

Reaching out to BME families.

Something that we pride ourselves on in the seven Home-Starts across Greater Manchester, is how we reach out to all families who need us; regardless of age, gender, religious belief or social class.

For instance, in communities throughout Greater Manchester we offer support to mums and dads from a range of minority ethnic families who are suffering with issues such as isolation and poor mental health.

Minority ethnic families face additional barriers in communication, where language difficulties exist, making it difficult to play an active role in their community, engage with services, ask for help and express feelings, build relationships and understand information to make informed decisions.

There's also another support need that we are seeing increasing amongst Asian women in particular, and that's domestic abuse.

This can impact greatly on their ability to cope with parenting, and lead to a deterioration in emotional wellbeing and coping strategies, which can then result in social exclusion and isolation, increasing the risk of vulnerable children.

One such mum supported by Home-Start said: "We find it hard to trust, especially around sensitive issues such as domestic abuse or mental health issues. We fear our community will judge us as incapable."

But the reason many mums from a minority ethnic background will allow a Home-Start volunteer into their homes is because they understand, right from the start that Home-Start's ethos is not to judge a family. It's to offer confidential and emotional support and not to 'tell' a parent how to think and behave.

Instead a Home-Start volunteer empowers a struggling parent to think about making positive changes in their and their children's lives. (Changes that they are in control of). This is so important when supporting a parent with low self esteem and self worth; two factors that are often the result of domestic abuse.

Another mum supported by Home-Start said: "It was out of the question that I would ever go to the police. I truly believed it was something I was to just put up with as I knew so many other women in the same boat. It wasn't until I built trust with my Home-Start volunteer that I realised no human being should experience abuse, and that my religion did not condone it."

If you are reading this and want to find out more about getting support, please do contact us. Your call will be treated in complete confidence. www.home-start.org.uk or call 0800 068 6368.