

## Home-Start Epsom, Ewell and Banstead

### Managing Referrals and Waiting Periods Policy and Procedure

#### Policy Statement

Home-Start is committed to providing a safe, efficient and responsive service to local families with young children. Referrals are accepted with the consent of the family. The range of referrals or self-referrals accepted is not limited, except where the resources available are not adequate to meet the number or complexity of cases or where ring fenced funding is secured to deliver support packages to families with specific support needs. Waiting times are carefully managed and referrers and families are kept informed.

#### Purpose of Policy and Procedure

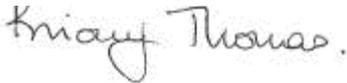
**For funders:** As one element of demonstrating an efficient, responsive and reliable service to families, Home-Start will operate to clearly documented referral procedures that can be shared with existing and potential funders and potential partners in joint delivery of services.

**For referrers:** to ensure good safeguarding practice we will ensure that referrers are absolutely clear about the nature, timing and level of Home-Start's support to families they refer and that they do not mistake occasional support offered to families waiting to be matched with the full Home-Start support service. Clearly documented referral procedures are shared with referrers and they are kept informed at all stages of the support to families including when support ends.

**For families:** Home-Start's commitment to good matching remains an essential feature of our service. If a suitable volunteer cannot be identified within the period noted within the following procedure, either due to the schemes capacity or the needs of the family, the referral should be returned to the referrer. Referrers and funders should be made aware that this is an important part of Home-Start's commitment to ensuring excellent and safe practice in family support.

**Continued Best Practice development:** In order to comply with the HSUK Quality Assurance System Home-Start will have and operate to clearly documented referral procedures.

**Referral procedure: see Appendix A**

Signature of Chair:  Name: BRIONY THOMAS

Date policy and Procedure adopted: 06.06.2021

Date policy to be reviewed 06.06.2024

Appendix Updated: 01.04.2022

## Appendix A

### **HSEEB Referral Procedure and Criteria**

HSEEB provide a number of family support services:

- HSEEB Volunteer Home-Visiting <https://hseeb.org/are-you-a-parent-in-need-of-support/>  
Or, HSEEB Staff Support
- Over 5's SEND and Parent Support Project – Support for Parents whose children are primary <https://hseeb.org/over-5s-project/>
- The NEST Nurture Group – Perinatal Mental Health Project <https://hseeb.org/perinatal-mental-health-project/>
- Refugee/Asylum Seekers Support – please contact [manager@hseeb.org.uk](mailto:manager@hseeb.org.uk) for more details

We operate a 'TRIAGE' process for all referrals. In the first instance referrers will contact [manager@hseeb.org.uk](mailto:manager@hseeb.org.uk). A member of the team will then contact them to discuss the family and possible support service best suited to their needs. Please see below for specific referral procedures for each service:

#### **Home-Start Volunteer Home-Visiting**

Home-Start offers a unique service, recruiting and training volunteers – who are usually parents themselves – to visit families at home who have at least one child under 5 to offer informal, friendly and confidential support.

#### **The criteria for HSEEB Volunteer Home Visiting support is:**

- The family has a child under five
- They live in the Borough of Epsom and Ewell (paying council tax to Epsom & Ewell). Live in Banstead (wards) or Mole Valley North Ashtead, Leatherhead, Fetcham, Bookham (wards) if unsure please see map <https://hseeb.org/wp-content/uploads/Surrey-Home-Starts-Map.jpg>
- The family has a need and would benefit from weekly volunteer support
- The family has given consent for referral (if referred by outside agency)

There are many reasons why parents need support and these can include:

- Isolation
- Post-natal depression
- Child's illness or disability
- Death of a family member
- Emotional and practical demands of twins, triplets or multiple children under 5
- Relationship difficulties
- Exhaustion or depression
- Coping with illness or disability
- Financial difficulties

#### **What do we offer?**

A carefully selected and trained volunteer, will visit regularly for 2-3 hours a week either in the family home or within the community for an agreed length of time. Volunteers offer emotional and practical support which is tailored to the family. Needs can vary from week to week so our support is flexible and responsive and can include:

- Being a listening ear or someone to talk to
- Reassurance, encouragement and motivation

- Practical help around the house
- Help to find out about and access other local services
- Emotional support to help parents find ways to manage and resolve problems.
- Direct support for children including playing, listening, having fun, establishing routines, encouraging development and providing opportunities for outings.
- Practical help with getting to appointments, shopping, budgeting, nutrition and meal planning, cooking and making the home safe.
- Attending groups with the family so parents can get out, meet others and become more involved in their own community.
- Information and links to other organisations including health, educational, financial and wellbeing services.
- Access to parenting advice and parenting skills training.

All volunteers have been vetted and receive Enhanced DBS checks. Volunteers receive regular ongoing support and training from HSEEB staff.

#### **REFERRAL FOR VOLUNTEER HOME VISITING:**

**There are two routes for referral for HSEEB Volunteer Home visiting:**

- Referral by a professional working with the family
- Self-referral

#### **Referral by a professional**

1. Contact HSEEB Manager by email or telephone and discuss possible referral.  
[manager@hseeb.org.uk](mailto:manager@hseeb.org.uk)
2. HSEEB will agree with referrer appropriateness of referral and explain support available or decline referral
3. HSEEB manager will email a link to the referrer to complete online
4. Professional completes the HSEEB referral form in as much detail as possible – please ensure that you have spoken with the family and that they have given permission for you to refer.
5. Once completed online HSEEB automatically are alerted and the referral will be processed and allocated to a member of the staff team. They will arrange an initial visit with the family
6. Within 2 weeks of receiving the referral HSEEB will contact the family to discuss the referral and to arrange an Initial Visit by a member of staff.
7. The Initial Visit will take place within 4 weeks (as far as possible) of receipt of the referral. The referrer will receive confirmation of the receipt of referral and any decision to support the family. Joint visits with referees can be arranged and are often very helpful – please indicate this on referral form.
8. At the Initial Visit HSEEB staff discuss with the family their needs and agree outcomes and timeframes.
9. After the Initial Visit HSEEB staff will discuss the needs of the family and make a decision if they are suitable for receiving Home-Visiting Support from a volunteer. If agreed the family is placed on the waiting list to be matched with a volunteer. At this point the family is NOT receiving Home Visiting support, however HSEEB staff will remain in contact with the family. The referrer will be kept informed of any decisions made.
10. When a suitable volunteer is found a matching visit will be arranged with the family by HSEEB staff who will accompany the volunteer to the family on this visit. Support, outcomes and timeframes will be confirmed.
11. Following the matching visit HSEEB will obtain feedback from the family and the volunteer, in the majority of cases this matching will be successful and the volunteer will continue to visit the family as agreed.
12. The referrer will receive confirmation that a volunteer has been matched and that HSEEB are now supporting the family. We aim this to be within 8 weeks from receiving the referral form.

- 13. After the first Volunteer lone visit to the family HSEEB staff will obtain feedback from the family and Volunteer.**
- 14. There will be a 6 weekly review with both family and Volunteer, the referrer will be updated.**
- 15. Following this families and Volunteers receive regular reviews, those with identified safeguarding issues will receive more frequent reviews.**
- 16. During one of these reviews, ending will be planned for and a final 'ending visit' by HSEEB staff will take place with the family after the last Volunteer visit. Confirmation of ending will be sent to the family, volunteer and referrer.**

### **Families Waiting**

The requirements of some families mean that they may be harder to match than others (e.g. because of their location, the time at which they wish their volunteer to visit or because HSEEB believes their circumstances are particularly challenging); in which case HSEEB will make an honest assessment of the likelihood of providing support and communicate that to the family and the referrer – rather than holding the family on a waiting or matching list for many months.

Home-Start's unique service involving the careful matching of a volunteer with a family means that there is almost always a 'wait' between referral and introducing the volunteer. HSEEB aim to offer the Volunteer Home visiting service within 8 weeks from the date of receiving the referral. Staff keep in contact with families during this time and offer support as appropriate. However, there may be times when the capacity of the scheme means there is no likelihood of being able to offer a service within the timeframe or where the resources available to Home-Start are not adequate to meet the complexity of the family's needs. In this instance the referrer will be informed and a way forward agreed.

Families who have been waiting for a match for more than the period stated in the procedure (8 weeks) are either reviewed by the Manager again to assess whether their support needs have altered and whether they should be referred on; or the referral is brought back to the original referrer for discussion and next steps are agreed with him/her.

A proactive approach is taken with all waiting families at this point, involving a review of the referral and a clearly identified course of action. As a result, HSEEB, the family and the referrer are all aware whether:

- the referral is 'returned' to the original referrer, so that s/he might refer the family elsewhere for support
- the family's needs have changed and the referral is withdrawn
- the referrer agrees to re-refer the family at a later date, when a volunteer is more likely to be available
- the referrer and HSEEB agree to maintain the family on the waiting list for a further specified period of time, good practice would indicate no more than a further 2-4 weeks.

The family's expectations are managed, so that from initial visit onwards they have a good understanding of how the referral is likely to progress and when they will be contacted by the scheme.

In rare circumstances the trustees may decide to 'close' to new referrals if they deem it necessary. Although HSEEB finds that this is generally undesirable, it is sometimes the pragmatic course of action – in the event of long term sickness or vacancy for example. In this case all referrers will be informed.

### **Self-Referrals**

Families may contact the HSEEB directly. A 'self referral form' will be completed by the coordinator. HSEEB will assess the family's needs and the appropriateness of offering support and liaise with any professionals currently involved with the family with consent. If deemed appropriate for support an IV will be arranged with the family.

The family will be asked to give permission to contact their GP or Health Visitor to let them know that they have referred themselves and any other relevant professionals.

Following the IV the family's needs will be assessed and appropriateness of offering home-visiting support. Other professionals may be contacted to ensure multi-agency working and communication as appropriate.

The family will be informed of the process and timeframe which will follow from point 7 'Referrals by a Professional' as above. Liaison with other professionals throughout the support for self-referrals will be discussed with the family.

#### **REFERRALS FOR STAFF SUPPORT: (INCLUDING REFUGEE/ASYLUM SEEKERS SUPPORT)**

**HSEEB recognise that there are occasions when placing a volunteer with a family may not be appropriate this may be for any of the following reasons:**

- immediate crisis support is required e.g. major incident in family – death, serious illness or other tragedy.
- the complexity of the case e.g. CIN or CP
- the knowledge, understanding and skills required to support the family are currently unavailable within the volunteer pool
- short term support is required with specific actions to impact a specific situation e.g. Family moved into area
- Where lack of engagement by a family with other professional has been highlighted
- Where a volunteer is unable to visit the family e.g. due to change in own personal circumstances or long break due to holiday

Therefore this work may be undertaken by members of staff in the team, except where the resources available to Home-Start are not adequate to meet the number or complexity of cases. In this instance the referrer will be informed.

The Manager in consultation with the team and referrer will decide if the referral will be accepted. The referral will be discussed and a plan put in place – this ensures all involved have clear objectives and timeframe to follow.

In particular circumstances where the member of staff is keeping in regular touch with the family (by phone, or by regular visits) or where the family is being supported by a family support worker employed by HSEEB, the nature and limitations of that support is described clearly to the referrer and the family

#### **REFERRAL FOR OVER 5'S AND SEND PARENT SUPPORT PROJECT**

Please see <https://hseeb.org/over-5s-project/>

The aim of this project is to offer support to families of PRIMARY aged children living in the borough of Epsom and Ewell, who may be finding life challenging for a variety of reasons.

**To access this support families will have one of the following:**

- Has primary age child/ren
- With child/ren with SEND/ADHD/ASD
- With child/ren with emotional/behavioural challenges
- Parents who would benefit from accessing support

**Support on offer includes:-**

- The Open Doors Café – in local schools. A chance to chat to other parents and a Home-Start coordinator.
- 1 to 1 parenting support and advice
- Family Links Parenting Courses
- Parenting/SEND Workshops
- Help to find appropriate support within the community.

**To make a referral to OVER 5's SEND Parent Support Project contact:**

1. Contact HSEEB Lesley Lane, Senior Family Coordinator – Over 5s/SEND [Lesley.Lane@hseeb.org.uk](mailto:Lesley.Lane@hseeb.org.uk)
2. HSEEB will agree with referrer appropriateness of referral and explain support available or decline referral
3. HSEEB will email a link to the referrer to complete online
4. Professional completes the HSEEB Over 5s referral form in as much detail as possible – please ensure that you have spoken with the family and that they have given permission for you to refer.
5. Once completed online HSEEB automatically are alerted and the referral will be processed and allocated to a member of the staff team. They will contact the family and arrange to meet them and any other professionals involved e.g. SENDCo
6. Support will then be agreed, this could include but is not limited to:
  - 1 to 1 parenting support and advice
  - Attending a Family Links Parenting Courses
  - Attending Parenting/SEND Workshops
7. The referrer will be updated during support and when support has ended.

**REFERRAL FOR THE NEST NUTURE GROUP – PERINATAL MENTAL HEALTH PROJECT**

Please see <https://hseeb.org/perinatal-mental-health-project/>

Designed to support parents during pregnancy & the first year following the birth of a child/ren (perinatal period) with mild to moderate mental health conditions or those experiencing relational issues with their babies.

**The NEST Nurture Group:****To access this support families will have:**

- mild to moderate mental health issues
- be experiencing relational issues with their babies
- be pregnant or have a child up to 1 year

**To refer to The NEST Nurture Group:**

1. Contact HSEEB - Claire Stevens, Senior Family Coordinator –PIMH [Claire.Stevens@hseeb.org.uk](mailto:Claire.Stevens@hseeb.org.uk)
2. HSEEB will agree with referrer appropriateness of referral and explain support available or decline referral
3. HSEEB will email a link to the referrer to complete online
4. Professional completes the HSEEB referral form in as much detail as possible and indicate PIMH support required – please ensure that you have spoken with the family and that they have given permission for you to refer.

5. Once completed online HSEEB automatically are alerted and the referral will be processed and allocated to a member of the staff team. They will contact the family to either meet them or invite them to the group when a space becomes available.
6. Support will then be agreed, this could include but is not limited to:
  - 1 to 1 PIMH support and advice
  - Attending The NEST Nurture Group
  - Attending other events run by HSEEB
  - Support to attend other groups/services in the community
  - Being transferred to another project e.g. Volunteer Home Visiting.
7. The referrer will be updated during support and when support has ended.