

Managing Resting Volunteers Policy

Policy Statement

Home-Start Herefordshire recognises that volunteers may sometimes need to take time out from supporting families. The 'volunteer resting' period is carefully managed to balance the needs of the volunteer with the operational work of the scheme.

1. Context

'Resting' is the term we use when a volunteer takes some time out from supporting families. This may be due to personal commitments or following the end of support to a family with complex or intensive needs. Plans are made to ensure that the volunteer's absence from the scheme and any supported families is handled in a positive, honest and open way. As Home-Start has limited resources which need to be used in the most effective way, and to ensure that volunteers are properly prepared and trained for being matched with families, there is a time limit for resting volunteers.

2. Principles

- Home-Start aims to maintain a flexible and sensitive approach to supporting volunteers but places a limit of six months on any rest period.
- At the discretion of the Scheme Manager and in exceptional circumstances, this may be extended by a further 3 months and up to a maximum of 12 months resting period.
- The scheme will keep in touch with the resting volunteer as appropriate to the individual circumstances.
- Depending on the length of the rest period and the previous experience / length of service of the volunteer, a volunteer returning after 9 months will be required to refresh their training in preparation for being matched with a family, in line with Home-Start guidance.
- A record of the resting period agreement is kept on the volunteer file and their status as either an active or a resting volunteer is clear.
- Volunteers wishing to return after 12 months must enrol as a new volunteer and complete the preparation course.

3. Procedures

To ensure rest periods are kept to a minimum, while maintaining a flexible and sensitive approach to supporting volunteers in their work, Home-Start operates the following procedures:

1. Volunteers receive a letter at the start of the rest period detailing the start date, details of contact during the period alongside a copy of this policy. The letter states that they will be contacted 3 months after the rest period begins.
2. If appropriate, the supported family/families are contacted, informed of the situation and offered a replacement volunteer (if a suitable one is available) and the referrer is informed of this change in support.
3. The volunteer no longer receives supervision, but may be invited to access group support and training during the rest period.
4. Other contact (eg invitations to social events, newsletters etc) is maintained as appropriate.
5. Three months into the rest period, the Organiser/Co-Ordinator contacts the volunteer to discuss their likely return to Home-Start.
6. If contact cannot be re-established satisfactorily or it becomes evident that the volunteer wishes to leave Home-Start permanently, the volunteer will be taken off the books, and a letter confirming this and thanking them for their previous support sent.
7. In particular circumstances and at the discretion of the Scheme Manager, a longer rest period may be negotiated with the volunteer. This will be confirmed in writing to them, and will not normally exceed a further 3 months and no more than a total of 12 months.
8. The volunteer's return to Home-Start is carefully managed, this will include a return to volunteering interview.
9. A judgement is made by the Scheme Manager about the appropriate level of refresher training, taking into account the volunteer's previous experience and the length of the rest period. This is noted on the volunteer's file.
10. Volunteers wishing to return after 12 months must enrol as a new volunteer and complete the preparation course.

Date policy adopted:

6th June 2013

Reviewed: Sept 2021

Signature of Chair:



30th September 2021

Date policy to be reviewed

September 2024