



HOME-START MENTOR GOOD PRACTICE GUIDELINES

Home-Start is a voluntary organisation in which volunteers offer regular support, friendship and practical help to families under stress in their own homes helping to prevent family crisis or breakdown.

TITLE

Home-Start Family Mentor

This work requires a high level of commitment and reliability and will be supported by the Home-Start Co-ordinator(s).

PURPOSES OF THE WORK

Home-Start Family Mentors are expected to work towards the increased confidence and independence of the family by:

- Offering support, friendship and practical help
- 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
- Encouraging 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

RESPONSIBLE TO

The Home-Start Co-ordinator who is in turn responsible to the Management Committee.

HOURS OF WORK

- Initial course of preparation, normally lasting 40 hours over a number of weeks
- Minimum of three hours per week according to the family's needs
- Regular support/supervision
- Ideally a commitment of two years or more.

DUTIES

- To be familiar with and committed to the Home-Start ethos as specified in the *Constitution* and *Standards and Methods of Practice*, the *Home-Start Agreement* and the *Home-Start Policy and Practice Guide*
- 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
 - Personal Safety
- To be introduced to and support a family or families by visiting regularly (usually at least once per week) for as long as is necessary
- To share information with the organiser/co-ordinator and contact the organiser/co-ordinator immediately if there is concern about the physical or emotional well-being of any member of the family
- To take part in reviews with the family and organiser/co-ordinator as requested
- To keep records of visits to families as requested by the organiser/co-ordinator
- To attend support, supervision and training sessions as arranged by the scheme
- To submit travel and telephone expenses on a regular basis, which will be paid at the agreed rate by the Management Committee
- To inform their insurance company that the car is being used for voluntary work with Home-Start for which expenses are paid.

This is exciting and rewarding voluntary work, which requires energy, commitment, reliability, creativity and a sense of humour. All volunteers can expect the support of the organiser/co-ordinator, other volunteers and the Management Committee, and, through the organiser/co-ordinator, other professionals involved with the family. The Management Committee membership includes two representative volunteers. There are also opportunities for self-development and social contact with others in Home-Start.

From the Home-Start Policies and Practice Guide.



PERSON SPECIFICATION FOR A HOME-START FAMILY MENTOR

A Home-Start Family Mentor should:

- Be a parent or have parenting experience
- Have a positive attitude to working with people of any gender, family status or sexual identity, or who are from any ethnic origin, culture or religion, or who may have a disability
- Demonstrate a sensitive and caring attitude towards others
- Have a non-judgemental attitude
- Be clear about confidentiality and when a confidence remains so, but be able to decide when disclosure of a confidence is essential to the well-being of the child
- Be reliable and understand the importance of reliability to the family
- Have good communication skills including the ability to listen
- Understand the need for support
- Have a warm and open personality and a sense of humour
- Have time and enthusiasm for Home-Start
- Be able to work as a member of a team
- Be prepared to keep records as requested by the scheme.



HOME-START THANET EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES POLICY STATEMENT

Home-Start Thanet is a voluntary organisation committed to promoting the welfare of families with at least one child under five years of age. Volunteers, often parents themselves, offer regular support, friendship and practical help to families under stress in their own homes helping to prevent family crisis and breakdown.

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Home-Start Thanet is a registered charity and works under the guidance and agreement of Home-Start UK Home-Start U.K. is a Charitable trust committed to promoting the welfare of children and parents by providing effective training, information, guidance and support to each existing and potential local Home-Start scheme.

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Home-Start Thanet is committed to a policy of equality of opportunity that respects the identity, rights and values of each individual.

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Recognising that discrimination exists, Home-Start Thanet is positively committed to oppose all direct and indirect discrimination in the organisation against people on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, culture, religion, disability, gender, sexual identity, family status or age (other than meeting the requirement that each family has at least one child under 5 years old).

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Home-Start Thanet declares its intention to work for the furtherance of equality of opportunity in employment practices, access to services, service provision, committee structure, committee membership and meetings, volunteer recruitment and selection and training.

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Home-Start Thanet will endeavour to work to this policy and will monitor, review and evaluate its effectiveness.