with the family
- to share information with the coordinator and contact the scheme immediately if there is concern about the physical or emotional well-being of any member of the family
- to ensure that the child's needs and experience are at the centre of their thinking and they act on concerns about their safety or welfare
- to keep essential records of visits to families and submit monthly via the volunteer diary sheet
- to attend regular 1:1 supervision sessions according to Home-Start guidance
- to submit travel and telephone expenses monthly, which will be paid at the agreed rate by the trustee board
- if applicable - to inform their insurance company that their car is being used for voluntary work with Home-Start for which expenses are paid and provide Home-Start with sight of their relevant tax, MOT and insurance cover for the car as requested

What will Home-Start do for volunteers?

In return for your hard work and commitment, you will receive:

- Excellent preparation for your role, through the preparation course
- Formal and informal support from the coordinator, other volunteers and the trustee board
- Opportunities for self-development and ongoing training

- Social events and the opportunity to get more involved in the scheme if you would like (e.g. fundraising, promotional events, becoming a trustee)
- The opportunity to be involved in a vital local service and to be part of a national and global network

This is exciting and rewarding voluntary work which requires energy, commitment, reliability, creativity and a sense of humour.

We look forward to hearing from you!