

Supporting families in Crawley, Horsham & Mid Sussex



Crawley, Horsham
& Mid-Sussex

Home-Start CHAMS has been supporting local families for 23 years.

Our aim is to give vulnerable young children the best possible start in life and during a year affected by a worldwide pandemic this became even more challenging and important. We adapted to offer local families the practical and emotional support they needed at this time. *"I find Home-Start amazing – the help is beyond brilliant – what else can I say – thumbs up!!"*

One to one Support

Every week our volunteers offer support to families with young children. They provide emotional support and help parents to overcome the challenges they face. This year help had to be at a distance, but face to face work resumed as soon as we could.

Group Support

Through our groups we can provide families with advice, encouragement, activities, play resources and the chance to offload. We support many families of multiples and new parents in this way – online during Covid but back to our usual venues as soon as allowed.

Essential Deliveries

Families struggled with accessing food, basic equipment, clothes and other essentials during the lockdowns. We sourced and delivered what was needed and offered a listening ear too.

Jane had recently experienced a relationship breakdown, the death of her father and was supporting her mother with a recent diagnosis of dementia. She was signed off work, worried about her finances, worried that she was not interacting with her daughter and terrified that she would repeat unhealthy patterns learned from her abusive father. She was not coping and was desperate for help.

A volunteer was matched for weekly support. Due to covid this was initially telephone support but when restrictions allowed outdoor walk and talks took place.

The volunteer initially provided a listening ear and support for Jane to tackle her financial difficulties. They then discussed her parenting challenges. Mum's high anxiety and unrealistic expectations resulted in extreme reluctance to allow Sophie to get messy or take any physical risks. So, by modelling parenting strategies through walk and talks and providing activity ideas Jane was encouraged to allow outdoor messy play and appropriate risk taking. Waterproof clothing and wellies were purchased to help with puddle jumping and den building and Jane was encouraged to participate.

Over time, Jane's mental health stabilised, her stress levels reduced, and her confidence grew. She applied for a new work position and was successful in this against strong competition. She was pleased with the balance she had achieved in working and caring for her child and no longer felt guilty regarding her parenting ability. She was no longer afraid of her behaviours towards Sophie and had more realistic expectations of herself in her parenting. Sophie and her mum were sharing quality time and enjoyment together- spending more time outdoors with less reliance on electronic 'babysitters'. Routines and behaviour became more consistent, and mum was confident that she knew where to go for further help should she need it.

Jane said: "it was so good to hear us laughing again – made me realise we don't laugh enough"

* Written up from a Home-Start CHAMS supported family case. Names have been changed

Our Impact 2020/21

Brighter futures for local children

Last year we gave **260** children in **146** families a brighter future, with our team of **55** volunteers, supported by **8** staff members.

Parents told us that after our support:

Their self esteem had improved

83%



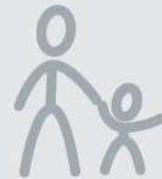
They were coping better with being isolated

77%



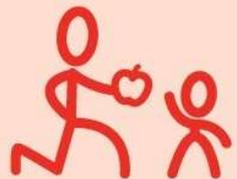
They were coping better with life at home with the children

73%



They were coping better with stress within the home

71%



Their mental health had improved

69%



They felt more able to listen to their children & manage their

66%



“Helped me feel that someone is there to listen. Helped me cope with stress. Helped me and my little one when we were short of food supplies. Helped cheer up my little one with new toys.” *Quote from a recently supported family.

Please support us by volunteering or making a donation. Further details:

www.homestartchams.org.uk