

Home-Starts across Greater Manchester are looking for a wide-range of volunteers

Across Greater Manchester Home-Start volunteers are working in diverse communities, supporting families with a range of needs.

Life isn't just tough for British-born families, life can be equally hard for families from different countries, be that African states, Eastern Europe or Pakistan.

Parenting is hard, poor mental health is on the increase, as is post natal depression and poverty. All of these issues can contribute towards a parent not being able to cope. And if English is not your first language, or you have witnessed trauma or war in your homeland, this can have a devastating affect on yours and your children's lives, coupled with isolation and the other issues already mentioned.

Across the year all seven Home-Starts working in Greater Manchester will be running training courses for new volunteers. Every Home-Start would love to hear from people from a range of backgrounds, including those who are bi-lingual, or who have moved to Greater Manchester from another country. Breaking downs the barriers, (including language) is an important element of Home-Start support.

We are also looking for more male Home-Start volunteers too. Many lone mums who are supported by Home-Start cite that having a positive male role model in their children's lives is crucially important. Equally many of the dads that we support are often looking for a male volunteer who can offer mentoring, emotional support and can be-friend them.

If you have parenting experience of any kind, can spare just two or three hours a week, and are able to offer confidential, non-judgmental support to a local family in their own home, we would love to hear from you.

To inspire you to find out more, here's what one of our male volunteers said about Home-Start: " My wife told me about Home-Start when I decided to reduce my working hours to part time. I laughed at first, I was thinking of community gardens, and dredging canals, not supporting families!

It wasn't until I had done some research into Home-Start that I thought that's the charity for me. I read a case study on a Home-Start website that told the story of a young dad whose wife had been killed tragically in a hit and run. Leaving him to bring up his six week old son all by himself. His own parents were living in Canada. He had no one, not only was his having to adjust to life as a new parent, but cope with bereavement too. This resonated with me because I had a son of a similar age, with two small children, and I could imagine how hard it would have been for my son. I rang Home-Start and signed up! That was two years ago. I support a young family where the husband has muscular dystrophy. I play with the children, I do a few practical jobs and I offer a listening ear, sometimes to the mum and sometimes to the dad. It's the best thing I have ever done. The smallest acts of kindness that make the biggest difference. I would encourage anyone to volunteer for Home-Start!"

To find out more about volunteering for one of the seven Home-Starts in Greater Manchester, please visit www.gmhomestarts.org.uk