

Martin House, 24 Hazelwood Road, NORTHAMPTON NN1 1LN

T 01604 627692

F 01604 235235

E admin@homestart-northampton.org.uk

W www.homestart-northampton.org.uk



**Home-Start
Northampton**

Dear Volunteer

Thank you for the interest you have shown in volunteering for Home-Start Northampton.

We are pleased to enclose for your perusal and information a leaflet about Home-Start, annual report, volunteer profile and volunteer charter, which we hope will go some way towards explaining what we do and the Home-Start approach.

If you would like to attend the next course of preparation (or even one at a later stage), please complete and return the enclosed application form. One of us will contact you in due course to arrange an informal interview. This will also be an opportunity to discuss the course content and provide you with the course agenda, times etc. If you have any queries and would like to discuss these over the telephone in the first instance please do not hesitate to contact us on the above number.

Yours sincerely

Bernadette Barnes
Scheme Manager

The Role of the Home-Start Volunteer

To help give children the best possible start in life, Home-Start supports parents as they grow in confidence, strengthen their relationship with their children and widen their links with the local community. Home-Start offers support, friendship and practical help to parents with young children in the local community.

Visiting families at home is basic to the Home-Start approach. Volunteers undertake the core work of the Home-Start scheme in their support for families, visiting them regularly in their own homes. Volunteers offer a realistic, flexible response and a caring attitude rather than a clearly defined method of working.

By sharing their time and friendship volunteers offer families opportunities to develop new relationships, fresh ideas, and enhanced skills and capabilities.

Because of this, families can develop a renewed interest in their children and an improved response to their needs. They gain the confidence to take advantage of other resources in the community.

The work of the volunteer requires a high level of commitment and reliability and will be supported by the Home-Start co-ordinators.

Volunteer Profile

A Home-Start volunteer should:

- be a parent or have parenting experience
- have a positive attitude to working with people of any gender, family status or 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 non-judgemental attitude
- be clear about confidentiality and when a confidence remains so, but be able to decide when disclosure of a confidence is essential to the well-being of a child
- be reliable and understand the importance of reliability to the family
- have good communication skills including an ability to listen
- understand the need for support
- have a warm and open personality and a sense of humour
- have time and enthusiasm for Home-Start
- be able to work as a member of a team
- be prepared to keep records as requested by the scheme.

Volunteer Charter

This Volunteer Charter contains our mutual hopes and expectations to make sure you are able to help in the voluntary work of Home-Start and that you feel that Home-Start recognises and values your contribution. As a volunteer you are one of a key group of people playing a crucial role in providing Home-Start support for families. Our responsibilities to you and your responsibilities to Home-Start are summarised below.

Our responsibilities to you

We aim to treat all volunteers with respect and undertake our responsibilities to them fairly and recognise that each offers their own unique qualities and has their own needs for support. We will ensure volunteers have:

- comprehensive and up-to-date information about Home-Start
- an individual interview with the co-ordinator before commencing the course of preparation
- a course of preparation to prepare for visiting families and opportunities for on-going training to support the volunteering role
- clarity about the role and task and who each is responsible to and who will provide support if there are any problems
- sufficient information about the family to prepare them for visiting
- information about any safety issues
- effective supervision of voluntary activities within the scheme and support for individual volunteers with the co-ordinator, and regular volunteer support group meetings
- reimbursement for agreed out-of-pocket expenses
- an annual review of their work with Home-Start
- opportunities to evaluate, comment on and contribute to the work of Home-Start, on-going training and the course of preparation
- an understanding of how to raise problems or make a complaint
- information about and access to the Board of Trustees
- opportunities to join with other volunteers for outings, parties and other social events.

Your responsibilities to us

- to perform your volunteer role to the best of your ability and within the Standards and Methods of Practice of Home-Start and the Home-Start Policy and Practice Guide
- to offer positive, caring support to young families under stress
- to visit the families as agreed and let the co-ordinator know if you can not keep an appointment.
- to attend the course of preparation, on-going training and individual and group support meetings
- to inform the co-ordinator of any problems, difficulties or changes within the families being visited, or within your own circumstances which may affect home-visiting
- to maintain the Home-Start guidelines on confidentiality
- to be aware of and work within Home-Start's guidelines on child protection
- to ensure your car is adequately insured, your driving licence is valid and you have a current MOT certificate if transporting families
- to understand and follow Home-Start's policies on child protection, equal opportunities and health and safety
- to keep Home-Start records as requested and to return them promptly to the co-ordinator as requested.

The Home-Start Approach

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

- offering support, friendship and practical help
- 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
- 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

Support for Volunteers

The Home-Start co-ordinator, who is in turn responsible to the trustees, supports volunteers in their work with families offering regular supervision and training for the role.

Commitment required

- initial course of preparation – all volunteers need to be prepared to offer their support to families. The initial course of preparation normally lasts 40 hours over a number of weeks
- time with families each week – to meet the needs of families and ensure the best support we ask volunteers to offer to spend time with at least one family per week, ideally for three hours depending on the needs of the family.
- willingness to accept regular support and supervision in respect of their voluntary activity
- we recognise that volunteers may stop volunteering at any time but we would expect and hope they would be able to offer their time to Home-Start for two years or more.

Expectations of Volunteers

In line with the guidance provided on the Preparation Course volunteers are expected to:

- be familiar with and committed to the Home-Start ethos as specified in the scheme's governing documents, *Standards and Methods of Practice*, the *Home-Start Agreement* and the *Home-Start Policy and Practice Guide*
- understand and implement Home-Start's policies on:
 - confidentiality
 - equal opportunities
 - looking after children in the absence of their parents
 - child protection

- health & safety
- personal safety
- be introduced to and support a family or families by home-visiting regularly (usually at least once per week) for as long as is necessary or until the volunteer is no longer able to offer support
- 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
- take part in reviews with the family and co-ordinator as requested
- keep records of visits to families as requested by the co-ordinator
- attend support, supervision and training sessions as arranged by the scheme
- submit travel and telephone expenses on a regular basis, which will be paid at the agreed rate by the trustees
- inform their insurance company that the car is being used for voluntary work with Home-Start for which expenses are paid.

This exciting and rewarding voluntary activity requires energy, commitment, reliability, creativity and a sense of humour. All volunteers can expect the support of the co-ordinator, other volunteers and the trustees, and, through the co-ordinator, other professionals involved with the family. The Board of Trustees includes two representative volunteers. There are also opportunities for self development within the role and social contact with others in Home-Start.

Volunteer Application Form

Home-Start
Northampton

Full name (If you prefer to be known by an abbreviated/different name, please write this in brackets)	
Address including postcode	
If you have been at this address less than two years, give previous address also	
Home tel:	Ethnic origin (please tick box) Asian or Asian British Indian <input type="checkbox"/> Pakistani <input type="checkbox"/> Bangladeshi <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (please specify) Black or Black British Caribbean <input type="checkbox"/> African <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (please specify) Mixed <input type="checkbox"/> (please specify) White British <input type="checkbox"/> Irish <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (please specify) Chinese <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> (please specify)
Mobile tel:	
Work tel:	
Date of birth:	
Place of birth:	

Have you ever been a volunteer or employee of any Home-Start Scheme?

Yes No

If yes, please give name of Scheme and details of your involvement below.

--

REFERENCES

- Please give contact details of two referees, who should not be related to you.
- If you have ever been a volunteer or employee of any Home-Start Scheme, one of your referees should be a member of staff or Trustee of that Scheme.

Name of referee: Relationship to applicant:	Name of referee: Relationship to applicant:
Address:	Address:
Postcode:	Postcode:

Languages spoken			
What is the minimum time you could offer to Home-Start as a volunteer on a regular weekly basis?			
What type of transport would you use?		If car - do you have a current clean driving licence?	
Please give details of any voluntary/paid work you have done, particularly with children and families:			

Names of your children:	Ages of children:	Please give information about your parenting experience:
--------------------------------	--------------------------	---

Have you any commitments which could affect your work with Home-Start e.g. part-time work?
What are your hobbies and leisure interests?

Have you any skills or personal experiences which may be relevant to your work as a volunteer for Home-Start?

How did you hear of Home-Start?

Why would you like to become a Home-Start Volunteer?

Is there any other information you would like to add?

Availability for Volunteers' Course of Preparation

To help the scheme plan its courses of preparation for new volunteers effectively, please indicate below your availability to attend and return this sheet with the completed application form. If you are available on several days, evenings etc please indicate in order of preference i.e., 1st, 2nd, 3rd and so on.

Monday	10 am – 2:30 pm x 9 weeks	6.30/7 pm – 10 pm x 11 weeks
Tuesday	10 am – 2:30 pm x 9 weeks	6.30/7 pm – 10 pm x 11 weeks
Wednesday	10 am – 2:30 pm x 9 weeks	6.30/7 pm – 10 pm x 11 weeks
Thursday	10 am – 2:30 pm x 9 weeks	6.30/7 pm – 10 pm x 11 weeks
Friday	10 am – 2:30 pm x 9 weeks	6.30/7 pm – 10 pm x 11 weeks
Saturday	10 am – 2:30 pm x 9 weeks	
Saturday	10 am – 4 pm x 6/7 weeks	

Registered Office: Martin House, 24 Hazelwood Road, NORTHAMPTON NN1 1LN
A Company Limited by Guarantee no. 5836827 registered in England & Wales
Registered Charity no. 1116665.

Patron: HRH Princess Alexandra, the Hon. Lady Ogilvy, KG, GCVO

Local Patron: Lady Lowther