

Support and friendship for families



Home-Start Stroud District

Annual Report 2018/19

Charity no. 1107019 Company no. 05282509

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MEET THE TEAM

Trustees 2018/19:

Elizabeth Ewart-James Heather Cunild Malcolm Swait Diana Lapping Sheila McGrath Sheila Marsh Harriet Walker Sandra Lampard Andrew Lane Chairman Treasurer Vice-Chairman

Assistant Treasurer

Advisors to the Committee 2018/19:

Cllr Sue Reed - Stroud District Council Representative Janette Wallace - HR Consultant Bill Walker – GDPR Advisor

President: Judith Coney-Jones

Staff 2018/19:

Alex Corgier Angela Lovegrove Jenny Kempson Michelle Smith Shelley James Connie Rachael Emma Desjardins Corrine Marks Rhiannon Byron Vanessa Reyes Rieger Deborah Hannam Elena Dunn Emma Love-Grove Smith Scheme Manager Family and Volunteer Coordinator Family and Volunteer Coordinator Family and Volunteer Coordinator Office & Finance Coordinator Clerical Assistant Development Officer Group-Start Office Coordinator Group-Start Lead Coordinator Group-Start Lead Coordinator Mothers in Mind Group Coordinator Bump-Start Group Coordinator Arkell Group Worker

Volunteers 2018/19:

Jannette, Deborah, Alison, Gill, Sue, Roberta, Ella, Lucy, Jan, Bridget, Elizabeth, Hilary, Rosemary, Jane, Sam, Lynn, Julie, Kathy, Judy, Monique, Sarah, Daphne, Val, Becca, Melanie, Teresa, Amanda, Andrea, Helen, Harriet, Andrea, Nia, Alison, Anne, Chris, Son, Sally, Barbara, Vicky, Bryan, Ine, Julie, Kate, Sarah, Lucy, Abi, Robina, Elena, Tracey, Gwen, Sue, Helen, Ingrid, Julie, Rhonwen.

Thank you and best wishes to our retiring trustees and volunteers:

Sarah, Lucy, Alison, Jane, Derrick, Jo, Anne, Jan, Charlotte, Patricia, Jo, Mary, Charlotte, Magda and Steve

WHAT WE DO AND WHY IT MATTERS

A better start in life changes a child's future

We focus on enabling parents to be the warm, consistent, nurturing and resilient carers that every child needs. We cannot prevent children from experiencing adversity but we work with parents to minimise the damage children suffer if they grow up experiencing chronic stress. Sometimes this means helping to break cycles of intergenerational harm. Many parents seek our help because they know that overcoming challenges linked to their own experiences in childhood is a vital part of giving their children the best start in life.

Reducing stress in childhood matters because research shows a strong association between chronic stress in childhood and poor lifelong wellbeing. Experiencing adversity can lead to low achievement in education, early sexual experience, increased risk of offending, substance and alcohol misuse, poor physical and mental health and increased likelihood of becoming a victim of violence in adulthood. The good news is we can help make sure this does not happen. Every child needs at least one stable, caring adult in their lives. We cannot avoid all adverse childhood experiences but confident, caring, connected parents can protect their children from experiencing chronic stress

Building resilience in families' matters because people cannot always avoid adversity. Resilience is the ability to adapt to and survive difficult times without suffering significant harm. Home-Start works to help families develop this strength but we are always aware that parents may be struggling because of issues which require wider society to help resolve. For example, many families are living in poverty, finding it difficult to access support for mental health issues or are housed in poor conditions. Home-Start works to help parents rebuild their confidence and skills. We connect families to the opportunities and services which help them become the change which can transform their children's live.

Support social connections to reduce chronic isolation and loneliness



"Home-Start gives families confidence, support, understanding, friendship and, most importantly, a sense of self-worth, a priceless gift." Feedback given by health visiting referrer In 2018 over 75% of families referred to Home-Start in the Stroud District and Quedgeley were experiencing difficulties relating to loneliness and/or social isolation – an increase of 10% on recent years. This is a worrying trend with potentially serious impacts on public health: Parents want and need to get reliable help and advice from others. Children do better in families who enjoy good social support.

Many parents know that forming positive relationships and feeling connected is an extremely important part of maintaining both their own and their children's wellbeing. This is why Home-Start has always achieved great outcomes with parents and children by investing in peer support and building friendly, caring relationships between well-trained and supported volunteers and families. In 2018 90% of parents Home-Start Stroud District worked with felt less isolated as a result of their support. There is evidence that families on persistently low incomes but which have good social support have children whose wellbeing is above average for all children. While addressing poverty is essential for many reasons, this shows the powerful links between connected communities and child wellbeing.

Good social support is linked to reduced social, emotional and behavioural problems in children. 90% felt their children's emotional and physical health & wellbeing had improved by working with Home-Start.

Professionals feedback comments

It's been a real privilege having Home-Start in the areas I have and still cover. It has given families something really special, a lovely healthy relationship, someone to help with children, to face challenges with someone who understands, who is kind and who is well supported by this organisation. I have noticed such growth, self-esteem and a real improvement in their relationship with their baby and other children

It is a good start to starting the process of closing the family to targeted support services and opening their opportunities to more community based support

Very impressed with this service – would love to see it expand into other geographical areas, you are all fabulous

It is a much valued service that I feel confident to refer to plus communication between Home-Start and HV team is excellent Built confidence and made families feel less alone and more part of the community

Improved their confidence and parenting and created less reliance on our service

It works really well alongside health visitors to give parents confidence in their own abilities. It has meant I have known families have had ongoing support when I am aware our service cannot provide this level of support in the medium/long term

Has helped support the Midwifery Service

OUR VOLUNTEERS

We train volunteers, people with parenting experience, to become the trusted source of support that too many parents lack. At the heart of these relationships lies the importance of strengthening attachment – the loving bond between parent and child, which is vital to human wellbeing. We help many parents improve the way they manage their own feelings and behaviours. This helps them to create the calm, safe, predictable home environments where children can learn and flourish.

The development of our group-work since September 2017 means we have also seen the introduction of trained peer support volunteers into groups alongside our home visiting. A recent review of volunteering and early childhood outcomes (abetterstart.org.uk/contents/resources) concluded that volunteers can make:

A contribution to achieving outcomes for children in ways that are distinctive from, but complementary to, professional support. Volunteers can initiate a different kind of relationship with pregnant women and parents based on trust and equality, and can reach and be accepted by parents who do not engage with professional services.

Very recently research from Cardiff University has analysed that nearly 95% of parents suffering with mental health issues saw an improvement thanks to the support of a Home-Start home-visiting volunteer. The research, which used Home-Start UK's administrative data, is one of the largest ever academic studies into the charity sector's work with families. It showed that completing Home-Start's support resulted in high rates of improvement in the most stressed families, including:

96% of those facing isolation

94% of those experiencing low self-esteem, and

95% of those coping with mental health issues.

The research, which involved over 10,000 families, also showed that the more frequently visits occurred, the faster families improved. Rob Parkinson, chief executive of Home-Start UK, said, "This research shows clearly and straightforwardly that the vast majority of families who Home-Start works with see an improvement in overcoming the challenges they face".

We are calling for a renewed focus on funding proven and effective early-interventions like home-visiting." It was also found that volunteers are just as effective as more specialist paid workers in many situations, such as working with large families and with disabled children.



Feedback from a family supported in 2018

Thank you so much for all that you do. You provided me with the kindest, loveliest volunteer – Kate. She has supported me through my twin journey. Always a smiling interested face every week which I looked forward to seeing. She helped me with the twins so I could feel in control of my house again, achieving day to day jobs that were impossible without help not only that, but being a listening ear and most importantly becoming my friend. We taught each other, so much and for you all at Home-Start I will be eternally grateful, without Kate's help once a week I defiantly would not have been able to breastfeed twins to 11 months so I also thank you for that as well. You are all superstars thank you for putting special people in our lives.

Tracey a volunteer who was previously supported by Home-Start

In 2016 my family was referred for support from Home-Start by my heath visitor. I was a single parent; my daughter was just over a year old. I suffered from chronic illness, anxiety and depression, my daughter's needs were always met but I was barely surviving.

Home-Start found me a regular Home-Start volunteer who was wonderful and I was invited to participate in the Mother's in Mind Perinatal community project in 2016. I participated in the focus group, the pilot drop in group and the CBT well-being Group. The MIMS group really was the start of my personal journey with therapy, the CBT Group identified I needed more specialised therapy. Let's Talk contacted me and I was lucky to receive the High Intensity Face to Face Therapy I so needed.

I have since trained as a Home-Start volunteer the preparation course I would highly recommend to anyone wanting to volunteer with families. I am currently Peer Support Volunteer for the Mother's in Mind group I support other mums with mental health problems, gained a new purpose in life, and I love helping other families. My daughter is now 4 and as a family we are so very lucky that our paths crossed with Home-Start.

CHAIRMANS REPORT





CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF FAMILY SUPPORT IN THE STROUD DISTRICT

20 years......it is hard to believe we will be celebrating the anniversary of Home-Start working in the Stroud area for this length of time. As well as having Home-Start Cotswolds as a neighbouring scheme, this year we are also celebrating Home-Start being rolled out across Gloucestershire with the establishment of a third scheme Home-Start North and West Gloucestershire. We all will continue to function as separate schemes but be linked together in the form of a Home-Start in Gloucestershire consortium, an arrangement which I believe upholds the ethos of Home-Start with individual schemes being community based with a high level of independence but also allowing a level of co-working for mutual benefit. Emma Desjardins, our Development Officer, has worked so hard to make this possible and I would like to wish her and her Trustees the best of luck with their new scheme. To celebrate our 20th year, we are planning to have an anniversary party in the grounds of Horsfall House, Minchinhampton, on the 7th of July. There will be an intergenerational flavour to the party as we will be inviting, along with the families we are helping both past and present, older people who still live in the community but attend a regular club at Horsfall. Many of them have become isolated and live alone and I know they will really enjoy some contact with young children.

Our Scheme continues to thrive, largely due to the foresight and enthusiasm of the staff group lead by Alex ably assisted by Shelley our new Office & Finance Coordinator and the rest of the team. This year we also welcomed a new family coordinator Sue Smith. Sue joined us in September and has been a wonderful addition to the team bringing with a her a wealth of experience in family support.

We will be saying goodbye to one of our longstanding family and volunteer coordinators, Jenny Kempson, and I want to thank her for her many years of invaluable workshe will be much missed. Sheila McGrath, a valued trustee has also decided to retire and her expertise will be greatly missed.

A big thank you to our trustees who continue to support the scheme and to Francis Cunild, Stella Knight and the Westonbirt committee who raised over £40,000 at the fair this year a portion of which we shared with other charities.

Finally, and most importantly, my thanks to the volunteers who do the actual work with the families, and make such a difference to the lives of so many.

Elizabeth Ewart-James

SCHEME MANAGER'S REPORT

This year has witnessed the ongoing success of our Scheme supporting more local families and their children than ever before either through home visiting and/or group-work. It has also been the year that has brought us closer to our vision of Home-Start support being offered across the county. It has been a challenge and a rollercoaster ride on many fronts but in the main we have been overwhelmed by the genuine enthusiasm

from so many people that this hope might become a reality! I would particularly like to thank the Clinical Commissioning Group and the Peter Lang Children Trust for their unwavering support in getting this off the ground. I have had the privilege recruiting and working alongside Emma Desjardins in the last year who took up the post of Development Officer for this project. 12 months later she has become Scheme Manager of a new scheme Home-Start North and West Gloucestershire which now covers the Forest of Dean, Tewkesbury and Cheltenham. It is also hoped that our own scheme will receive funding to expand its services into the City of Gloucester in the next twelve months. As with all our work what we are able to deliver is at the mercy of our ability to access funding.



So a particular thank you to all our funders, both large and small, who help support the vital work that we do.

A huge thank you to all the staff and volunteer team for their hard work, care and commitment to Home-Start. I have written on my noticeboard, by my desk, the following quote from Bertacchi (1996) that I think sums up the importance and necessity of having such a great team: "The quality of the relationships within the team match the quality of the relationships they aim to foster within the families being supported." And this ethos carries on with the work of our dedicated and wonderful volunteers "Any intervention, regardless of technique or theory, is only as effective as the quality of the relationships that early interveners (volunteers) can build up with the family they become involved with ... the parent's relationship with the intervener serves as the engine of therapeutic change." Berlin et all (2008).

So, what's next, I hear you cry! Well, I am looking forward to working with our newly formed Home-Start in Gloucestershire Consortium in order to further raise our profile and find ways to attract countywide funding. I am working on a project to review and develop how we work with fathers and partners and we are about to create a working group to take this piece of work forward having already run a training/consultation morning with staff and volunteers. I will continue to spread the word and knock on every door (and fill out every funding application!) that will help us to continue the valuable work we do in this scheme and the ongoing development of Home-Start across the County.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our Trustees for their ongoing support. I would particularly like to thank Elizabeth Ewart-James (Chair) and Heather Cunild(Treasurer) whom, without their sheer grit and determination to set-up a new scheme in Stroud 20 years ago, none of us would be reading this report today!

Alex Corgier

Scheme Manager



Group-Start began in April 2017 and has 3 group co-ordinators, running group sessions across the Stroud District and Quedgeley, and an office coordinator. All our group sessions are informal, welcoming and non-judgemental, giving parents the opportunity to meet in a safe, friendly and supportive environment. Our groups provide encouragement and information on what to expect at different stages of parenthood. The groups include:



Bump-Start - a 6-week <u>antenatal programme</u> for parents expecting a baby at any gestation, providing extra support and reassurance on their pregnancy journey so that they feel listened to and prepared for their new baby.



Best-Start <u>postnatal</u> group is our 6-week programme supporting parents and their new born babies to make friends and get up-to-date parenting information and support whilst learning about their baby's development from the very beginning.



<u>Mothers in Mind drop-in group</u>. This group offers mums a place to find comfort, advice and support while experiencing anxiety, depression, low mood, OCD or

In the last year the Mothers in Mind group have supported 66 mums, 52 children and 16 unborn babies



Bump-Start additional support have supported 14 mums, 3 dads and 17 unborn babies



Best-Start have supported 134 mums, 27 dads and 140 babies



In the last year Bump-Start have supported 45 mums, 47 unborn babies, 9 dads over 7 groups

"We don't go anywhere apart from this (Mims) and I'm new to the area so it has stopped us being isolated. The kids really enjoy it and I don't feel like I have to "perform" being normal or okay" A god send

The group (Mims) has been a massive help for my mental health and confidence. Building new friendships and getting me to talk about what is going on in my life to help vent. Absolutely amazing group and Vanessa is extremely supportive and a very lovely person

"The course has helped to improve my confidence and put my mind at ease about the labour and throughout my pregnancy. It has helped to 're-love me' during the pregnancy and happier going into labour and what to expect" "The group facilitators have created an environment where there is no pressure to attend, the approach is very non-judgemental and you feel as though someone understands and cares. The crafts are well thought out, fun and take your mind off worries.

When I am struggling they listen and are thoughtful and informative. I also find the group crucial in maintaining my mental health as well as helping when my mental health is poor. The group is highly accepting of everyone. The professionalism of the facilitators and volunteers is outstanding. I would highly recommend the group

"I felt alone before the group (Mims) & now I have made new friends and feel comfortable talking about any issues I have ". I would like to come again

"Made me more relaxed about if I am unsure about things or if I feel I am making mistakes" I do not get frustrated with myself anymore, which I know will help my baby to relax as well."

Thank you so much for all that you do. You provided me with the kindest, loveliest volunteer. She has supported me through my twin journey. Always a smiling interested face every week which I looked forward to seeing. She helped me with the twins so I could feel in control of my house again, achieving day to day jobs that were impossible without help. Not only that, but being a listening ear and most importantly becoming my friend. We taught each other so much and for you all at Home-Start I will be eternally grateful, without the volunteers help once a week, I defiantly would not have been able to breastfeed twins to 11 months so I also thank you for that as well. You are all superstars, thank you for putting special people in our lives.

THE ARKELL FAMILY FUN GROUP

Both the Wednesday and the Friday sessions now have on average of around 12 families attending each session. The group works hard to be friendly and inclusive attracting parents of babies as well as toddlers up to pre-schoolers. Parents are encouraged to take ownership of the running of the group. This includes helping with snacks, clearing-up, planning craft sessions and organising seasonal activities. There is a lot of peer support that occurs within these groups fostered by a strong sense of Home-Start's ethos of being empathic, non-judgemental and just being there for others when they are going through a difficult time.

We have worked hard on creating a fully inclusive positive play environment for families. We now include a specific craft activity at every session for families and, also, occasionally, invite guest professionals to come and talk about various different aspects of parenting. This might be around dental care, positive parenting, self-care and mental health to name but a few subjects.

One of Home-Start's family coordinators attends the group at least once a week. It is her role to chat to some of the parents that are going through challenges or difficulties. They can then either be referred into our home visiting service, or one of our more specialist groups or they can be signposted on to other relevant services in the locality. This works very well and keeps the group firmly within the workings and supportive system that is the ethos of Home-Start.



Although the two weekly sessions are universal non-targeted groups (e.g. anyone is welcome to attend) we know that the group is being used by a large amount of families that are vulnerable. What do we mean by vulnerable? Well we mean a large range of challenges that families might be facing from first time parents having moved to Forest Green with no local family support feeling isolated and unsupported. Families affected by domestic abuse or breakdown of relationships. Poor mental health, low self-esteem and inability to cope very well with the pressures of parenting. And so the list goes on. These groups are free, anyone can access them and anyone can easily ask for further support in a non-judgemental confidential setting.

Home-Start are building good links with the school and the pre-school and in collaboration with Nailsworth Primary School have run a 'Ready for School' course to help families ease their children into school life. Further collaborations such as this can easily grow from the roots of our community pre-school family fun sessions.



The Arkell Centre is a great venue and a great place to have as a community hub for families. The family fun time groups are a great way of getting local families to use and get use to the Centre. Whilst continuing to fund this group we must also work to create a holistic wider time frame for family activities.

QUEDGELEY NEWS

Home-Start has been supporting vulnerable families in the Quedgeley area for approximately 3 years now. During this time, we have built good working relationships with professionals in the area and supported families through some challenging times. We continue to build upon our success at a steady pace, having regular training courses for new volunteers twice a year.

We are now looking to recruit more parents who are passionate about family support in an advisory role. This group of parents will have the opportunity to discuss the way forward with funding opportunities, ways of promoting our scheme and, very importantly, recruiting volunteers for home visiting, group helpers, trustees and advisors. It's an exciting time to join Home Start, as we hope to be able to spread our wings and offer our support to more families in the foreseeable future.

Our volunteers are parents themselves and need to complete a 10-week volunteer preparation course with us. Our courses are CERTA affiliated and those volunteers wishing to add a qualification to their skills are able to add this to their CV. All trained volunteers are now supporting families with weekly visits. Volunteers also have regular supervision meetings with their coordinators to provide continued support in their roles.

In addition to our initial volunteer training course we have ongoing training throughout the year, this includes annual safeguarding, drugs and alcohol misuse, antenatal training and a working project to bring better inclusion for dads in their role. We also invite all of our staff, volunteers, trustees and advisors to social events to bring us all together to celebrate their valuable work. This includes skittle evenings, coffee, cake and catch up mornings as well as our Christmas lunch.

We continue to run our Home Start support groups; Mothers in Mind is proving to be well subscribed as is the Best-Start, postnatal group. The Bump-Start Group has also run in the area and was very well received. Having these groups to refer a family to has been incredibly beneficial for families as well as myself as a coordinator. Knowing a family will be welcomed and supported in a non-judgemental way in the safe hands of our Home-Start facilitators is reassuring.

I often hear families say they struggle with isolation and the fear of being judged. Our volunteers are able to hear this and walk alongside families to grow in confidence in their abilities and reach out into their communities. For families that feel isolated, going out into the community and building relationships is crucial.

The Gloucester Foodbank, Gloucestershire Bundles and the



FLUCK Convalescent Fund have also been very helpful to families we are supporting and for that I am very grateful.

As family coordinator I have regular review visits with families and provide additional support when necessary. Coordinator support includes attending Case conferences, CIN and TAC meetings, CORE Groups and supporting families with meetings at school, speech and language, hearing tests etc. I believe Home Start provides the 'bridge' for families to access services that may prove too difficult to do on their own. We work alongside families enabling them to get to a place where they feel empowered to do it alone, however long that takes.

Michelle Smith (Quedgeley Family Coordinator)

IN THIS YEAR:

90% of parents felt less isolated after our support



90% of parents felt their children's physical and emotional health had improved through our support

In this year we trained 20 new volunteers and 70 volunteers continued to give their gift of time It costs £25 per person to attend a group session. It costs £15 per hour face to face volunteer support



In this year we received 312 new referrals and supported 343 families through home visiting & groups



Volunteers gave up 160090 hours of their time



THANK YOU SUPPORTERS!

Our sincere thanks go to all those who have supported us during the last financial year

To our major funders for their loyal and continuing support:

The Peter Lang Children's Trust Gloucestershire Clinical Commissioning Group Stroud District Council Stroud Town Council The David Thomas Trust The Gyde Trust

To those who have given us grants this year:

Gloucestershire Community Foundation Freemasons Grant Programme The ACT Foundation The Henry Smith Trust Nailsworth Town Council The Charles Irving Trust Summerfield Charitable Trust The Door Project Stonehouse Rotary Club Nailsworth Rotary Coop Relief Fund The Gateway Trust

To our local sponsors, groups and individual supporters:

Westonbirt Charities Fair **Rodborough Scouts** Claire Owen (Owen Accountants) Waitrose, Stroud **Dunlem Mills** Newgen Publishing UK **Oriana Singers** Kathryn McNicholas **Alex Corgier** The James Tysoe Trust L James S Marsh J Penn Fluke **Gloucestershire Bundles Coco Confectionary Project Linus** Foodbank & Kids Stuff Beacon Children's Centre

Matt Hugh's (Pcprop) Beresford Group Slimbridge Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust Mr J.L Williams (Deceased) Brush Up UK **Daisy First Aid** Alison Vickory Murrays Estate Agents, Stroud Q Club, Quedgeley Randwick Scout Hut The Beacon Children's Centre Stroud Maternity **Denise Holder Taxis** Jinn Harvey (Reflexologist) Little Hearts First Aid **Anne-Marie Thomas** Hammersmith Books **IT Schools Africa** Nailsworth Quaker **Minchinhampton Parish Council**

TREASURERS REPORT

The year saw both income and expenditure grow reflecting the full operation of all the groups and the fully funded employment of Emma Desjardins as development officer. This was a year's post and Emma now leaves us to reap the rewards of all her hard work in setting up the new scheme. It is to be hoped that spreading Home-Start across the whole of Gloucestershire will open up new sources of funding in the future for all three schemes.

I must reiterate sincere thanks to our many generous and some very longstanding funders as mentioned earlier in this report. Also to the many individuals, companies and trusts that have made donations or grants over the past year enabling us to cover all the costs of running the enlarged scheme and bring a useful sum into the coming year. Again the Westonbirt Charities Fair raised a wonderful amount through the hard work and dedication of its committee and organiser. Funding is always a challenge but we feel confident that the value of the work we do is now more widely recognised with a corresponding positive response in well directed bids for funds.

Owing to the increase in size of the scheme it was felt prudent to increase our contingency funds by £10,000 to £70,000.

MONEY MATTERS!

In the year 2018-2019 - Income: £251,196 Expenditure: £237,271 Net income for the year: £13,925 Balance brought forward from 2017-2018: £100,711 Of which Reserves: £70,000 General funds brought forward to 2019-2020: £30,711

Reserves

The Trustees of Home-Start Stroud have set a reserves policy which requires that £70,000 of funds are to be held in reserve to meet the costs of redundancy, pension liability and 3 months running costs should the scheme hit hard times. The reserves may also be used to cover for any temporary shortfall in funding but must be re-instated as soon as replacement funds are received.

Review of Risk

The treasurer reports to the board at its regular meetings relating actual income and expenditure to the approved start of year budget. Risk is assessed and future expenditure reviewed.

A full set of accounts is available from Home-Start Stroud District. We are very grateful to our accountant Claire Owen of Owen Accountants, Patch Cottage, High Beech Road, The Pludds, Ruardean, GL17 9UD for preparing these accounts.

Heather Cunild, Treasurer