

**County Hall**  
**Hertford, SG13 8DF**

**INFORMATION FOR SERVICE PROVIDERS**

**1 April 2011**

**HOME-START REVISED SERVICE SPECIFICATION BETWEEN HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL AND PCT: START 1 APRIL 2011**

Hertfordshire County Council's Children, Schools and Families and the Primary Care Trust, have a three year contract with Home-Start schemes in Hertfordshire, to deliver an early intervention home-visiting outreach service to families with children aged 0-5. 2011/12 is the last year of this contract and as part of CSF's Transformation Programme, the contract has been reviewed, resulting in a variation of the service specification from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2011.

The principles of the new service specification are to:

- recognise children's centres as the "hub" for services to families with children under five
- improve the co-ordination of services to families – ensuring they get the right service at the right time
- improve information sharing between services
- refocus Home-Start's service to support families with emerging needs (see Level 1 and 2 of Hertfordshire's *Meeting the Needs of Children and Families* document)

***What does this mean in practice for people who may want to request a service from Home-Start schemes in Hertfordshire?***

Requests for support for families can be made using the Common Assessment Tools if appropriate, Home-Start scheme's new referral forms and self-referrals. Partners will need to consider the service being requested from Home-Start, with reference to the *Meeting the Needs* document. The expectation is that families will have more than one

need e.g. having multiple births or multiple children under-5 alone will not meet the criteria, there must be additional presenting needs. Equally when the needs of a family are higher, i.e. at levels 3 or 4, or being deescalated following successful specialist intervention, Home-Start will not accept referrals as a single service and will only provide support to the family as part of a Team around the Child/ Family where the Lead Professional is within a specialist service.

To support the coordination of services and ensure that the family's needs are met it is expected that the referrer will have discussed information sharing procedures with the families prior to referral to Home Start. For each family referred, Home-Start will make contact with the referrer or local children's centre in order to confirm partner involvement and prior registration with the local children's centre. Home-Start will appropriately encourage children's centre registration if the family is not already registered.

To ensure this service supports early intervention practices, Home-Start will aim to commence support to the family within four weeks of the request for the service. If this is not possible, for whatever reason, Home-Start will communicate this with the referring agency, who will arrange alternative options for support.

The service will aim to meet the emerging needs of families within nine months, by reviewing support plans every three months. It is acknowledged that each family's needs will be different and Home-Start will use discretion if support is necessary and valid for a longer period.

For more information about requests for this service from Home-Start as well as information about other services the schemes offer please visit:

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/comdirectory/comvol/famil2y/homestart/>



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