

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How do I know if I am eligible to have Home-Start support?

A. Home-Start Cotswolds supports families who have at least one child under 5, who are going through a difficult time. You need to live in the Cotswold District Council area and to be happy for a volunteer to visit you at home.

Q. Do I have to pay for Home-Start support?

A. No. Home-Start is a Charity and there is no charge for our support.

Q. What sort of difficulties can Home-Start help me with?

A. Being a parent is not easy and the demands of every day family life can be tough. Some of the difficulties we support families with are: post natal depression, lone parenting, multiple birth or several very young children, loneliness, and illness or disability in parent or child. If you are finding it hard to cope please call and talk things over with us.

Q. Who can refer a family to Home-Start?

A. Families can contact us themselves by ringing **01285 885 391** or an agency or friend could do this for you. You can also email us on office@home-start-cotswolds.org.uk (We will only work with a family if they want our support).

Q. What happens when I call Home-Start or after you receive a referral?

A. Our office opening hours are 9.30-12.30 Monday-Friday. There is often someone in the office at other times but if not you can leave an answer phone message and someone will ring you back. When you call you will speak to one of our staff and they will take a few basic details from you.

One of our co-ordinators will contact you to make an appointment to come and see you at home. You will then be able to talk to them confidentially and privately in the comfort of your own home. The co-ordinator will tell you all about the volunteer support and what they are able to support you with. You can then decide if you would like to go ahead and meet one of our volunteers.

The co-ordinator will then bring a volunteer to meet you at home and you will arrange a good time for the volunteer to visit each week for the next 3 months.

Q. What does a volunteer do when they visit?

A. A Home-Start volunteer will come to your home once a week for up to three hours to spend time with you and your family, offering support in whatever area is most important for you.

They often provide:

- someone to talk to who will not judge you;
- help and encouragement to get out
- someone to play with children
- help with routines and children's behaviour
- a shoulder to cry on
- an extra pair of hands
- their experience of being a parent

All our volunteers are parents. Before joining Home-Start their details have been police-checked and we have taken up references.

The families we finished working with this year told us that their volunteer helped with: going out to the park, listening, helping with kids, being a good friend, building mum's confidence and helping with GP appointments.

Q. How long will I be supported?

A. The length of our support all depends on the family situation, but initially we offer support for 3 months. A coordinator will visit you to review and discuss how things are going and support will be extended if necessary.

Q. What if I change my mind?

A. Don't worry if you no longer require Home-Start support just call the office and speak to your co-ordinator. If you have any concerns about your volunteer or the type of support you are getting then please contact the office; we are here to help support you and the relationship you have with your volunteer.

Q. Who decides when the support should end?

A. During the time that you are supported you will have regular contact with a co-ordinator; she will have made the initial visit to you and will then make review visits every three months. At each review visit you and your co-ordinator will decide how much longer the support should go on for. Support is usually wound down gradually and the end visit date will have been agreed well in advance.