



Support and friendship  
for families

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Home-Start  
Southern Oxfordshire

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Annual Report 2017/18

# Twenty-nine years supporting families in Southern Oxfordshire



# Standards and Methods of Practice

Home-Start works with families who are experiencing difficulties or suffering stress and who have at least one child under five years of age.



Each Home-Start scheme is an independent voluntary organisation which works towards the increased confidence and independence of the family by:

- offering support, friendship and practical assistance
- visiting families in their own homes, where the dignity and identity of each individual can be respected and protected
- reassuring parents that difficulties in bringing up children are not unusual and encouraging enjoyment in family life
- developing a relationship with the family in which time can be shared and understanding can be developed; the approach is flexible to take account of different needs
- encouraging the parents' strengths and emotional well-being for the ultimate benefit of their own children
- encouraging families to widen their network of relationships and to use effectively the support and services available within the community.

# Chair's Report

## Annual Report 2018

I am pleased and proud to begin this Annual Report on a very positive note, our Scheme, on 14 February 2018, underwent the Home-Start UK, Quality Assurance Review. I am delighted to say we achieved 100% on the QA Standards.

## Quality Assurance in Home-Start

The quality of a scheme's practice is assured by the Home-Start QA System for Schemes. This robust system is based on a programme of self-assessment against Home-Start's Quality Standards and a process that focuses on the ongoing development and continuous improvement of all practice areas relating to the governance, management and service delivery of local Home-Start Schemes.

Home-Start's QA Specialists are accredited ISO internal auditors and Home-Start UK holds ISO 9001 accreditation and the Investors in People Award.

## The Quality Areas

The standards fall into the following 4 Quality Areas:

1. Governance
2. People Management
3. Managing Information
4. Safeguarding

## Indicators

The standards of all performance indicators must be met by Schemes as they are legal, regulatory or Home-Start UK policy requirements.

I would like to thank Gill Bodey our vice chair, Janet and Rhiannon for all of the work they did in preparation for the QA, it made the actual day go very smoothly indeed. My thanks to all staff, trustees and volunteers for making this very high mark possible.

For the last 18 months, we have been working collaboratively with Oxford City and Banbury & Chipping Norton schemes, on a joint Big Lottery bid. We have always maintained strong and supportive links with the two other Oxfordshire Home-Start schemes. We are all three aware of areas where we are unable to provide Home-Start support to families, for a mix of funding and geographical reasons. Working together as a consortium sharing our local knowledge, experience and resources has been most beneficial for the completion of the joint lottery bid. We were pleased to reach stage 1 of the bid and have recently submitted stage 2, and are currently waiting to hear if we have been successful.

The scheme as you can see from Rhiannon's report continues to be very busy. I would like to thank Janet, Rhiannon, Helen, Jacquie, Gill and Sue, for their commitment and enthusiasm for the work they do.

Sadly our excellent fundraiser Dawn left us in March, we will miss her but wish her well for the future.

My thanks to the volunteers, who give their time so generously to the families they support. It was very uplifting at a recent event to experience first-hand some of the new volunteers with their families, they all seemed to be so relaxed and comfortable with each other.

I would like to give my sincere thanks to my fellow colleagues on the Trustee Board, for their continued support and commitment to Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire.

*Doreen McNulty*  
Chair of Trustees

# Treasurer's Report

The scheme had a surplus of £16,915 in 2017/18. Once again, we have to thank Dawn for some excellent fundraising and to whom the scheme is indebted.

We are pleased to report the fantastic support from the MOD Covenant of £34,240 and from the Royal British Legion, for a third year, of £30,000, which allowed us to support military families throughout our area. Both of these are being continued in 2018/19, to allow us to continue our work with these families.

We have received the second year of our four-year funding from the South Oxfordshire District Council, of £24,106, to support families in the District, and further support from BBC Children In Need, of £9,828, for our Family Group.

We now receive no funding from the Children's Centres, as a consequence of Oxfordshire County Council cuts.

We have received funding from many town and parish councils, as well as grant-giving trusts, organisations and individuals. We thank them all. The most notable was a grant of £5,000 from the PF Charitable Trust.

Expenditure was well within budget, thanks to tight controls and also to a lag in staff costs as recruitment took place following confirmation of grants being awarded. We are particularly grateful to Rhiannon and Janet, who had to manage the impact of 3 additional staff, which doubled the number in the scheme.

## Reserves Policy

Our reserves policy is to hold sufficient reserves to cover potential liabilities if the scheme were to close, plus anticipated funding requirements for the forthcoming year, plus a general reserve of no more than 12 months annual income. We had reserves at the financial year end totalling £134,093. This is represented by two reserves: a designated reserve of £41,000 - to cover a Pension Trust liability of about £28,000 and potential liabilities from redundancy payments and closing

down costs - plus a general, free reserve of £93,093. These free reserves represent 10 months of the budgeted expenditure for 2018/19.

Once again, we offer our sincere thanks to all the organisations, individuals and trusts that have supported us throughout the year. We would especially like to mention those volunteers who not only give up their valuable time but have also been able to generously donate over £1,853 of their expenses back to the scheme. We cannot thank the staff enough for their tolerance and understanding in another year in which there has been great change with new staff joining us. We are moving forward with more secure funding and a higher staff resourcing level, allowing us to support more families in our area.

*Colin D. Campbell*

Treasurer



# Senior Organiser's Report

## Comments from families:

"Home-Start made such a huge difference to our lives. Before Ann started I felt like I was drowning and unable to cope. Ann was amazing and my daughter loved her, I always felt safe leaving her with Ann and it meant I could set aside that time each week to focus on the huge amount of admin that surrounds a disabled child. Thank you so much for helping us to cope and enjoy our daughter."

"Gill has been a great support to me and the family, her continuous support has been received with thanks. Her support has helped a great deal and she will be missed."

These are some of the positive comments from families Home-Start has supported this year. This work is only possible with the continued support of our fantastic team of volunteers. I would like to say a huge thank you, to all our volunteers for their time, commitment and expertise. Their visits make a difference each week to families all over Southern Oxfordshire offering friendship and support at times when families need it most. This year we have been fortunate to have eighteen new volunteers attend our preparation course for new volunteers. In addition, we have offered volunteer training in areas such as Mental Health, Safeguarding, Autism Awareness and Substance Abuse.

This year has been very busy. We have supported 248 families. Unfortunately, we haven't been able to accept all referrals to the scheme. Mostly this has been due to a lack of funding in some areas and often we have received more referrals than we have capacity for. Since the closure of the local Children's Centres, we have noticed an increase in families with more complex needs being referred from both health visitors and social care. Where possible we accept more complex referrals if suitable volunteers are available and it is within the scheme's capacity.

In addition to our volunteer home visited families we now run four groups each week, in three of these staff are supported by Home-Start volunteers. We also welcomed Gill Jones to the staff team – our new Family Support Worker/Forces Liaison Worker, who joined us in June 2017 and directly supports forces families. This year has been the first year of our Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust project, we have launched two new groups, and Gill delivers 1-2-1 support to forces families.

We have renewed funding from BBC Children in Need – this time for three years, which enables us to continue to offer a high quality group with a sustainable future. We are also very fortunate to have received renewed funding from the Royal British Legion which has enabled us to continue our work supporting referred families on the military bases across Southern Oxfordshire. This year we are thrilled to have received four year funding towards supporting referred families and our group work across South Oxfordshire from South Oxfordshire District Council – enabling us to help more families across this area than in recent years.

We are very fortunate to have the commitment of a very active Trustee board. Their support and guidance have been invaluable to Home-Start this year. Special thanks to Gill and Doreen for all their work in preparing us for the Home-Start UK Quality Assurance Inspection in February.

Finally, I would like to say a big thank you to the staff team; Janet, Helen, Jacquie, Gill, Dawn and Sue for their professionalism, support, commitment and humour.

I look forward to working with you all during the year ahead.

*Rhiannon McCobb*  
Senior Organiser



## From an Organiser – Family Case Study

Claire moved into our area with her daughter Alice aged fifteen months and partner George. They knew no one locally and Claire did not have transport. They were referred to us by their Health Visitor as Claire had a chronic pain condition and was depressed.

When I went to meet them, Claire said that she wanted a volunteer to help entertain Alice, help them get out to groups to meet other families and allow Alice to socialise. Claire also wanted someone to talk to as she was lonely.

I introduced a volunteer, Fiona, to them and they got on well with each other. During visits to the family Fiona sometimes played with Alice if Claire was in pain and unable to get down to the floor. If Claire was well Fiona would take them to groups or the library, allowing Claire to meet other mums. Alice enjoyed these outings, playing with other children. This continued for some time.

Fiona supported Claire emotionally and they talked over any problems or issues which bothered Claire. Fiona accompanied Claire to a hospital appointment as George was at work. This helped Claire in both a practical way by transporting her but also helped her with the doctor's consultation by listening and discussing what he said later. This helped as Claire had felt overwhelmed at the time of the appointment and had not understood all the doctor said.

This was a pivotal moment as Claire then understood her medical condition better and how to learn to live with it in a more positive way. From then Claire was going out more with Alice on her own, her mental health improved and she was finding it difficult to fit Fiona into her now busy life.

Claire and Fiona then discussed that Fiona's support was no longer needed. When I went to see Claire to complete an evaluation she said that initially had thought that two hours a week wouldn't make any difference but how wrong that had been. She was very grateful for Fiona's support at a difficult time in her life and what a positive outcome there had been.

*Helen Galsworthy*  
Organiser

# Home-Start Groups

## Home-Start Monday Group

A small referral only group, for parents with post natal depression or who feel more comfortable accessing a smaller group and who have children under five years old. We meet in our family room in our Didcot offices on Monday mornings. With funding from BBC Children in Need we offer a variety of activities each week, including themed art activities, a library, a play and explore area as well as a structured snack time and singing and rhyming circle time. Our aim is to support parents build positive relationships with their child whilst encouraging children to become confident with a view that over time they will feel able to engage with our services in the community.

This year we have met for picnics and games in the local park and attended the local performance of The Nutcracker and The Mouse King at Didcot Cornerstone Arts Centre. One of the parents told us that "I never thought of bringing my daughter to a theatre, we both really enjoyed this!"

## Didcot First Babies group

This local baby group is specifically for first time parents and their bumps to babies up to 15 months old. We meet at Ladygrove Community Hall in Tamar Way, Didcot each Tuesday morning. Later this year we will be celebrating the groups 25th Anniversary and welcoming past and present families to join us to celebrate – with tea and cake!

This group enables parents to meet others in the same situation, to share experiences and swap tips. We provide a relaxed and supportive group to enable parents to observe and get to spend quality time with their first babies. We are lucky to have the continuing support of our local community Staff Nurse Janet. Due to reduced staffing levels in the local health teams this year I have promoted and run our first weaning workshops at the first babies group. The session proved popular and parents feedback was encouraging. A second session is currently under discussion.

Didcot Town Council have enabled us to offer subsidised baby massage classes through our Baby Massage Therapist Hazel. We are very fortunate to have the continued support from our long standing and highly regarded volunteers, Pat and Sandy.

### Dalton Barracks Under Fives Family Group

This busy session opened in June 2017 as part of our Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust project. It replaced the Children's Centre group which had been closed due to the recent reduction in funding for Children's Centres by the County Council. The aim of the group is to reduce social isolation within the military community and improve community cohesion by inviting civilian families from the local community and forces families from the base. The group has proved popular and we regularly get around 15-20 families each week.

The group is exclusively aimed at children under five and their parents, with appropriate resources and art activities to encourage new experiences with both parents as well as their peers. We have access to a soft play area and outside garden in addition to the main Community Centre.

### RAF Benson Babies Group

In March this year we opened our newest baby group at the community centre on RAF Benson. This group is also part of our Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust project and was developed following a request from the local Health Visitors for more services for new parents to meet and feel supported on the base.

The group is for parents with babies between 0-15 months old. So far this is a small group with a regular cohort of six families. These parents have voiced their relief at having somewhere to go to meet other parents with young babies and have already swapped numbers to meet up during the rest of the week.

Our Family Support Worker Gill is often available to assist families who require additional help with parenting issues. We are also lucky to have two volunteers, Lucy and Elaine who support staff at the group on alternate weeks.

*Jacquie Boshell*  
Group Worker

# Armed Forces Family Support and Community Liaison



The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust have awarded Home-Start three years funding, part of which funds my role as Home-Start's Family Support and Community Liaison Worker. I receive referrals from various agencies including SSAFA, Welfare Officers and Health Visitors and we also encourage families to self refer. I offer 1-2-1 tailored support, directly to families in their own homes. The support given has been very varied covering areas such as parenting, isolation, building self esteem and mental health, to name but a few!

Thanks to our friends in SSAFA I have recently been able to attend a military Mental Health First Aid Course. I will be sharing the knowledge I gained with my colleagues and volunteers over the next few months.

The Community Liaison part of my role has given me the opportunity to meet lots of professionals from different agencies, in addition to Military staff. All are part of a huge network working to support forces families in all areas of life! These include: The Hive, Army Family Federation, SSAFA, Welfare, Health Visitors, various Mental Health organisations, Aspire, Oxfordshire Play Association, The Job Club, Home School Link Workers, Community Co-ordinator, Military Advocacy, Royal British Legion and more!

I am looking forward to further developing my role over the next year.

*Gill Jones*  
Family Support/Community Liaison Worker

## Community Fundraising



After a very successful fundraising year in 2016-2017, the scheme was in a very good position at the beginning of this year. However never resting on our laurels, funding wise there has been lots of activity:

We are delighted to have been TSB in Abingdon's Charity Partner this year – they have raised money by staff running the Blenheim Fun run, held a book sale in branch and held a Christmas raffle. Rhiannon, Rob and Gill collected a cheque for £462.88 in April.

Home-Start had a book stall at Wallingford Carnival in June 2017 – a baking hot day for all those who came along. Being at community events raises awareness of the scheme as well as funds. We raised £115.59 on the day.

We were very pleased to be chosen as the new Didcot Starbucks local charity. Doreen was asked to go along and open it on 22nd March and we look forward to developing our relationship with them over the next year.

We teamed up with local businesses, Allen & Harris and Style and Sophistication in November 2017 to run a Christmas stall in aid of Home-Start. There was a bottle raffle and Reindeer food plus warm drinks inside the Allen & Harris office which proved very welcome on what turned out to be a freezing cold night. A big thank you to staff from Allen and Harris and Style and Sophistication, and Home-Start staff, trustees and volunteers, for coming along and supporting us and for raising £663.49 on the night.



Sadly Dawn has now left Home-Start and she will be much missed by all at Home-Start. Her dedication and enthusiasm first as a Home-Start home visiting volunteer and then later as our Fundraising and Marketing Assistant was above and beyond what we hope and expect. We will be recruiting a new Fundraising and Marketing Assistant in the Autumn.



*Rhiannon McCobb*  
Senior Organiser

## Quote from a family

*"I don't think there is anything that you can do better!  
My volunteer was a godsend to me through those very tough times  
and I can honestly say I wouldn't have got through them without her.  
The service you provide is amazing, keep up the good work!"*

## From a volunteer

I was inspired to volunteer for Home-Start by reading the obituary of Home-Start's founder Margaret Harrison CBE. I contacted the Didcot branch and started the Home-Start New Volunteer's Preparation Course in September 2018 in a group of 18. It was so interesting to meet people from all walks of life with different experiences and varied reasons for wanting to volunteer. Most training I have completed during my previous career has been a challenge to sit through (let alone, stay awake through), but the Home-Start training delivered by Rhiannon and Helen was the opposite. It was informative but also enjoyable. A lot of laughing and self exploration of our own opinions and reflection. There was a general, genuine feeling of sadness when the course came to an end, it really had been so engaging and enjoyable to all of us.

Wonderfully, additional training has been offered since the start of the New Volunteer's course including sessions from Relate, Autism Family Support, Citizen's Advice and Turning Point. All of which were valuable. Some of the information that I have learnt has already been extremely useful as a new volunteer. Much of the information has also been personally useful to me as a parent. The Autism course was most pertinent and a good reminder of the challenges that my own son faces and how my family and I can best help him on a daily basis. I know that all of the courses will be of great use with families I hope I will be lucky enough to volunteer for in the future.

In December I met the expectant Mum of the twins that I now support once a week. The twin boys arrived after Christmas and so I began actively volunteering in January of this year. The family are lovely. They do however have a number of challenges that they are facing and so I feel privileged to be able to offer support to them. They do not have family locally to help them and as parents of twins I see that this is very difficult.

What will happen during my visit week to week varies so much. It has ranged from offering to wash up baby's bottles and the dishes, make sure that Mum gets something to eat for breakfast, to offering emotional support and signposting services. There have been GP, Health Visitor and Hospital Appointments and we are looking forward this week to going to a twin's group. Home-Start as an organisation has helped the family I visit enormously and has made a real difference to them. I am able to go for a few hours each week and feel confident that I can help with whatever may be required by the family, because of the dedicated and strong support from Rhiannon who is my direct organiser.

Volunteering for Home-Start (even though it has only been for 5 months to date) has been enormously rewarding for me personally. When I get in my car to go to the family it is one of the highlights of my week. I am looking forward to many more years with Home-Start.

*Caroline*

# Trustees and Staff

## Trustees:

Doreen McNulty	Chair
Gill Bodey	Vice Chair
Colin Campbell	Hon. Treasurer
Roy Hobart	
Rosemary Knagg	
Barbara Guast	Volunteer Representative
Helen Conway	
Lorraine Meadows	Health Visitor Representative
Linda Cheong	
Rob Hufton	

## Staff:

Rhiannon McCobb	Senior Organiser
Jacque Boshell	Group Worker
Helen Galsworthy	Organiser
Gill Jones	Family Support Worker (from June 2017)
Janet McIlvennie	Office Manager
Dawn Robinson	Funding and Marketing Co-Ordinator(Until March 2018)
Sue Chappell	Data Input Clerk

## Auditor:

Keith Goldsby-West, A.C.M.A.

# Home-Start Safeguarding

Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and expects all trustees, staff, volunteers and members to share this commitment. Our policy on safeguarding is available on request.

# Funders

We would like to thank everyone who has given grants and donations throughout the year:

## Parish Councils

Steventon; Checkendon; Benson; Upton; Lewknor; Chilton; Watchfield; Milton; Harwell; Brightwell-cum-Sotwell; Nuffield; Stanford in the Vale; Steventon; Sutton Courtenay; Cholsey; Berinsfield; Fyfield and Tubney.

## Town Councils

Didcot; Henley; South Oxfordshire District Council, Revenue Grant.

## Charitable Trusts

Royal British Legion; Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust; Four Acre Trust; Spalding Trust; BBC Children in Need; Kelly Family Trust; PF Charitable Trust; Coutts / Albert Hunt Trust; Faringdon Rotary Club; The Big Give; Stanford in the Vale Public Purposes Committee; Wantage Coronation Fund; Wantage Rotary Club; Oxfordshire Community Foundation; Doris Field.

## Business Donors

The Staff, Clients and Supporters of Allen and Harris; Didcot and Style and Sophistication, Cholsey; Waitrose Token Schemes – Abingdon, Henley, Wallingford, Faringdon. TSB Abingdon Branch.

## Groups and Individuals

Didcot Rock Choir; Dr. K Broom and colleagues at Public Health, England.; Aston Tirrold United Reformed Church

## Facts & Figures

Families supported by a Home-visiting volunteer	62
Families supported by groups	186
Total families supported:	248
Children supported:	402
Under fives	332
Over fives	70
Number of volunteer visits taken place	585
Duration of visits:	1237 hours

### Source of referrals

Health Visitors	49
Self Referrals	172
Army Welfare/SSAFA	12
Mental Health Services	0
Midwifery	1
Other Health (FNP)	5
Education	4
Social Workers	1
Assessment Team	2
Other Community Group	2

## Quality Assurance

We are proud to be quality assured. The quality of our practice has been assessed under the Home-Start QA System. This is based on a self-assessment against nationwide quality standards. The ongoing development of our services has been looked at, as well as the continuous improvement of all practice areas relating to governance, management and service delivery.

## Public Benefit Statement

The trustees have a duty to report on the scheme's public benefit. They have taken into account the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in planning the year's activities. This report demonstrates how Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire fulfils its charitable objectives, which are:-

To safeguard, protect and preserve the good health, both mental and physical, of children and parents; to prevent cruelty to or maltreatment of children; to relieve sickness, poverty and need amongst children and parents; to promote the education of the public in better standards of child care in southern Oxfordshire.

## Membership of Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire

Membership is open to any person interested in furthering the objectives quoted above, and approved by the trustees. Members are entitled to vote at the AGM and other general meetings. Application forms are available at the AGM or on request from the scheme.

## Risk Management

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the scheme is exposed, in particular those relating to finances and operations, and believe that arrangements are in place to mitigate those risks.

# Can you help Home-Start? Would you like to support a family?

*Come and be a Home-Start volunteer – help make a difference!*

*Do you have management or fundraising skills?*

*Would you be interested in joining our Board of Trustees and getting involved  
in the decision making?*

*Do you have skills or contacts that would help us raise much needed funds?*



**Didcot  
Town Council**



For more information please contact:

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**[www.homestart-southernoxfordshire.org.uk](http://www.homestart-southernoxfordshire.org.uk)**

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