

The number of children living in temporary accommodation in Britain is at a three-year high.

In 2014, more than 90,000 children in England, Scotland and Wales were without a permanent home, according to homeless charity Shelter.

When Home-Start began back in 1973, its ethos was to support families in their own homes.

Forty years on, while this is still a core value for the charity, in recent years Home-Start is supporting more and more families who are either at risk of homelessness, or living in temporary accommodation.

There are so many reasons behind this, such as welfare reform, (a change in how housing allowance is distributed), a rise in redundancies (and therefore working parents struggling to make their mortgage repayments) and an increase in the reduction of working hours for many families. All of these factors can contribute to a family being at risk of losing their home.

Sadly and worryingly, families across Greater Manchester are spending weeks, weeks and sometimes years living in bed and breakfasts, hostels, and in some cases sofa surfing (sleeping from one night to the next in the homes of friends and families).

Home-Start is not a homeless charity, but we do support families in dire need of help with housing. We do this by supporting families with budgeting, housing applications and sign-posting them on to appropriate support agencies. There are times when we advocate on behalf of a family with rent arrears and difficulties in making payments.

Home-Start believes that every child deserves the best possible start in life and having somewhere safe and secure to live is a basic and fundamental right of every child.

Living in temporary accommodation can have a dire impact on a child's development. We want to prevent more local families from ending up in these difficult situations.

To help Home-Start support more families, you can volunteer as a home visitor, use your skills and experiences as a trustee, or help with fundraising activities.

To find out more, visit www.home-start.org.uk or call 0800 068 63 68.