

Mums of kids aged four at risk of post natal depression

New research published recently in the British Medical Journal of Obstetrics and Gynaecology states that first-time mothers are more likely to suffer depression when their child is aged four than at any other time in the first 12 months after birth.

As seven family support charities across Greater Manchester, Home-Start welcomes this research as it confirms what we see every day – that parents (mothers and fathers) can struggle with depression at any time during the early years of their child's life.

We focus our support on the early years, as they are so important, but can be the hardest for parents. Children are not yet in the school system and parents may not see their health visitors regularly.

Parents can easily feel isolated and feel like they are the only ones struggling to cope.

Mental health issues such as post natal depression can make it difficult for parents to even leave the house, which means that children can miss out on learning essential early life skills.

As children reach school age, for some, the thought of leaving who they have been with 24/7 since birth, can be extremely daunting.

Home-Start is a unique charity that supports over 500 families every year in Greater Manchester and mental health issues including post natal depression, are the most common reasons for support.

Our trained volunteers, all parents themselves, know how difficult raising children can be.

They visit families in their own homes, where families feel more at ease, for two to three hours per week to provide practical help and much needed emotional support.

Our volunteers support parents in stepping back out into the world again and just having another adult to talk to can make them feel much more able to cope.

We have supported many parents to overcome episodes of depression as our amazing volunteers are able to establish such good relationships with families, that we regularly see the emotional health and well-being of parents improve.

As one parent said: "There were lots of people involved... psychiatrists, doctors...and the main person I saw was from Home-Start who I felt I could turn to talk to."

For more information about volunteering for Home-Start or accessing support, please contact 0161 344 0669 or go to home-start.org.uk

