

# Becoming a Home-Start Camden volunteer

Volunteers are the backbone of Home-Start Camden (HSC), who enable us to offer the best possible service, which is valued so much by families and referrers.

We provide training for you on our volunteer preparation course where we will get to know you all as individuals and be able to identify your strengths. Volunteers who attend our training bring a wide variety of cultural and life experience to the prep course and volunteers learn as much from each other as they do from the course. Many comment on how helpful it has been in their own family life. We receive extremely positive feedback from those attending the course and people often go on to do further study or work in a related field.

We ask volunteers to give a minimum of one year of service to the organisation after completing the course, but many volunteers stay with us for several years!

Some volunteers support more than one family at a time (especially those who are looking to gain experience in preparation for paid work with children and families in the future), however we do not ask volunteers to do more than they can manage.

## Volunteer support and supervision

Once the course is completed and you have been matched with a family, a Home-Start coordinator will meet with you regularly, both individually and in a group setting. Sometimes it can take time for both family and volunteer to feel comfortable with each other, this is quite normal and changes after a few weeks. Regular support and supervision ensures that the volunteer isn't simply left to cope with worries or concerns on their own.

Supervision provides an opportunity to talk openly about your family visits and to receive guidance and help, without breaking the HSC confidentiality policy. It also enables us to review the work you are doing and advise you about other helpful resources for the family.

## Frequently asked questions:

1. **Will I be looking after children?** **No Home-Start Camden provides support for families; it is not a childminding or baby sitting service.**

2. **How much time do I give?** **3-4 hours a week for one year.**

### 3. What do volunteers do?

- ☺ Provide home visiting to support to families (help with shopping, going out, being a friend).
- ☺ Opportunity to help out in the office
- ☺ With publicity
- ☺ Help to organise the AGM

### 4. What will I get out of it?

Increased self confidence, ongoing training, meet new people, get involved in your community, references provided

### 5. Will I have to deal with families where there is a social worker?

Sometimes yes, however the staff deal with any difficult issues and we provide Camden Safeguarding training for you.

### 6. What about commitment?

We do ask volunteers to commit for a year as we believe that long term support for families undergoing stress is more helpful and more effective in facilitating change.

### 7. My first language is not English – will this be a problem?

No, but you will need to have sufficient understanding of English as there is a lot of discussion and group exercises during the training which we will expect you to participate in. You do not need writing skills.