

# VOLUNTEER NEWSLETTER

**JULY – SEPTEMBER 2024**

Issue 41



## Summer is here!

We don't know about you, but here at HSSW HQ we are very glad to be seeing a bit more of the sunshine after a very wet and cold few months. It was lovely to see some of you one sunny day for our Volunteer Week picnic and we have another opportunity for you to get together coming up too. Read on to find out more and get all the updates you need for the Summer months.

### FAMILY SUPPORT UPDATE

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

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

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

...3 families with SALT support  
...2 families with Dad Matters support  
... 16 families in our postnatal groups

Many of our groups will close for the Summer, but our postnatal groups in Warwick and Leamington will continue. If you have a family who would like to attend, please speak to Sarah.

### SAFEGUARDING UPDATE

**During April – June we have had 2 safeguarding concerns.**

All volunteers must keep up to date with their **annual safeguarding training update**. If you haven't already completed a session this year, please speak to your Coordinator.

We are updating our records with **next of kin** details for all volunteers. Please let your Coordinator know or respond to the email when you get it.

### UPCOMING DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

**22nd Jul – 2nd Sept – Summer holidays** – the office is open as usual but Coordinators may be on annual leave.

**10th Aug 10am-12pm RSC steps – Volunteer walk and talk** – open to all volunteers. Please let Sarah know if you would like to come along.

**6th Sept 10am-12pm venue tbc – Safeguarding refresher training** – if you haven't already completed your annual refresher, please sign up to this session or contact the office for alternative options.

**If you are taking a break during the summer holidays, we hope you enjoy the rest!**

**Meet other volunteers & share your experiences at our walk and talk on 10th August. Let Sarah or your Coordinator know if you would like to attend.**

## **VOLUNTEER SATISFACTION SURVEY RESULTS**

Thank you to those of you who completed our volunteer satisfaction survey earlier this year. It has been a great way to find out what you think about volunteering with us and how we can improve your experience.

We are happy that 100% of you who responded enjoy volunteering and are likely to remain volunteering with us in the next 12 months! Thank you!

For more details, please see the attachment to this newsletter.

## **CHARITY LOG DIARIES**

Completing your diary entries after each of your visits is extremely important for a number of reasons:

- it provides details of the support we are providing
- it provides details of the amount of time volunteers are giving
- it provides a chronology of events and information which may be used in the event of a safeguarding issue or concern

Please complete these as soon as possible after your visit, ideally on the same day.

It is also important to include relevant, factual information about what you did and observed while you were with the family. This information may be requested and used in any safeguarding cases that may arise with the family.

We have put together guidelines of what to include in your diary entries which can be found on the volunteer resources page of the website. Your Coordinator will also be going through this with you at your next supervision.

## **WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST VOLUNTEERS!**

We would like to welcome Clare, Claudia, Jo, Rachel and Chloe to our wonderful volunteer team! Thank you for completing the latest training courses and wanting to support families who need us. You're going to be great!

## **CAR INSURANCE REMINDER**

Please don't forget to check with your car insurance provider if you are transporting families in your role. It is important to make them aware to ensure you are covered whilst volunteering. For a template letter you can send them, please visit the volunteer resources page of the website.

## **NEXT OF KIN DETAILS**

We are updating all of our records and adding next of kin details to volunteer files. Please let your Coordinator know the name, contact number and relationship of your next of kin to add to your file. Hopefully we will never have to use it, but just in case!

## **'LOOKING AFTER CHILDREN' FORMS**

There may be occasions when you are looking after children without their parents being present. If this happens, please complete the "Looking After Children" form with the parent before the date required. This ensures both parties are happy with the arrangement and understand expectations and emergency procedures. For a copy of these forms, speak to your Coordinator or visit the volunteer resources page of the website.

Looking after children in the absence of parents should not be a regular occurrence in your role. We are not a babysitting service. If you find yourself doing this frequently, please speak to your Coordinator.

## PERINATAL UPDATE

The Perinatal team are currently providing **12** families with 1-2-1 support and have **9** families waiting. We have **11** families signed up to our Postnatal Support groups which will continue throughout the Summer. Our Mum2Mum Social Groups will finish after the sessions on 16th July and return in September.

As we say a sad farewell to our volunteer Claire Field, who is stepping down from facilitating our Lillington Postnatal Group, we say a huge heartfelt thanks to her for holding the fort for the last 6 months. This does mean that we are in need of another volunteer to facilitate this group on Mondays 1-2.30pm, supported by the wonderful Yvonne and Emma. If you have perinatal experience and would be interested in taking this on, please do drop **Sarah** a message.

Our Postnatal Support Groups will now be "Perinatal Support Groups" as we welcome referrals for expectant Mums too.

**Dad Matters** - We continue our outreach to talk to new dads at parent education classes and Warwick Hospital. 1-2-1 support continues, with referrals on the rise, and recent walk and talks have been well received. If you have a Dad who might need support or who would like to volunteer, please contact **Abi**.

## FUNDRAISING UPDATE - WOLF RUN

Back in April, a group of 24 intrepid adventurers, including our very own Jemma and Kate, took on the Wolf Run - a 10k obstacle course in the wilds of Leamington. The team had to tackle mud pits, climbing walls and huge hay bales, to help raise vital funds for our services.

We are so very grateful to the whole team who braved the cold and wet to raise over £7500 and counting! This money will help us continue to provide the services that so many local families depend upon.

A massive thank you to everyone who took part!

## SCHOOL READINESS UPDATE

We are currently supporting **14** families with 1-2-1 support, and have **3** families waiting.

We have **11** families signed up to our Peep groups, which will end in July and start again in September. We are taking bookings for these next groups which will be in Stratford, Meon Vale and Warwick. If your family would like to find out more, please contact the office.

The School Readiness team are busy developing their skills and resources to better support those families whose children are taking their next steps into nursery or school. We are hoping to share this with any volunteers supporting these families in the coming months, so keep your eyes peeled for upcoming training sessions in the Autumn. If you have any skills or experience in this or any other relevant field, and would like to share your thoughts, please contact **Emma**.

## FREEDOM UPDATE

Our May course saw us supporting 6 women, with 6 children in our creche. The September course will be in Lillington, so if you are able to help in our creche (on a rota basis), please let **Sarah** know.

# WOLF RUN



**If you would like to help us create a HSSW fundraising committee to organise and run fundraising activities, please contact the office.**

## PICNIC CELEBRATIONS!

It was lovely to see volunteers, old and new, at our Volunteer Week picnic on 5th June. It was great to catch up, find out how you have been getting on with your families and share a wonderful feast of pizza, nibbles and Prosecco!

As well as a fun game of People Bingo, we recognised those volunteers who have been with us for a year or more.

### A huge thank you to:

**Annamarie H** - 4 years

**Rachel B** - 3 years

**Alex A** - 3 years

**Linda B** - 2 years

**Nicola S** - 2 years

**Lucy M** - 2 years

**Morag M** - 2 years

**Clara B** - 2 years

**Rhiannon P** - 2 years

**Fiona M** - 2 years

**Sarah C** - 2 years

**Emma H** - 2 years

**Yvonne W** - 2 years

**Jane C** - 2 years

**Sanjeev K** - 2 years

**Amy L** - 1 year

**Ann D** - 1 year

**Saima H** - 1 year

**Jo S** - 1 year

**Amy G** - 1 year

**Alison S** - 1 year

**Kate F** - 1 year

**Michelle S** - 1 year

**Helen C** - 1 year

**Emma H** - 1 year

**Fran G** - 1 year

**Diane A** - 1 year

**Larry P** - 1 year

**Max H** - 1 year



**And thank you to all of you, for all you have done and continue to do for the families that come to us. We couldn't do it without you!**

*Thank you* 



**If you know someone who might be interested in volunteering with us, our next prep course will be in October. Please ask them to get in touch!**

## SUMMER HOLIDAY SUPPORT

The 6-week summer holidays are coming up very soon and for some families, this can be a difficult time. Below are some ideas for support. Please share with your families.

### FREE ENTRY TO COMPTON

#### VERNEY

We have been very lucky in receiving free entry for our families to the wonderful Compton Verney until the end of August. Families can enjoy exploring the grounds and the free activities and exhibitions in the house. To get an access code and details to share with your family, please speak to your Coordinator.



### HAF PROGRAMME

If your family has a child in full-time education who is in receipt of free school meals, they will be eligible for a HAF code (Holidays and Food) which can be used to access free activities with food over the summer holidays. Please visit <https://searchout.warwickshire.gov.uk> for more information.



## WARM PACK FUNDING STILL AVAILABLE

Although the Summer might not be the most obvious time to stock up on slipper socks, vests and duvets, families may still need them for the end of the year, so if your family is struggling financially and would benefit from these, please speak to your Coordinator.



**If you come across any additional support, free activities or ideas for families over the summer holidays, please feel free to share them on the HSSW WhatsApp group.**

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)

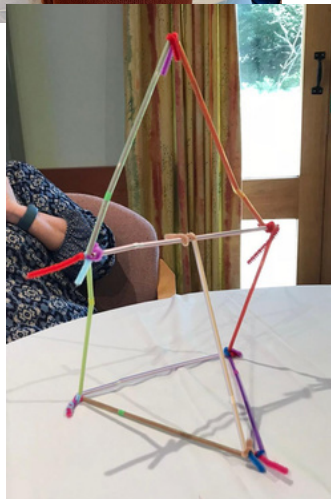
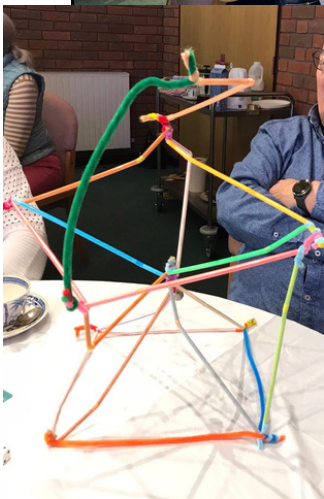
# The Brain Game

**It was lovely to see those of you who could make the volunteer training session in Wellesbourne in April. It is always good to meet one another and share experiences, along with the struggles and, of course, the joys of volunteering! And this time we also learnt a bit more about brain development...**

Ten volunteers joined us to learn how important they are in supporting a child's brain development, by playing The Brain Architecture Game - a learning tool developed by The Centre on the Developing Child at Harvard University. The game involves building a brain, based on a series of scenarios and environments that the brain is growing up in, using pipe cleaners and straws - the tallest, strongest brain wins! It was a fun morning with plenty of laughter and food for thought - and of course cake!



The game highlighted the importance of the seemingly small actions of volunteers, like reading a book with a child, getting on the floor for some imaginative play, making it possible for them to get outside and play in some puddles or at the park, and how these can work to prevent toxic stress harming the brain. It showed how significant the work of our volunteers can be. If our volunteers can help turn a toxic stress into a tolerable stress, or add positive connections, then the child's brain architecture becomes healthier, giving them better future outcomes.



The game is intentionally played in small groups too, showing the importance of team work; health professionals, neighbours, volunteers working together with a family will support healthy brain development.

All the volunteers not only enjoyed playing and learning about the significance of early childhood, but also were (hopefully!) encouraged in their volunteering. So, if you find yourself thinking "I'm not doing much", remember - small, seemingly insignificant, everyday interactions do make a positive difference to a child's brain and can help a parent make a positive impact on their child's brain development. As we often say, it really is the small things that make the difference.

**If you didn't know if before - you are part of positive brain development! Thank you!**

**If you would like to find out more about The Brain Architecture Game, please visit:  
<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/the-brain-architecture-game/>**

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)**

**Find us on Facebook and Instagram @homestartsouthwarwickshire**

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

[marie@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk](mailto:marie@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk) 07906 143 611

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

[caroline@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk](mailto:caroline@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk)

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

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

[sarah@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk](mailto:sarah@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk) 07516 680 649

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

[ros@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk](mailto:ros@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk) 07857 041 578

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

[kate@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk](mailto:kate@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk) 07719 731 098

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

[gemma@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk](mailto:gemma@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk) 07783 427 145

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

[abi@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk](mailto:abi@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk) 07783 426 359

**Mel Pritchard – PEEP Facilitator and SALT Coordinator – Thursday**

[mel@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk](mailto:mel@homestartsouthwarwickshire.org.uk) 07927 130 969

**Lucy Ashley – Administrator (Charity Log!) – Monday, Wednesday, Thursday**

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**Jemma Bonner – Community Partnerships Manager – Tuesday, Wednesday**

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