

# Brighter futures

Our impact on local  
children and families

Home-Start CHAMS  
Annual Review: 2015/16



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### Annual Review: 2015/16

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## Why Home-Start is needed



Home-Start transforms the life chances of some of the most socially excluded young children living in Crawley, Horsham and Mid Sussex.

Each year, hundreds of vulnerable children and their families are referred to us for help and support.

Our work with families helps parents to create brighter futures for their children.

# About us

**Children whose parents have had the support of a Home-Start volunteer have a better start in life than those who don't.\***

Being a parent isn't always easy. Young children whose parents are struggling to cope with problems such as poor mental health, disability, poverty and domestic violence, can all too often miss out on the love, routine and support that are so vital for their future.

Home-Start volunteers help parents to overcome their challenges and build better lives for their children. Our work with families can:

- **Change** how parents think and feel about themselves
- **Help** them cope with the challenges they are facing
- **Support** them to provide good early parenting

**Children are still benefiting up to three years after their Home-Start volunteer has stopped visiting.\***

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## The support we offer

Home-Start CHAMS support is tailored to families' individual circumstances and needs. It can include:

- **Emotional support** to help parents find ways to manage and resolve problems.
- **Practical help** such as budgeting, meal planning and making the home safe.
- **Direct support to children** including play and establishing routines.
- **Parenting skills** training opportunities.
- **School readiness** support for families with pre-school aged children.
- **Think Family** approach; part of the government's 'Troubled Families' agenda for families with complex needs.
- **Meeting attendance** and moral support, especially in relation to case conferences and dealing with solicitors.
- **Information and links** to other services, including health and education.



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In order to provide these vital support services to families free of charge, we rely heavily on fundraising.

To find out about ways to support us, please see Pages 14 and 15.

\* Findings from longitudinal research published in 2013.  
More details at: [www.home-start.org.uk/independent-research-evidence](http://www.home-start.org.uk/independent-research-evidence)

# Jenny's story

Local Mum Jenny\* had recently lost her father and been diagnosed with breast cancer. Work meant her family regularly had to move home and being away from relatives made this difficult time an even greater struggle.

**"After we moved home yet again, I got to the point where I couldn't see any sort of positive future. The radiotherapy was making me feel so awful and tired. I was trying to deal with Dad dying. I honestly thought my family was at rock bottom.**

We were used to moving around the country for Paul's\* job, but this time was even harder than usual, not knowing anyone and being so far from family. Paul helped where he could, but he was at work all day. I couldn't take the boys with me to my appointments, so our family were taking it in turns to help by having Oscar\* and Alfie\* staying with them. But that meant we wouldn't see them for days.

I'd had Post Natal Depression after both the boys were born, so it always felt like that natural bond you see mums have with their children was sort of missing for me. Them being away from us made me feel so guilty – they were only young and didn't



understand. And I knew they were unhappy too, because they'd really play up when they were home. That was all making my relationship with them more difficult."

Jenny knew that her family was in need of help and she took the brave step of asking Home-Start CHAMS for help. Within 2 months her family had been matched with Tina\*, a volunteer who was able to give the support and friendship they so needed.

"I found afternoons particularly difficult to handle, so it was arranged for Tina to visit in the afternoon each week. We agreed that she'd mainly be doing things with the children, which would be good for them, as well as meaning I had the chance to rest or get to appointments. But seeing them all doing things together had such an impact on me too. Since my health has begun to get better, I've found that I can play like that with the boys, I can enjoy messy play, or trips to the park!

The space that Tina gave me over the 8 months she visited allowed me to have counselling therapy and led to me getting part time work. I'm in remission now, but more than my physical health has improved. We've got routines in place; the boys are settled in pre-school; I take them to play groups; we enjoy time together as a family. Things seem more positive now and we're all so much happier."

# About us

## Delivering our services

Home-Start CHAMS has been supporting local families for over 18 years. We help families to deal with the issues they are facing through two key services; Home Visiting and Family Groups.

### Home Visiting

This is our core service, working with parents to help families avoid crisis and breakdown and supporting them to give good early parenting.

The needs of the family are assessed by a staff member and the key improvements to be made are agreed with parents. This provides focus for the work to be undertaken and allows us to monitor progress being made by the families.

Trained and supervised volunteers are matched with the family and visit them in their own home each week. The support they give can range from sharing positive ways to play with children in order to encourage early learning, through to giving help dealing with debt or housing issues.

We aim to create an informal but bounded relationship with parents, based on security, trust and communication.

During the time a family receives our support, their needs are reviewed, to ensure the support continues to help them make progress (as measured on a 'coping scale'), and can be adjusted to meet emerging issues.

### Family Groups

We offer support to families with twins or multiple birth children through our Twiglets Family Groups.

The weekly term-time Twiglets meetings are run by staff and volunteers. They provide a safe environment for parents and children, encouraging positive relationships, assisting the children's development and offering the opportunity for peer support to reduce isolation.

Twiglets groups are semi structured and incorporate messy play, singing and rhyme times as well as time for free play. Speakers and other agencies are invited in to share their expertise and additional information is made available to parents as appropriate.

Areas covered by Twiglets over the year include:

- Speech & language development
- Social confidence
- Healthy eating
- Multiple birth issues
- Activities related to the Early Years Foundation Stage

# Meeting families' needs

Last year we supported

175  
families



436  
children

across Crawley,  
Horsham & Mid Sussex

## Who we've supported

Home-Start CHAMS offer support to all local families with a child under 5, whatever their background and need, with a particular focus on families who are socially excluded and not engaging with other services.

In 2015/16 the support we provided to the local community showed a significant rise on the previous year:

- **Children** supported increased over 22% to 436
- **Families** supported increased nearly 20% to 175

Increasingly, the families referred to us are facing more challenging issues and have higher levels of need than before; for example having young children on Child Protection Plans.

The 175 families supported last year were referred to us in a number of ways:

47%

from Health  
Visitors

11%

from Children's  
Centre's

20%

were  
Self-Referrals

22%

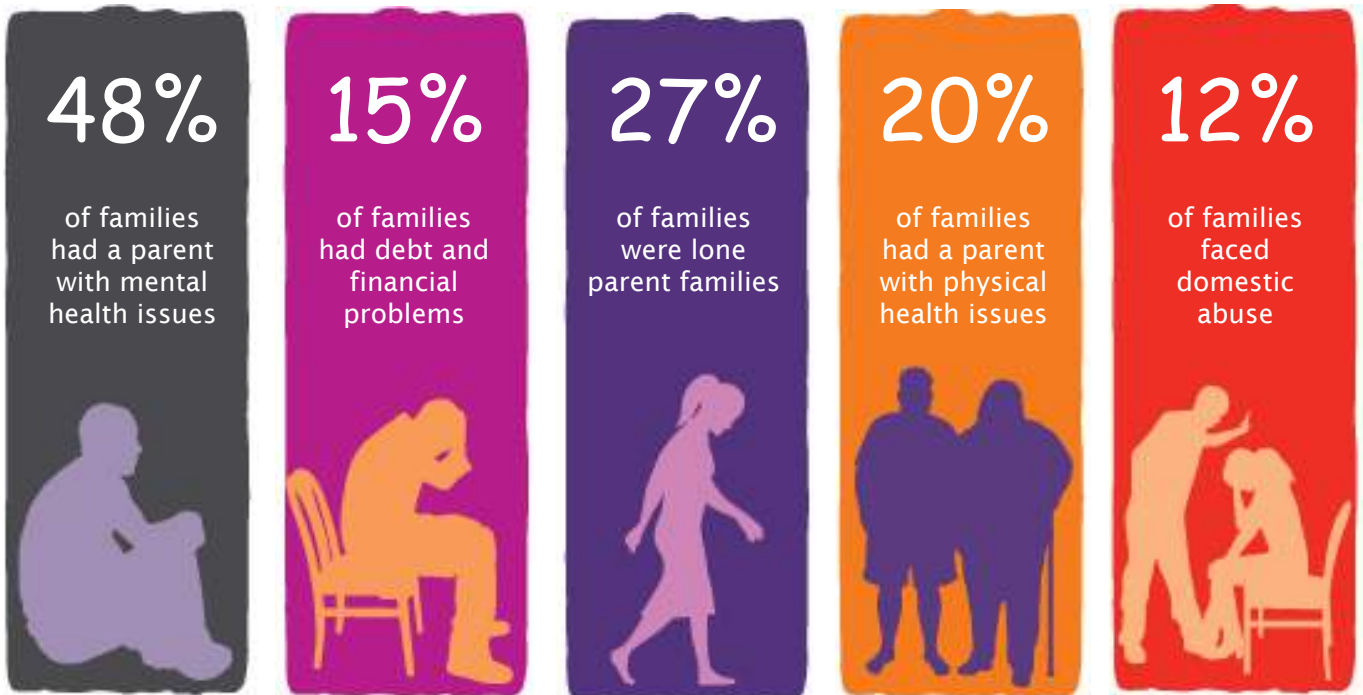
from other  
agencies, such as  
Social Services



# Meeting families' needs

## Families with multiple and complex needs

The needs of families are monitored at the start of our support and throughout. From this we know that families often have complex and long term needs, which create risk factors for children's development. Children and families receiving our support in the last year had the following needs:



# Brighter futures

## Measuring our impact

Home-Start is committed to providing real evidence of the difference we make for families. We use evaluation tools in order to better understand the effect of our services on children's and families' lives.

For the last three years, we have been using an on-line tool to measure change in every family we support. This enables us to capture data on children and family needs and the journeys of change that families go on during the time they are supported by a Home-Start volunteer.

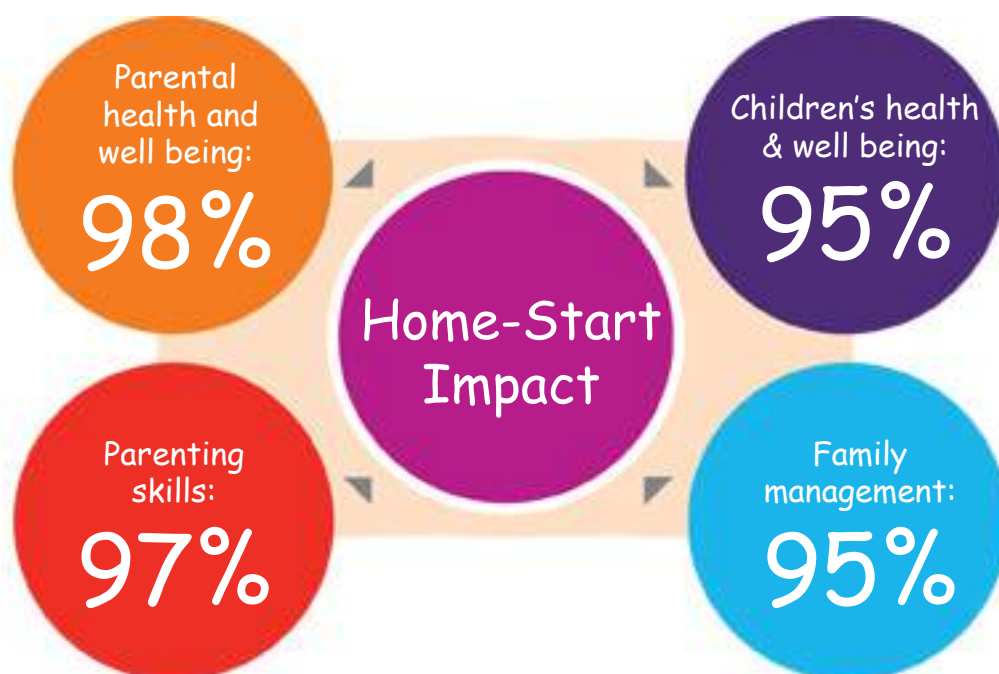
This monitoring focuses on four core areas critical to family health and well-being, and to creating the best possible start in life for young children:

- Parental health and well being
- Children's health and well being
- Parenting skills
- Family management

## Improving family life

Results from our monitoring provide real evidence of the positive difference that family support from a trained Home-Start volunteer makes to parents and children.

Below are figures showing the percentage of families whose situation had improved in each of the areas of need, by the time our support ended during last year:





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## What families say

In addition to measuring our impact, we ask families to let us know in their own words the difference our support has made to them.

"Things were hard and stressful; I had letters I couldn't read so was ignoring them and getting into trouble with money. I was just about to have my second child and was worried about coping. Home-Start helped me a lot. It's easier now; I have more confidence and I can do things by myself. Because I feel happier, my children feel happier!"

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"Chaotic; I was unsure of myself as a person and as a mother. I was deeply worried about the impact on my children by my condition. Now I have structure to my life. I've sorted by own business. I have a clear understanding of my abilities as a parent. Home-Start has made all this possible. Without the support I received I don't know how I would be now."

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"I couldn't see the wood for the trees. Health was at an all-time low and I was genuinely worried about my family's welfare. Home-Start helped me understand I would get better. My children got necessary and loving attention. I am so much happier and motivated. (Home-Start's) patience and understanding was unwavering. But the practical guidance and advice has physically changed my life for the better - and the lives of my children actually."

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"I can now take my children out on my own whilst managing my levels of anxiety. My confidence in myself as a parent has grown and I have now begun to build a good relationship with my youngest son. All of this would not have been possible without the support of Home-Start."

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"The support I have received from Home-Start has been incredible. It has enabled me to go out with my children which I need to do for my eldest son with autism. I could not have managed without Home-Start's help and support. Thank you so much. Words cannot express my gratitude."

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"I lacked confidence, I was lonely and felt isolated and trapped. My volunteer helped to reduce my anxieties, provided a safety net and increased my confidence. Showed me how to play and interact positively with my children. I feel I was empowered to make choices and shape opportunities for my family."

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"We were very much overwhelmed. We've been helped massively. We have been given the gift of independence and moral support."

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# Orla's story

At age 5, Jacob\* was diagnosed with Autism. After so long struggling on their own, his parents, Orla\* and Simon\*, were finding family life very difficult and were worried about the impact this was having on their younger daughter Mia\*.

**“There’s no doubt that Jacob’s Autism made things hard for our family.**

He has no speech and we have to constantly keep an eye on him because he just isn’t aware of things being dangerous. When he received his diagnosis, I did find that tough. We couldn’t help but worry about his future.

We haven’t got family nearby so, to make sure there was always one of us at home, we were both working part time. That made finances a bit tight. And the rest of our time was spent caring, which meant we hadn’t made many friends. I felt really isolated and found it stressful looking after both children. I know that Mia was being left out of things that we should’ve been doing with an 11 month old.”

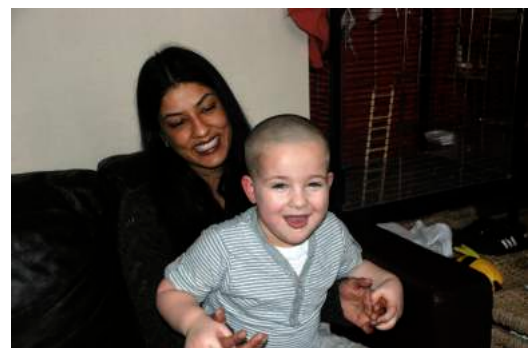
Orla and Simon felt overwhelmed by their family situation and didn’t know where to go for help. They heard about Home-Start and the services we offer from Carers Support and made the decision to refer themselves to us.

“Our Home-Start volunteer, Nicky\*, was someone for both of us to talk to and share our concerns, in a way that we couldn’t have done with each other. The emotional support from someone who knew and understood our situation made such a difference. It has helped things at home become happier generally.

Nicky was a great help with Mia too, helping us to get out of the house and join in local groups, which has made such a difference. Mia’s had the chance to meet and play with other children, which is helping her come on really well. And I’ve made friends too, with the other parents!

Jacob had started at school, but Nicky helped us to deal with his sleep and meal times, which were causing the biggest problems at home. Because of his diagnosis, school started working with us to set routines and boundaries and we’re getting support from elsewhere too. We’re both feeling much more positive about Jacob’s future now.

Thanks to Home-Start, things have really changed for us. I’ve been able to work more, which has helped with money. It feels like we’ve become part of the community and there are people around who will help us. It’s good to see how things have improved for the children and we can now spend quality time together as a family.”



# Brighter futures

## A Journey of Change

The needs of families we support are identified at an initial visit in their home by our staff Co-ordinator, and then measured at the start, middle and end of our time supporting them. By tracking these needs, we are able to demonstrate the impact our support has on the whole family.

Families score themselves on a scale from 0 (not coping) to 5 (coping very well), providing a 'Journey of Change' throughout the time we work with them.

The 'Journey of Change' for Orla's family



# Supporting us

## Our Volunteers

Our unique work supporting families in their own homes is only made possible thanks to the committed and caring volunteers, who give their time freely.



## Community Award Winners

Our volunteers often work in highly challenging family contexts. Their work and the impact that they have helped us make within our local community, was recognised at the Crawley Community Awards which were held at The Hawth in March. We were delighted to win the 'Community Group' award which was presented to us by Councillor Michael Jones.

# Bonny's story

Bonny has been a Home Visiting volunteer for Home-Start CHAMS since she retired from teaching six years ago. Her work supporting families in Mid-Sussex has allowed her the chance to 'give back'.

**The prospect of retirement caused Bonny to think about what exactly she wanted to do with her time. Volunteering seemed an ideal way to keep active and in touch with her local community, while also helping to make the move into retirement easier.**

Bonny's background meant that she had experience of the difficulties family life can bring. From her upbringing in a Boy's Approved School where her father worked, through her own Post Natal Depression, to living away from close family and her husband working abroad when their children were young.

She first heard about Home-Start from a friend who had become a Home Visiting volunteer themselves. Bonny's own Post Nata Depression had made her feel she was a 'pretty useless' mum and the work of Home-Start appealed as a way that she could give struggling families the type of support that she herself had been so grateful to receive.

Since completing the training course for Home Visiting in 2010, Bonny has supported 10 families and is now working with her 11th.

The time she's spent regularly visiting a family has varied widely, for anything up to 1 year. And the range of issues that she has helped them deal with has included drug addiction, twins, Post Natal Depression and debt.



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Bonny is pleased that she has been able to help families, as she sees them developing and gaining confidence. It's been particularly rewarding for her to look back and realise the progress that's been made towards the goals she's agreed with them.

In return, Bonny feels that she has benefited from her time volunteering. Families have given back to her in whatever way they can, such as their hospitality; to this day she is still in touch with some families.

And then there's the support she's had from her supervising Co-ordinator, helping her deal with challenging situations, as well as the camaraderie and friendship from other Home-Start volunteers.

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*"Volunteering has given me a real sense of satisfaction. My work with Home-Start gives me the opportunity to help others, as I've been helped in the past."*

# Supporting us

## Raising funds for our services

As an independent charity, we have to raise all the money required to offer our services to families. In 2015/16 the cost of offering our services to local families was £225,000 – equivalent to £1,286 for each family we supported.

We are grateful to everyone who gave us their support and delighted to share some highlights of how this was achieved in the last year.

### Trusts and Foundations

We are pleased to have the continued support of a number of Trusts and Foundations, and have built some valuable new relationships with funders in 2015/16:

- ✓ Big Lottery
- ✓ Sussex Community Foundation
- ✓ Garfield Weston Foundation

### Businesses

Local businesses have continued to support our work in many ways. Our annual Snowflake Appeal provided a focus for much activity and generated new contacts.



### Local Councils

While statutory funding has reduced over recent years, we continued to receive vital financial support from:

- ✓ Crawley Borough Council
- ✓ Horsham District Council
- ✓ Burgess Hill Town Council
- ✓ North Horsham Parish Council

### Local children

A Super Hero fun run was organised by the local community.

The event engaged well with young children, seeing 25 take part and raising over £1,000.



### Schools

We were delighted to receive support from a number of local schools.

The fundraising and awareness activity for primary school children was focussed around our Home-Start bear 'Harvey'.

### Community Hub

A Community Hub was established in Horsham, led by a volunteer Community Fundraiser. This group have supported us through their own fundraising activities, as well as providing vital help at our events.



# Supporting us

## Help us make a difference

In order to continue offering our services free of charge to vulnerable local families, we need the support of people within our local community. You can help our work and make a difference by getting involved in one, or all, of the following ways:

### Volunteer

There are opportunities to volunteer in a range of roles which are all vital to our work.

- ✓ Directly supporting children and families by Home Visiting or at our Twiglets groups
- ✓ Taking on a Trustee position to assist with the running of the charity
- ✓ Helping at Fundraising events we hold, which take place throughout the year
- ✓ Working in our offices to provide much needed admin support and specialist skills

### Fundraise

Help to raise the funds required each year is crucial to enable us to support the families referred to us. Could you:

- ✓ Arrange your own fundraising activity
- ✓ Select us as your organisation's chosen charity
- ✓ Take part in a sponsored challenge
- ✓ Donate a raffle or auction prize
- ✓ Come along to our fundraising events
- ✓ Sponsor an event
- ✓ Join in our annual Snowflake Appeal

### Donate now!

**Online** single or regular donations can be made to Home-Start CHAMS through BT MyDonate via our website

**Text** - Simply text **CHMS14 £5** to 70070 to donate £5 towards our work with families.

**Post** - Please send a cheque, made payable to 'Home-Start CHAMS', to our office address in Crawley.


You can find out more at:  
[www.homestartchams.org.uk/donation](http://www.homestartchams.org.uk/donation)

### Keep in touch

Find out more and keep up to date with what is happening:  
[www.homestartchams.org.uk](http://www.homestartchams.org.uk)

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 home-start-chams

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**Home-Start CHAMS**  
**(Crawley, Horsham & Mid Sussex)**  
Longley House 2, International Drive, Southgate Avenue, Crawley  
West Sussex, RH10 6AQ

Tel. 01293 416327  
E-mail: [info@homestartchams.org.uk](mailto:info@homestartchams.org.uk)

[www.homestartchams.org.uk](http://www.homestartchams.org.uk)

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