

# Annual Report

April 2022-March 2023



Home-Start Cotswolds  
c/o Cirencester Baptist Church  
Chesterton Lane  
Cirencester  
Gloucestershire  
GL7 1YE

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Charity Number: 1110632

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**The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service**

*The MBE for volunteer groups*

# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

2023 is a big birthday for Home-Start, as we celebrate 50 years since the very first scheme was formed in Leicester. It is also 16 years since Home-Start began to support families in the Cotswolds, funded by £20,000 from the National Lottery. We've come a long way since then and today our annual funding requirements are over £145,000.

This year we have continued to see the huge toll that the pandemic and cost of living crisis have taken on families – creating more stress within family life and particularly affecting parents' emotional wellbeing. As a result there has been a steady increase in the need for our work and we feel so thankful for the commitment of all our volunteers who are generous with their time, energy and compassion supporting families in so many different ways.

We've also faced our own challenges in the past year – mainly in the area of staff recruitment. As an organisation, we recognise the incredible work that our staff do and, during the course of the year, we have reviewed our salary structure to reflect this and to help with future recruitment.

Interagency working is so important for an improved service to families. As well as working with local voluntary and community sector organisations, and health providers, we are fortunate to be part of the Home-Start network, giving us access to online training, webinars and additional funding opportunities. In September, staff and trustees attended a regional workshop event with 10 other Home-Start schemes from the Southwest of England, which was a great opportunity to exchange best practice and ideas.

Of course, none of our work would be possible without our generous funders and donors. We are very grateful for the support we continue to receive from The John Armitage Trust, Peter Lang Children's Trust and The National Lottery, as well as the many donations referred to later in this report.

Finally we would like to thank Cirencester Baptist Church, who provide us with an office in a great location and superb meeting room facilities for all our training.

*Steve Kaufmann*

Steve Kaufmann  
Chair of Trustees



Steve Kaufmann with Peter Grigg,  
Chief Executive of Home-Start UK



***As a health visitor I have found Home-Start Cotswolds to be an invaluable service. This year they have helped my family referrals with mental health, isolation, lack of local family support, lone parenting and a child with complex health and developmental needs." Michelle Clancy, Health Visitor***

# OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Margaret Harrison, the founder of Home-Start, was an experienced community work volunteer. She realised that what many families lacked “was another parent who would understand their experience, would listen, care and have fun with them—someone to share and help in a practical, down-to-earth way”. With a grant of £1,936pa, the first Home-Start was formed and 50 years later, in 2023, Home-Start has grown into a network of 182 local charities supporting 38,000 families with 65,000 children in the UK. Home-Start also works in 20 countries across the world.



At Home-Start Cotswolds, we aim to provide early support to families across the region, to help give children the best possible start in life. Our qualified staff team and trained volunteers provide weekly home support, postnatal groups and maternal mental health groups, for families with at least one child under five. Working alongside families, we build strong relationships with parents and children, supporting them with issues such as isolation, mental health, disability, play, parenting skills, cooking and healthy eating.



Trustees Richard Waller, Hilary Morris and David Pointet at the Community Health & Wellbeing Week in Cirencester, June 2022

Over the past 17 years, we have developed a vibrant and effective Home-Start community across the Cotswolds, made up of staff, trustees, volunteers, families and funders. We are members of a consortium of three Home-Start schemes working across the whole of Gloucestershire. We also belong to a UK network of Home-Start charities who all share the same objectives to safeguard, protect and preserve the good health – both mental and physical – of children and their parents.

# STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

## MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Steve Kaufmann (Chair), Clare Baker (Safeguarding Adviser), Tony Jones (Company Secretary), Carla Partridge (Treasurer), Chris Hall, Carolyn Ford, Richard Waller, David Pointet and Mike Hellens (left March 2023).

Trustees are unpaid volunteers from a variety of backgrounds, responsible for governance, financial and strategic planning. The staff are responsible for the day-to-day operation of the scheme and report to the trustees on a regular basis.

The trustees meet bi-monthly with advisors and they form the Management Committee. There are three Sub-Committees (Personnel; Finance; Profile and Fundraising) that meet regularly and report back to the full committee. It is Home-Start policy that a trustee only serves for a maximum of three years before being subject to an election.



Carla Partridge (Trustee) speaking at the AGM 2022

In March, we were sad to say goodbye to Mike Hellens, who has been with us for six years and was a member of our Profile and Fundraising sub-committee. We are currently recruiting for new Trustees with experience of HR, fundraising and IT.



Staff, trustees and baby Dot saying goodbye to Lynn, our North Cotswolds Coordinator since 2014

## STAFF

**Janice Gibson**, Senior Coordinator

**Katharine Campbell**, Senior Coordinator

**Liz Wilkinson**, Coordinator North Cotswolds (replaced Lynn Hurley in Nov 2022)

**Sophie Holland**, Group Coordinator (maternity leave)

**Emily Boston**, Group Coordinator (maternity cover)

**Danella (Dee) Weir**, Office Coordinator

**Sally Mason**, Administrator

**Karen Roberts**, Administrator (replaced Gillian Eames in Oct 2022)

All our staff work part-time and their combined hours amount to **3.6 FTE**.

# ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE 2022-2023

## FAMILIES

This year Home-Start Cotswolds has supported a total of **139** families. We offer a range of support, which includes:

**Home Visiting:** Weekly volunteer visits to families in their homes

**Baby & Me Postnatal Groups:** Eight-week support groups for new Mums and Dads

**Reconnect Perinatal Mental Health Groups:** Ten-week mental health support group for Mums

**Home Visiting:** We supported **66** families, including **139** children, with home visiting volunteers during the year. As many of us know, being a parent has never been easy; it can be lonely, frustrating and overwhelming. Often, our supported families have suffered from life changing events, such as illness, anxiety, relationship breakdown, financial worries or domestic abuse.



Bubble fun at our Summer Family Party, Aug 2022

When a family is referred to Home-Start, a volunteer is matched with them and will visit for up to three hours each week, building a trusting, supportive relationship. Our volunteers work alongside the families, helping them to overcome the challenges they are facing by offering a listening ear, friendship, encouragement to go out, ideas for play and signposting to other organisations.

### Referral circumstances for families supported by home visiting

**21** Lone parents

**13** Families with safeguarding issues

**53** Families with support for their mental health

**19** Families with physical health difficulties or disabilities

**12** Families who had experienced domestic abuse

**19** Families with significant financial issues

**11** Young parents aged under 25 yrs

**4** Parent care leavers

Throughout the year we are continually referring or signposting families to other support services, such as: Food Bank, P3 (support with budgeting & debts), Household Support Fund (financial help with the energy crisis), GDASS (domestic abuse service) and local playgroups. Our volunteers also help families to access these services and to attend medical appointments.

# ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE 2022-2023

## Group Work

This started in June 2021 and our Group Coordinator worked hard to develop new groups in Tetbury, Bourton-in-the-Water and Fairford. In 2022 we reviewed and adjusted our groups, making changes in response to feedback from parents, sourcing outside support to deliver some of the sessions and building good community relationships in each town where a group is held.

We have, however, experienced a few set backs. Firstly we had difficulty recruiting maternity cover for our Group Worker and, as a consequence, we had to put our Tetbury Baby & Me group on hold until September 2023. Secondly, it has taken longer than expected to build up attendance numbers, although we now have a circulation list of over 40 referrers and numbers are slowly growing. In 2022, a total of **73** families in the Cotswolds were supported by our groups as follows:



Baby & Me Group 2022 - Infant First Aid Session



### Reconnect Maternal Mental Health Group

**3** Reconnect groups (10 weeks each) were held in Bourton-in-the-Water with 23 families attending.



### Baby & Me Postnatal Groups

**8** Baby & Me groups (8 weeks each) were held in 2022 with 50 families attending over the year. These were held in Bourton-in-the-Water and Fairford.

## Dad Matters Gloucestershire

Funded by the Tudor Trust, Home-Start offers Dad Matters support to Dads across the county, to help them have the best possible relationship with their families. This is provided through groups both online and in person, run by a growing team of volunteer Dad Champions. For more information, please go to: [www.dadmatters.org.uk/gloucestershire/](http://www.dadmatters.org.uk/gloucestershire/)

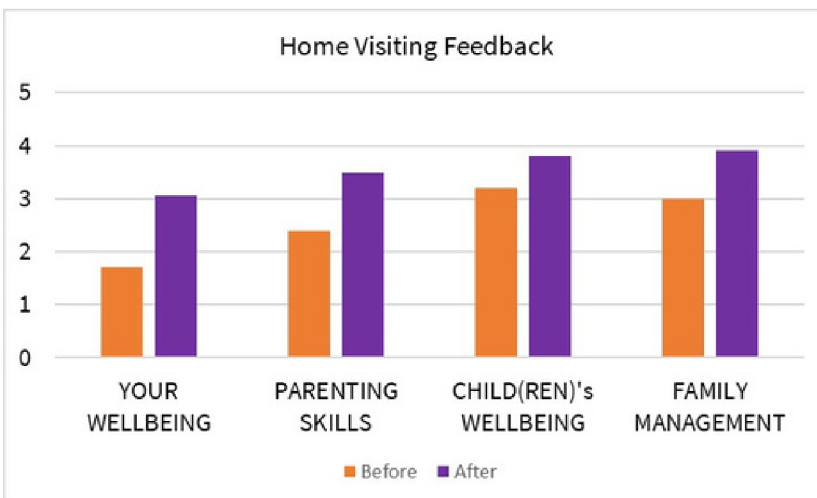
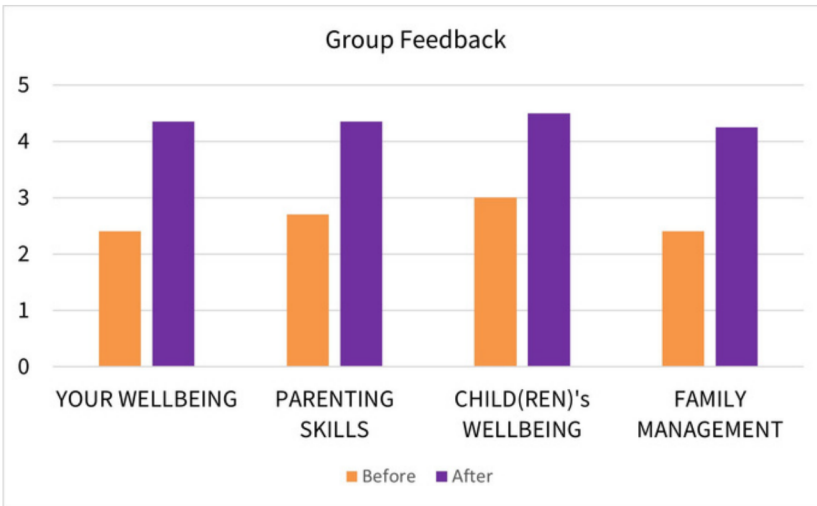


## Measuring Family Outcomes

It is important that we measure the effectiveness of the support we are providing for families. We use CharityLog, a database that asks parents questions to help them assess how they and their family are coping with different areas of family life. For home visiting, this assessment is completed at the beginning of support and then at each review visit. For group work, the assessment is completed at the end of the group (please see page 7 for our outcome data.) We also collect anecdotal evidence from parents throughout the year.

# ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE 2022-2023

## Family Outcomes



Since 2021, we have been working with the University of Gloucestershire to produce an evaluation report showing the impact of our work on families in the county. The analysis took data from pre and post intervention assessments with families who were supported by home visiting and groups. The first phase of this report was finalised in 2022 and the findings show that Home-Start is having a significantly positive impact on family outcomes in all the areas of support we provide. The next stage of the research will involve a qualitative study; interviewing parents who have accessed our home visiting services to help us understand parents' experience of our support.



The chart on the left shows outcomes from the groups we held in 2022-23. The scores have been averaged over all the groups for both Baby & Me and Reconnect. Parents were asked to rate how they felt before and after attending groups, using the scale:

0 = not coping very well to 5 = coping very well.

***"It has given me more information and also confidence with dealing with my baby."***  
**(Mum attending Baby & Me)**

The Home visiting data (left) shows a snapshot of the outcomes of three families who finished support in 2022-23. Parents were asked to rate how they felt at Initial, Review and End visits, using the scale:

0 = not coping very well to 5 = coping very well.

***"It has allowed us to have some time apart, so I could relax and recharge my batteries. I live in the middle of nowhere and have no family or friends near me. I felt so alone and like my baby wasn't getting any interaction with the outside world and other babies. I felt huge mum guilt. The group made me excited about the week ahead, looking forward to seeing people and talking to other mums. My baby loved it and I felt that guilt lift."***  
**(Mum attending Reconnect)**

# ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE 2022-2023

## VOLUNTEERS

Simply put, our volunteers are the heart of our service. It is impossible to mention everything they do in a year to help families feel appreciated, heard, valued and supported. Giving a morning or afternoon of their time each week, they provide immense understanding and patience as they listen, reassure, encourage and accompany families through their difficult times. By helping with practical issues such as transport, form filling, cooking, play and outings, they relieve the stress of family life and improve home life for children.

At the time of writing, we have **46** trained volunteers. Throughout the year we have continued to support them with regular supervision, training and peer support groups. In 2022-2023 this included three peer support sessions, a Gong Bath session, Christmas lunch and training on Safeguarding, Domestic Abuse in Pregnancy, and Coercive Control.

In early 2023, **8** new volunteers were recruited and trained in the North Cotswolds. The 40-hour training course was held over eight weeks.



New Volunteers Training 2023



South Cotswolds Volunteer Christmas Lunch 2022

**“ I thought the course was interesting, informative and very well delivered with knowledgeable course leaders and detailed handouts. ” (Trainee volunteer)**

**“ The Mum was new to the area so had no support network and spent most of her day in the house. Her youngest was in nursery and the older daughter was at school. There was no parent role model for the Mum, who had a turbulent history. I learnt the importance of not judging the family you are supporting. The Mum felt that so many agencies were telling her what to do or criticising what she was doing, and she just needed someone who would listen, see first hand what she was actually doing and be there to support her. ” (Home-Start Volunteer)**



North Cotswolds Volunteer Christmas Lunch 2022

# HOW IS HOME-START COTSWOLDS FUNDED?

## GRANTS

John Armitage Charitable Trust

Peter Lang Children's Trust

The National Lottery

NHS Gloucestershire CCG (ICB)

Barnwood Trust

Gloucestershire Community Foundation

**INCOME:**  
**£121,517**

**EXPENDITURE:**  
**£126,211**

**Thank You!**  
To everyone who  
has supported us  
during the year

## DONATIONS

Bridget Plant

Cirencester Quakers

Groundwork UK (Tesco Tokens)

Cotswold Auction Company

Savills (Northleach)

White Stuff

Sir Edward Horsfall

Little Farringdon Bonfire

Bibury PCC

HWM Building Services

Hatherop School

Lechlade and District Lions Club

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibility to identify, assess and manage risks and ensure we take action as necessary. We retain reserves at 60% of annual expenditure, in line with our policy. A copy of the audited Annual Accounts for 2022-2023 is available on our website.

# LOOKING AHEAD TO 2023-2024

Without our volunteers and staff, Home-Start Cotswolds would not be the success that it is. But equally, trustees have a vital role to play, which is why we continue to search for new trustees to join and strengthen our team. I am now stepping down as Chair after four years and, as part of our plan to continue developing our Board, I am delighted to announce that Carla Partridge, our current Treasurer, will take over from me and continue to bring her enthusiasm and professionalism to the role.

As we look forward into 2023-24, we will continue to work in close partnership with other statutory and voluntary agencies across the Cotswolds – and our Consortium partners – to ensure consistent provision of support to families who are facing difficulties. As well as providing our core service of supporting families with volunteer visits, we intend to expand our group offering and look forward to our continued partnership with Dad Matters.

**Steve Kaufmann**  
**Chair of Trustees**  
**For and on behalf of the Trustees**  
**May 2023**



**“** *I reached out to Home -Start when I was struggling to get back into things after having my third little one, and having a history of anxiety/low mood. I was placed with a lovely lady – she was my friend when I felt like I was alone; supportive and kind. We did days out together and she showed me I had nothing to fear, and that I could cope. She always checked up on me when I didn't see her. She was amazing with all three of my children. I am now going out on my own and not fearing it. I'm not pushing myself to be 'the best mummy' – there is no such thing. I am doing my best and that is good enough.”*  
**(Mum supported by home visits)**



**Office address:** Home-Start Cotswolds, c/o Cirencester Baptist Church, Chesterton Lane, Cirencester, Gloucestershire GL7 1YE

**Registered Office:** 203 Alexander Drive, Cirencester, GL7 1UH

**Bank:** Lloyds, PO Box 1000, Andover, BX1 1LT

**Accounts:** Independently examined by McGills, Oakley House, Tetbury Road, Cirencester, Gloucestershire, GL7 1US

Home-Start Cotswolds is a Registered Charity (since July 2005) and a Company limited by guarantee.

Company Registration number: **5468592**

Charity Registration number: **1110632**

As an independent charity we work under the umbrella of Home-Start UK.