

Karen's a volunteer's story

Karen was a volunteer then became a member of staff.

My journey with Home-Start started as a volunteer in 2011. I had heard about Home-Start from a friend and was keen to become involved. I had just been made redundant and felt that I now had the time to commit.

I started the preparation course feeling very nervous and apprehensive, unsure of what lay ahead. However, I needn't have been worried as the training was excellent. The delivery of the course was to a high professional standard whilst maintaining a relaxed environment. At the end of the course I felt much more confident and ready to take on my first family. In total I supported 3 families, all with a variety of needs and challenges. I found the role of a volunteer really rewarding. It was very humbling to think that giving a couple of hours of my time a week can make such a difference to a family. The support and guidance I received from my co-ordinators was invaluable. It was reassuring to know they were always at the end of the phone if I had any concerns. Nothing was too much trouble!!

I soon came to realise that I wanted to become more involved within the organisation. I spoke to my co-ordinator about this and she was brilliant. She got me involved with various other jobs and when a temporary co-ordinators job became available she really encouraged me to apply. I couldn't believe it when I was offered the position. I started the post in January 2015. The role was very different and came with new challenges. It involved recruiting, training and matching volunteers with suitable families. At times the job was very challenging but really rewarding when the link was successful. I enjoyed the management and contact with both families and volunteers.

At the end of my 12 month contract I was very sad to leave and say good-bye to all my volunteers, families and colleagues. I thoroughly enjoyed my 3 and half years with Home-Start. They are a great organisation and the work they do is invaluable. I feel very privileged to have worked within part of a great organisation. I shall miss being part of the Home-Start family!!!