

# VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

**JANUARY – MARCH 2024**

Issue 39



## Happy new year!

We hope you have enjoyed the festive season and a well earned break! Welcome to our new look newsletter and a new year! Keep reading for updates from us, dates for your diary, details of our Winter Warm Packs for families and a feature on Claire Field, a volunteer who has been supporting families with us for over 3 years.

### FAMILY SUPPORT UPDATE

#### **We are currently supporting...**

...26 families with 1-2-1 home visiting.  
We have 12 families on our waiting list.

#### **Our groups will start again this term and we are expecting...**

...13 families in our PEEP groups  
...7 families on our Freedom Programme course  
...9 families in our postnatal groups  
...13 families in our Mum2Mum support groups

#### **We are also supporting...**

...6 families with SALT support  
...1 family with Dad Matters support

### UPCOMING DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**Friday 26th January, 10am-12.30pm, St Peter's Church Centre** - First Aid refresher training, *(optional for all volunteers)*

**Monday 5th February, 7.30pm-8.30pm, online** - Safeguarding update *(see below)*

**12th-16th February** - Half term - *office is open as usual but Coordinators may be on annual leave.*

**20th February-19th March** - Prep course, St Peter's Church Centre - for all new volunteers. *If you know someone who would like to become a volunteer, please ask them to get in touch.*

**25th March-5th April** - Easter holidays - *office is open as usual but Coordinators may be on annual leave.*

**16th May - 20th June** - Prep course, venue tbc - for all new volunteers. *If you know someone who would like to become a volunteer, please ask them to get in touch.*

## CHRISTMAS PARTY

At the end of last year we were delighted to welcome so many of you to our Christmas party. It was great to see you and have the chance to celebrate all you have done for the families you have been supporting over the past 12 months, and to see you meet old friends and some new faces!



We also celebrated our long standing volunteers who have been with us for a year or more...



Morag - 1 year



Jane - 2 years



Liz - 3 years



Fiona - 3 years



Helen - 3 years



Su - 3 years



Sue - 3 years



Selina - 2 years

**Thank you to all  
of you for  
everything you  
have done for  
HSSW!**



## HQ UPDATES

HSUK have been reviewing and updating a number of policies so there will be a few changes to what volunteers can and can't do whilst supporting families. You can find the full list on the Volunteer Resources page of the website but the most recent changes are listed below:

- No members of a volunteer's family are permitted to accompany volunteers on visits due to insurance restrictions and confidentiality.
- No photos of the family are to be taken on the volunteers phone or camera due to safeguarding and confidentiality.

We are also advised to keep in touch with our volunteers every 6 weeks to check-in with you and how you are getting on, so you may be hearing from us a little more often going forward.

We hope you understand that these changes have been made to ensure we provide the best possible service to our families whilst also keeping you and the charity safe and legal. Thank you for your continued support.

## SAFEGUARDING UPDATES

HSSW is committed to safeguarding and as such require all staff and volunteers to undertake safeguarding refresher training every year. With this in mind we will be hosting 2 face-to-face sessions over 2024 for all volunteers to update their safeguarding training. The dates of these are below. Please contact the office with your preferred date and we will be in touch with the details nearer the time.

**Monday 5th February** - 7.30pm-8.30pm  
online

**Friday 6th September** - 10am in person,  
venue tbc

## REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT

If you can help us in other ways, we have the below opportunities:

- Volunteer at Meon Vale Mum2Mum support group
- Fundraising - we rely solely on the donations of generous individuals, groups and organisations to enable our services to continue. We are looking for local businesses who may want to support us as their charity of the year or arrange some one-off fundraising for us. We are also recruiting fundraising volunteers to sit on our committee to help with organising and supporting events to help us raise funds. If you are able to help us in anyway with this, please contact Jemma.
- If you are on social media, please like and follow us to help spread the word about what we do.

## GROUPS

Our family support groups are changing this year...

**PEEP** - 3 new groups will be held in Lighthorne Heath, Lillington and Shipston.

**Freedom Programme** - there will be 3 groups this year.

**Mum2Mum Support** - there will be another group in Meon Vale at The Pavillion alongside our existing group at Bewiched, Heathcote.

**Postnatal** - groups will continue but with some changes.

**Antenatal** - groups will remain closed until further notice.

Please find our group timetable for the spring term attached to this newsletter. If your family would be interested in attending a group, please speak to your Coordinator.





nationalgrid

## WINTER WARM PACKS AND ENERGY ADVICE

We have recently been awarded a grant from National Grid to provide warm packs for 20 of our most vulnerable families and we need your help to make sure they receive them.

Each pack will provide the following items:

- a single duvet per family member (or 1 double for parents)
- a pair of slipper socks per family member
- a pack of thermal vests per family member
- radiator foil OR LED lightbulbs up to the of £20

If you consider yours to be a family that should benefit from this, then please complete the Google Form on this link: <https://forms.gle/uXHWit76MrTdstpY7>.

Please make sure you add any useful information such as clothing sizes/children's ages etc in the 'Any further comments' box on the form.



The grant award also requests that we spread the word to our families on how they can access free information and advice from Act on Energy, the Energy Advice Charity.

Act on Energy deal with all energy related issues from problems with bills to accessing grants, and their website has a wealth of information on energy saving ideas too. Our Coordinators will be handing out Act on Energy leaflets to any new families at the initial visit; however, it would be greatly appreciated if you could please share this information with your current families where appropriate. We have leaflets in the office which we can post to you if applicable or alternatively you can direct your family to the Act on Energy website [www.actonenergy.org.uk](http://www.actonenergy.org.uk).

If you have any questions about this, please contact your Coordinator.

You can find further sources of support for families on the signposting page on our website:

[www.homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk/volunteerresources](http://www.homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk/volunteerresources)

Last month, we invited one of our longest standing volunteers, Claire Field, into the office for a chat about her time volunteering so far. Claire joined us back in 2020 and was part of our third cohort of trainees. She has supported 3 families and currently leads the postnatal group in Lillington.



## **Why did you want to volunteer with HSSW?**

I had a gap in my employment and I didn't want to look for a job straight away.

I stumbled across HSSW and thought with my experience in teaching and wanting to support children in their development and future aspirations, it would be a good fit for me. I had time and I wanted to give something back.

## **How many families have you supported and how have you found it?**

I have supported 3 families 1-2-1. My first family was complex with the police and social services having been involved. I helped Mum with routines, giving her encouragement to spend more time with the children, helped to create a bedroom for the youngest to give them their own space and also helped around the house. The second family I supported was short-term, during the summer holidays, and Mum just needed some time to get things done, so I would take the kids out for walks and help them expend their energy. By the time I was matched with my third family, I had learned a lot, so I was doing more things with them, rather than for them. I also modelled play, encouraged Mum to do more with the children, helped get them new furniture that they needed and was also an advocate for them with a new school.

## **What have you learned about yourself since volunteering?**

I am a 'doer', so it was difficult at first to not just do things for the families. As I have supported more families, I have realised the importance of 'doing with', so find it easier to encourage the parents to do the task with me. I also found that the more you do, the easier it gets, in terms of sticking to your boundaries. It's also made me realise that I have done a good job as a mum, and to be able to offer that support to another mum is really worthwhile. I've also realised I don't want any more kids!

## **What advice would you give to other volunteers?**

Don't expect not to get emotionally attached. It is hard not to, but try to keep your boundaries and don't be at their beck and call. As I've supported each family, I know how much more beneficial it is for the families when you aren't doing things for them but working with them and empowering them. Also be prepared to be practical with the families too. All the families I have supported have needed some kind of practical help, whether that be with decluttering, rearranging furniture or chores.

## **What has been the most rewarding part of volunteering?**

Just getting a 'thank you' from the family and hearing them say how Home Start has helped them. The last Mum I supported told me 'you are the best Mum I've ever had'.

## **How do you look after yourself when you are volunteering?**

I go to the gym, go on lots of walks and also make sure I maintain a routine at home. My work also helps me to have other things to think about.

## **What are you doing now?**

Last year, I needed to prioritise my own family so decided to step back from 1-2-1 support, but I didn't want to give up completely. I started volunteering at the new postnatal group in Lillington. It's lovely to be part of and means I can have cuddles with babies every week! And the Mums are grateful for that too. It is also really great to see the Mums make friends and build a network around them so they can meet up outside of the group - that's what it's all about.

**Thank you, Claire for all you have done for HSSW and our families over your 3 years of service, and for coming in to tell us about it!**

We are always here for you to speak to about anything to do with your volunteering role. See below for the HSSW Team's contact details and working times.

**Home Start South Warwickshire**  
**St Peter's Church Centre, Wellesbourne, CV35 9LS**  
**07564 543 806**  
**[office@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk](mailto:office@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk)**  
**[www.homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk](http://www.homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk)**

Staff member and job role	Email and phone number	For questions about...	Working days
Marie Ashford Head of Operations	<a href="mailto:marie@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk">marie@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk</a> 07906 143 611	HSSW, Safeguarding	Mon, Weds, Thurs
Emma Gurdag Family Support Manager	<a href="mailto:emma@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk">emma@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk</a> 07907 616 922	General volunteering, Safeguarding	Mon - Fri
Ros Bishop Family Support Coordinator	<a href="mailto:ros@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk">ros@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk</a> 07857 041 578	1-2-1 Family Support Volunteering	Tues - Thurs
Kate Smith Family Support Coordinator	<a href="mailto:kate@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk">kate@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk</a> 07719 731 098	1-2-1 Family Support Volunteering	Mon - Weds
Gemma Proctor Group Coordinator	<a href="mailto:gemma@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk">gemma@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk</a> 07783 427 145	PEEP, Mum2Mum support groups, group volunteer training	Mon, Tues, Thurs
Mel Pritchard Speech and Language Therapist	<a href="mailto:mel@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk">mel@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk</a> 07927 130 969	Speech and Language support and PEEP	Varies
Sarah Kaiper-Holmes Perinatal Coordinator	<a href="mailto:sarah@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk">sarah@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk</a> 07906 143 611	Perinatal 1-2-1 and group support, Freedom Programme	Mon - Thurs
Abi Hall Dad Matters Coordinator	<a href="mailto:abi@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk">abi@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk</a> 07783 426 359	Dad Matters	Tues-Thurs
Caroline Pepperell Head of Finance and Income Generation	<a href="mailto:caroline@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk">caroline@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk</a>	Finances, Expenses	Mon - Weds
Lucy Ashley Admin Assistant	<a href="mailto:lucy@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk">lucy@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk</a>	Charity Log, Expenses	Mon, Weds, Thurs
Jemma Bonner Community Partnerships Manager	<a href="mailto:fundraising@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk">fundraising@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk</a>	Fundraising	Tues, Weds