

HOME START

Craigavon

Because tomorrow
starts today



ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024
HOME-START CRAIGAVON

Home-Start Mission

Home-Start is a community network of trained volunteers and expert support helping families with young children through challenging times. That means we are there for parents when they need us most because childhood can't wait.

We are parents supporting parents.

We work alongside parents to help them regain their confidence. Home-Start helps parents be the best they can be. There is no judgement, just compassionate, confidential help and expert support. Starting in the home, our approach is as individual as the families we work with.

Today families face more pressures than ever and the services that could help them are stretched or non-existent. Without stable homes, young children won't build the foundations they need to thrive as adults. A child's earliest years are irreplaceable and the first five years of a child's life are critical. Once the chance is missed, making up lost ground in later life is difficult, expensive and often just doesn't happen.

A better start in life can change a child's future.

Home-Start makes sure those years count so that no child's future is limited. Because tomorrow starts today.

Our Board of Directors 2023/2024

Our Trustees are also volunteers, giving time, knowledge and experience to direct and oversee the work of the scheme.

Chairperson	Joe Garvey
Vice Chair	Geraldine Haughian
Secretary	Carol Halferty
Treasurer	Dorothy Trainor
Independent Trustee	Margaret Young
Volunteer Rep	Marie Therese McDowell
Advisor	Lisa McClean



Staff

Co-ordinator	Deborah Millar
Scheme Support	Reda Matuseviciene



♥ Kay Lawson ♥
♥ 1944-2024 ♥

Chairperson's Report



Another year of successful support for local families.

This is how I would best describe the past year for Home-Start Craigavon.

In Home-Start Craigavon we still strongly believe in home-visiting, complemented with additional supports. 45 families in total were supported over the year with 26 receiving specifically home-visiting support.

Despite the universal difficulty recruiting volunteers across the community & voluntary sector, we managed to deliver our home-visiting service with 12 very active and committed volunteers. Home-visiting remains our most in demand service due to the weekly support being provided in families own homes where the children are most content in their own natural environment.

We also catered for families who were reluctant to leave their homes to join in group activities. Our online counselling sessions proved to be very beneficial in reducing depression and building confidence in the context of parenting.

During the year we embarked on two parenting programmes to support families. The Mellow parenting programme for parents with children 1½ - 5 years, which took place in the Chrysalis Centre, was very well received by parents and had an excellent evaluation outcome. The Trust funded Parent Information Programme, was a 19-week face to face programme for parents with children 0-4 months, with a wide range of activities. Home-Start Craigavon continues to



be one of the key organisations in the support of children under 5 years in the Lurgan, Craigavon & Portadown area and the only one that provides weekly support to families in their own home.

Our success, of course, relies on our great group of volunteers whose only motive is to help families with young children where some support can make all the difference. I must really thank the volunteers for all the work they do.

I must also thank Reda for supporting the Co-ordinator with all the administrative duties and as Co-facilitator in the parenting programmes.

It was a significant year for Deborah, our Co-ordinator, who celebrated 25 years in the role and even decided to do a cycle run from Vietnam to Cambodia to raise funds for Home-Start Craigavon. Her dedication, professionalism and tenacity to provide support for young children and their families is incredible.

I must also commend my fellow Trustees for their dedication, as running schemes like Home-Start with increasing demand and a challenging Government budgetary situation, is not always easy.

Lastly, I must thank all our parents and especially the children who have we have been engaged with over the past year. You are paramount in our objectives.

Joe Garvey

Joe Garvey – Chairperson



Co-ordinator's Report and Events during the Year 2024

For the year 23/24 Home-Start Craigavon supported 45 families with 12 volunteers. 20 families were home-visited by a volunteer; 6 were home-visited alongside a parenting course; 18 participated in a parenting course; 1 accessed counselling. As Home-Start Craigavon's target is to support 30 families through home-visiting, supporting 45 families is a massive achievement.

Scheme Activities

Family Support

Home-visiting support through our unpaid volunteers continues to be our most in demand service. No other service in the Craigavon area provides weekly support to families in their own home, with young children, for an average of 6 months to one year support or longer if necessary.

Online Counselling

The online counselling for families who are anxious about leaving their house can benefit from free sessions to encourage independence, reduce depression and build confidence in their parenting.

Mellow Parenting Programme

Home-Start delivered a face to face Mellow toddlers programme for 5



Mums with children ages 1½ - 5 years in partnership with the Chrysalis Women's Centre. The evaluated Mellow programme looks at topics such as: baby & toddler development; emotional regulation; resilience; healthy relationships and flexible thinking and was scored highly by parents, especially in areas of parental wellbeing & improved relationships with their children.

Parent Infant Programme (PIP)

9 Mums attended the 19 week face to face Programme which included: 5 weeks Baby Massage; 8 weeks Incredible Babies; 2 weeks Sleep Support and 4 weeks Baby Sensory.



PIP Mums also benefited from the Health Visitors' talk 'Wee Brains Matter', Relate's Golden Threads training on Healthy Relationships, a fun session with Moo Music, Forest Bathing & Baby Grounding, Women's Regional Development Agency 'Maternal Advocacy Support' Programme seminar, NSPCC Look Say Sing Play Resources & online supports, picnic in Edenvilla Park & trip to South Lakes Leisure Centre Sensory Room, Support in use of Tech tools eg weekly Padlet posts & conversations with fun quizzes on Mentimeter & Kahoot apps.

PARENT INFANT PROGRAMME

Have you a new baby aged 0-4 month in the Craigavon Borough area (not in Sure-Start area)?

New parent support programme starts on Wednesday 29th November 10-12pm in Craigavon Chrysalis Women's centre.



- Baby massage
- Incredible babies programme
- Sleep support
- Sensory play

Pre book: Contact HS Craigavon 028 38 345 357 or Chrysalis Women's Centre 028 38 341 846



Applications closing 4/11/23
Limited places remaining.



Angkor Wat Cambodia

Craigavon Civic Centre, the 'Mum Moves Ambassador' Training and the Bushcraft & the Promoting Well-being Team's 'Nurture in Nature' training. The NI Connection Forum, meeting the HSUK CEO Peter Grigg for the first time in person, was a great opportunity to meet up with other NI Schemes. The scheme continues to benefit from the Home-Start peer reflective Zoom group with other members from Home-Start schemes across the UK, looking at staff & scheme issues.

The Co-ordinator gave a successful talk to the local Health Visitor's, highlighting our core work and additional programmes. From this talk there have been an increase in appropriate referrals. Thank you to Lisa, our Board Advisor and HV Team Manager for arranging this.

Co-ordinator also enrolled on an online 20 week Stranmillis University Post-graduate 'Blended Learning' course fully funded by the NI Skill up Programme to develop tech tools within the Craigavon Scheme and to become a Tech Champion to encourage the use of digital skills across the other NI Schemes.

Partnership work continues as Chair for the Craigavon Locality Planning Group; CYPSP HUB and Splash Sure-Start Board and membership of the Southern Outcomes Group with attendance at their Action Planning Day.



Volunteer Group Supports & Preparation Course

3 new Home-visiting volunteers joined the Home-Start volunteer team and all enjoyed get togethers, coffee mornings and lunch at Jethro Centre, Café Vibe & Mount Zion House along with the other Trustee Volunteers.

Scheme Training

The Scheme continues to be part of the local community by attending events and membership of local Boards and Committees.

The scheme continues to keep abreast of current community information by attending the 'Eliminate Violence for a new Beginning' conference in

Fundraising and 25 years as Home-Start Co-ordinator

To celebrate 25 years as Home-Start Craigavon Co-ordinator on 1st December 2023, I successfully cycled Vietnam to Cambodia in November and raised approximately £500 along with great profile raising of Home-Start. Very hot with long hours on the bike! Memories to last a lifetime.



Thank you to Ryan McCann, my son, who also climbed Kilimanjaro to raise funds for Home-Start and increase PR with Home-Start T-Shirt Travels.

I am very appreciative of the gold bracelet and cake presented to me at my 25th Celebration Anniversary meal by



my volunteers and Trustees. Home-Start is still the wonderful, caring & inspirational charity it was when I started in 1998, as a young, enthusiastic and very idealistic Co-ordinator all those years ago!



Acknowledgements, Thank you and Goodbyes.

To the trustees and volunteers: who continue to support families and the Scheme.

To Joe Garvey as Chair for all his time and continued dedication. Also for the well-deserved King's Honour BEM Award for services to the community received this year.

To Reda: for her friendship, valuable insights and ongoing support in the Scheme.

To our current Funders: SHSCT & ABC Council.

To all our partners in the community this year in helping us to continue to support families.

To the families, the parents and children of Home-Start for being part of this wonderful journey of support together.

Good luck to Eelco and Dorothy, Home-Start Managers that I have worked with for more than 20 years, hope you enjoy a well-deserved retirement.

A final goodbye to our past trustee Kay, may you rest in peace and farewell to the most inspiring Co-ordinator, Margaret Thompson from Home-Start Antrim, your legacy will live on in the families, volunteers and colleagues whose lives you touched with genuine kindness, fun and friendship. Gone but not forgotten. xo



Deborah Millar
Deborah Millar
Co-ordinator 25 years





Co-ordinator - 25 years
1st Dec 2023



Volunteer Comments

“ I wanted to give something back to my community as I had been helped by others when my husband passed away. I know others who had volunteered so I got in contact with Home-Start. ”

I was contacted by Deborah and she took us through our volunteer preparation course which was amazing. It was informative and a real eye opener to what as volunteers we could help with.

I was placed with a lovely family who just needed some day to day support. To be honest I was scared at first but I soon settled with the family. I helped the Mum with the young children and we went shopping etc. I was someone the Mum could have a chat with and I think we both benefitted with this.

I would really recommend becoming a volunteer and I am looking forward to being placed with my next family.

Catherine



Volunteer Representative Report

“ This year we celebrated a milestone anniversary in Home-Start Craigavon, 25 years since our Co-ordinator Deborah began working here. ”

So much has changed within those 25 years, the way we communicate, digital technology, the saturation of daily life with social media. Political faces have come and gone, we've had a recession, a pandemic and a cost of living crisis.

Through all these changing times, families still need support and that is where the Home-Start Craigavon volunteers continue to step in. 2 to 3 hours, once a week of dedicated time spent listening, building confidence, empowering families in their daily lives.

A volunteer turns up, on the doorstep, every week and goes into the family home. It might be a good week or a tough week, a house full of chaos or a lonely place for mum, clean and tidy floors or toys and laundry everywhere but each week, the volunteer comes back and does it all again.

No expectations or judgements. We're not about Instagram likes or picture-perfect moments. We don't come with magic wands or quick fixes. Every family is unique and each family faces different challenges along the way.

I continue to believe in the enormous value of our volunteers and time spent with families in the family home. I hope we can continue to recruit and train volunteers for Home-Start Craigavon to help families for another 25 years.

Marie Therese McDowell
Volunteer Representative



Family Comments 2024



We asked for help as I was completely overwhelmed by household chores, often feeling isolated, with no family support. Having a 1 year old baby and severely disabled 4 year old, I just wasn't coping, which was affecting my mental health.

My volunteer came and played with the kids in the house while I did some housework, at the same time having a friendly chat and cup of tea. The simple but massive difference it made was having a break from the kids, having company and getting the house back in shape again.

My volunteer was fantastic, a really lovely person and glad to have met her.

Jeanette



I am a first-time mum to my baby boy and also a single mum. I am 38 years old and I have no friends. I was finding motherhood very lonely especially in those first couple of weeks. I have plenty of family that are very supportive but had no peers that I could confide in or chat to about new motherhood struggles.

When I saw the advert for the Home-Start Parent/Infant Programme (PIP) I was excited as I didn't live in a Sure-Start area and having only one income and being on maternity leave, the other mum and baby classes were quite expensive.

The first day that we had class, I was so nervous to walk in and meet everyone but Deborah and Reda made everyone





feel at ease and comfortable. It wasn't long before we were all chatting and being asked to focus on the baby massage!

The Programme was run over a 19 x week period and there were 4 topics that we covered: Baby Massage; Incredible Babies; Sleep support; Baby sensory. Out of the 4 subjects I would have to say that Baby Sensory was my favourite. We got to go and explore local services that I can now take my baby



to myself. My son loves being outdoors and Home-Start brought us to a new park that he now really loves.

The Mums all started a WhatsApp group and we regularly chat and ask questions about our children's development. We meet up and go for walks and there's always someone there to chat to when you're feeling low.

Taking part in the Home-Start PIP Programme gave me a bit of confidence to know that what I am doing with my baby is right and to learn new ways to help him develop.

It's a great programme for new Parents as the Mummies are all there for the same reason - to meet new people, to develop new skills and to gain confidence in looking after our new babies.

April





stability and wellbeing. Our volunteer's dedication and expertise have been invaluable, making a meaningful difference in our daily needs!

Genevieve



We sought Home-Start services to provide comprehensive support for our family, including emotional, practical, and social assistance. During her visits, the volunteer engages in activities such as providing emotional support and offering guidance on accessing additional community resources. She has also connected us with healthcare services, financial aid programmes, and educational workshops.

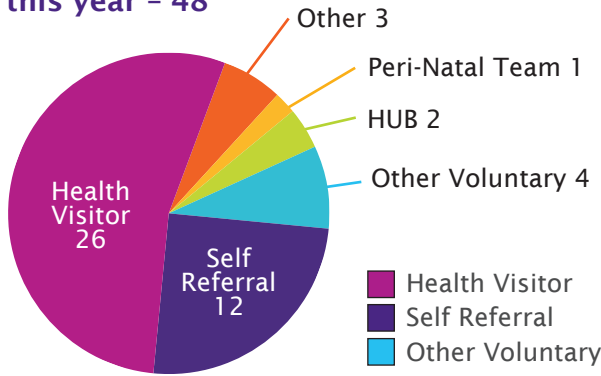
Her involvement has significantly improved our quality of life, reducing stress and fostering a sense of





Families' Statistics

Total Number of Referrals made this year – 48



Total Number of Families supported 45

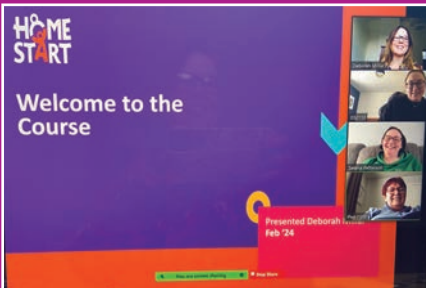
Number of Families supported through Home Visiting	26
Number of One Parent Families	6
Number of ethnic minority families	12

Total Number of Children Supported 95

Under 5	65
Over 5	30

Families for whom Home Visiting support has ceased and length of support 26

Up to 6 months	19
6 months to 1 year	7



Our Home Visiting Volunteers 2023/2024

Marie Therese, Reda, Patricia, Yvonne, Sonya, Kat, Natasha, Christopher, Rachel, Selena, Sharon, Carrie.

Volunteer Statistics:

Available during year – 12
 Recruited – 3 Left – 4

Securing a Better Future for Families

What are family's needs?

These figures are based on Home-Start Monitoring and Evaluation System. It seeks to identify the reason why families look to Home-Start for support and how they consider their needs to be met. Out of the 14 families whose Home Visiting and group support ended this year, who had completed an ending form, the majority expressed that their needs had been achieved, or partially achieved.

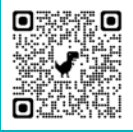
Title	Total Families	Need Achieved	Need Partially Achieved	Need Not Achieved
1. Managing children's behaviour, listening to children and respecting their rights	6	5	1	0
2. Being involved in the children's development/early learning and socialisation	7	6	1	0
3. Coping with physical health	3	3	0	0
4. Coping with mental health	13	9	4	0
5. Coping with feeling isolated	11	7	4	0
6. Parents self-esteem	13	11	2	0
7. Coping with child's physical health	1	1	0	0
8. Coping with child's mental health	1	0	1	0
9. Managing the household budget	0	0	0	0
10. The day-to-day running of the home	7	5	2	0
11. Stress caused by conflict in the family	4	2	2	0
12. Coping with extra work of multiple children under 5	2	1	1	0
13. Use of services	9	7	2	0
14. Other	0	0	0	0
15. Parents own learning needs	1	0	1	0



Volunteer Befrienders needed in HOME-START CRAIGAVON

- Visit a local family
- Fantastic Volunteer training
- Feel valued
- Make a difference
- Have fun!

Book your
place now
We can't wait
to meet
You!



**HOME
START**
Craigavon

All you need is -

- parenting experience
- be a good listener
- non judgemental
- Visit a family with young children 1-2 hrs a week



"Training was very fun and informative and it was great to meet new people."

Phone 028 3834 5357 or
DM homestart.craigavon@btopenworld.com

**Because
tomorrow
starts today**



"I was treated as a friend from day one and that made me trust my volunteer immediately, I didn't feel like a "case."

More supported by Home-Start

3/4

of volunteers say that volunteering improves their mental health

HOME
START



"We are parents supporting parents"

HOME-START CRAIGAVON

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