

HOME START

Herefordshire

2020- 2021



Unit 1

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Registered Charity No 1113432 · Company No 5659978

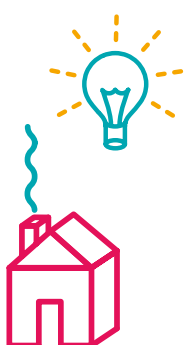
GIVE
A LITTLE
LOVE

Emergency supplies and donations

Due to the financial strain brought about by self-isolation, shielding and job losses some of our families in the past year have reached the point of extreme hardship and many of these have struggled to put food on the table. Home-Start liaised with the countywide food banks on behalf of these families ensuring they were provided with food and toiletries, as well as items such as baby formula, nappies and pet food when required. Morrison's in Ross-On-Wye gave dried, long life food to add to our food parcels. In addition an ex-service user kindly raised funds throughout the year via their family business in order to purchase food parcels of fresh produce which we could distribute to the families in need. In collaboration, The Sunshine Radio Christmas appeal and the toy donations from Haines Watts were enormous this year, providing us with an abundance of Christmas gifts to distribute to the families we support, including small gifts for the parents/carers. No child went without on Christmas day.

With core funding and donations from Asda, Waitrose and TM Factors, we were able to create Easter food and activity packs for all the families, with additional items such as Easter chocolates and crafts which we distributed around the county on Good Friday. Mother's day saw more lovely donations from Body Shop at Home and Waitrose so each mother/carer, had a little pamper pack delivered.

The Waitrose, #Give a little love campaign resulted in two hampers for our Christmas and Easter raffles and with the generous donations of knitted toys and gifts from volunteers and friends, our Christmas online shop sold out and the raffles were great fundraisers.



Andy Walkden Chair of Trustees

It has been another tough year for Home-Start with Corona virus still dominating the news and influencing what we can and cannot do. As I write this I look back upon my Chair statement from the last annual report and it almost seems as if nothing has changed: we are still looking at relaxing restrictions after the COVID resurgence from last year, and returning to “normality” is again threatened by another anticipated resurgence of the virus. A beneficial change though has been the introduction of the vaccines and I was delighted when Home-Start was informed that staff and home visiting volunteers classed as key workers and could have their vaccinations that bit earlier. A game-changer for Home-Start, it has helped volunteers to return to safely supporting families face to face - both outside and in the home much earlier than first expected.



I thank the people who are essential to making the Home-Start service possible. Our home visiting volunteers continue to be amazing, showing huge resilience in taking on board the extra safety precautions so that Home-Start continued to deliver help when and where children and families needed it. Volunteers could not do this without the help and support of the staff, who working exceptionally hard with occasional personal sacrifice, have kept Home-Start running.

With both thanks and sadness we have said goodbye to Alison this year. After thirteen years with Home-Start and facing increasing challenges with her health, she has taken the incredibly difficult decision to step back. Her work in recruiting volunteers and promoting what Home-Start does has been invaluable over the years and it is fair to say Home-Start would not be as strong an organisation without her efforts. You will be a hard (if not impossible) act to follow Alison, however we all wish you well for the future and thank you for your support over the years.



I thank also the people and organisations who most crucially help fund the work of Home-Start to support children and their families. We are already seeing the impact of the pandemic on their health and wellbeing and it is certain that the need for services like Home-Start provides will be there for years to come as a result. So my plea to funders is please continue to support what we do.

To meet these challenges, the Home-Start trustees are working hard to strengthen Home-Start from the board downwards. And I thank my fellow trustees for their continued support in ensuring Home-Start remains a “fit for purpose” organisation and sticking with all the changes we have gone through. By undertaking a reflective and self-evaluation exercise we have pinpointed some areas of Home-Start to focus on, partly due to the pandemic but also to keep up with internal and external changes. We are keen to work with volunteers, staff and stakeholders to learn from experiences over the last year and shape the strategic direction of Home-Start for the future. Another focus is to strengthen the board with the addition of two new faces, if you or someone you know might be interested please do get in touch. In one of my messages to staff and volunteers during the year I said that to mark when the threat of Covid ends, I will have a little ceremony of burning one of my masks (I cannot think of anything more symbolic of the end of the pandemic than when the need to routinely wear masks has receded). It is still my intention to do so however I recognise pinpointing an exact date will be difficult as the need for society to prevent new variants spreading continues. I will do this though to honour two memories.

First is to honour those who lost their lives and the families who mourn them. Politicians will argue over how much tragedy might have been avoided however it does not take away the pain for these families and their need for more help than ever from Home-Start and others.

Second is to honour everyone who, to help others and when we thought things could not get any worse, gave up the one thing they never get back ...their time. When daily life was so difficult for everyone these people, including the staff and volunteers at Home-Start I have such respect for, found the time, space, commitment, energy, resilience and motivation to volunteer and/ or work beyond their contracted hours. It's a personal view, however I believe this is what has saved the country from meltdown more than anything else.

And I fervently hope the Chair's statement next year can avoid having to use the “C word”!
Thank you



Volunteer recruitment. Recruitment was always going to have its challenges in a year where social distancing was essential, but we can proudly say that we have been able to recruit and train seventeen new volunteers and two new trustees throughout the year (two 'blended learning' prep courses- forty hours of training each) in a safe way that abided by the national social distancing regulations. This involved flexibility on our part, by having to adapt some of the training to online provision. Barbara and Diane have been getting used to delivering virtual online training, as well as getting used to the changing covid guidelines, by ensuring appropriate PPE provision was in place in our two new training locations. This has also shown the generosity and selflessness of our newly recruited volunteers by giving their time in the midst of a national pandemic and being patient with our new ways of working. We were able to train them to the same high standard of the rest of our volunteers, enabling service continuation and effective delivery.

Volunteer guidelines and assistance. To assist our volunteers with remote working we provided "Guidance for supporting from a distance" resource packs which covered practical tips for making effective support phone/video calls and emails, guidance for providing emotional support to families, activities for the children to do at home, methods of supporting the parents to implement good routine and behaviour management for the children, coping with stress and looking after own mental wellbeing, and useful contact numbers. These packs were greatly appreciated by the volunteers, as for some distance support was quite a daunting prospect, but felt they were able to confidently approach it with some of the strategies provided. Many families responded well to email and phone call support, especially those we have found previously hard to engage, as they felt able to spend time noting down their feelings at times which may be more convenient to them. We have also found that teenagers and young adults have also liked this type of support as some reported feeling more confident using technology to disclose their worries and concerns, rather than speaking to someone face-to-face.



Trustee, Philippa Granthier: "I've worked alongside Home-Start Herefordshire for several years now and have always been impressed at the positive changes they achieve working with families in need of help. When the opportunity came up to be able to volunteer as a Trustee I jumped at the chance to be able to be more directly involved. It's been tough this last year with Covid, but the Board are an enthusiastic, committed group of people from all sorts of different backgrounds. It's been a real pleasure and honour to get to know them, to have some fun and feel as though I am making a real contribution to Herefordshire families."



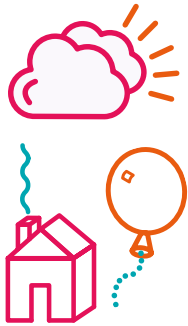
Trustee, Virginia Taylor: "I have had close links with Home-Start Herefordshire for the past 15 years, including as Chairman of their 25th Anniversary Appeal. Having always admired the vital work they do in helping young families in the local community, I recently rekindled my involvement by becoming a Trustee. It is a hugely rewarding and enjoyable experience to work with other committed and like-minded Trustees and to be able to actively contribute, in whatever way I can, to this very special local charity."



Mandie Preece Scheme Manager, Organisation adaption As an organisation we have found that all members of staff, volunteers and trustees have adapted to the situation and continued to provide the best support possible for some of Herefordshire's most vulnerable and fragile families, who have faced financial and emotional difficulties in this tough time. As our usual way of providing support was no longer feasible, our volunteers, who usually did in the home family visits have been keeping contact with their family via video calls, phone calls and emails, maintaining the lifeline of support and preventing loneliness. This has also allowed the continuation of practical advice such as assisting families virtually with home learning, managing children's difficult behaviours and maintaining a good routine. We have also supported families, both parents and children with the emotional toll of the lockdowns, by encouraging families to talk about how their feeling and providing techniques to maintain a families good overall emotional health

Mandie Preece Scheme Manager

The year 2020 and its arrival of Covid19 was unprecedented and brought with it great fear for everyone. Some families in Herefordshire who were already vulnerable and struggling, found themselves at crisis point, while others who would previously say they had been coping fine found themselves in situations of despair and hopelessness. As an organisation we had to rapidly and dramatically adapt our way of working, as the face-to-face volunteer befriending service we usually provided was no longer feasible in line with government guidelines and restrictions. Coupled with this we also experienced an increased need for our services support, as more families found themselves struggling due to the consequences of lockdown, isolation and poor health.



Keeping connected:

Our Marketing and volunteer recruitment Coordinator, Alison, regularly updated our social media pages enabling all supporters, staff, volunteers and families to stay informed about the continued work of our organisation and ways of accessing our/other organisations support if required. In addition we also provided links to fun activities for children to do at home, as well as practical support for parents, in terms of parenting advice, stress management and coping strategies. Regular updates concerning national and local advice was also provided in regards to the Covid19 situation, with links to key messages from the Children's Commissioner, Adult and Children's Safeguarding, Public Health and the NHS, ensuring the provision of appropriate and accurate information. In addition to this our President Alex James read and recorded children's stories which we uploaded on social media, with feedback from many families stating their children's enjoyment of these sessions.

Educational support:

Due to the closure of schools, many children were struggling with home schooling, whether that was practically (i.e. having access to equipment such as laptops) or emotionally (i.e. stress of not having a teacher to assist them). This could lead to tension within the family home, often resulting in conflict between the child and their parents/carers. Home-Start was able to assist remotely with this by providing virtual volunteer support to encourage child engagement with their lessons and provide practical tips for parents to improve children's challenging behaviours. Many of our volunteers provided additional support sessions on top of the average two hours/weekly they would usually provide in recognition of the difficulties the children were experiencing. Home-Start were also able to liaise with the schools if it was felt by the child that they weren't coping with the work set, and this enabled the schools to recognise the struggles and provide additional resources. This has allowed better engagement for many of our children in their home learning, improving their productivity and ensuring a continuation with their education. We also recognised the importance of more vulnerable children attending school if places were available, supporting parents to access this if they so wished, and liaising with schools about the child's progress to ensure the child was supported adequately. This ensured the needs of the child were met and that they were safeguarded effectively

Emotional support:

In light of the pandemic, the worries and concerns of the children we support have been seen to change, and thus we as an organisation have adapted accordingly. Many of our children were expressing anxiety surrounding the current global situation in terms of concerns about mortality, and illness, while others were expressing increased self-confidence issues, and social anxiety due to increased time spent at home. Our volunteers were able to rationalise some of these fears for the children by providing age-appropriate facts relating to the pandemic, enabling the child to understand their fears more appropriately, reducing the occurrence of catastrophizing thoughts and its consequent anxiety. Furthermore many volunteers were able to work with the confidence issues some of our children were having by encouraging more positive thinking patterns, identifying the negative self-thoughts and countering them and encouraging self-care. This work was especially beneficial for some of our young people who without the distraction of school, friends and extra-curriculum activities found themselves in a cycle of negative self-thinking. By encouraging the development of a healthy routine, (virtual) social contact and engagement in positive activities, many of our young people reported an improvement in their self-esteem and confidence.

As an organisation we are extremely grateful to all our funders for their on-going support and flexibility they have shown us in the past year. By providing your very kind and generous contributions we have been able to continue our vital work and support families when they need us most. Thank you!

I would also like to thank the trustees for their continued support and guidance in these uncertain times. Their positivity and optimism for the future of HSH and dedication to our values and beliefs continue to effectively inform and advise the vital work we do. Thank you!

To our wonderful staff team working tirelessly across the county providing support, guidance and resources to all our families and volunteers, thank you!

Finally to our fabulous volunteer team, we truly couldn't do this work without you. You have shown immense kindness and dedication during a very difficult time. I know I speak for everyone at HSH and all our families when I give you all a big, big thank you!

We are positive for the future and will continue to show our resilience and aptitude in the face of adversity in order to provide support for those families that need it most.



Alex James President of Home-Start Herefordshire



I had come to Herefordshire to marry a farmer. Three children came along pretty quickly and my life had completely changed. Having been so totally independent, I was now, in a world of motherhood that I knew nothing about. Having just left The Royal Shakespeare Company to get married, I felt vulnerable and out of my depth. I was asked by a friend, who was the then president of Home-Start to help her raise money for her beloved charity. In the space of 3 weeks, Derek Jacobi, Richard Clifford and I performed an evening at Eastnor Castle of poetry, under the heading of “CHILDREN”. The evening was a huge success and made the charity a substantial amount of money. Sarah the then President had to move away and she asked me if I would be interested in taking over, that was 20 years ago.

Home-Start Herefordshire has always been very dear to me and I became close to Margaret Harrison, the founder of the charity and one of the most remarkable women I have ever met. She would come to Broadfield, my home and business, to be our guest speaker on several occasions. Each time I met her I would be more in awe. Unfortunately Margaret died too young! By the luck of the Gods, Barbara and I got the 2 Hereford tickets to her huge funeral at

Leicester Cathedral. There were dancers and music, a joyous day for such a sad occasion, suffice it to say it was one of my 10 top days as I was able to say goodbye to my dear friend and spend the day with another wonderful woman, Barbara.

I have watched Home-Start Herefordshire grow from the sidelines for many years, always proud of the team, they are such wonderful people who care so much about “Family”. The team is successful because they really care; they respect each other and look after each other. The perfect ingredients to help families. Four years ago I decided I needed to become a volunteer. The training was superb and enthralling and being matched with a family even more so.



To be allowed to go into a family's home, I see as a privilege. I have loved each family I have supported on my journey, they have helped me so much too, with patience, tolerance and a realisation that maybe, just maybe I can do this.

Remote working

‘Stay at Home’ working and learning has been difficult for everyone, with unforeseen complications arising for Home-Start staff, volunteers and families alike. During the national lockdown all Home-Start staff members worked from home which did prove a difficulty due to the lack of equipment for participating in video/ phone meetings i.e. microphone headsets, cameras and mobile phones. Funding allowed the purchase of such items, which ensured that staff were able to actively participate effectively in countywide meetings with other organisations such as schools and the council, provide volunteer supervision and support and contact families when needed. Home-Start also was able to purchase equipment to aid with remote service delivery. Due to the rural nature of some of the communities of North Herefordshire, many families residing in this area found themselves increasingly isolated due to national and local restrictions, preventing the usual running of their Home-Start run family group. Through the purchase of a tablet for our Group coordinator we were able to deliver weekly group sessions via video conferencing, in which the families had the opportunity to meet together (be it remotely), sharing the highs and lows of lock-down and being able to share what their children had been doing/ making at home.

Tam Thomas Our Group coordinator was also able to offer parenting support via themed sessions, as well as safety advice and sign-posting when needed and our experienced play leader joined the sessions, demonstrating some fun craft activities and story and rhyme sessions. This provided a much needed sense of social interaction and community to these families, enabling them to discuss their worries and concerns, as well as keeping in contact with friends.



A Family's story

I've been helped by Home-Start for a while now and they have been absolutely fantastic, giving me tremendous support, which I've been so so grateful for! During an incredibly difficult part of my life, fleeing from domestic abuse while heavily pregnant with my son, I had little to no help. Home-Start came to my aid and helped me cope with various problems I had. I have had several wonderful volunteers, who've been lovely and whose help is unfathomable. Words genuinely cannot do justice to the faultless work, commitment and support I've received from everyone I've been in contact with from Home-Start. I will be eternally grateful to them, being someone who's on the outside of my situation and won't have a bias opinion, but who can still offer sound advice or just someone to listen to me whilst I rant. Truly truly amazingly fantastic and wonderful!!

Alison Jones

Marketing and volunteer recruitment Co-ordinator

The day has come for me to write a goodbye post in my very last Annual Report. Where does one start? Time flies when you are having fun! I joined in March 2009, and am now in my 13th year with the charity. I've had the most amazing team around me and consider every one of them a true friend. I've had many wonderful experiences and met some amazing people, some of whom you can see in these pictures below. During my time here I have had the privilege of being welcomed into approximately 400 homes!! 303 of those visits resulted in new volunteers commencing our preparation courses and going on to support families. To my credit, I believe I can remember everyone's name by sight and regularly bump into volunteers around the county. The fundraising events I've organised and participated in range from little coffee mornings to huge events like Christmas fairs, a packed out Courtyard Theatre and once I organised a wonderful fashion show! They were all a little stressful at times but enjoyable in equal measures. My family and my health issues over the years have been at times really difficult to cope with emotionally and mentally but the unwavering support I was shown by the team was second to none and I believe I wouldn't have been given the same understanding in any other work place. Mandie in particular is an amazingly strong woman and the best boss anyone could ask for, her support, care and belief in me right from the start never faltered. So, from the bottom of my heart, I thank Mandie and the team for making my 13 years working with Home-Start a real pleasure. P.S I'll still be around and about popping into the office, you can't get rid of me that easily.



Jeremy Stobart

Treasurer

The 2020/2021 financial year has been a roller coaster year in terms of our finances largely due to the effects of Covid 19 and lockdown and the resultant effects on our operation, personnel and finances.

Although there has been a reduction in almost all areas of expenditure over the year, our 'expected' Income was reduced in many areas. However, income was 'enhanced' by emergency funding and one-off grants from various national bodies/organisations.

Total expenditure was significantly reduced at £143,607 (2020: £155,212). Total income (Core and Restricted combined) was an increase on last year at £163,285 (2020: £154,844) There was a surplus for the year on Core/unrestricted activities of £27,024 (2020: £6,479 surplus). However, due to a delayed payment by the council going into the 2021/2022 accounts our restricted funds stood in deficit at (7,346), which reduced our overall reserves, at year end, to £71,264

Overall, I think we can feel relieved that we have come out with a fairly healthy surplus in these difficult times and this outcome is in no small part due to our hard (and smart) working staff, keeping costs down and drawing income in from wherever it can be found, so my thanks goes out to them as well as the work and support given by our volunteers throughout this turbulent year.

Our current unrestricted reserves only provide minimum cover for emergencies such as shortfalls in funding or unexpected expenditure. The Trustees continue to believe that reserves equivalent to 6 months expenditure, i.e. circa £80,000, are the optimum required to ensure continuity of operations and will continue to work towards this goal. Although the current reserves currently provide for just over 5.5 months of expenditure cover (2020: 3 months), the Trustees believe this is sufficient to meet the minimum requirements to continue operations.

However, the current climate, due to us coming out of lockdown and the legacy of Covid 19 and its ramifications, may exert greater pressure on funding and potentially our reserves.

Amounts were received from Eveson Charitable Trust, Herefordshire Council, BBC Children in Need, William, The HSUK Loneliness Fund, EF Bulmer Benevolent Fund, Hereford Community Foundation, HFT Forklifts, Pontrilas Development, Rathbone Moral Aid Charity, The Southall Trust, Kington United Charities, Tesco, Tampon Tax Community Fund, Asda Foundation, Waitrose & Partners, John Lewis & Partners, Department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (Loneliness project), Masonic Charitable Foundation (BHBF), Pontrilas Developments (s), William A Cadbury, Philip Witcomb and Friends who make regular donations. We are grateful for their support. In addition money was received in the form of donations from individuals and the proceeds from fund raising events. We are grateful to the donors for their generosity and to all those involved in fund raising events for their hard work and commitment.

Financial Summary

	Year Ending 31 March 2021 (£)	Year Ending 31 March 2020 (£)
Incoming Resources		
Donations	7,609	10,899
Fund raising income	6,130	1,123
Social work students	0	4,200
Grants	145,420	135,557
Other income	4,126	3,065
	163,285	154,844
Resources Expended		
Staff and volunteer costs	122,886	132,647
Fund raising costs	0	23
Office costs	9,691	15,818
Scheme expenses	3,242	5,349
Governance costs	1,580	1,140
Other costs	6,208	235
	143,607	155,212
Net movement in funds		
Unrestricted funds	27,024	(6,847)
Restricted funds	(7,346)	6,479
Funds at 31 March		
Unrestricted	74,983	47,959
Restricted	(3,719)	3,627



The Rathbone Moral Aid Charity

The Eveson Charitable Trust

The Witcomb Fund



KINGTON UNITED CHARITIES

E F Bulmer



Benevolent Fund

HFT Forklifts Limited

