



PRESS RELEASE

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Rochdale's leading family support charity celebrates 17 years of family support by completing its 50th volunteer training course.

Opening in the millennium year, Home-Start Rochdale recruited its first seven local parent volunteers to support local families. In the last 17 years, Home-Start Rochdale has recruited and trained over 360 volunteers, who in turn, have supported over 2,000 local families who are reaching out for support.

Home-Start recruits and trains local parent volunteers to offer emotional and practical support to families in their own homes. Families who are struggling to cope for many reasons, including- poverty, isolation, poor mental health and illness and disability. Believing that every child deserves the best possible start in life, Home-Start's ethos is to empower parents to create happy, fulfilling childhoods for their children.

One family supported by Home-Start said: "Before Home-Start I was isolated, suffering poor mental health and wondering how I was going to get through one day to the next with a toddler and a brand new baby. I was referred to Home-Start by my GP, and for the next 6 months I was supported by my volunteer. She changed my life, I looked forward to her visits every single week. Just to know that she was there for me, and my children and didn't judge me, it meant the world. What's brilliant about Home-Start is that it's a confidential service, so I knew I could tell my volunteer anything. I am the mum I am today because of Home-Start and because of my volunteer."

It's not just families who benefit from Home-Start support, volunteers also develop skills in confidence, enhance their career prospects or go onto further education and training. Many volunteers who have trained with Home-Start become social workers, Early Years Workers and Support Workers. For other volunteers who may have already retired, they say that volunteering for Home-Start has improved their own emotional well-being and decreased loneliness and isolation.

One Home-Start volunteer said: "Volunteering for Home-Start is the best thing that I have ever done. For just a couple of hours each week, you are making a difference to a young family, a difference that could last a lifetime. Its' humbling, rewarding and challenging- I would recommend it to anyone!"

Donna McKenna, manager of Home-Start Rochdale said: *“As life gets tougher for so many local families, so does the need for a charity like Home-Start. In the years since we opened in 2000, we have adapted and changed to meet the needs of local parents. At its core, Home-Start is an early intervention family, working with children under the age of five, however, due to need and high demand, Home-Start Rochdale is now supporting families with children up until the age of 12.”*

Donna continued: “We now have our latest parent volunteers trained and ready to start supporting local families, if you would like to find out more about getting support from Home-Start, please contact us on- 01706 629651 or email homestartrochdale@gmail.com.”

In the last year alone, Home-Start Rochdale’s 38 volunteers have supported 148 families with 318 children.



Home-Start Rochdale manager, Donna McKenna, (centre) with the very first Home-Start volunteers and a family support by Home-Start Rochdale

-ENDS-

Notes to Editor-

For interviews, case studies and spokespeople please contact:

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Home-Start recruits and trains local volunteers to offer emotional and practical support to families in their own homes. Supporting families with a range of difficulties and issues from poor mental health and post- natal illness to poverty, domestic abuse and illness and disability. There are seven Home-Starts working across Greater Manchester. They are: Home-Start Bury, Home-Start Bolton, Home-Start Manchester North, Home-Start Manchester South, Home-Start Oldham, Stockport & Tameside, Home-Start Rochdale, Home-Start Trafford & Salford.

