

HOME-START BRISTOL

Volunteer Newsletter April 2022



Welcome to our volunteer newsletter - a resource for
Supporting and Keeping in touch with our volunteers

Ramadan Mubarak Happy Easter



We hope you all have some nice things planned over the Easter holidays, Marie our family support worker and Katherine our office star are out and about this week ably assisted by many of you, delivering Easter food packages to families. This time around families are being encouraged to make home made pizza, with ingredients and recipes supplied as well as Easter holiday activity ideas for families to do together. We were also thrilled to receive a donation of Easter eggs from the John Lewis store at Cribbs Causeway, so a huge thank you to them. Easter eggs are winging their way to families as we speak. A case of a little of what you fancy is good for mental health and well-being, if not the waistline!



A message from Terri (the Manager)

It's the little things.....

Spring is in the air and I hope you are all managing to get out and about to enjoy some of the joys of the new season and are all keeping well in these ever challenging times.

Your continued support for families is even more important after such a long period of disruption and makes a real difference to parents and children. A recent report by Ofsted based on inspections of 70 early years providers highlighted the ongoing impact that the pandemic is having on under 5's, **"Young children's development, following the pandemic, has been "particularly worrying", the chief inspector of Ofsted has said.**

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-60981450>

Often the feedback from parents who have received support indicates that it is the small things that can make a big difference, a kind word of encouragement, a 15 minute break to get something done, a cup of tea and time to share a worry and be listened to. As parents ourselves we all know how much those things can mean when you are feeling stressed and under pressure. Some of the family stories on page 2 beautifully illustrate the impact that those small acts of kindness can have.



Making a Difference

Feedback from volunteers

What I like best about being a Home-Start Bristol volunteer is feeling I can make a difference.

A new mum I supported was doing amazingly with her newborn baby, but going outside caused her panic attacks. On an early visit we went to the local shop together. She impressed me with her mental arithmetic, keeping track of her budget all the way. But when we got to the till the panic attack began. I just stood by her side, making silly faces at the baby to keep him entertained, and fielded the small talk at the till. She arrived home looking very white and trembling, but after she'd put away her shopping she let out a whoop of delight and did a little dance. It was the first time she'd had food in the cupboards since becoming a mother.

She said she couldn't have done it alone.

Mum told me that my visits got her out of the house each week which was much needed and that she now feels confident going out on her own with both children. Mum also said she didn't believe she was a good mum before we started working together but she does now – I have always been able to see that mum is a great mother and I'm glad she can see it now too. She is more present with them, less stressed and can have more fun with them.



Feedback from Parents

My volunteer has shown me ways in which I can get on with jobs in the house and keep my son happy – such as moving some of his equipment into the kitchen while I'm in there and how to remain connected with him through eye contact and talking. After my volunteer visited in the morning, I found I was able to enjoy my afternoon with my son, I could relax and enjoy quality time with him.

My volunteer has helped me and my child to play outdoors. She encourages us to take managed risks like playing in a shallow stream. My child's independence has grown. My volunteer takes my child out to play without me. She is the only person they have done this with.

My volunteer made me feel confident in my own parenting skills, I wasn't sure if what I remembered from childhood was right or good parenting (found out I had ASD as an adult) and I feel like I'm doing ok

The family also noted the success of HSB food project for them. They reported that it has changed their eating habits for the better.

It is amazing! She's the first person I've met who has been so patient with my son, she's taught me so much and has given me the confidence to take both boys out and to manage their behaviour. She is wonderful!

Vol: I have seen so much progress within the family since I started supporting. The boys' language and communication has really improved and they are engaging with new activities that mum has made for them. Mum has really taken on board my advice and ideas and it shines through!

My volunteer was amazing – so kind and helpful, she listened to me, got me out of the house and helped me find a baby group to go to. I feel stronger and much more able to cope now

My volunteer has made me a more confident person, more able to cope with life and its demands and my children are happier as a result. My youngest was born during lockdown and our volunteer has helped us get to a toddler group which means she is playing with children her age and is learning so quickly – this is so important to me. We can now sit at the table and eat a meal together as a family (thanks to the JL Magical Xmas) this makes me and my children so happy. I feel able to go to toddler groups on my own now and have a few people there I can talk to.

Stay connected

Staying connected is even more important at the moment, so we are pleased to announce new opportunities for you all to get together with fellow volunteers and your reps.

Volunteer coffee catch-ups

There haven't been many opportunities to meet fellow volunteers over the past couple of years. But this has finally changed! We were delighted to see those of you who joined our Zoom catch-ups on 2nd March and 4th April and even more pleased to meet some of you in person in the Greenway Cafe on 17th March. We shared our experiences, moments of joy and niggling doubts, as well as chatting generally over our cuppas.

We'd love to meet many more of you, so whether you're newly trained or an old hand, currently resting or busy visiting, please put the following dates in your diary now.

Dates for your diary:

Tuesday 26th April 12-1, coffee and sandwiches following the school readiness training session at Greenway Centre

Monday 9th May 10.00 – 11.00 Zoom drop-in.

Tuesday 17th May 12-1 coffee and sandwiches following the sleep session at Greenway Centre



Your volunteer reps: Left to Right: Gemma, Maroussia, Janet & Celia

Contact your reps

Your volunteer reps are there for you! As well as the zoom drop-in and coffee catch-up sessions, you can contact us by email or phone.

Maroussia – Marouss1a@homestartbristol.org.uk
(this is the correct address!)

Janet - Janet.hsb@hotmail.com
07340 042736

New volunteers

We were thrilled to welcome 14 new volunteers from our January prep course. Recent new volunteers have included a wonderful range of walks of life and experience. Some found us online, some in local newspapers, flyers in a library, through schools... We'd like to also ask you to circulate the flyer attached to your email for the next prep in a last minute ditch to increase numbers. We're low on volunteers at the moment, which makes us unable to support all the families we'd like to. We'd be very grateful to you if you could reach out to your networks. Word of mouth is one of our best recruitment avenues. Thanks to you all!

Maroussia

HOME START
Bristol

Volunteer with us now - because childhood can't wait

Many local families with children under 5yrs are going through tough times. Our volunteers offer up to 3hrs' friendship and support a week to give these children across Bristol and South Glos the best start in life. Why not join our next volunteer training course? Starts 28th April, details below.

Contact us today to find out more.
homestartbristol.org.uk
0117 9501170

Charity No. 1138890
Unit 11, Greenway Business Centre, Doncaster Road, BRISTOL, BS21 5PY

Course location:
Greenway Centre,
Doncaster Road,
Southmead, Bristol
BS10 5PY

Thursdays
28/04/22-
26/05/22
Time 9.30-2.30



In other news...

Safeguarding refresher sessions

We recently held a safeguarding refresher session at Coniston Community Centre for volunteers who had either missed the safeguarding session on their prep course, were returning volunteers who had been resting and for volunteers who were due to do a safeguarding update. We were pleased to welcome both old and new faces and will be running these sessions throughout the year. The next course will be on June 9th at Greenway so do have a chat with your coordinator if you would like to or need to attend.



Training opportunities for next term

There is still time to book on the upcoming training for next term:

Tuesday 26th April 10.00—12.00 School readiness session. How can you support families to help their children be school ready. Held in person at the Greenway Followed by a lunchtime catch up.

Wednesday 11th May 11.00—1.00 on zoom Debt and Mental Health. This is the rescheduled date.

Tuesday 17th May Sleep Session 10.30—12.00 Supporting families who have sleep issues for themselves or their children. At Greenway followed by a lunchtime catch up with your reps.

Wednesday 25th May 11.00—1.00 on zoom Introduction to benefits and Universal Credit.

Please contact the office to book a place.



Kate Oliver

Home-Start Bristol has a new chair of the Board

After many years of wonderful service, Katherine Martin has now stepped down as our chair of trustees. Stepping into her shoes is Kate Oliver who has volunteered and worked for many local charities; she is a counsellor, foster carer, researcher and public sector consultant, focussing on the welfare of children and young people. Welcome Kate. Hopefully many of you will get to meet Kate over the coming year.

And covid continues...

We are very aware that there are many cases of Covid-19 out there at the moment. To make sure that we all stay safe please ensure that you continue to take sensible precautions, ask your family before each visit if they or anyone in the house has symptoms of Covid-19 either on the doorstep before entering the house or by texting them beforehand.

We are also asking families to let us know straightaway if they have any illness in the family. And your coordinator will be carrying out a risk assessment before you start visiting. This involves asking both you and the family about any risk factors and whether you are both happy to proceed on the basis of the answers given.

Please also remember that you must let us know if you or anyone in your household develop any illness or symptoms, covid or otherwise.

If you feel uncomfortable at any point please do let your coordinator or the office know: 0117 9501170