



Support and friendship
for families

Home-Start
Sheffield

Think Family
...Think Home Start



Home Start from a Service User's Perspective

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"I was feeling so down and needed someone to talk to, my volunteer was fantastic and helped me get things off my chest" **Annette**

"Jackie was my fairy god mother! Like an aunt to me and the kids when no family are nearby me" **Melissa**

Introduction

About Home-Start

Home-Start Sheffield offers a unique service. We recruit and train volunteers, who are parents themselves, to visit families at home who have at least one child under 5.

Our aim is to help give children the best possible start in life, by supporting parents to grow in confidence, develop and strengthen their relationship with their children and widen their links with the local community.

We Offer

- **A volunteer with parenting experience** to visit parents with young children at home. The volunteer offers regular weekly support tailored to the family's needs.
- **Emotional support** to help parents find ways to manage and resolve problems.
- **Direct support for children** including playing, listening, having fun, establishing routines, encouraging development and providing opportunities for outings and treats.
- **Practical help** with getting to appointments, doing the shopping, budgeting, nutrition and meal planning, cooking and making the home safe.
- **Outreach and family groups** so parents can get out, meet others, and become more involved in their own community.
- **Information and links** to other organisations including health and educational services.
- **Attendance at meetings and moral support**, especially in relation to dealing with case conferences or solicitors and court cases.
- **Access to parenting advice and parenting skills training.**

New to the Country Jeanine

Before I had this support I had two young boys and couldn't manage to go out. I was new to this country and didn't know anyone in the area. My husband had cancer and was very ill. Home-Start found me a volunteer and helped me to access a nursery place for my eldest son. My volunteer helped me to go out shopping, play with the boys and was someone to chat with.

My volunteer helped me to visit my husband in hospital and to continue taking the children to nursery. Soon after my husband passed away. She helped me to get through this very difficult time *"Thank you for sending her to me, she's my friend"* and has since encouraged me to get out more, make new friends and take driving lessons.

I would definitely recommend Home-Start, I don't know what I would have done without you.

My volunteer has a new baby herself now but we still see each other every few weeks.

"It was wonderful to understand how my child develops physically & mentally, Home-Start is such a wonderful service, my volunteer was brilliant, I miss her a million, million times!"
Paula



Picture posed by model

Suffering with Postnatal Depression

Ursula



My Health visitor told me about the Lose the Blues group in Hillsborough after I had my baby. He was 3 or 4 months old and not sleeping well and I was struggling with coping with sleep deprivation. I am a physiotherapist so I was used to being always in control and organised but I was having to learn on the spot.

I went to the group when it had just started, the first time I just burst into tears. I needed to accept some help but needed a push. I didn't know about Home-Start but everyone was so nice. Jo told me about Home-Start volunteers and asked me what kind of support I'd like at home and what kind of person I'd like and I said I'd like someone like Jackie who was a lovely volunteer at the group, as it happened Jackie was available and started to visit me every week.

Jackie was someone to talk to or look after Ed while I did some chores, she would often take him out for a walk for a couple of hours and I would go to bed or have a bath and just feel a bit more normal for a few hours and I would really look forward to it. After a few months things got easier so I rang and said I don't think I needed Home-Start anymore but she assured me that that was good and what Home-Start are supposed to do! I still go to the group on a Tuesday and have made some really good friends. I still have some bad nights and feel I can't cope or stressed. Meeting other mums reassured me that it wasn't only me and that other babies have sleep problems.

The health visitor is great but can make you feel like you're being tested and I always felt I had to do my hair and put lipstick on. At Lose the Blues you can be yourself and know you won't be judged.

It's nice to know Home-Start is there if I chose to have another baby!

New to the area and fleeing Domestic Abuse **Trina**

I was completely new to the area after I fled domestic violence and was in a women's refuge. I moved into a house but had no confidence. I was referred to Home-Start by the children's worker at the refuge but didn't know what Home-Start was before.

It was nice to have a friendly face to see us regularly who would spend time with my son and bring activities. He loved reading books with Zoe my volunteer and she would spend ages reading with him. It was nice to see him interact with someone else and it gave me encouragement that I was doing OK as a parent. Home-start volunteers are not there to criticise or make judgement, I could talk about anything and she would just listen. I've moved on now, I have a boyfriend and we're expecting a new baby. We're about to move into a better area and I'm looking forward to making a home for my family.

"Home-Start helped me tremendously; it was so easy but without them I probably wouldn't have moved on from my brain haemorrhage" **Rebecca**

"My volunteer was an extra pair of hands when one just wasn't enough to juggle twin babies (one of which has special needs) and a 4 year old" **Jude**

Young Mum Megan

I lost my mum when I was young and was in trouble with shop lifting and other things, I met my baby's father at 16 and had my baby when I was just 18 I had to move away because of domestic violence and we are no longer together.

I went into depression and couldn't cope with my son who is now nearly 3 years old and I needed help.

Sarah is my support worker at Home-Start and my son loves her, we both want her to stay until he's 16! Sarah has done a lot for me. I have to go to a lot of meetings and appointments and Sarah has come with me and explained things, she will speak for me and stick up for me because I'm quiet. She's there for me once a week and will swap days for when I have my appointments.

I'm doing OK now Sarah has helped me to access counselling and given me info about courses I can do. I would like to get into youth work and help kids with anger issues because I can relate to them. Sarah has told me that I could start by doing voluntary work and I'd really like to. Home-Start is right good and helps a lot of people.



Struggling with severe trauma

Julia

I met Home-Start when I was recovering from being trafficked to the UK from Uganda and experienced domestic violence. I had ill health, was suffering from flash backs and a total lack of confidence. I found it difficult to go shopping and visit my GP.

My Support Worker Sarah has been a great help. She helps me with my son and has been key to getting us the right support and medication for his allergies. She has also provided us with clothes and toys and helped me with the shopping. Because of his allergies my son has a special diet and I was finding it hard to get things locally but Sarah will take me to the supermarket.

I'm comfortable with Home-Start, they know my history and I don't like having to explain my history to people over and over. I go to the Messy Mondays group run by Home-Start and have made a friend there. I've gained confidence but still need help, people struggle to understand my accent but Sarah helps me when she can come with me to the hospital or GP. I am now waiting for an appointment for some specialist counselling.

I have recently been to Scoop Aid and found out about courses and I am starting a Health & Social care course in September I would like to work with elderly or disabled people.

“My volunteer helped a lot and was someone to talk to and help me get to appointments, she gave me more confidence and we got on well. I was a bit nervous about being referred at first but everything was explained. Without Home-Start's help I don't know how I would have managed – I would be less confident and not able to go to school meetings or dancing” Jenny

Recovering alcoholic Helen

I was isolated because I came from a mother & baby unit and I had no family or friends in Sheffield. I was an ex-alcoholic so the friends I did have were not real friends and I chose not to see them anymore. It was difficult to get out with a very young baby so it was so helpful for me to go out with the volunteer and have someone to talk to. I also really enjoyed the trip to Cleethorpes that Home-Start organised and I really appreciated the chance for a day out.

I'm now going to college and I work as a child minder in a crèche and my daughter comes with me, I've passed my English and will continue with numeracy in September and I've made some good friends. I'm hoping to move into a bigger property but I would like to stay in the area because I feel part of the community. I would like to be a counsellor myself, I plan to do some voluntary work to get me started and I've done several courses around parenting and safeguarding children that I hope to be able to use.



“Home-Start helped me get back on track when I suffered with depression. I thought it would take ages to get support but it was really quick. Thanks for the help, I got on really well with my volunteer” *Ashleigh*

Feeling lonely and isolated

Tricia

I don't have any family in Sheffield or friends who can babysit and was feeling isolated. My husband works away and I was 40 when I had my baby. I struggled with the idea of accepting help because I have been a volunteer, so I am used to helping others. I had to grit my teeth a bit and start going to the local Sure Start but I did find it difficult to mix with other mums there.

We were having a lot of building work done, so I couldn't go out for some time while the builders were in. Having a volunteer was like having a part of the outside world come to me! She would play with my baby so I could get some jobs and DIY done – it was a Godsend!

Things are a bit better now – I have a very good friend locally whose child is the same age as mine, and although we don't see each other as often as we'd like, we keep in touch. My child is going to the local nursery for short sessions and I am enjoying spending time with her doing cake decorating and other things whilst working occasionally and managing the on-going work at the house. It is stressful but I have learned to let go a little bit now.

“I was very isolated with no family around and Home-Start was a Godsend! You helped me keep my sanity. Without this help I would probably not have coped.” Tricia



Has a child with special needs Claire

Home-Start definitely helped me, I'm a single parent and my child has special needs including ADHD and autism and problems with his legs and he needs constant attention. I found it easy to accept help because I so needed it and it came just in time before I had a breakdown! I am really grateful for the support and only wish it could have continued longer it was brilliant.

My volunteer would watch him or take him out so I could get stuff done and it was just such a relief to feel more organised. She was also someone to talk to. We miss Sarah, he keeps asking for her! But is starting school in Sept. Things are stressful but I'm coping better than before and feel better in myself, it was good that I was able to have a moan!

"I would like to thank all for the support I have been given towards the way I bring up my child. It has been a real pleasure and I have learned quite a lot from the programme and personally from Karen because she is a mother herself, it makes it all so much easier to understand what I may go through sometimes" Ana



Picture posed by models

Dealing with a relationship breakdown **Natalie**



I was referred to Home-Start by the health visitor. I had recently separated from my husband, moved to a new area where I know no one and was diagnosed with post-natal depression. I was so miserable and just didn't get out of the house with my baby son. The health visitor told me about having a Home-Start volunteer who would help me get out. My volunteer took me round to playgroups where I met a girl who lives on my road and has a son the same age as mine and we've become friends. Sarah would visit me every week and even if we didn't go out, just knowing that she was coming gave me something to look forward to and made sure I didn't stay in my pyjamas all day! Karen, my co-ordinator has been fantastic. She gave me a training brochure about courses available in North Sheffield and I had no idea that there were courses available to me and how to go about finding out. I have since completed a first aid course and my level 1 NVQ in childcare and I'm now hoping to do childminding so I can work without having to pay for childcare for my son. I continue to see Karen once a month for PAFT (Parents as First Teachers) sessions, my son loves it! He just sees it as play but it's a new activity every month and we're helping him to develop his speech and everything. Home-Start has helped me so much – I can't believe that was me looking back. I don't wake up wishing to go back to sleep, things look so much better now.

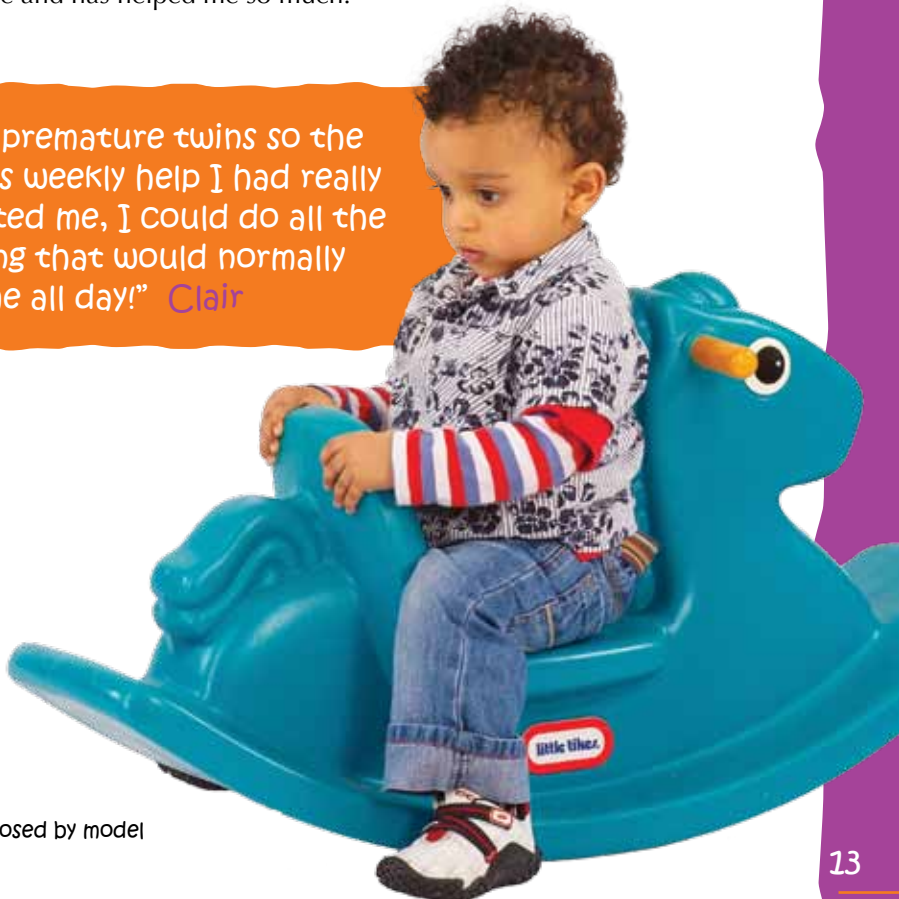
"I would have struggled without Home-Start. It was really nice to be able to Hoover without my little girl round my ankles while my volunteer coloured with her! Just little things make a big difference!" **Caroline**

Past Substance Misuse

Janet

I was lacking in self-esteem and had no confidence. I'd had issues with drugs in the past and social services were involved, I was worried that I might lose my kids. Sarah has helped me so much I now can go shopping on my own, I have been managing my money, my confidence has improved and I have not taken drugs. The difference between Home-Start and social services is that Social Services get involved for the kids, Sarah is here for me not the kids and if I feel better then I can make a better life for my kids. She has helped me with routines and I now have time for myself after 7.30pm and I can go out occasionally. This is the first time that I feel settled in 20 years and I trust that Sarah will continue to support me for as long as I need her. Home-Start needs to keep going because it is fantastic and has helped me so much.

"I had premature twins so the 2 hours weekly help I had really benefited me, I could do all the cleaning that would normally take me all day!" Clair



Picture posed by model

Quotes from families who have attended our groups...

"I enjoy meeting people and giving my baby a chance to play. I have made a new friend here who has become like a sister."

"The group has helped me to get out with my twins. They were born premature and I think it has helped them to develop. The families and staff are really friendly. I feel confident to ask the staff about anything. We get lots of activities and trips. I feel I am looked after and part of a group."

"It helps my child's behaviour to see how other children behave, or, to see that they are told off if they behave in a certain way, as he can be quite giddy."

"I come to the group because I like meeting people. My child's confidence has grown- he is learning how to behave in a group and out of the house."

"It helped us with visits to Citizens advice and helped me with a group to join outside my normal family life and gave me confidence to be away from home on my own and to make new friends" Anne

"I like meeting new friends for myself and my child and my son is learning new skills."



“I really enjoyed the activities at group the staff were very welcoming and I especially liked the speakers and information provided. I have done two courses since coming to the group, Makaton and another one leading on from it and achieved a certificate.” Natalie

“Before I stayed at home feeling lonely, overwhelmed and depressed- too much housework. Now, I come out and meet friends at the group. I’m out of the house and my son and I get to socialise. I feel better when I get home. I’m not overwhelmed because I’ve had a break, and my son will settle because he has been stimulated meaning I am better able to complete tasks. I’m making new friends all the time and running into people I knew years ago. Its cheering now when I go out as I stop and chat to people I have met because I feel so much more confident.”

Volunteers' Stories

Julie Long - Volunteer

I was born and have always lived in Sheffield. Before I had my children I worked for the NHS. I had a lovely Home-Start volunteer visit me when my children were 3 1/2, 12 months and a new baby of just 3 weeks. I had my hands full! My experience with Home-Start encouraged me to become a volunteer, which I have been doing for 4 years. I know how valuable and much needed volunteers are and have met some lovely families, all with different wants but with a common need for support.

Joanne Pike - Volunteer

Joanne is from Sheffield and before volunteering she has had a very varied career. She has been a care assistant, a cleaner, a shop worker and a cashier! She has brought up her two girls aged 11 and 5 on her own. Joanne heard about Home-Start through her family support worker she wanted to get back into work and needed some relevant experience and thought that volunteering was a good place to start, she visited the Volunteer Centre, saw the Home-Start advert and just went for it! She started the Preparation Course in October and has just been 'linked' with her first family. Joanne would recommend Home-Start for caring people who want to help.

Sarah Dawson - Volunteer

Sarah is from Rotherham but has lived in Sheffield since 2002. Sarah says *"I've been a lone parent since my child was 20 months and had lots of help from Scoop Aid over the years, I heard about Home-Start from them and liked the idea so when my daughter started nursery I decided to volunteer.*

I wanted to work with lone parents or women with post natal depression because I had it myself. I have done basic advice work and counselling skills courses and wanted to use this with lone parents to help them with benefits. I recently started a toddler group in my area for mums to get together and kids to do craft activities."

Through Home-Start Sarah says you get to meet other mums from all different backgrounds. *"It has helped me and my confidence, it's nice to know that I can help people with the things I've learnt."*



“Home-Start helped me a lot, to go shopping and have time with the other children. My son learnt a lot from playgroup” *Regina*



“I had PND and kept lashing out at everyone, but it helped having someone to speak to and I felt able to tell them things. Without this help I would have bottled it all up and got worse but my volunteer was lovely. Keep doing what you’re doing Home-Start” *Asiya*



“Nursery have been quite negative about my sons language skills but haven’t given any suggestions. PAFT tells me in simple terms what he should be saying at what age and assures me that I am doing everything I can to promote language development” *Paula*

Referrers' Comments

Claire Hobson

Senior Drugs Worker, Primary Care Addiction Service

I didn't know about the Home-Start service until I was working with a mum that had already been allocated to Home-Start but have since made a few more referrals, the process is very easy.

Home-Start is good general wrap-around support for vulnerable families, it's good for my clients to have another perspective because the work we do is very specific, Home-Start makes sure that all the family's needs are met, including the children.

Home-Start is meeting a 'gap in the market' some of the families I work with don't quite meet the threshold for Family Support so I know I can refer them to Home-Start, there is no other service like this. It's a worthy and needed service for vulnerable families.

Chris Kemp

Health Visitor, Birley Health Visiting Team

Over the years I've referred lots of families to Home-Start and generally it has been very, very positive. Because your volunteers are not part of a statutory organisation there's a range of things that they can do for families e.g. be someone to talk to, help them organise the house, attend appointments, help with twins, provide play and stimulation for children and help mums with the emotional aspect of being a parent.

If Home-Start wasn't around there would definitely be a big gap in services, I would probably have to refer my families to MAST for family support but their needs might not be high enough to get any support.

I've recently found that all the referrals I've made have been allocated a volunteer where in the past this was not always the case, I continue to recommend the Scallywags group which is also very positive for parents. There has been one family that had had a lot of input from Family Services then Sara started to do PAFT with them and helped with play ideas at the group and I have seen some real positive changes in this family, before Home-Start's help the young mother didn't know how to play with her baby who had a developmental delay possibly due to lack of stimulation but now I have seen her playing with her baby and it's made a big difference.

Become A Friend of Home-Start

Families are turning to Home-Start Sheffield in ever- increasing numbers, over 41,000 children in Sheffield are considered to be vulnerable or in need!!

Could you become a valued part of Home-Start's work?

You could help Home-Start by:

- Becoming a Friend of Home-Start by setting up a standing order of £3 a month or £30 per year
- Making a one off donation
- Providing a raffle prize or two!
- Taking part in a fundraising event to raise money for Home-Start
- Holding your own fundraising event.
- Adopting Home-Start as your charity of the year if you are a business or school.
- Become a volunteer for Home-Start, by either visiting families in their own homes, helping out at one of our groups, or becoming a trustee on our Board.

To find out more please visit our website on www.hssheffield.org.uk

Please help Home-Start to make a difference to a child's life today. Simply contact the office on 0114 2788377 or email enquiries@hssheffield.org.uk.





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