



Newsletter

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Cotswolds

Lockdown Parcels Give Families a Boost



When we sent out our last newsletter at the end of March, we had no idea how long it would be before we could visit our families in their homes again. And at the time of writing this, we still do not know. So we have been working hard to deliver regular parcels to them, containing lots of fun activities for children and parents to do together.

The packs all contain craft activities and instructions to make things, like a rainbow for the window, family handprints, 'jelly boats' and suncatchers. There were even seeds, pots and soil for some indoor gardening, plus treats for parents. At Easter, we sent out everything needed to make chocolate nests, and our latest parcels contain the ingredients and recipe for a simple tomato sauce with pasta.

The response has been really positive and we've had some lovely feedback...



'Literally live for the delivery of treats and craft packs. The things are so special and mean so much. When I've nothing left to give, the packs arrive with everything in them to make and create. It's such a boost. Thank you so much.'

'Just to say thank you so much for the packs you are sending. They are a lifesaver with all the different activities—and treats for grown ups are such a boost at this difficult time.'

'Thank you so much for our activity box. My son had the biggest smile.'

'I cannot thank you enough for the gorgeous bags of treats and crafts you arranged. We are LOVING doing the crafts and having all the resources we need to make something special. The encouragement, motivation and cheer those

three bags have brought is huge and it meant so much to receive them.'

'Thank you so much—my little boy gets so excited when the packs come, he started unpacking it on the doorstep! The craft ideas are amazing!'

Special thanks must go to the Cotswold District Council Community Resilience Grant for their funding of the packs, as well as to volunteers Trish Dodridge and Cathy Wheeler for their invaluable help.



'Virtual' Annual General Meeting

This year, our Annual General Meeting will be held on Wednesday 24th June, from 12 noon to 2pm. However, in these times of Covid-19, it will be taking place online, using the cloud-based video conferencing application Zoom. This is in order to comply with current social distancing regulations.

Invitations will be sent to members and funders, who will be able to join the meeting online.

The Annual Report and Accounts will be published on our website by the end of June at the latest.



National Volunteers' Week



The first week of June is UK National Volunteers' Week and we want to give a huge 'shout out' to our amazing volunteers. Their support makes a really big difference to families who are finding it hard to cope with any number of a wide range of issues, such as post-natal depression, isolation or multiple births.

We always ask our volunteers what they have learned from their time with each family and how our Preparation Course helped them. Here are some of the things they have said:

'It was wonderful to spend time with the family and to see the mum change and grow in confidence, and become more at peace and feel more empowered.'

'I have definitely been made more aware of the struggles some families are facing. I have learnt that patience and sensitivity are essential when listening to families, in order to find out how they most need help.'

'I think that the course really helps you understand that it is a privilege to be invited into someone's home and therefore it is more important to listen rather than to just do what you may feel you'd like to.'



Are you—or anyone you know—interested in becoming a Home-Start volunteer? To find out more, please visit our website at www.home-start-cotswolds.org.uk

Service Update

In addition to the delivery of 'lockdown parcels' to help our families, our volunteers and Coordinators are providing telephone support to parents.

Fortunately, we have not had any major staffing issues, as everyone is able to work from home—albeit with some family 'distractions'!

We are also continuing to share information via social media about other services and resources locally that might help our families. Recent examples include:

- A link to the Gloucestershire Breastfeeding Support Network, who have been providing free support from trained counsellors online at www.gbsn.org.uk
- Gloucestershire County Council has announced the first in a series of new mental health services, designed to help people during the current coronavirus pandemic. Anyone aged over 18 in Gloucestershire can now access free anonymous counselling from qualified counsellors via an online chat based platform at www.qwell.io. Chats can be booked via a drop-in service or booked sessions; there is no referral needed from a health professional, no waiting lists, and no criteria to meet in order to get support.



So do follow us on social media for similar updates:

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