



## **HOME-START BRISTOL VOLUNTEER AGREEMENT**

### **Welcome to Bristol Home-Start!**

This document aims to provide you with important information that will clarify your role and responsibilities as a Home-Start volunteer and also the support that we shall offer you.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Bristol Home-Start has an Equal Opportunities Policy to ensure that all families who live in Bristol and South Gloucester, with at least one child under the age of 5, will have equal access to our service irrespective of their gender, race, age, class or sexual orientation.

We ask all staff, paid and voluntary, to support this principle in their interactions with families and other staff members.

### **Commitment**

Bristol Home-Start aims to provide a high standard of on-going support, supervision and training for all its staff and volunteers.

Upon joining the organisation, we ask that you are available for home-visiting for at least one year. We recommend that the visits should last for about 2-3 hours and should take place once a week.

We offer you regular supervision (with your Co-ordinator) to support your work with families. We also hold volunteer training events which provide opportunities to meet with other volunteers, to have peer support and to further the development of your professional skills.

Reliability is an essential part of the trusting, caring relationship that Bristol Home-Start seeks to foster with families. It is for this reason that we ask that you please keep your appointments, and if necessary, to notify the family or the Bristol Home-Start office if you cannot carry out a home-visit.

## Taking Time Out

After your initial year as a volunteer you may take up to 3 months off. Please discuss this with your Co-ordinator so that arrangements can be made to cover your absence if need be. To return after your period of 'resting' you need only contact your Co-ordinator who will then match you with a family.

For individuals needing to take a longer break we ask that you also discuss this with your Co-ordinator in order to plan an exit strategy. In these cases we also ask that you contact your Co-ordinator if and when you decide you may want to return. An interview will be arranged and you may be asked to attend further training before being matched with a family.

## Confidentiality

It is essential that all personal information about families and staff is treated sensitively and confidentially. Our Confidentiality Policy states that we will protect the information we are entrusted with by our families except where a child's welfare is at risk. In cases where a member of staff believes that a child is being neglected or abused, the volunteer should notify their Co-ordinator immediately.

The Co-ordinator will then advise and support you in resolving your concerns. We aim to discuss concerns about children with parents in cases where this would be appropriate. The Management may decide that information must be disclosed to the appropriate authority. In these cases, we will advise you and the parents of the course of action that we are taking.

It is important that volunteers know about our Confidentiality Policy and Procedures, as well as our Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

To safeguard staff privacy families will not be given any contact details of volunteers, but will be encouraged to leave messages with office staff, who will then forward them.

## Advice, Information and Befriending

Bristol Home-Start is a befriending service for families. Where specialist advice is asked for please refer the family to the appropriate agency. If you have accurate information that is relevant, it is of course important to share it. In general, however, please refer parents to the appropriate service that can advise them. Resources and information about other professional services can be provided by the office.

## Childcare

All volunteer staff must have a current Enhanced Police Check before they can begin visiting families.

The role of the volunteer involves spending time with children, sometimes while the parent is out of the room, and often with the parent and children outside of the family home. All Staff working for Bristol Home-Start are protected by comprehensive public liability insurance and a volunteer insurance policy to cover these areas of work. **However, the Home-Start UK policy mentioned does not cover transporting parents or children in your own car (see section on Insurance).**

Also, please note that the following activities are beyond the remit of the Home-Start volunteer role and so are **also not covered by our insurance**:

- Babysitting in the evenings or during the day while the parent is absent
- Overnight care of children in the family home, or your home
- Transporting children without appropriate insurance and safety seats
- Administering medication to children, or giving medical advice
- Disciplining children

If you have any concerns or questions about your role and responsibilities as a Home-Start volunteer, please speak with your Co-ordinator.

## **Record Keeping**

We are required to keep accurate, up to date, relevant information about the families we support. We therefore ask that you keep a clear record of your home visits, using your monthly diary form, and then return these to the office at the end of each month.

Please let us have your mileage claim forms at the same time (see section on Expenses).

## **Illness and Infectious Diseases**

If you or your family come into contact with an infectious disease (such as chicken pox, mumps, rubella, or meningitis) please let your Co-ordinator know as soon as possible. They will discuss with you whether or not to continue your home-visits.

## **Training, Support and Supervision**

Bristol Home-Start regards the professional support and development of volunteer staff as a high priority.

Accordingly, in addition to the 10 week preparation course, we shall offer you regular on-going support, supervision and volunteer training events.

**We encourage you to make regular contact** with your Co-ordinator. They in turn will maintain regular contact with you and your Home-Start family to monitor progress. By monitoring and evaluating our work in a systematic and regular way, we are able to maintain the highest professional standards in our work and be clear about what we have achieved.

## **Travelling Expenses**

We shall reimburse your travelling expenses in connection with your home visiting of Home-Start families upon receipt of a claim form. Your Co-ordinator can advise you of the current rates. For those who choose not to make a claim, please contact Alex Wyatt at the office, who will explain the procedure by which Home-Start can benefit from your 'non-claimed' donation.

## **Insurance**

Bristol Home-Start has Employer's Liability and Public Liability insurance policies, which cover all the volunteer activities outlined in this agreement. If an incident occurs which you feel may give rise to a claim against Bristol Home-Start, please contact your Co-ordinator as soon as possible.

These policies do not cover you to use your car for transporting parents or children. You will need to organise additional insurance for this purpose. Please let your Co-ordinator know if you do plan to transport parents or children in your own vehicle, and see a copy of the relevant insurance letter/document that indicates that additional cover is in place, before you use your car for such purposes.

For further details please speak with a Co-ordinator.

## **Management Committee**

The Management Committee is comprised of volunteer trustees and advisors who guide and manage the Bristol project. Two volunteer representatives sit on this committee to provide their points of view. If you would like to know who these representatives are, or have an interest in this role, please speak with your Co-ordinator.

## **Complaints and Grievance Procedure**

If you or your Home-Start family has a concern or a complaint, please raise this with your Co-ordinator in the first instance. If the issue cannot be resolved, the Senior Co-ordinator will hear the complaint. If the matter is still not resolved, the Chair of the Management Committee will hear the complaint and then take the most appropriate action.



**Bristol Home-Start  
Volunteer Agreement**

I ..... agree to abide by the terms and conditions of the Bristol Home-Start agreement which I have read and understood.

Volunteer's signature: .....

Date: .....

Bristol Home-Start  
Co-ordinator's signature: .....

Date: .....