

# HOME-START BRISTOL

## Volunteer Newsletter December 2022



Welcome to our volunteer newsletter - a resource for supporting and keeping in touch with our volunteers

### The Volunteers' Christmas Lunch

This is a long-standing tradition at HSB, with the trustees providing a home-made feast as a thank you to volunteers for all their hard work during the year. It's a wonderful opportunity for the three strands of the Home-Start team (volunteers, trustees and staff) to get together for a festive celebration - a chance to catch up with old friends and make new ones. Having missed out for the past two years we're looking forward to this year's lunch being extra special. It will take place 12 - 2pm on Wednesday 14th December at Redland Green Bowling Club BS6 7HE. We will start with Prosecco/fruit juice welcome drink and chat, followed by a hot lunch and, of course, our usual selection of indulgent desserts. There will also be the opportunity to pick up beautifully wrapped gifts to pass on to your HS families to spread the festive cheer. We had some lovely feedback from volunteers who enjoyed the Summer Lunch and we're looking forward to seeing even more of you at our festive gathering, so put the date in your diary now and dig out your sparkly jumper in readiness!

Please RSVP to the office by Wednesday 7th December (including details of any special dietary requirements) so that we can finalise numbers for catering purposes.

Looking forward to seeing you there!

Janet, Maroussia and Celia



### Christmas is coming!



Christmas cheer has arrived early this year! We were thrilled to receive an early visit from Santa courtesy of the lovely staff at BT Group who have donated a sledge full of presents for our families, all beautifully wrapped. They will be much appreciated by children and parents alike. We will be bringing some of the presents with us to the volunteer lunch for you to distribute to your families.

Five lucky families will also benefit from a 'Magical Christmas' thanks to generous support from our local John Lewis store. Each family has been allocated £500 and can choose items that will make the most difference to their family. Your coordinator will let you know if you are supporting a family who is benefitting from the John Lewis offer.

### Inside this newsletter

- Supporting Families with the cost of living crisis
- Online training opportunities for volunteers
- New Groups - volunteers needed
- Volunteer survey and new diary sheet
- Welcome to our newest volunteers

# Support for Families: cost of living crisis

## Family Mealtimes

Our food project, funded and supported by Warburtons, has been busy over the last couple of months. The Family Mealtimes Project enables staff and volunteers to nominate families who are struggling with food poverty and who would benefit from a delivery of fresh, healthy ingredients, simple recipes and in some cases cooking equipment such as a hand blender to enable them to cook and eat together. Before the summer and October half term holidays, 40 families received food resource packs, all delivered by you and our coordinators.

We would love to extend this project by sharing ideas for other simple, cheap and healthy recipes. If you have a good recipe, please do share it with us. If you would like to get more involved in the Family Mealtimes Project we would also love to hear from you.



*"This couldn't have come at a better time. I am struggling to get a foodbank voucher and my cupboards are empty. Thanks you so much."*

## Healthy Eating online training available

You can also support the project by accessing free training that is available online through Home-Start UK on healthy eating. If you would be interested then please let the office know and we can get you signed up. The Healthy Eating course includes the following modules:

- The fundamentals of healthy eating
- Babies and introducing solids
- Children and early years nutrition
- Cook along videos
- Healthy recipes
- Healthy eating resources

## E-Learning Modules available from Home-Start UK

In response to feedback from Home-Starts across the country, HSUK has launched a series of online learning modules to help volunteers to support families with some common issues that many families are struggling with. The programme is called Happy, Healthy, Home and included three different courses:

- Sleep
- Finance
- Healthy Eating

If you would like to complete any or all of the training modules then please contact the office and we can get you signed up.

## Cost of Living crisis

These are scary times for many of our families, volunteers and staff as the cost of living continues to rise and impacts on people's daily life and well-being. There are however, places to go for support. The council have a dedicated cost of living webpage with links to agencies who can help. Warm, welcoming spaces are also opening to help people keep warm, charge their phones and some also offer additional services such as advice, food or activities.

[Find a Welcoming Space \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://bristol.gov.uk)

[Warm spaces - Gloucestershire County Council](https://www.glos.gov.uk)

It can be an awkward topic to raise with your family, but we can all help by asking families how they are coping and suggesting useful places that they can go for support. You don't need to have all the answers, you can just pass any questions on to your coordinator. Families may welcome the chance to talk and a gentle nudge could be helpful if families are burying their heads in the sand or are too embarrassed to ask for support.

[Cost of living support \(bristol.gov.uk\)](https://bristol.gov.uk)

[Help with the rising cost of living | BETA - South Gloucestershire Council \(southglos.gov.uk\)](https://southglos.gov.uk)

[Practical cost of living tips for families - Family Action \(family-action.org.uk\)](https://family-action.org.uk)

We are also aware that some of you may be struggling. Please do remember to claim your expenses and let your coordinator know if you need any extra help.

# Groups for Families - an exciting development

## Mums in Mind Groups

You may be aware that Home-Start Bristol has officially launched into the world of groupwork as an additional offer of support to our families. Thanks to funding from Home-Start UK we have been able to pilot Mums in Mind groups across Bristol and we are looking for volunteers to support them.

The Mums in Mind groups are for women with children under the age of two who are isolated, feeling anxious and who may be struggling in baby's first year. The groups are based on an informal peer support model, with the main focus on talking and meeting up with other mums in a similar situation. Beth, one of Family Support Coordinators is running the groups and would welcome the support of volunteers to help with activities with children, setting up, supporting mums and other tasks. **If you would like to help please do contact Beth or the office.**

From January groups will be running at the following Children's Centres:

**Bannerman Road** on Tuesday mornings 9.30 - 11.00

**Bishopsworth** on Tuesday afternoons 1.00 - 2.30

**Stoke Park** on Thursday mornings 9.30 - 11.00

**St Anne's** on Thursday afternoons 1.00 - 2.30

If you are supporting a family and think they would benefit from going along to one of the groups then do let your coordinator know.



## Best Start Groups

We are also thrilled to have been commissioned by South Gloucestershire council to provide additional support to our S Glos families through a groupwork pilot for one year.

The Best Start groups will be for families with children under the age of 3 who would benefit from building positive relationships with their children and with other families. The groups will run for 8 weeks, with a focus on parents and children having fun together and also finding out about issues like budgeting, healthy eating, play and parenting tips in a supportive environment.

Our new groupworker Anna Pope will be joining us in January and we will be aiming to run the first groups at Kingswood and Filton from the end of January/ beginning of February. We will also be needing volunteers to help support these groups, so please let us know if you can help

### Can you spare some time to support our new groups?

We are looking for more volunteers to support our groupwork programme. This is an opportunity to be part of a new and exciting stage for Home-Start Bristol.

Some of you are already supporting Mums in Mind groups as well as your individual families but we still need others, especially to support the new groups in Bishopsworth, St Anne's, Kingswood and Filton Children's Centres.

If you can help, please contact the office or talk to your coordinator.

*"It was great to talk about how everyone was feeling and realising you all feel the same"* Mums in Mind participant

**Please complete our volunteer survey!** Home-Start would not exist without you! We want to make sure you enjoy your volunteering and get the support you need from us. Please respond to this survey to give us your views and suggestions. [https://app.timetospare.com/form?\\_id=h9LbOl1XOYuDgaz8ebI](https://app.timetospare.com/form?_id=h9LbOl1XOYuDgaz8ebI)

# In other news...

## New diary sheets

Some of you may have seen the new diary sheets! The first big difference is that we fill them in weekly. The second is that instead of a single box per week there are various headings. This may seem a bit daunting, but we're not expected to write more than we did before and we can leave boxes blank if they're not relevant on that day. In fact the headings can help us remember something that happened or that was said. It's also hugely helpful for Terri as the headings feed straight into reports for funders. My personal favourite is probably always going to be the direct interaction with the children. With twin toddlers and a baby, I can't imagine ever leaving it blank!

Whether you're a bullet-point person or chatty even in print, your coordinator and the office appreciate this opportunity to find out what's going on for your family in your own words.

### Some practical points:

- you can send it in monthly or weekly
- signposting/referrals could be a new group you go to, or a need for a Baby Bank item or foodbank referral that you pass on to your coordinator
- send any feedback/comments about the new diary sheet to your coordinator
- and don't forget you can put your expenses in even if you're cycling!

## A Note from Terri

The new diary sheets will help Home-Start Bristol to evidence it's outcomes, i.e. what difference we are making to parents and to children. Your diary sheets are an invaluable source of information about the difference that Home-Start support makes to families and the new format is more closely aligned to the questions that we are asked to evidence by funders, so thank you for bearing with us.

## Volunteer peer support and training

On Tuesday 29th November some of our newest volunteers met up with some of our more experienced volunteers for peer support over lunch followed by an interesting session on play led by our volunteer Richenda (who is a play therapist). The session was well received by all and we will be repeating this format next term.

### Upcoming Training

We are also hoping to put on a session on Paediatric First Aid, so watch this space more details next term.

We also have the offer of a free online training from Bristol City Council that our volunteers can access:

**Understanding parental couple conflict, its impact on children's outcomes and what we can do to help. This half day online workshop aimed at everyone on Jan 24<sup>th</sup> 2023 can be booked [here](#) (9.30 - 1pm).**

## Welcome to our newest volunteer recruits!

Our new cohort of volunteers from the September group have completed their prep course, welcome to the family! We still have places for our January prep course so if you know anyone who might like to join us and make a difference to families do let us know or direct them to the website [www.homestartbristol.org.uk](http://www.homestartbristol.org.uk)

