

Calling all male volunteers.

Whilst many people think that Home-Start is a charity that's just about mums supporting other mums, this couldn't be further from the truth. Across Greater Manchester, we have many male volunteers working with families. Some of our male volunteers do in fact support mums, but others support dads too.

In recent years, we have found that lots of dads are now raising their children on their own. This can be for a whole host of reasons, it can be that their partner has left them, or that they have lost a partner through terminal illness.

We support a dad called Paul whose bringing up his little boy on his own due to the fact that he suffered domestic violence at the hands of his son's mother. For several years he was supported by two male Home-Start volunteers. One has since gone on to become a Home-Start trustee, and the other is now training to become a social worker. Paul's second volunteer, Wes, also knows what it's like to be separated from his child's mother, and that's what we encourage at Home-Start- empathy and understanding. Wes was a listening ear for Paul, a male confidant, someone to share his worries and concerns with, who would just turn up for a couple of hours a week, someone Paul could depend on.

There are, on occasions, times when a mum comes to us and asks specifically for a male volunteer to support her and her children. For instance, we have supported mums through domestic abuse who have said they want a male volunteer to show their children that not all men are violent and abusive, other times they may want a male volunteer to be a positive male influence to their children whose own dads are not around.

We are always looking for volunteers across Greater Manchester male and female. But we would just like to take this opportunity to make male readers aware that men make brilliant Home-Start volunteers too and we'd love to hear from dads and granddads who feel that they could spare just a couple of hours a week to support a local family. All our volunteers attend a preparation course before they are matched to their first Home-Start family and they are offered ongoing support and supervision.

If you think you have what it takes to become our next 'Wes', please do get in touch with us. We'd love to hear from you.

Find out more about volunteering for anyone of the seven Greater Manchester Home-Starts by calling 0800 068 63 68.