



Support and friendship
for families

HOME-START KIRKCALDY

**VOLUNTEER
INFORMATION PACK**

HOME-START KIRKCALDY

Home-Start is the UK's leading family support charity. Home-Start provides a unique service for families – recruiting and training volunteers to support parents with young children at home.

Home-Start Kirkcaldy began in January 1994 while Home-Start, the national organisation began in 1973.

Our volunteers all have parenting experience and visit local families in their own homes for a couple of hours per week. We also have a Respite Creche twice a week which is staffed by a crèche worker and volunteers. Our Family Group meets weekly and is run by two playworkers.

Before being matched to a family, all our volunteers must attend a preparation course. This runs one day a week for five weeks between 10am and 2.30pm and lunch is provided.

Topics included on the preparation course include –

- The role of the home-start volunteer
- How families are referred to Home-Start
- “Good Enough” parenting
- Values and attitudes
- The role of the Health Visitor
- Child Protection
- Play
- Confidentiality
- Commitment, boundaries and support

The preparation course is very informal and gives volunteers the opportunity to find out more about the project and what their role will be. The Co-ordinators run the preparation course although we do invite outside speakers to a couple of sessions.



WHY IS HOME-START NEEDED BY FAMILIES?

Many parents need help, friendship and support when their children are young. Common reasons for Home-Start support are;



- A family feeling lonely or isolated with no family support
- A family struggling with the emotional and physical demands of having young children.
- A mother may be suffering from post natal depression.
- A family who may need help with practical things such as shopping and budgeting.
- A family with twins or triplets.
- A family finding it hard to cope with their child's ill health or disability.

Anyone can refer a family to Home-Start and families can refer themselves. Families are often referred to us via their Health Visitor, Social Worker or by another organisation such as Women's Aid.

The Co-ordinators visit every new family to explain about Home-Start, home visiting volunteers, Respite Creche and our Family Group. Families must know they are being referred to Home-Start and must be willing to accept a visit.

There is no time limit set and families are supported for as long as required. The volunteer/family match is reviewed every three months to ensure things are running smoothly.

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.

WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM HOME-START

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

- Excellent preparation for your role through an informative preparation course
- Regular, ongoing support from our Co-ordinators (Eleanor and Mary).
- Ongoing training and support opportunities on a variety of topics throughout the year with other volunteers.
- All out of pocket expenses will be reimbursed by the scheme.
- Social events with other volunteers and staff.
- The opportunity to get more involved in the scheme if you would like (e.g. fundraising, promotional events, being a trustee)
- To meet new people, learn new skills and have fun.
- After you've volunteered with us for 12 months we will provide a reference.
- The opportunity to be involved in a vital local service and to be part of a national and global network.
- Comprehensive and up to date information about Home-Start.



WHAT WE WILL EXPECT FROM YOU

- Commitment and reliability. All new volunteers **must**
 - Attend all sessions of our preparation course prior to being matched to a family.
 - Provide two suitable references
 - Complete a PVG check
 - Commit to Home-Start Kirkcaldy for at least a year
 - Attend reviews with the Co-ordinators every 4 – 6 weeks
- To commit to the Home-Start ethos and to understand and implement Home-Start's policies on:
 - Confidentiality
 - Equal opportunities
 - Looking after children in the absence of their parents
 - Child protection
 - Health and safety
- To sign their acceptance and understanding of the Child Protection Code of Conduct (on the preparation course).
- 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 Co-ordinator and contact the scheme immediately if there is concern about the physical or emotional well-being of any member of the family
- Ensure that **the child's needs and experience are at the centre of their thinking and they act on concerns about their welfare**
- To keep essential records of visits to families and submit monthly
- To attend ongoing support and training sessions as arranged by the scheme
- To submit travel expenses monthly, which will be paid at the agreed rate by the trustee board (currently £0.40 per mile)
- To inform their insurance company that the car is being used for voluntary work with Home-Start for which expenses are paid.

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-ordinators.

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.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q Do I need any formal qualifications?

A No. We ask that all our volunteers have parenting experience and some spare time available to support local families.

Q How much time will it take up?

A The minimum requirement is two to three hours per week at a time convenient for both yourself and the family.

Q Will I receive any training?

A Yes, all new volunteers must attend our preparation course which will equip you with the information you need to get started. We also have a programme of ongoing training and support for volunteers throughout the year.

Q Will I get paid expenses?

A Yes, we pay all out of pocket expenses.

Q Will it affect my benefit?

A You can still volunteer and it shouldn't affect your benefits.

Q What support will I receive?

A Individual telephone and face to face support by your Co-ordinator as and when needed. Volunteers can contact their Co-ordinator at any time to discuss and concerns they may have.

PERSON SPECIFICATION OF A HOME-START VOLUNTEER



Volunteers *must*....

- be a parent or have parenting experience
- have a sensitive and caring attitude towards others
- have a non judgemental attitude
- have a positive attitude to working with people from different backgrounds, nationalities or religions
- be reliable
- be warm and approachable
- have good communication skills
- be able to listen
- understand the need for support
- be able to work as part of a team
- be prepared to keep records as requested by the scheme
- share information with the Co-ordinators
- have a sense of humour

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

If, having read through the information pack, you are interested in becoming a volunteer, please –

- Phone the office to arrange an appointment with the Co-ordinators. They will be able to answer any further questions you may have and give you details about the next preparation course.
- Please fill in the application form and bring it with you to the appointment.
- We will then take up the references you have supplied on your application form.
- You will receive a letter confirming the dates and times of the preparation course.
- On receiving the letter, please confirm that you are still attending the preparation course.
- On the first week of the preparation course you will complete a PVG (criminal record form). You will be told what documents and ID you need to bring with you.
- On the last day of the course we will arrange to meet with you again to discuss the practical arrangements of volunteering –ie- what days and times suit you best to visit.
- Finally, you will be ready to make a difference!



The office is open between 9am and 4.30pm Monday to Thursday. We have an answering machine outwith these times or if we are out of the office.

For more information about Home-Start please visit our website at www.homestartkirkcaldy.org.uk

The Staff Team

Eleanor Thomson – Senior Co-ordinator
Mary Cormack – Co-ordinator

Marketa Bruce – Administrator
Janette Holmes – Creche Worker
Fiona Davidson & Karen Paterson – Playleaders