

6.1 Recruitment, Management and Supervision of Volunteers

Policy

Home-Start Bristol (HSB) recognises that effective recruitment, management and supervision of volunteers (including trustees and administrators) should demonstrate and ensure the commitment to inclusion and diversity that plays an essential part in the provision of a high quality and safe service to families

HSB believes:

- in recruiting the most suitable people for the different volunteer roles
- in recruiting that aims to attract volunteers and staff from all the diverse communities we work with
- in a selection policy which treats as fairly as possible everyone who applies for a volunteer role. This can mean making reasonable adjustments, for example: for disability, for those who speak English as a second language, for managing cultural concerns
- that safeguarding the children and other vulnerable people with whom we work is of paramount importance. All our recruitment procedures follow Safer Recruitment principles and are designed to ensure that the history of the person appointed has been thoroughly checked
- in training volunteers for their roles, safely and effectively
- in supporting volunteers in their ongoing development and helping them manage their volunteering effectively

What that means in practice for volunteer recruitment:

- application packs make it clear what volunteering roles involve
- ensuring that recruitment and marketing covers all our diverse communities and areas across Bristol
- it is made clear in advertising that a DBS check will be required along with references and that the selection process will involve an interview
- the process will involve completion of induction training
- records of applications, training and supervision will be kept in accordance with the retention table in HSB's data protection policy
- it is made clear that successful applicants must inform HSB if there is a change in circumstances that might affect their ability to fulfil their roles

What that means for trustee recruitment and management:

- carrying out an induction which covers Safeguarding, Confidentiality, Data Protection Policies and their implementation
- ensuring the annual re-reading and signing of the code of conduct which relates to the above policies and practice
- completing relevant training and ensuring records of it are kept
- ensuring any conflicts of interest are declared along with any change in circumstance that might affect their role

What that means for the training and management of family support volunteers:

- ensuring the completion of the volunteer preparation course
- ensuring that the Volunteer Agreement and the Code of Conduct are signed. (This lays out HSB's commitment to volunteers and theirs to HSB – see Agreement in the 'volunteers and families' section 6 of HSB Policies)
- offering ongoing safeguarding training and annual reminders and signing of the safeguarding/ confidentiality and data protection Code of Conduct
- offering other relevant training to volunteers throughout the year to enhance their support of all families
- keeping records of training undertaken and events attended
- carrying out regular supervision

Recruitment and Supervision checklists are contained in Appendix 3a and 3b

Supervision of family-visiting volunteers

HSB recognises that regular and effective supervision plays an essential part in both the provision of a high quality and safe service to families and in the management and development of its volunteers.

The purpose of supervision is to:

- provide formal, confidential and structured opportunities for volunteers to reflect on their volunteering, to talk through any issues and to plan the focus for further support and development
- enable the monitoring and maintenance of standards
- provide one of the opportunities for refresher training in safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection
- contribute to the development of good working relationships, developing and valuing the experience of the volunteer and deepening the understanding of families' needs
- to provide feed back to the manager to inform the ongoing development of how we work with families

Supervisions are recorded and stored in personnel files according to the table in HSB's Data Protection policy. Procedures for supervision of volunteers are covered in Appendix 2

There may be times when a volunteer needs to take a break. A volunteer resting period is carefully managed to balance the needs of the volunteer with the operational work of the HSB. It is expected however that volunteers will normally support families for at least twelve months before any period of resting. See appendix 3

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Signature of Chair:



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Appendix 1 HSB Supervision Procedures

1. The importance and purpose of supervision in the work of HSB is made clear to all volunteers during the prep course and in the Home Start Agreement which they sign. It is also made clear to families.
2. All volunteers taking on a new family will have a face-to-face supervision at 6 weeks and at least every 12 weeks thereafter. Regular, recorded telephone contact in between supervisions is used to monitor how things are going.
3. Volunteers who are matched with families where there are complex needs, where a child protection plan is in place, where there are safeguarding concerns or families where coordinators are involved in CAF/TAF or equivalent child in need or at risk meetings, are supervised more frequently than normal if this is appropriate, either formally or through regular telephone calls that are recorded. This would also apply where a family had experienced a recent crisis.
4. Supervision meetings are planned/timetabled in advance and normally take place face to face. Telephone or video call supervision is used sparingly and is not a substitute for regular in person meetings. Only in exceptional circumstances will a matched volunteer go for longer than 12 weeks without meeting with the co-ordinator in person. Cancelled or postponed supervision meetings are noted in the volunteer file and re-arranged for as soon as possible
5. A standard agenda is agreed and used as a template for structuring supervision sessions; any other issues are added to the agenda prior to the start of the session. Telephone or video supervision is structured and recorded in the same way.
6. Supervision meetings are conducted in a confidential space, free from interruptions. Sufficient time is allocated to allow the agenda to be worked through and for any concerns or queries to be fully discussed.
7. The co-ordinator regularly checks with the volunteer that:
 - a. they are clear about how to report any safeguarding concerns, and that they should not wait until the next supervision meeting to do so if any concerns emerge in the course of their support to the family
 - b. they know they can access informal support from the scheme at any point, and have the out of hours number
 - c. they are familiar with the guidelines about looking after children in the absence of parents and of the need for prior authorisation from the co-ordinator or manager
 - d. they are familiar with and are recording their visits to families with their coordinator and the HSB office so that their whereabouts can be tracked on HSB's Outlook Calendar
8. The co-ordinator records the main points of the discussion on the volunteer support and supervision record, ensuring that only the family reference number, not their name, is recorded. The notes also record whether the session was face to face.
9. Both the co-ordinator and the volunteer sign the supervision record, and both keep a copy.
10. The co-ordinator's copy is kept in the relevant section of the volunteer's file in accordance with data protection requirements. Pertinent issues raised during supervision are recorded in the family file as appropriate.

11. During supervisions of the coordinators the manager checks that they are up to date with the supervision of their volunteers and whether they are experiencing any difficulties or concerns with this area of their work.
12. The manager reports on how supervision is being done in accordance with policy as part of their own supervision. Trustees are kept up to date with any changes in practice via the annual policy reviews.

Appendix 2 HSB Management of Resting Volunteers

It is expected that normally volunteers will support families for at least twelve months before any period of resting. 'Resting' is the term we use when a volunteer takes some time out from their volunteer role. Only in exceptional circumstances would resting occur mid-way through support. If this is unavoidable, plans for minimising the effect on families are handled in a positive, honest and open way.

Principles

- HSB agrees with Home-Start UK's general principle that a flexible and sensible approach to supporting volunteers is needed.
- Taking into account that general principle, HSB would prefer volunteers to limit resting to a six month period in order to minimise any adverse effects which a longer period of resting would have on the service. At the discretion of the manager and in exceptional circumstances, this may be extended.
- HSB will keep in touch with the resting volunteer as appropriate to the individual circumstances.
- Depending on the length of the rest period and the previous experience/length of service of the volunteer, a volunteer returning after more than six months may be required to refresh their training including safeguarding, confidentiality and data protection before being matched with a family. A volunteer returning after more than 12 months could, at the manager's discretion, be asked to repeat the prep course.
- A record of the resting period agreement is kept on the volunteer file and database, and their status as either an active or a resting volunteer is clear.

Procedures

To ensure rest periods are kept to a minimum, while maintaining a flexible and sensitive approach to supporting volunteers in their work, HSB operates the following procedures:

1. Having discussed and agreed with the volunteer a period of resting, the coordinators keep in touch with the resting volunteer every other month to review the situation
2. Where support has been interrupted the family/families are contacted, informed of the situation and offered a replacement volunteer (if a suitable one is available) and the referrer is informed of this change in support
3. The volunteer no longer receives supervision but may be invited to access group support and training during the rest period. Other contact (e.g. invitations to social events, newsletters etc.) is maintained as appropriate
4. Three months into the rest period, the volunteer's coordinator contacts the volunteer to discuss their likely return to HSB

5. If contact cannot be re-established satisfactorily or it becomes evident that the volunteer wishes to leave HSB permanently, the volunteer will be taken off the books, and a letter confirming this and thanking them for their previous support sent.
6. Where the manager has agreed that there is an exceptional need for more resting time she/he/they will confirm to the volunteer by telephone (noted in the communications records) that up to a further three months has been granted – a maximum total of twelve months.
7. The volunteer's return to HSB is carefully managed and recorded in the volunteer's file.

Appendix 3a – Volunteer recruitment checklist

Role	Role Description	Application form	References	Other	Interview	DBS Check	Level	Done?
Home Visiting	Required	Required	Two		Recorded formal	Yes	Enhanced	Date/initials
Group volunteer	Required	Required	Two		Recorded formal	Yes	Enhanced	Date/initials
Trustee	Required	Required	Two	Declaration of willingness	Recorded informal	Yes	Enhanced	Date/initials
Admin	Required	Required	Two		Recorded informal	Yes or N/A	As appropriate	Date/initials
One-off events	Required	Not required	None		Briefing recorded	N/A	N/A	Date/initials

Appendix 3b – Volunteer Induction, training and supervision requirements checklist

Role	Code of Conduct (to include safeguarding, data protection and confidentiality)	Induction	Other Policies	Supervision	Additional training	Annual Refresher
Home Visiting	Required	Volunteer prep course	P6.3 Looking after...	Minimum every 12 weeks or more if CP or CIN	As necessary	Required for safeguarding, confidentiality, data protection
Group volunteer	Required	1 day		As required	As necessary	Required for safeguarding,

						confidentiality, data protection
Trustee	Required	Trustee Induction	P7.2 Conflicts of Interest (Others as they come up for review)	N/A	As necessary	Required for safeguarding, confidentiality, data protection
Admin	Required	1 day		As required	As necessary	Required for safeguarding, confidentiality, data protection
One-off events	Required depending on role at event	On the day briefing	P6.3 Looking after...	N/A		N/A