



HOME START North Down



Annual Report 2023-24



Manager's Introduction

During the year 1st April 2023-31st March 2024 the organisation has undergone some change mostly as a result of some key funding coming to an end (most notably a 3 year grant from BBC Children in Need) and the difficult funding environment that we, and all community and voluntary sector organisations are experiencing at present.

One of the changes was moving out of our premises on High Street to reduce our overheads in relation to running a large premises which also meant closing our Community Café which was very difficult for us all. Our group work and family support staff team has also reduced in number throughout the course of the year having been unable to renew some staff contracts.

However, there have been a number of really positive developments including our continued support from the South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust through renewal of our Service Level Agreement for this year. We continue to sit on the Ards and North Down Family Support Hub and have strengthened links with North Down Community Network. It was a real pleasure to be invited to the King's Garden Party in May '23 by the Mayor of Ards & North Down Borough council and to meet Chris Quinn the incoming Commissioner for Children and Young People in NI in March '24 and introduce him to our work. Some effective new partnerships and collaborations have developed including; working with Bangor Foodbank and Community Support, who now provide us with their purpose-built premises 2 days a week to enable us to deliver our weekly Groups, Bangor Elim Church who donated the use of their Church Hall with bouncy castle for our Christmas Party and partnering with Bangor Sure Start to deliver family support, attend events and their offer of the use of premises and finally attracting some new funders including the ARN Foundation and the Albert Hunt Trust. We are grateful to Balloons and Gifts by Erin (donations and balloon banner for Christmas Party), Tesco Community Champion (donating food for groups/events and children's clothes), the Salvation Army, Castle Espie and Nationwide who donated toys for our children at Christmas time. We have also benefitted from the generosity of Watertight International, a local business who have given us the use of a lockable storage unit and Board Room for staff meetings and volunteer training free of charge. I am extremely grateful to the staff team and their families for the support and practical help they gave which enabled the office move.



I am delighted to say that despite a very challenging year, this has not affected the quality or level of support provided to families. We have successfully delivered on all our targets with the hard work, skill and dedication of the staff team, along with our truly incredible Volunteers. Our volunteers help with Family Groups, programmes, seasonal activities and home visiting support. We delivered a Volunteer Preparation course in September welcoming 4 new Volunteers to the team. I am continually amazed by the commitment, enthusiasm, care, knowledge and talents that the volunteers of Home-Start North Down consistently offer so generously, and how many volunteers we have, which is what makes the Home-Start Family Support offer so special and effective and a testament to the organisation for the care it takes over the recruitment, training, support and development of its volunteer family.



I am pleased for you to now read on and hear what we have achieved this year, with some uplifting feedback and responses from 'our' Home-Start families.

Vision

Home-Start exists to support families with young children through difficult times to ensure that each child has the best possible start in life.

Home-Start North Down has been operating in the Bangor area since early 1989 offering confidential support, friendship and practical help to parents in the community, including Bangor, Conlig, Donaghadee and Holywood.

Objectives

- **To support the development of Parenting Skills** by supporting the development of early relationships between parents and children and through encouraging stimulating play and activities which support the development of language and cognitive skills
- **To support Parents' well-being** by helping them cope with their own physical health, mental health and self-esteem and reducing any feelings of isolation
- **To support children's well-being** by supporting parents in caring for children and promoting children's health and physical, social and emotional development, and early identification and support of children with emotional, learning or behavioural difficulties
- **To support overall family management** by providing support with household budgets, home management, stress in the home or other issues as appropriate to each family.

Outcomes for Families

- ✓ Improved children's well-being
- ✓ Reduced isolation
- ✓ Increased confidence
- ✓ Improved language development and/or socialisation (child)
- ✓ Improved family management
- ✓ Foster secure emotional attachment
- ✓ Improved access to health promotion advice
- ✓ Increased self-efficacy (belief in their own ability)



Activities, Achievements and Performance

Home-Start North Down has delivered a programme of support for families with pre-school children in North Down to include:

1:1 volunteer home visiting, weekly Family Group and weekly Baby Group, 1:1 Family Support from HS staff, outdoor summer activities, school readiness programme, Christmas Party for all families and the delivery of Evidence Based Parenting Programmes (Incredible Years and Partnering with Parents).

96
Families
Supported

128
Children's
lives
transformed

130
Referrals
received

34
Families
signposted

33
packages of
home visit
support

10 parents
completing
Incredible
Years

69% of
referrals from
Health
Visitors

77% of
parents referred
had a mental
health difficulty

38
Volunteers

What Difference did we make?

We asked those who had participated in Home-Start Support for some feedback – here are some of the key findings:

Q. How much do you feel your family has benefited from coming to the Family Group?
100% scored 5/5 on a scale of 0-5 (0= not at all 5= very much)

For Parents:

Q. Did you feel it was beneficial in any of the below areas?

Reduced feelings of isolation	90%
Made new friends	90%
Information/advice	95%
Practical help with children	90%
Reassurance	85%
Increased confidence	85%
Having fun with my child	85%



For Children:

Q. Do you feel the group was beneficial to your child in any of the following ways:

Improved Social Skills	81%
Improved Communication Skills	76%
Enjoyment with Parent	81%
Learning Opportunities	95%
Increased Confidence	76%
Increased Independence	81%



'I can't put into words what you have all done for me, [my daughter] and my family. Over two years ago Home-Start came into my life when I was at my darkest place. You have supported me and guided me each step of the journey with my PND. I couldn't be who I am now without your help. [My daughter] has come on so much too. We will always hold a special place in our hearts for our Home-Start family. We will forever be grateful [for this] invaluable service.'

Home-Start North Down Parent 2024

Financial review

Income

Home-Start North Down was funded within the financial year 2023/2024 by a range of different organisations, donations and fundraising.

Organisations which provided us with funding included:-

● South Eastern Health & Social Care Trust	£54,743.87
● Awards for All	£9872.00
● ARN Foundation	£5000.00
● PHA – Seed Foundation	£5000.00
● The Sceptre Foundation	£2078.50
● The Blackburn Trust	£600.00
● Bangor Sure Start*	£16,152.00

*This funding paid for Home-Start staff to assist Sure Start in running their groups in Bangor and Donaghadee on a weekly basis throughout the year. We received four payments.

● Donaghadee Community Development Associations	£400.00
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For the Wee Wheels event and The Teddy Bears picnic which was part of the Donaghadee Festival.

Donations:-

● Donation from family -	£360.00
● Donation from Hybrid MMA Jujitsu Club	£100.00
● Donation from Amazon (they give us this each year)	£22.28

Fundraising:-

● Pop up Shop -	£849.98
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This income was generated by selling items that no longer needed in High Street (furniture, café equipment, toys, books etc.)

<u>Café:</u>	£1422.83
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This income was made in April - June before the café closed.

Income generated within the year	£96,601.46
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Other income:-

● Bank Interest	£659.70
● Statutory Maternity Pay (advanced payment)	£2631.13

Overall income	<u>£99,892.29</u>
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Expenditure

Breakdown:-

• Salaries (This includes Statutory Maternity Pay)	£91,748.78
• Professional Fees (Accounting/Access NI/Insurance/TAG/ membership)	£ 5,056.08
• Running Costs (including rent)	£18,902.10
• Café expenses	£ 1,113.63
• Expenses vol & staff /training/resources	£ 1,383.54
• Bank Fees	£ 127.60

Total expenditure in 2023 / 2024 **£118,331.73**

Reserves/Business Account

We used £22,545.01 from the business account this year. There was £12,539.06 of this used to take us to year end due to reduced funding income. £10,005.95 was used to pay salaries in line with NJC pay scales backdated to 1st April.



Trustees/Directors

The directors of the charitable company (the charity) are its trustees for the purpose of charity law. Our Trustees give of their time voluntarily to ensure the good governance of the organisation is maintained as well as ensuring it is meeting its strategic objectives and charitable purpose. The trustees and officers serving during the year were as follows:

Janice MacArthur (Chair until January 2024)
Charles Ballantyne (Acting Chair from January 2024)
Jenni Rice
Colin Miller
Cherie Getty
Louise McKee
Judith Smith

Staff Team



Kirsty Richardson
Janine Caldwell
Donna Hunter
Lindsay Murray
Jennifer Wills
Jacqueline McKeown
Norma Jess

Manager
Family Support Coordinator
Group Worker
Group Worker (until end August 2023)
Group Worker (until end August 2023)
Administrator
Finance Officer

Family Support Volunteers



One of our Volunteer Celebration events in June 2023

Suzanne Ferguson
Maureen Ellison
Carol Walters
Margaret Mitchell
Vivienne McCarthy
Katie McTurk
Ilona Boyd
Ingrid Bailie
Heather McCrackin
Angela O'Sullivan
Danielle McGloin
Suzanne Hunter
Ita Neeson

Susan Kelly
Lorraine Hume
Orla Edgar
Cas Power
Hayley Harrison
Julie Beattie
Margaret Brown
Zoe Donegan
Pamela Patton
Moira Stewart
Sarah Christie
June Pollock

Margaret Brown
Alice Kerr
Jacqueline Durkin
Janet Calvert
Heather Armstrong
Heather Tough
Sarah McClure
Samantha Wallace
Kelly-Anne Donnachie
Barbara McCavana
Lorraine Alexander
Michelle Field





Charity number: NIC106098
Company number: NI022755

4 Bingham Street
Bangor
BT20 5DW

info@homestartnorthdown.org.uk
www.homestartnorthdown.org.uk