



There for parents when they need us most, because childhood can't wait

Information for referrers: November 2023

In order to be offered home visiting support from Home-Start Kernow the family must:

- Live in Cornwall
- Have at least one child under the age of five
- Be experiencing challenges to parenting that would be well-supported by a peer support volunteer

Our peer support volunteers offer practical and emotional support in the family home for roughly two hours per week. Typically, support is offered for six to nine months. We work 'alongside' families, empowering them to gain self-belief, knowledge and skills to enjoy their parenting and continue to thrive once support has ended.

The focus of support is decided in agreement between the lead parent and the Home-Start Coordinator. This will be reviewed every twelve weeks. Support is most successful when offered early and when the family engages well.

The home visiting volunteers have parenting experience enabling them to relate to family challenges. All our volunteers bring knowledge, skills and rich life experiences to the peer-support role. We maintain the distinction between the peer-support we offer and professional interventions from other services.

We do not accept referrals for families under Child Protection for home-visiting support. Where there is a Child in Need status, referrals will be considered according to need. A professional from a statutory service must be the lead professional if this referral is accepted.

Whilst we endeavour to meet the needs of all families referred, we are limited by the availability, experience and geographical location of volunteers.

When making a referral we ask referrers to ensure they can answer 'yes' to the following:

- Has the lead parent been involved in the referral and will they engage well with our service?
- Does the family have an idea of the kind of support they would find useful?
- Is it reasonable to expect a peer support volunteer to offer this kind of support?
- Are the family aware of the timescale of the support?
- Could this be classed as early help?
- Is there a professional from a statutory service who will act as a lead professional if needed where there is a Child in Need Plan?

When processing a referral and matching families to our volunteer team, we consider the above questions plus the following:

- The level of need of the family
- The type of support needs of the family
- The geographical location of the family
- The days and times a family is available for support

As a result of the consideration of the above the following actions may be taken:

- a) Accepted for home-visiting support
- b) Accepted for group support
- c) Declined with explanation and where appropriate signposting given