

Group Volunteer Role Description

Home Start Warrington and Cheshire (HSWC) staff, trustees and volunteers work together to achieve our vision “To empower families to give children the best start, because childhood can’t wait”.

Our guiding principles are the organisational values of “Accountability, Integrity and Excellence”, setting the tone for all our interactions with other Trustees, Volunteers, Staff, Families, Partners and other stakeholders.

Role Purpose

Home-Start is a voluntary organisation that helps families from all backgrounds through their most challenging times.

Our group volunteers attend groups and offer support and friendship to young families experiencing difficulties. These groups, which are run by Home-Start staff, are targeted to specific Home-Start families. This may be the only support a family receives or it may be in addition to home visiting support.

Our Volunteers have parenting experience or experience of working with families and understand that sometimes family life can be tough.

Home-Start Volunteers give a high level of commitment and reliability. In return they receive high-quality preparation and ongoing training, supervision and support from the Home-Start staff team.

A Home-Start volunteer should:

- Understand why families may need support from Home-Start
- Have a positive, non-judgmental 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 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
- Have a clear understanding of the confidential nature of the Home-Start service, and not breaking confidences shared by the family, other than when disclosure is essential in order to protect the wellbeing or safety of a child or vulnerable adult.

What do Group volunteers do?

Home-Start volunteers work in partnership with the Home Start coordinator to build the confidence and independence of the family by offering support and friendship through:

- offering non-judgmental support to families attending groups, where the dignity and identity of everyone is 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 families attending built on trust and shared understanding

- supporting parents in developing healthy, safe and stimulating relationships with their children
- encouraging families to widen their network of relationships and effectively use the support and services available in the community
- being aware of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults and reporting any concerns to HSWC immediately
- specific support to the group as agreed with the group facilitator, for example setting up the area, making refreshments, supporting a particular family, tidying up at the end of the session

Becoming a Group Volunteer

To become a Group volunteer applicants must:

- Commit to the Home-Start ethos
- Successfully complete all sessions of the Home-Start Course of Preparation
- Provide two suitable references
- Complete a DBS check at enhanced level
- Sign their acceptance and understanding of
 - HSWC Safeguarding and Protecting Children Policy
 - HSWC Safeguarding and Protecting Adults Policy
 - HSWC GDPR and Confidentiality Policy
 - HSWC Safeguarding Code of Conduct
 - HSWC Health and Safety Policy and Procedure (once revised)
- Have the intention to volunteer for at least 12 months

What are the responsibilities of a Group Volunteer?

Having successfully completed training:

- Commit to regular attendance at group sessions as agreed with the appropriate Home-Start family coordinator
- Attend supervision and support meetings
- Attend mandatory annual safeguarding refresher training
- Attend Volunteer Reflective Circles for peer support
- Share information with the coordinator, including safeguarding concerns
- Ensure that the child's needs and experience are at the centre of their thinking
- Submit the HSWC volunteer diary sheet after each group session attended
- Submit travel and telephone expenses monthly
- 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