

HOME-START BOREHAMWOOD & DISTRICT

THE HOME-START PRACTICE STANDARDS

HOME-START STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

Home-Start is a voluntary organisation committed to promoting the welfare of families with at least one child under five years of age. Volunteers offer regular support, friendship and practical help to families under stress, in their own homes, helping to prevent family crisis and breakdown.

HOME-START UK STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLE

Home-Start UK is a Charitable Trust which is committed to promoting the welfare of children and parents by providing effective training, information, guidance and support to each existing and potential local Home-Start scheme.

HOME-START PRACTICE STANDARDS

The following Home-Start *Practice Standards* are the basic practice standards for Home-Start referred to in the Home-Start *Agreement*. They have been developed from the Home-Start constitution, Home-Start UK *Trust Deed* and the *Standards and Methods of Practice* for Home-Start schemes and Home-Start UK. Home-Start schemes and Home-Start UK must develop their practice in accordance with these standards. They are included in the relevant sections of the *Home-Start Policy and Practice Guide* which also gives more detail and related recommended procedures for effective Home-Start practice.

The Home-Start Practice Standards are in 3 parts:

- Part 1: Practice Standards for all Home-Start schemes and Home-Start UK
- Part 2: Practice Standards for Home-Start schemes
- Part 3: Practice for Home-Start UK

In developing and working to the Home-Start *Practice Standards*, Home-Start schemes and Home-Start UK recognise the following underpinning principles:

- All Trustees, Management Committee members, staff and volunteers work within and demonstrate the essential ethos of Home-Start
- The welfare of the child is paramount in all decisions taken
- Children and families will be treated equally whatever their ethnic origin, religion, culture, disability, gender, sexual identity and family status.
- Parents should be supported in order to care for their children
- Home-Start practice will be guided by current children's legislation and the *UN Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- The *Home-Start Policy and Practice Guide* will be the basis on which policy and practice for Home-Start schemes and Home-Start UK are developed

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PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR ALL HOME-START SCHEMES AND HOME-START UK

- 1.1 Home-Start schemes and Home-Start UK have recognised charitable status. Home-Start schemes must adopt and adhere to the Home-Start constitution. Home-Start UK adheres to its *Trust Deed*.
- 1.2 All Trustees, Management Committee members, staff and volunteers must be aware of and abide by the Home-Start *Equal Opportunities Policy*, must be sensitive to equal opportunities issues, and must support and promote equality of opportunity.
- 1.3 Home-Start schemes and Home-Start UK recognise their role as good employers and should offer terms and conditions of employment for staff at least as recommended in the *Home-Start Policy and Practice Guide*.
- 1.4 All Home-Start volunteers have the right to appropriate support and supervision and to be paid out of pocket expenses for the voluntary work they have agreed to undertake.
- 1.5 Home-Start schemes and Home-Start UK must sign and adhere to the *Home-Start Agreement*. Each has responsibility for ensuring that others work within the *Home-Start Agreement*.
- 1.6 Home-Start schemes and Home-Start UK abide by their respective statements of principle and *Standards and Methods of Practice*.
- 1.7 Home-Start schemes and Home-Start UK have agreed complaints procedures.
- 1.8 Home-Start schemes and Home-Start UK use the Home-Start logo.

PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR HOME-START SCHEMES

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 Each Home-Start scheme is an independent voluntary organisation.
- 2.1.2 Each Home-Start scheme pays an agreed annual contribution to Home-Start UK for the training, information, guidance and support which they receive.
- 2.1.3 Home-Start schemes agree to work in accordance with the *Home-Start Policy and Practice Guide*.

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2.1.4 After the first two years Home-Start schemes are normally expected to work within the following range (to be applied pro rata):

37 organiser/co-ordinator hours will support a team of 20-30 volunteers who will support 50-60 families annually. Figures depend on the nature and complexity of the support required and on local circumstances.

2.2 Families

2.2.1 Home-Start works **with** families who are experiencing difficulties or suffering stress.

2.2.2 Families have at least one child under five years of age at the time of referral.

2.2.3 The main focus of Home-Start's work is to offer families support in their own home.

2.2.4 Each family has the choice to accept or reject Home-Start support.

2.2.5 Support is offered through volunteers who are normally parents themselves, or who have had parenting experience.

2.2.6 Families are supported for as long as is appropriate.

2.2.7 Volunteers develop a relationship with the family.

2.2.8 The Home-Start approach is flexible to take account of different needs.

2.2.9 Parents' strengths and emotional well being are encouraged.

2.2.10 Families are encouraged to widen their network of relationships.

2.2.11 Families are encouraged to use effectively the support and services available within the community.

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2.3 Management

- 2.3.1 The Management Committee of each Home-Start scheme employs the staff.
- 2.3.2 The Management Committee is responsible for:
- The effective management of the scheme including funding, insurance and premises
 - Good practice and procedures in employing and supervising staff
 - Policies, which must include equal opportunities and health and safety
- 2.3.3 The Committee members ensure that effective links are developed with the statutory caring agencies and with other voluntary organisations within the community.
- 2.3.4 No representative of a scheme's funding agency is eligible for election as the chairperson of Home-Start.

2.4 Organiser/Co-Ordinator

- 2.4.1 At least one salaried organiser/co-ordinator is employed.
- 2.4.2 The organiser/co-ordinator is normally a parent, or has parenting experience
- 2.4.3 The organiser/co-ordinator should have relevant training and experience
- 2.4.4 As part of the effective administration of the scheme, records of the work and of families visited should be maintained.
- 2.4.5 Each family is visited initially by the organiser/co-ordinator
- 2.4.6 The organiser/co-ordinator pays careful attention to matching volunteers' skills and experience to the needs of the families.
- 2.4.7 The organiser/co-ordinator supervises the ongoing support to the family.
- 2.4.8 The organiser/co-ordinator supervises the ending of Home-Start support to the family.

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2.5 Volunteers

- 2.5.1 Home-visiting volunteers are normally parents themselves, or have parenting experience.
- 2.5.2 Volunteers are supported by Home-Start organisers/co-ordinators and other Home-Start volunteers.
- 2.5.3 All volunteers are carefully selected as described in the *Home-Start Policy and Practice Guide*.
- 2.5.4 All home-visiting volunteers attend an initial course of preparation and receive ongoing training and information.
- 2.5.5 All volunteers are carefully matched and introduced to families.

2.6 Referrals

- 2.6.1 The range of referrals or self-referrals accepted are not limited, except where the resources available to Home-Start are not adequate to meet the number of complexity of cases.
- 2.6.2 Referrers will be informed when Home-Start supports begins
- 2.6.3 Referrers will be informed when Home-Start ends.

2.7 Confidentiality

- 2.7.1 All information about parents and families is treated as confidential, to be discussed only as necessary with the organiser/co-ordinator in support of the volunteer and to assist the family.
- 2.7.2 Any disclosure of the confidential information to any other person may only be undertaken with the expressed permission of the parents for the purpose of assisting the family, except where it is considered necessary for the protection of a child when information shall be shared with the appropriate authority.

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2.8 Training, Information and Support

- 2.8.1 All schemes retain close links with Home-Start UK and with other Home-Start schemes.
- 2.8.2 Schemes avail themselves of the training and information provided by Home-Start UK.
- 2.8.3 Schemes share their experience to ensure that the development of Home-Start.
- 2.8.4 Schemes share their experience to ensure that the development of Home-Start is as effective as possible to the ultimate benefit of the families.

PRACTICE STANDARDS FOR HOME-START UK

3.1 General

- 3.1.1 Home-Start UK works within the four countries of the UK.
- 3.1.2 Central resources are provided for the whole of the UK.
- 3.1.3 All existing and potential Home-Start schemes are linked to a Home-Start UK Consultant.

3.2 Home-Start schemes

- 3.2.1 Training, information, guidance and support are offered to existing and potential Home-Start schemes.
- 3.2.2 Home-Start UK supports new schemes to ensure they are set up in accordance with the Home-Start constitution and *Standards and Methods of Practice*.
- 3.2.3 On-going support is offered to Home-Start schemes and extra support is available to schemes experiencing difficulties.
- 3.2.4 Home-Start UK supports schemes to work within the Home-Start *Agreement*.
- 3.2.5 Information on issues relating to establishing and maintaining a Home-Start scheme is available to schemes.

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3.2.6 Guidance on existing policy and practice is provided to support schemes.

3.2.7 Induction and ongoing training are provided.

3.2.8 Home-Start UK facilitates policy development for Home-Start.

3.2.9 Home-Start UK provides information and guidance to schemes on matters external to Home-Start which may affect policy and practice.

3.3 Management

3.3.1 The Trustees hold the ultimate responsibility for Home-Start UK.

3.3.2 Home-Start UK has a multi-disciplinary Management Committee accountable to the Trustees.

3.3.3 The Trustees are the employers of the Director and all other Home-Start UK staff.

3.3.4 The Director, supported by the Management Committee, is responsible for:

- The effective management of Home-Start UK including funding, insurance and premises.
- Good practice in employing and supervising staff
- Policies which must include equal opportunities and health safety

3.4 Staff

3.4.1 An induction programme is provided for all Home-Start UK staff.

3.4.2 All Home-Start UK staff receive ongoing training.

3.4.3 All Home-Start UK staff receive support and supervision.

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3.5 Resources

3.5.1 Training, information, guidance and support to schemes will not be limited except where the resources available to Home-Start UK are not adequate to meet the number or complexity of requests.

3.5.2 Responses to new enquiries will not be limited except where the resources available to Home-Start UK are not adequate to meet the number or complexity of requests.

3.6 Review

3.6.1 Where there is concern that a Home-Start scheme is not observing the ethos, standards and/or practice laid down in the Home-Start Agreement or is in danger of jeopardising the good name of Home-Start, Home-Start UK will be involved in carrying out an evaluation and review of the scheme and taking any other appropriate action as necessary.

3.6.2 During the review information will be treated confidentially unless it is acknowledged that it is in the best interests of Home-Start to share this information with agreed parties.

3.7 Advocacy, promoting the welfare of children and families

3.7.1 Home-Start UK promotes the welfare of children and parents by:

- Building relationships with relevant voluntary and statutory organisations
- Participating in relevant events
- Disseminating relevant information and research about Home-Start

3.8 Links with Home-Start schemes

3.8.1 Home-Start UK retains close links with Home-Start schemes.