

Volunteer Agreement



Home-Start volunteers play a crucial role in providing support for families and are central to the Home-Start service. The work of the organisation is dependent on the availability of a committed team of volunteers able to support the delivery of service to families. Volunteers do not need specific qualifications; it is their life experiences, attitudes and interpersonal skills that matter.

Home-Start Bristol (HSB) is committed to valuing volunteers, preparing them for their role and supporting them on an ongoing basis. This document aims to provide you with important information that will clarify your role and responsibilities as an HSB volunteer and also the support that we shall offer you.

Your Commitment to us

On joining the organisation, we ask that you are available for home-visiting for at least one year. Family visits should last for about 2-3 hours and should take place once a week.

Reliability is an essential part of the trusting, caring relationship that HSB seeks to foster with families. We therefore ask that you keep your appointments. If you are unable to, please contact the HSB office at the earliest opportunity.

Our commitment to you

Training and Support

HSB recognises that volunteers require satisfaction from their role and encourages opportunities for personal development. We are therefore committed to providing a high standard of on-going professional support, supervision and training for all volunteers. Once you have completed the preparation course we will offer you regular on-going support and training opportunities.

Supervision

HSB undertakes to ensure all volunteers receive supervision in line with the recommended Home-Start principles and procedures as set out in the Volunteer Recruitment, Management and Supervision Policy. Face-to-face supervision is a condition of volunteering with HSB and will take place in line with family reviews, i.e. after 6 weeks and then every 3 months. In between these sessions you will receive regular telephone calls from your Co-ordinator and in turn we ask you to make regular contact with her/him/they.

Record Keeping

Diary Sheets

We are required to keep accurate, up-to-date, relevant information about the families we support including information about your weekly home visits. It is a condition of volunteering that you keep a clear record of each visit, using your monthly diary form. We require you to return your completed diary sheets to the office (by post or e-mail) at the end of each month. The co-ordinator is required to report to the manager any problems with diary sheets and the manager may then ask for a meeting with a volunteer to resolve the issue.

Travelling Expenses

HSB will reimburse travelling expenses in connection with your home visiting of Home-Start families upon receipt of an expenses claim form. Ideally these should be submitted to the office at the end of the month with completed diary sheets. (If you do not want to claim back expenses, please contact the office as the charity is able to benefit from your 'non-claimed' donation).

Insurance

Public Liability Insurance

The role of the volunteer involves spending time with children, sometimes while the parent is out of the room, and often with the parent and children outside of the family home. A comprehensive public liability insurance and a volunteer insurance policy cover volunteers for these areas of work. If an incident occurs which you feel may give rise to a claim against HSB, please contact your co-ordinator as soon as possible.

The following activities are beyond the remit of the HSB volunteer role and so are **not covered by our insurance**:

- Babysitting in the evenings
- Overnight care of children in the family home, or your home
- Transporting children without appropriate insurance and safety seats
- Administering medication to children, or giving medical advice
- Disciplining children

Please note this policy does not cover transporting parents or children in your own car.

Vehicle Insurance

Please let your co-ordinator know if you do plan to transport parents or children in your own vehicle. You will need to organise additional insurance for this purpose and we will ask to see a copy of the relevant insurance letter/document that indicates that additional cover is in place, before you use your car for such purposes.

Policies and Procedures

As part of your initial training you will learn about the policies and procedures relevant to your role – including those mentioned below. To read the most up-to-date policies please visit the website www.homestartbristol.org.uk or ask your co-ordinator for a copy.

Safeguarding

Promoting the welfare and safety of children is our paramount concern and we are committed to following all legal safeguarding requirements and established best practice.

Therefore:

- safeguarding training is mandatory for all volunteers. You must complete this as part of your initial training before you can visit a family. Thereafter you are required to attend a Safeguarding Refresher session every two years and discuss it during an extended supervision in the year in between
- you have a duty to inform the scheme if you are under investigation by the police or have been convicted of an offence.

Equality, Fairness and Diversity

HSB is committed to ensuring that families who live in Bristol and South Gloucestershire, with at least one child under the age of 5, have equal access to our service irrespective of their gender, race, age, class or sexual orientation.

We require all staff, paid and voluntary, to support this principle in their interactions with families and other staff members in line with what is set out in the Equality, Fairness and Diversity Policy.

Confidentiality

It is essential that all personal information about families and staff is treated sensitively and confidentially. Our Confidentiality Policy states that we will protect the information we are entrusted with by our families except where a child's welfare is at risk. In cases where you believe that a child is being neglected or abused, you should notify your co-ordinator **immediately**.

The co-ordinator will then advise and support you in resolving your concerns. We aim to discuss these concerns with parents in cases where this would be appropriate. The Manager may decide that information must be disclosed to the appropriate authority. In these cases, we will advise you and the parents of the course of action that we are taking unless this would place the child at further risk of significant harm.

It is important that volunteers know about our Confidentiality, Data Protection, Safeguarding and Equality, Fairness and Diversity Policies and Procedures. You will be asked to sign a code of conduct annually which says that you have read and re-read these policies and agree to abide with them.

Looking after children in the absence of parents

We do not encourage volunteers to look after children in the absence of parents. On rare occasions this might be necessary but must be agreed in advance by the manager of HSB who will advise on what actions should be taken to safeguard the volunteer and the children. Reference should be made to policy 6.3 Looking after Children in the Absence of Parents.

We ask that families and volunteers do not contact each other outside of visiting times, for any reason, for example to cancel or rearrange visits or agree activities. This **MUST** be done via the office.

Complaints Procedure

If you or your HSB family has a concern or a complaint, please raise this with your co-ordinator in the first instance. If you are uncomfortable about doing so, talk to the Manager. If the issue cannot be resolved, the complaint should be put in writing to the Chair of the Trustees who will consider it with at least one other trustee and agree the most appropriate action. You will be given an explanation of what action has been taken.

Other Information

Advice, Information and Befriending

HSB is a befriending service for families. Where specialist advice is needed please consult your co-ordinator about referring the family to the most appropriate agency. Resources and information about other professional services can be provided by the office. If you have specialist knowledge that is relevant, it is of course important to share it with the family and your co-ordinator.

Taking Time Out

At some point during your time as a volunteer you may need to take a break. Unless it cannot be avoided we ask that this does not happen in your initial year. Please discuss any break with your co-ordinator so that arrangements can be made to cover your absence if need be.

To return after a short period of 'resting' (up to three months) you need only contact your co-ordinator who will then match you with a family.

If circumstances mean that you need to take a longer break, contact your co-ordinator when you decide you want to return. An interview will be arranged and you may be asked to attend further training before being matched with a family.

Illness and Infectious Diseases

If you or your family come into contact with an infectious disease (such as chicken pox, mumps, rubella, or meningitis) please let your Co-ordinator know as soon as possible. They will discuss with you whether or not to continue your home-visits.

Gifts

Some families like to thank their volunteer by presenting them with a small gift, e.g. flowers or chocolates. This is perfectly acceptable. However, if families offer money as a gift they should be thanked but advised that this will be treated as a donation towards the work of the charity.

Trustee Board

HSB's Board of Trustees is comprised of volunteer trustees and advisers who guide and manage the HSB. Home-visiting volunteers are encouraged to become members of the board, either as trustees or volunteer representatives. If you would like to know which home-visiting volunteers are currently attending board meetings as your representatives or you have an interest in becoming a trustee or adviser, please speak with your co-ordinator.

Feedback

Feedback from Volunteers is encouraged and welcomed in developing HSB's work and the role of its volunteers. You will be asked by your co-ordinator to contribute to the review and end visits with a family so that we have a full picture of the benefits to the family of our support that we can share with the board and our funders.

Keeping You Informed

As a volunteer you will be one of the most important people in HSB and we therefore believe that it is important to keep you informed on the running of the organisation and to give you the opportunity to comment upon changes that might be proposed from time to time. Hence, we will send you regular updates via our newsletters. The detailed Annual Report and Accounts are available to view on our website. Also, the scheme holds a formal AGM each year which you are very welcome to attend.



**Home-Start Bristol
Volunteer Agreement**

I agree to the terms and conditions of the Bristol Home-Start agreement which I have read and understood.

Volunteer's signature:

Date:

Home-Start Bristol
Co-ordinator's signature:

Date: