

Home-Start, a charity supporting families in need, often sees victims of domestic abuse.

As one of Greater Manchester's leading family support charities, we welcome the news that a new criminal offence for domestic abuse could be introduced to include emotional and psychological harm.

We see the impact that emotional abuse has on some of the many families we support.

Emotional abuse is far reaching and of course affects the relationships parents can have with their children.

Women (and men) who have suffered any form of domestic abuse, will often suffer in silence, with their self esteem, confidence and ability to form healthy relationships all affected.

It's a subject that Home-Start cares deeply about. We have strong connections with various domestic abuse support services across Greater Manchester.

Because our core aim is to provide emotional and non-judgemental support to families in their own homes, our volunteers are often the first person to whom a victim discloses their problems.

In severe cases where a parent when a parent has fled domestic abuse, they have often had to leave their friends and family behind, moving to a safe house or refuge in a new city.

Loneliness, isolation and no one to turn to, their problems can escalate, affecting their ability to parent their children. This is where Home-Start steps in.

Once a week a volunteer will visit a family in their own home, providing a listening ear, and often a shoulder to cry on. Over time, that volunteer may support the parent to widen their links in the local community, to access other support services and ultimately to help that parent rebuild their lives again.

This is of paramount importance- a parent who can't cope means that a child will suffer.

For more information on Home-Start and how to help, visit www.home-start.org.uk