

Need that extra pair of hands?

In recent weeks, we have highlighted a very serious side of Home-Start support. From poverty and domestic violence to issues around housing and pay day loans.

But, there's a very different side to Home-Start and that's the practical support our Home-Start volunteers offer to parents who need that extra pair of hands.

Take multiple births for instance. We have supported countless parents across Greater Manchester as they come to terms (and the reality), of having twins, triplets and even quads!

Those daunting first weeks of managing constant feeds and nappy changes are hard for any new parent, never mind when there's twice or three times the amount. And for many parents that we support with multiple births, they often already have an older child. So in some cases, we are supporting parents who may have three or four children all under the age of four.

One mum supported by Home-Start (and who has a five year old plus triplets), said: "I liked the idea of having triplets and I liked the idea of being a bit different. But then reality kicked in- no sleep, three crying babies, and a child at school. It became crazy. I didn't have time to get out of my pyjamas, to have a cup of coffee or have a bath. Those early days of three tiny babies all in a row, with everyone saying how cute they were, in all honesty it began to wear very thin. My Health Visitor referred me to Home-Start and to this day, I can remember flinging open the door and just saying 'please help me' to this poor volunteer on my doorstep! But the great thing about Home-Start is that they match volunteers according to their interests and experiences. So luckily for me, my volunteer was a mum of twins herself, so she just got it. Right from the start, she was just invaluable. Sometimes, it was just about that bit of practical support- getting all the bottles made up, or making sure that my older child was still getting some attention, (so that she didn't resent the triplets). Other times she'd sit and listen to me moaning about how tired I was and how hard it was- but never judge me for saying it. I will never forget the day that we took the triplets to the park for the first time. Wow! That was such an achievement. Many parents can just take that for granted, but for a mum of triplets, it's impossible without extra help. My volunteer was there, by my side and I can't thank her or Home-Start enough."

If you feel you could support Home-Start for a couple of hours a week as an extra pair of hands for a local Greater Manchester family, please visit www.home-start.org.uk or call 080 068 63 68.