



HOME START

Wokingham
District



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Annual Report 2018/2019



Our Main Aims



Early Intervention and Prevention

Our emphasis is on supporting families at an early stage to ensure the support we offer has the best possible impact on children. The importance of supporting families, to give their children the opportunities they need to thrive and develop in the earliest years, identifying and addressing problems early, is one of the strongest themes of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) Children's Plan and we support this.

Sustainability

We want to make sure Home-Start is here for parents and children now and in the future.

Diversity and Inclusion

We want to ensure that all parents are aware of what we can offer and feel confident in our approach. We want to ensure we reach those who are socially disadvantaged or those who do not find it easy to ask for help or access services for themselves or their children. We want to learn what works best for them and how we can shape our service to meet their needs.

Quality

We will ensure we have a continuous process of self-assessment and review, in every part of our work to ensure we continue to improve, develop and offer the highest quality service to families.



What We Do

Home-Start offers a unique service, recruiting and training volunteers – who are usually parents themselves – to visit families at home who have at least one child under 5 to offer informal, friendly and confidential support.

To help give children the best possible start in life, Home-Start supports parents as they grow in confidence, strengthen their relationships with their children and widen their links with the local community.





Our Team

Our offices are usually staffed between the hours of 9.00am and 3.30pm Monday to Friday and there is an answer phone for out of office hours messages.

We can be contacted on 0118 988 8025 or by email at admin@home-startwd.org.uk www.home-startwd.org.uk

Manager – Emma Roberts (July 18)
Co-ordinator – Lindsay Browne
Co-ordinator – Mandy Özfiçici
Tools for Life Co-ordinator – Teresa Crandon (Oct 2018)
Administrator – Elaine Strange
Play Leaders – Katie Gordon & Eileen McKenna (group ended May 2018)

Trustees

H Diffenthal
P Cannam
G Heard
S Heard
R McCormack
A Martin
G McCormack
A McMullen (ended Feb 2019)
S South

Trustees are elected and serve for 3 years. Re-election takes place at our Annual General Meeting.



Emma Roberts

I joined Home-Start Wokingham in July 2018 from a background in health, nutrition and humanitarian aid! Its been a steep but very interesting and enjoyable learning curve. Getting to know the team, volunteers and families has been a pleasure and knowing that together we can make a difference in the lives of families is very important. My role is to access the resources we need so our volunteers can provide the ongoing support, with guidance from the team.



Lindsay Browne

Since joining the scheme over 7 years ago, I have had the opportunity to work with so many incredible families and volunteers. The needs of each family is very diverse and it is rewarding to see them flourish and in some cases turn their lives around. Watching the relationship between the family and the volunteer develop is so fulfilling. Everyday brings new opportunities and I certainly wouldn't want to change it.



Mandy Özfiçici

I joined Home-Start Wokingham District in March 2012 as a part-time Co-ordinator, having been a home visiting volunteer for a couple of years. I really enjoy the variety each day brings, from meeting with families to find out how we can help, to meeting with volunteers to see how their relationship has developed with the family they support. Seeing families gain confidence in their abilities is amazing.



Teresa Crandon

I joined Home-Start Wokingham in October 2018 as the Tools for Life Project Co-ordinator. I have been developing the training and resources for the project to train our existing volunteers and also new volunteers on the Volunteer Preparation Course. I have also had the opportunity to volunteer with a family offering Tools for Life support and it has been very rewarding to see the family grow in confidence and be ready for school in September. I look forward to the future of the project as we prepare to run family groups across the borough.



Elaine Strange

I have been with Home-Start Wokingham District since August 2009. I currently work 24 hours per week providing administrative support to the office team and board of trustees. This work includes maintaining office records, banking and the monthly reconciliation of our accounts.



Quotes from our families



My volunteer was so reliable.

She was easy to talk to and I felt relaxed with her.

She reassured me I was a good parent.

My volunteer provided me with reassurance.

My volunteer supported my whole family not just me.

My volunteer was patient and friendly and I felt as though I had a friend when I was feeling lonely.

I have regained my identity.

She helped me access things in the community.



She got stuck in and helped me start tasks that without her help I couldn't do.

I felt stronger emotionally because I knew someone was coming each week.

She didn't judge me.

She was a friendly face each week.

Report from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

I am delighted to report on a very positive year for Home-Start Wokingham District after several years of having to make cutbacks and severe belt-tightening. We have been successful in securing two grants from the Big Lottery, one to launch our Tools for Life initiative and another to maintain the management of the scheme. Furthermore, in addition to our core service funding from Wokingham Borough Council, we have attracted monies from several other organisations, clubs and councils. A huge thank you to you all!

We have been fortunate in the recruitment and successful induction of Emma Roberts, our Scheme Manager, who has brought a refreshing, pragmatic approach to making the best of everything in this world of tight funding for charities. The whole team, Mandy, Lindsay, Elaine and Teresa, led by Emma have moved HSWD forward in so many ways and have reenergised our presence in the local community. The Board of Trustees would like to thank you all publicly for your dedication and commitment to the families we support. We must also acknowledge the help we received from Sarah Smith, Scheme Manager at Home-Start Reading, who provided guidance whilst we were without our own Manager. However, Home-Starts cannot function without our amazing volunteers who are the external caring face of the organisation. You are the people who make the difference to our parents and their children. A heart felt vote of thanks is due to each and every one of you.

The last group I personally need to acknowledge are my fellow Trustees who have provided me with encouragement, good humour and unfailingly support during my four years as Chair. There have been some difficult times but together we have weathered them and hopefully we can now look forward to the future with confidence. Whilst I am no longer Chair, I will remain a Trustee and give Gareth Heard my full backing.

Helen Diffenthal - Chair of Trustees

Home-Start Wokingham, Nov 2014-Nov 2018

Building on from Helen's outstanding leadership over the past four years, there are a clear set of actions for the future stability of Home Start Wokingham. Part of the support from the Big Lottery has enabled us to update our computing systems and allow us to become a more responsive organisation in the future.

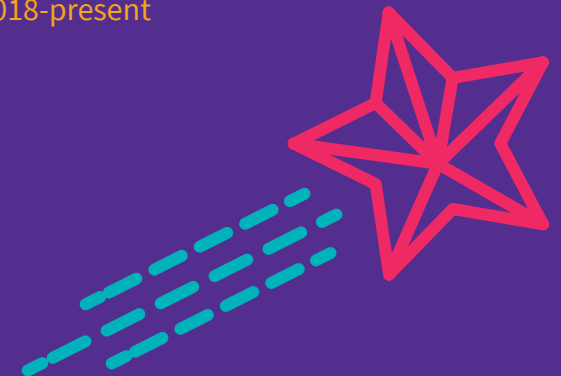
As an organisation we are raising our profile across the borough, to ensure those needing our help can reach us, and get the help they require. To achieve this we are seeking support from both Commercial and Charitable organisations in our community. Continuing participation in local events such as the Xmas and Summer Fairs, and the "Days of Christmas Event" are vital for providing us an opportunity to meet the public and explain how we can help those in most need.

Fundraising remains, as for all Charities, an important factor in our continuing success. Tony Martin, who has led our fundraising team, has retired as a Trustee, and we thank him for the sterling work he carried out.

I look forward to meeting as many of you as possible over the next twelve months.

Gareth Heard - Chair of Trustees

Home-Start Wokingham, Nov 2018-present



Report from the Scheme manager



I joined the team as Scheme Manager in July 2018, from a background in humanitarian aid and have spent the last 8 months asking lots of questions of Elaine, Lindsay and Mandy who have patiently answered them - often more than once!

Thanks to the hard work of Louise, the previous scheme manager, the Team and the Trustees, I arrived at a time when our new 4 year lottery funding was secured and this was rapidly followed with the WBC funds and this has meant we have more financial stability which enables us to look forward and plan more effectively for the next few years.

We were able to reopen referrals again and have been busy recruiting and training new volunteers as the demand for support has grown throughout the year. In October we launched the new lottery funded Tools for Life Project and Teresa joined the team to lead on the set up and coordination of the various activities that make up this project. This has involved a considerable amount of work building a network of support, developing and delivering training and bringing together the resources for our volunteers to use with families.

Christmas was busy with our Christmas Party at Jungle Mania, Father Christmas and his grotto at Wokingham Library and many generous donations through the Giving Tree, Reading Family Aid, the Lions and the Coombes School.

In the new year we ran our latest course for new Volunteers and it was a pleasure to meet and get to know the new volunteers as they went through their course. I have also enjoyed meeting many of the “older/more experienced” volunteers at various events through the year. Without our volunteers we would not be able to offer the support we do for our families and we really appreciate the time and effort that so many make both our home visiting volunteers and also our trustees who also give up their time and skills to help us deliver the support we do. For Red Nose Day we were invited to talk about our work on Berkshire Radio and it was a real privilege to have two of our Mums speak about what Home-Start support means to them.

Within our lottery grant we received some funding to be used to strengthen us as an organisation particularly in the area of IT. This has been invaluable as we have had several IT challenges and have made some significant changes which should lead to the team being able to be much more flexible in our working practices, with working from home an option occasionally.

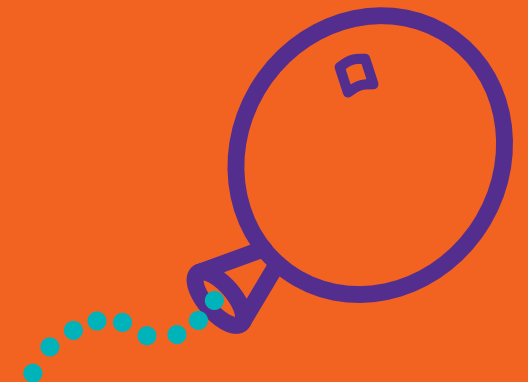
With the changes required with GDPR we are now embarking on the setting up of a new recording system for our families called Charity Log. This will give us much greater flexibility to record and report more effectively as we can tailor the system to our needs and reporting requirements. Home-Start UK have also now realised that the old MESH system that was used is not fit for purpose and is also moving across to Charity Log which should help us streamline our working somewhat.

Throughout the year we have received fantastic support from The Estate Management College at Shinfield Grange as they provide us with rooms free of charge for many of our activities. This makes a huge difference as it enables us to run our prep course at the office as well as many of our meetings. A special thank you to Andrew and Yvonne for their support.

Moving forwards there is much still to do. Demand for our services is growing and the complexity of issues that many of our families face means our support is needed more than ever and we need to continue to learn and increase our own knowledge if we are to be able to provide the support required and also enable our volunteers to really make a difference. This also means we need to continue to seek additional funding and to look to tailor our services to meet the needs of families across the Wokingham Borough.

I am delighted that this year we are celebrating the work of our volunteers, both home visiting volunteers and trustees and alongside this, the team deserve recognition for the work that they have done through very difficult and uncertain times. Thank you to Elaine, Mandy, Lindsay and Teresa for the work you do to support the volunteers and the families and I look forward to working with you over the coming year as we continue to work hard to provide a quality service and together make a real difference here in Wokingham. We have an exciting and busy year ahead!

Emma Roberts



Volunteers stories



Rosie ➤

Early last January I spotted an advert for a training course for new Home-Start volunteers, due to start at the end of the month. Having worked in early years education I am aware of the impact that children's early experiences have on their lives and future outcomes, so a charity which supports parents and their children through those years was something I was keen to support. I had recently retired and had time available, and had a friend in another region who'd enthused about being a Home-Start volunteer, so I decided to find out more and got in touch. A visit from Mandy at my home was quickly arranged and she explained more about the scheme, which confirmed for me that I wanted to volunteer. Forms were promptly sent out, filled in, references duly submitted and accepted, and by the end of the month I was heading into the first session of the 8 week volunteer training course.

Ten new volunteers arrived (with 2 more joining after the first session), with a diversity of experiences, ages, backgrounds and varying degrees of excitement, nervousness, curiosity and enthusiasm, but we were put at ease by the friendly, welcoming and highly professional team of Home-Start employees running and supporting the course, and as the course progressed over the following weeks and as the volunteers got to know one another we were able to support one another and learn from one another through sharing friendship, ideas, concerns and experiences.

We were issued with a file containing support material for the training along with a multitude of forms and policies, which were tackled gradually over the weeks. The training was well planned and prepared, very interactive and varied. Some of it was fun, some interesting, and some of it tackled quite sombre and harrowing scenarios which made us all feel a little daunted, yet it was clear that we would be well supported by the staff team at all times. It was pointed out that some of these scenarios were extreme and we were unlikely to meet them, but needed to be aware. Safeguarding training is, of course, an important part of the training, as were the discussions about how to set appropriate boundaries, how to keep ourselves safe, and also the importance of offering non-judgemental support and friendship to the families with whom we would be paired. We were encouraged to examine our own attitudes and views, and explored how, as a group, whilst we all shared some attitudes, we had different ideas on other issues. We were also given training on the new 'Tools for Life' initiative. I think the volunteers came out of each week's training feeling we had gained new insights and had our horizons expanded, and enjoyed our time together in the process. On the final week, those who wished to exchanged contact details in order to keep in touch and support one another, and we had a short one-to-one session to be told about the family we were to be paired with, and who our supervisor would be.

It was very re-assuring to have Mandy arrange and accompany me on the first visit to my family, leaving me to it after I'd settled in to chat with the mother and play with the children. I am now in the swing of my (mostly) weekly visits which I enjoy, the children are always excited when I arrive, and the mother always seems very pleased to have someone come to share the load for a couple of hours. It's early days for me as a volunteer, but I would unreservedly recommend it.

Vicky ➤

I became a Homestart volunteer just under 3 years ago. I am now on my second family (although I still see my first family regularly) and still enjoy the time spent with both families. When I first volunteered I was really unsure what to expect – would I like the families I had been given? Would they like me? Would I be able to understand their problems or would they be too much for me to cope with? I feel that I have been very lucky with my families- both of them (although with very different problems) are kind, keen for me to visit and very welcoming. It is a great privilege to be welcomed into someone's home and both families have been very open and honest about their problems.

Although I know that I can't help or change their situation, I feel that I can be a sympathetic ear, and, by giving them time to talk, I can help ease the burden of their troubles –help them realize that there is light at the end of the tunnel, signpost them to agencies that can help and generally just make them feel that they are not alone and that somebody cares.

I am using Tools For Life with my new family and they are enjoying all aspects of it, being very keen to take on any suggestions. I can see the little boy already growing in confidence and I can't wait to hear how he gets on with his first visit to "big school" next week.

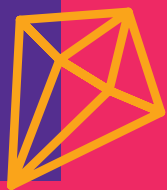
In a wider sense I am very grateful to Homestart for the other volunteers I have met –I couldn't have hoped to meet a nicer, more caring, funny bunch of people. I have enjoyed all the extra training that's been given and any opportunity to meet up.

When people ask me "what do you get out of Homestart?" I suppose it's connecting with people, the feeling of being able to help others and the personal satisfaction to see families gain in confidence as they work through their own personal challenges.

Volunteers 2018-19

Amy	Debra	Linda	Shelley	Emma
Amy	Dhanisha	Liz	Simone	Marsha
Anne	Jackie	Lorena	Sue	Linda
Carleen	Jaqui	Lucinda	Sue	Claire
Caroline	Jayne	Lynn	Teresa	Jane
Caroline	Jenny	Megan	Tricia	Joanne
Catherine	Jill	Melanie	Vicky	Lorraine
Catherine	Joanne	Mitzi	ALSO	Esther
Celia	Joanne	Pat	Angie	Jen
Charlotte	Judith	Patricia	Frances	Rebecca
Christine	Karen	Rebecca	Julia	
Claire	Kelly	Rosemary	Sarah	

Family Events



Reading Family Aid trip to Odds Farm

A dry but chilly day on the farm with everyone wrapped up in warm coats and kitted out in wellies kindly donated by First Days Children's Charity ensuring the children were ready to play in the mud and puddles. A new water feature outside had been open just 2 weeks and the kids loved splashing in the ponds, rivers of water and dams. The children enjoyed their time on the outdoor play areas as well as the indoor soft play. There were plenty of animals to feed including goats, sheep, pigs, donkeys, cows and an array of smaller animals in the petting area. A great time was had by all.

Circus Starr - The circus with a purpose

Circus Starr kindly donated 160 tickets to Home-Start Wokingham so that our families could attend their shows in Woodley. Circus Starr is a touring circus boasting world class professional artists from across the globe. Since Circus Starr was established in 1987, it has given over 1 million underprivileged children and children with disabilities the chance to run away to the circus and forget their troubles for a day – a big thank you to Circus Starr.



Santa's Grotto - Wokingham Winter Carnival 26th November 2017

Home-Start Wokingham set up and ran the grotto in the library at the Wokingham Winter Carnival for the 7th consecutive year. A steady stream of excited children in their Christmas jumpers queued to see Father Christmas, bringing their Christmas lists. It was a great success and we would like to thank our volunteers and trustees who gave up their time to make this a happy experience.



Christmas Party - 12th December 2017

Our Christmas party courtesy of Jungle Mania Woodley was held on 4th December with 23 families enjoying the soft play facilities and a special guest appearance by the man himself - Father Christmas.

A big thank you to Free Cakes for Kids Reading and their keen bakers for providing everyone with a themed cupcake as a going home present and Bookstart for



2018 Winnersh Civic Award

Congratulations to Eileen McKenna for being awarded a Winnersh Civic award for her outstanding contribution to the Winnersh community through her work with Home-Start.

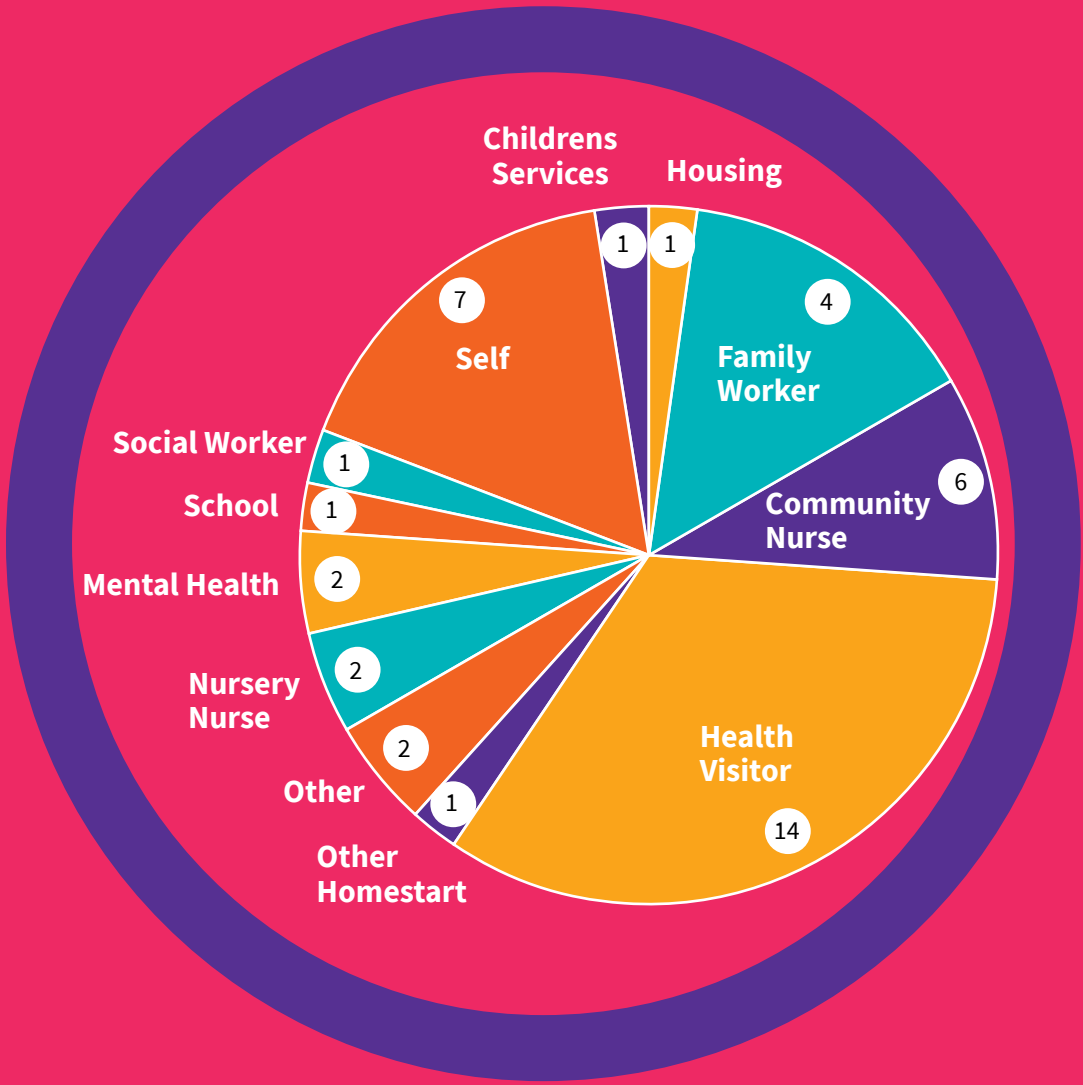


Where our supported families live

Map of Wokingham Borough.
Showing families supported by
Home-start Wokingham District
(source MESH Q21a 1.4.17 – 31.3.18/Filemaker)



Source of referral



(source: MESH referrals 1.4.17 – 31.3.18)

Tools

4

Life



The Tools for Life project is well under way and going from strength to strength. Once the training materials had been written and resources made, I was ready to deliver the first training session to existing volunteers in February 2019. This was well received by the volunteers who all felt it was something they could use in the family home. Tools for Life training has now also been incorporated into the prep course.

We now have 66% of our volunteers who have completed a one-off training session, with a further training session being held in September. Two members of staff from the Red Kite Children's Centre also attended one of the training sessions and gave positive feedback.

As well as sharing good practice with the Children's Centres and pre-schools in the Wokingham District I have worked very closely with Emma Griffith, Wokingham Borough Council Early Years Advisor, who has supported me with training materials and data from the Wokingham area which I was able to include in the Tools for Life sessions and more recently offering guidance with planning for our new family group, Chat and Play.

There are five families with seven children currently being supported in the family home with Tools for life being offered alongside the core support. The volunteers complete a diary sheet with outcomes for both children and parents. There is also an option for the volunteers to use a resource bag to take into the family home to work with the family on specific skills; one of these areas could be around speech and language, amongst other things there is a tea-set and teddy which encourages talking and listening also story books for parents to share with their children. I have personally been working with a family using the Tools for Life training and resources since January. The mum I am supporting has been willing to adapt her approach towards her child which has had a massive impact on her child's speech leading to improved changes in his behaviour at home and especially at nursery.



I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the volunteers and trustees who have attended the training sessions and offered good constructive feedback enabling the training to stay up to date and relevant.

Annual Financial Report 2018/2019

Financial Report 2018/2019

The summary Home-Start Wokingham District accounts for the year ending 31 March 2019 are set out below and they represent the day to day operations of the scheme. They have been independently examined by Mr Tim Kingcott ACMA ATT.

Financial Status

Home-Start Wokingham District received its funding during the year from a variety of sources but in the main from The Big Lottery Fund and from other national/local organisations and trusts. We received the first year's funding (4 year project) of £37,985 from The Big Lottery relating to Tools for Life and a further £10,000 relating to Awards for All. We received £24,000 from Wokingham Borough Council, £15,000 from MCKS Pranik Healing and £5,000 from Wokingham United Charities. The Scheme also received a large number of smaller donations that each made a valuable contribution towards our income total of £100,044. Our expenditure was £91,822 resulting in a net surplus of £8,222. Our net assets excluding pension liability total £85,616.

From a financial point of view 2018-2019 was less challenging than the previous year. The funding received from the above organisations enabled the trustees to reverse the difficult decisions that were made in the previous year. We increased the working hours of all the staff. Whilst our short term funding is secure the trustees will continue to monitor its resources on a regular basis and make difficult decisions if necessary to ensure the long term viability of the scheme.

The Contingency Fund (Reserves)

The Charity held £50,000 in reserve at the year end. This is held within the general fund and is designed to help finance any situation that the scheme may find itself in at short notice. Closure of the scheme would result in employment redundancy compensation being payable as well as employer debt on withdrawal from the pension scheme. The Charity aims to maintain the reserves in line with guidance from the Charity Commission on an ongoing basis. We review our reserves' fund on an annual basis.

The Future

Fortunately the Scheme's short term future is looking much brighter now thanks to the tremendous efforts of the fundraising team. In addition to the organisations listed above we have have received funding from Comic Relief, Kirath Trust, Garfield Weston and Woodward Trust. The trustees very much appreciate all these contributions which secure the short term future of the Scheme. We believe we offer tremendous value for money to local families who rely on our professional help so much and that we make a major contribution to our local community. Unfortunately the demand for our services is increasing and we are unable to cope within our existing resources. We are committed to continuing our vital work in the community for as long as possible. To achieve this aim we are recruiting a new part time member of staff dedicated to fund raising.

Additional copies of the full accounts are available from our offices at a cost of £3.00.



Our sincere thanks go to all those who have supported us during the year.

Bookstart
Berkshire Community Foundation
Charvil Parish Council
Circus Starr
College of Estate Management
Corpus Christi Mother and Toddler Group
Earley Town Council
Finchampstead Parish Council
First Days Charity
Free cakes for kids
Garfield Weston
Gressgardens Tree Care
Hodes Weill & Associates
Infinity Business Solutions
Junglemania Soft Play Centre
Kiriath Trust
Linus Quilts
Loddon Lodge of Instruction
MCKS
More Arts (Living Advent Calendar)
Fresh01 –The Creative Agency
Reading family Aid
Rotary Club of Wokingham
Shanley Foundation

Shinfield Parish Council
Stella Symons Charity
Swimathon - A. Mycock & A. Morgan
Tesco – bags of help
The Co-op Shinfield
The Giving Tree
The Wokingham Winter Carnival
Twyford and District Round Table
UCM Group
Wargrave Parish Council
Winnersh Parish Council
Wokingham Bikeathon
Wokingham Foodbank
Wokingham Half Marathon
Wokingham Library
Wokingham Lions Club
Wokingham Town Council
Wokingham United Charities
Woodley Town Council
Woodward Trust

Various donations through Local Giving

And one huge thank you
to the many volunteers,
trustees and staff
who made individual
donations to our scheme.



Home-Start Wokingham relies on funding and donations which are essential to our work with existing families and our vision for the helping more families in the future.

Would you like to help?

Please tick one of the following boxes:

- ☒ I would like to make a donation to Home-Start Wokingham District

Amount

(Cheques payable to Home-Start Wokingham District)

- ☐ Please contact me regarding corporate fundraising

Name:

Address:
.....
.....

Email: Tel No:

Home-Start Wokingham is a registered charity.
Charity Number 1109629

Please send this page back to:

Home-Start Wokingham District,
Shinfield Grange,
Cutbush Lane East,
Shinfield
Reading
RG2 9AF