

VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

APRIL - JUNE 2024

Issue 40



Spring brings change at HSSW HQ

The changing of the seasons is being echoed in some exciting new changes at HSSW HQ this quarter. Our team continues to provide the same vital services, as ever, but through our new 'Perinatal' and 'School Readiness' teams, headed up by Sarah Kaiper-Holmes and Emma Gurdag, respectively. Keep reading to find out more about this, our new volunteer satisfaction survey, and much more...

FAMILY SUPPORT UPDATE

We are currently supporting...

...28 families with 1-2-1 home visiting.
We have 4 families on our waiting list.

In our groups next term we are expecting...

...8 families in our PEEP groups
...7 families on our Freedom Programme course
...21 families in our postnatal groups
...32 families in our Mum2Mum support groups

We are also supporting...

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

UPCOMING DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

25th March-5th April - Easter holidays - office is open as usual but Coordinators may be on annual leave. If you are unable to contact your Coordinator, please call the office.

Weds 17th April - Refresh and Connect Training Session, 10am-12pm - for all volunteers who want a refresh. We will be playing 'The Brain Game' to understand how important supporting the developing child is. To book your space, please contact Ros.

16th May-20th June - Prep course - If you know someone who would like to become a volunteer, please ask them to get in touch.

5th June - Volunteer Week Summer Social, St Peter's Church Centre - save the date and keep your eyes peeled for all the details.

27th-31st May - Half Term - office is open as usual but Coordinators may be on annual leave.

Tues 2nd Jun - Golf Day - book your team now to help us raise vital funds! See leaflet for info.

SAVE THE DATE - WEDNESDAY 5TH JUNE VOLUNTEER SUMMER SOCIAL!

HQ UPDATES

We are excited to tell you about our new dedicated Perinatal and School Readiness teams to provide the best support to families going through difficult times. Our teams will be as follows:

PERINATAL TEAM



Sarah Kaiper-Holmes

Perinatal Senior Coordinator



Kate Smith

Family and Volunteer
Coordinator



Abi Hall

Dad Matters
Coordinator

SCHOOL READINESS TEAM



Emma Gurdag

School Readiness Senior Coordinator



Gemma Proctor

Group
Coordinator



Ros Bishop

Family and
Volunteer
Coordinator



Mel Pritchard

PEEP Facilitator
and SALT
Coordinator

Keep reading to find out more about our new teams and the services we continue to provide within them.

SAFEGUARDING UPDATES

Our 'Safeguarding Children Policy' and 'Code of Conduct' have been updated and we require all volunteers to read this new version and confirm they have done so. Please visit the [Volunteer Resources](#) page of the website to read the documents and find the link to sign.

Thank you to all those who attended the safeguarding refresher training. The next session will be on **Friday 6th September** - 10am in person, venue tbc.

Please speak to your Coordinator about signing up for this session.

VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION SURVEY

We would love to get your feedback about your volunteering experiences with HSSW. Without you wonderful people, we wouldn't be able to help families going through their most difficult times. We want to make sure we are giving you the best possible volunteering experience and you are getting the right support and feel recognised for what you do too.

We would be grateful if you could spend 5 minutes completing the survey on the link below by **26th April**, and we look forward to reading and sharing your feedback with you in the coming weeks. Thank you!

[Volunteer Satisfaction Survey 2024](#)

Welcome to our newest 1-2-1 Home Visiting Volunteers - Kate, Gillian, Anita, Maddie, Gilly, Alison and Nichola. Thank you for joining us!

PERINATAL UPDATE

What is perinatal?

Our Perinatal team supports families with children up until they are 2 years of age, focusing on:

- encouraging bonding and attachment with baby
- supporting new parents, Mums and Dads
- providing opportunities for parents to meet others and build their own networks in their community

Sarah and Kate will be the Coordinators for 1-2-1 Volunteers supporting families in this way. Volunteers supporting parents in the perinatal period may be:

- listening to parents about their feelings around parenting and their child
- providing help around household organisation
- giving parents time to themselves by taking care of baby for a short time

Our other perinatal services continue to provide even more support to new parents.

Our **Postnatal Support Groups** in Lillington and Warwick continue to provide a safe, friendly and non-judgemental space for new mums to meet and support each other. We will also be starting a second group in Warwick in the coming weeks.

Our **Mum2Mum Social Groups** in Heathcote and Meon Vale give local parents with non-mobile children the chance to meet others in the area at a similar stage of their parenting journey and build a supportive network around themselves.

Our **Dad Matters** project, led by Abi, supports new Dads navigating parenthood and provides them with the opportunity to speak to 'Dad' Volunteers, who can support them with bonding, attachment, emotional support and signposting.

SCHOOL READINESS UPDATE

What is school readiness?

School readiness means ensuring a child has the skills and behaviours needed to succeed in school (or nursery), so refers to children aged between 2-4 years.

A number of factors play a role in school readiness:

- **home readiness** - availability of stimulating materials in the home and good morning and evening routines
- **parental readiness** - being able to access early years services, establish routines, engage with their child's development and cope with their child being away from them
- **child readiness** - being able to dress themselves, play and share with others, cope away from their parents, eat and drink unaided and more.

Emma and Ros will be the Coordinators for the 1-2-1 Volunteers supporting families in this way. Volunteers supporting school readiness may be:

- helping parents set boundaries and routines
- modelling play, reading and turn taking
- supporting parents and children with spending time apart from each other

Our other school readiness services, **PEEP and SALT**, provide even more support for families wanting to learn more to help their child become school ready.

Our next PEEP groups, facilitated by Gemma and Mel, will be starting after the Easter holidays - please see the attached group timetable for more details, and do share this with any families who may like to attend.

Mel, our Speech and Language Therapist, is also on hand to provide tailored support for families with children with communication, understanding and attention needs, by working with volunteers to share the strategies and activities with their family. If your family would benefit from this support, please speak to your Coordinator.

EASTER GIFTS

We are very grateful to staff at **NFU Mutual** who very kindly donated a selection of books, bubbles, crayons and more for families who may need them. If your family would benefit from some of these, please contact your Coordinator for details.



COULD YOU HELP US AT OUR NEXT FREEDOM PROGRAMME?

Our next Freedom Programme for female survivors of domestic abuse begins on 18th April. It is a 10-week course with a creche available for the children to play while the Mums concentrate on the course. If you are interested in joining our team of creche volunteers on a rota basis, please speak to Sarah to find out more.

WARM PACK UPDATE

At the beginning of this year we received funding from National Grid to provide **'winter warm packs'** for families struggling with their energy bills.



These packs include duvets, slipper socks and thermal vests for all family members, energy efficient lightbulbs and/or radiator foil.

To date we have delivered 16 warm packs to families we support and we still have funding for more. So, **if a family you support could benefit from a warm pack, please speak to your Coordinator.**

EASTER SUPPORT

Holidays can be a difficult time for families. But there is a lot of help out there that families can make the most of. Below are some links that might be helpful to your families. Please share them if appropriate:

[HAF - Holidays and Food Activities](#)

[Warwick Children and Family Centres](#)

[Stratford Children and Family Centres](#)

[SEND specific/inclusive holiday clubs](#)

[Local libraries](#)

[Family Information Service](#)

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

www.homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk/volunteerresources

Back in September 2023, Home Start South Warwickshire started supporting Patrycja, a single mum with 6-month old, Luna. Patrycja had not heard of Home Start before being referred, but on reflection feels that the support provided has been crucial in helping her to adjust to life as a Mum.

"I was first introduced to Home Start by a Family Support Worker after Luna was born. I was feeling very isolated, was very worried about how I would manage life on my own with a baby and was also trying to get over a recent breakdown of a relationship."

After giving birth to Luna at 31 weeks and spending the first six weeks in the Special Care Baby Unit, life was feeling very overwhelming for Patrycja. As a survivor of domestic abuse and a single parent, life was lonely, difficult, and unsettled. Despite having some local friends, Patrycja had minimal family support nearby and so was worried where help would come from for her and Luna.

Patrycja and Luna were matched with a local volunteer who visited them at home once a week to offer emotional and practical support.

"Having a volunteer through Home Start has been a big change for Luna and I. It has been so beneficial to have someone to talk to and for someone to help care for Luna so that I could get things done around the house or have some time to myself. Just someone to make me a cup of tea made me feel so happy! I loved spending time talking with the volunteer and it felt good to share some worries and concerns. I always looked forward to the visits from my volunteer and knew we would have a relaxed day the day she came to see us".

Patrycja has recently returned to work and Luna has settled in well at a local nursery, "I really want Luna to be provided for as she grows up. I am planning to use the money I earn from work to buy our home to give Luna security and a stable life".

"Without the support of Home Start, I feel that life would have been more of a mess, that my mental health would have suffered and that I would have struggled to care for Luna and to manage her needs".

Patrycja is keen to encourage others to access the support available from Home Start South Warwickshire. When asked about the advice she would give others considering getting support from this local charity, she said, "Just do it...it is better to ask for help than for waiting for the problems to solve themselves. The help is there, you just have to ask!"



"My volunteer is a very helpful and nice person, I don't know how we would have done it without her!" - Patrycja (and Luna)

We love reading the stories of the families we support and hearing how you wonderful volunteers make such a difference to their lives.

We would like to say a huge thank you to all of you, and to Patrycja's volunteer for all you have done to help her during a difficult time. You are amazing!

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
www.homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk

Marie Ashford – Head of Operations – Monday, Wednesday, Thursday

marie@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk 07906 143 611

Caroline Pepperell – Head of Finance and Income Generation – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

caroline@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk

Emma Gurdag – School Readiness Senior Coordinator – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday

emma@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk 07907 616 922

Sarah Kaiper-Holmes – Perinatal Senior Coordinator and Freedom Programme Lead – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

sarah@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk 07516 680 649

Ros Bishop – Family and Volunteer Coordinator – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

ros@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk 07857 041 578

Kate Smith – Family and Volunteer Coordinator – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday

kate@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk 07719 731 098

Gemma Proctor – Group Coordinator – Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday

gemma@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk 07783 427 145

Abi Hall – Dad Matters Coordinator – Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday

abi@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk 07783 426 359

Mel Pritchard – PEEP Facilitator and SALT Coordinator – Thursday

mel@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk 07927 130 969

Lucy Ashley – Administrator – Monday, Wednesday, Thursday

lucy@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk

Jemma Bonner – Community Partnerships Manager – Tuesday, Wednesday

fundraising@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk