



**HELPING FAMILIES
WITH YOUNG CHILDREN**



**HOME
START**

Kirklees

ANNUAL REPORT
AND ACCOUNTS 2024-25

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Chair's Welcome

It's a real pleasure to share my first report as Chair of Trustees. At the end of last year, I was honoured to take over from Vanessa Stirum and I'm delighted that she continues to support us as an advisor to the Board. I'm also very pleased to welcome two new trustees, Helen Thewlis and Sally Rhodes, who bring valuable experience and insight.

This past year, 2024–25, has been one of both achievement and opportunity. When the Thriving Kirklees Partnership came to an end, we were pleased that Kirklees Council continued to commission us to provide support services for families. We've also drawn on reserves to continue our specialist groups for young parents and secured multi-year grants and donations totalling over £319,000. In total, our income this year reached £665,339 – a fantastic result that has enabled us to maintain, and in some areas expand, the support we offer to families.

We're proud to have received the Kirklees Volunteering Quality Award again and to be nominated for the King's Award. These honours are a wonderful testament to the commitment of our staff and volunteers.

Looking ahead, in June we commissioned Abi Levitt, who brings extensive national experience from other Home-Starts, to lead a comprehensive review of our services. She is working closely with our staff team to assess how we can enhance our reach and impact. This is a significant and exciting project that will guide us in focusing our efforts where they matter most.

Our Business Development team is now fully established and actively working with stakeholders to identify new opportunities for service delivery, either directly or in partnership with others.

Finally, my heartfelt thanks to our amazing staff and volunteers who make our work possible, and to our funders for their essential support. Childhood can't wait – and it's vital we continue to be there for families when they need us the most.

David Mason

Chair of Trustees





**“Volunteering
for Home-Start
has increased
my confidence”**

Our Vision:

**Children will have the best start
in life. Families will be safe,
healthy and resilient**

Our Values:

- Respect - we treat families with dignity and without judgement
- Compassion - each family is different and we listen
- Relational - our support is not time limited and is bespoke to each family
- Quality - we are committed to delivering trusted, professional, high quality services
- Community - we care for local families by tackling inequalities
- Empowering - parents to have confidence, resilience and ability to self-manage

Our Mission:

- An independent local charity offering unique and bespoke support to local families in Kirklees
- A workforce of experienced volunteers recruited, trained and supervised
- Volunteer led support delivered in the family home, remotely or in the community
- Peer support for parents to develop confidence, resilience and ability to self-manage

Rebuilding confidence, creating change: A family's journey with Home-Start Kirklees

At Home-Start Kirklees, we understand that parenting can be incredibly challenging - especially when families are facing multiple, complex issues. One mother's journey this year illustrates the power of compassionate, consistent support in helping families move from crisis to confidence.

Referred to Home-Start in June 2024, this young mother of two was struggling with social isolation, anxiety, and depression. Her physical health was deteriorating due to cannabis dependency and an eating disorder. She was experiencing vacant episodes, raising serious concerns amongst professionals and family members about her safety and that of her children.

During the initial visit, she was emotional and overwhelmed, expressing deep feelings of shame and guilt. She feared she was failing her children and repeating the parenting patterns she had experienced growing up. Her own mother had been substance dependant and had introduced her to cannabis at just 13

years old, something she once believed was normal. She also felt judged and undermined by her children's paternal grandmother, who often used her health struggles to threaten involvement from Social Care.

Her eldest child had expressed distress, saying, "I just want a normal mum". Her youngest child had speech and language delays and had frequent emotional outbursts. He had no consistent bedtime routine, often falling asleep on the sofa and going to bed when his mother did. Her self-esteem was so low that she didn't feel capable of making any changes.

Home-Start Kirklees became part of the Team Around the Family (TAF), offering emotional support through the building of trust. With time and encouragement, she began engaging with other services. She worked with CONNECT to address her eating disorder and was discharged after reaching a healthy weight. She also significantly reduced her cannabis use with support from CHART and continues to access their services.

"I felt Home-Start listened and believed in me and helped me to be a better parent"



When her mental health declined further following the death of her father, her Co-ordinator supported her to attend a GP appointment, leading to a referral to Mental Health Services. She was also signposted to bereavement support through Cruse.

In late 2024, during a home visit, the Co-ordinator witnessed her having a seizure and called emergency services. She was later diagnosed with epilepsy. Home-Start supported her through the diagnosis, including attending hospital appointments and co-ordinating with Children's Social Care to implement a safety plan. Safety gates were installed, a careline was fitted, and her eldest child was taught how to respond in an emergency. These steps helped reduce her anxiety and gave her the confidence that her children would be safe.

As her situation stabilised, she was matched with a Support Worker for a short-term intervention. Together they attended toddler groups, worked on school readiness, and introduced a consistent bedtime routine. Her youngest child's emotional outbursts reduced, and his speech and language improved significantly. Cooking sessions helped her introduce healthier meals, and her confidence as a parent began to grow.

By February 2025, her level of need had reduced, and she was matched with a Home-Start volunteer for ongoing emotional support and community engagement. She now feels more confident, less anxious, and more capable in her parenting. Her words reflect the transformation:

“ I have gained so much confidence in myself and in my parenting. At the beginning of the support I would not have left the home on my own, but with the support I have gained the confidence to take the children out. Home life is so much better. We now have better routines in place during the day and at night. I have gained the confidence to reduce screen time and put boundaries in place. I have managed to potty train my youngest and the dummy has now gone. My anxiety has reduced lots. Thank you so much for all your support ”

This story is a powerful example of how Home-Start Kirklees helps families navigate complex challenges, build resilience, and create lasting change. Through trust, encouragement, and practical support, we empower parents to believe in themselves and build brighter futures for their children.

Highlights of 2024-25

- **Started ESOL classes in partnership with Kirklees College** due to barriers in accessing regular courses for parents who needed childcare provision to be able to learn
- **Awarded The National Lottery Community Fund grant for 3 years** to bring a brand-new project into Kirklees dedicated to support Dads in the peri-natal period (launched April 2025)
- **Nominated for a Kings Award in September** with the assessment taking place in March (to be announced in Nov 2025)
- **Supported more families than ever before - total of 361** (including 52 young parent families 14-24 years). **An increase of 68 families from the previous year**
- **Number of children supported is 714**
- **New website launched Sept 2024**
- **Number of volunteers** who have supported HSK **continues to grow - 150 volunteers in 2024-25 compared to 127 the year before**
- **Staff and volunteers carried out an amazing 2500 visits**
- **We made 253 referrals** to other organisations, including **67 to baby banks** for essential items for families, **over 50 to local food banks**, and **19 for home safety items.**
- **Extended eligibility to include support with transition into first term of mainstream school for children needing additional support** (extension of school readiness offer)





● **Awarded the KVQA (Kirklees Volunteering Quality Award) for a further 3 years**

Good practice feedback highlighted:

- Volunteer feedback is collected and responded to, at regular points in the volunteer journey
- Volunteers experience a thorough preparation course which is interactive and includes relevant scenarios
- Volunteers report feeling highly valued
- Senior leaders & trustees have a clear understanding of the important role of volunteers within the organisation



Business Development

This year has marked a period of strategic growth and innovation for Home-Start Kirklees. We have further developed our marketing and fundraising strategies, providing a clear roadmap for income generation, communications and stakeholder engagement.

Our digital presence faced a major challenge this year with the unexpected loss of our Facebook account. Despite this setback, we were overwhelmed by the level of community support we received in rebuilding our online presence. Thanks to the encouragement and engagement from our supporters, we successfully relaunched our social media platforms and have seen steady growth across channels. Our new website continues to serve us well, providing accessible features such as live chat and a language translator. Our 25th anniversary campaign was a particular highlight, generating new supporters and strengthening our visibility across Kirklees.

Fundraising efforts have been successful. We secured multi-year funding from The National Lottery Community Fund for our Dad's Project as well as continued funding for the peer support groups, alongside major grants from Henry Smith Charity, Garfield Weston, Tudor Trust, The Sackler Trust and Pears Foundation. Additional support came from One Community, Sir George Martin Trust, Charles & Elsie Sykes Trust, UKH Foundation, Arnold Clark, Toy Trust, and the Facey Foundation. Community and corporate partnerships also grew, with support from Co-op and Tesco.

We were also supported by Liz & Terry Bramall Foundation, Waitrose and Sharps Media, who provided amazing Christmas donations for the families we support. Thank you to all our donors and supporters who helped us raise £12,000 via The Big Give Christmas challenge

Stakeholder engagement has expanded significantly. We developed new partnerships with Kirklees College (for ESOL delivery) and Huddersfield University. These relationships have opened doors to collaborative projects, research opportunities, and increased community reach.

Looking ahead, our focus remains on diversifying income, deepening partnerships, and embedding digital tools to ensure long-term sustainability and impact.

“

**A huge thank you to everyone
that has supported us this year,
we simply couldn't do our life
changing work without you ”**

Be Part of the Change

Celebrating 26 years of supporting families across Kirklees and we're just getting started. Your time, voice and generosity can help us reach even more families in need.

Spread the Word

Word-of-mouth is one of the most powerful tools we have. Whether it's a chat with a friend, a mention at work, or sharing your experience of our services, every conversation helps us grow our visibility and impact.



Follow & Share

Help us reach more people by following us and sharing our posts.



Connect with us on socials – details on the back page



Stay Connected

Sign up for our newsletter to hear about family outcomes, events, and news.

Scan the QR code to subscribe - unsubscribe anytime.



Fundraise for Us

From marathons to bake sales to corporate days, every effort counts.

homestart-kirklees.org.uk/donation

Contact Amy:
amy.oneill@homestart-kirklees.org.uk



Donate Today

Your support helps us provide consistent, compassionate care to families facing mental health challenges, financial hardship, and social isolation.



You're not just giving money, you're giving hope, stability, and a brighter future.

Scan the QR code to donate

Call: 01484 421925

Visit: www.homestart-kirklees.org.uk

UK taxpayers: Add 25% with Gift Aid!

Our Impact

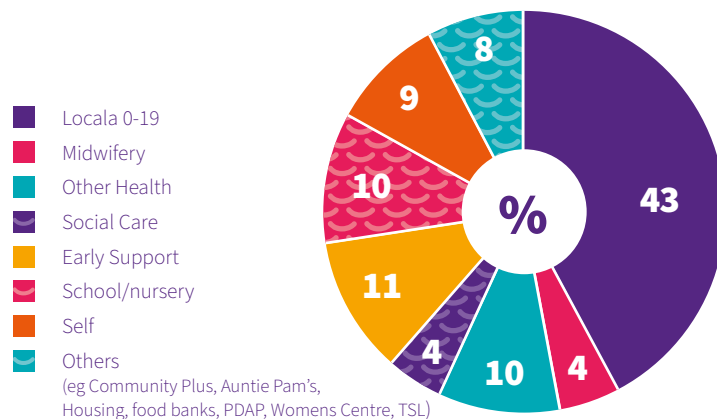
In the year 2024-25, **Home-Start Kirklees supported a record 361 families**, including **714 children**. The support provided was tailored to each family's unique circumstances and included:

- **Home visits from trained volunteers or paid staff**
- **Peer group support**
- **Short term information, advice and guidance including telephone befriending**
- **School readiness sessions**

The families we supported experienced a range of complex and often overlapping challenges:

- 81%** were affected by parental mental illness
- 81%** experienced social isolation
- 73%** of families lived in the top 30% most deprived areas in England
- 20%** of families were young parents (14 – 24 years)
- 21%** had a child with special education needs or disabilities (SEND)
- 48%** were lone parents
- 30%** lived in unsuitable housing
- 60%** had complex (5+) needs

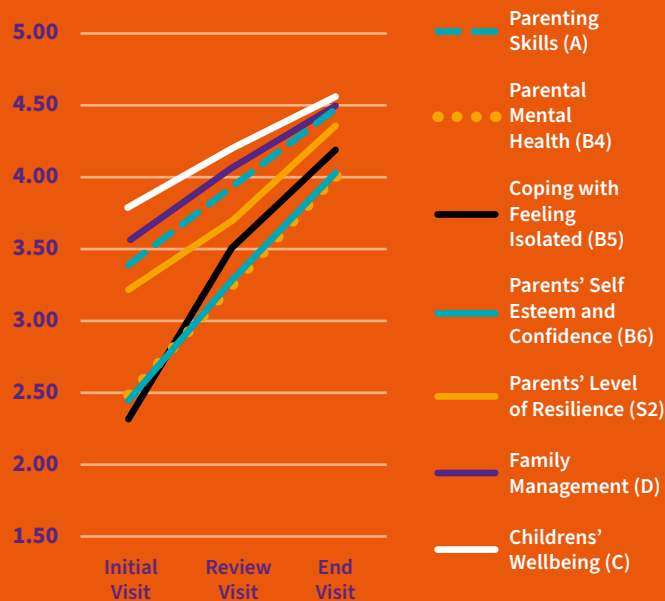
We received **321 new referrals for support** from a wide range of sources, reflecting our **collaborative approach and strong community partnerships**.



Support is focused on helping parents achieve the best outcomes for their families. We conduct regular review assessments to ensure that the support remains relevant and effective.

Parents are asked to self-assess their needs across various indicators, and these scores consistently show significant improvement over the course of support.

Average coping scores for families supported 2024-25



Feedback collected at the end of support shows that Home-Start's intervention had a powerful and positive impact:

- 95%** of parents reported improved parenting skills
- 91%** felt more resilient
- 90%** experienced better mental health
- 93%** accessed more specialist services and community provision
- 92%** felt less isolated and more connected

Home-Start's support has a lasting effect on families' ability to cope and thrive. We follow up with families 6 months after their support ends to assess how they are able to manage independently. Of those contacted in the last year:

93%
still felt safe

85%
still felt resilient and able to self-manage

76%
still felt healthy

Peer Group Support

Home-Start Kirklees has continued to strengthen families and communities through our peer support programmes. These services, designed for both young parents and parents of all ages experiencing isolation, have provided vital lifelines across the district. More than just weekly gatherings, support sessions have become safe, nurturing environments where learning and peer connections flourish.

Empowering Young Parents

The young parent group sessions (aged 14–24) address a wide range of challenges including mental health issues, domestic abuse, housing instability, and social stigma. Held weekly in Huddersfield and Cleckheaton, these sessions supported **52 young parents** and **65 children in 2024–25**.

The outcomes were significant at the end of support:

- **94%** of participants felt less isolated
- **100%** improved their parenting skills
- **94%** reported better emotional wellbeing
- **100%** experienced increased self-esteem
- **93%** felt more resilient

Each session is co-designed with parents, ensuring relevance and engagement. Topics include child development, healthy relationships, and household management. A key strength of the programme is the involvement of peer educators - former participants who now offer relatable guidance and mentorship. This peer-led model not only builds parenting skills but also fosters a sense of community and empowerment.

“Thank you for always being there and helping me and [child] grow into confident individuals”

“So many times I just wanted to give up but looking at my baby’s face made me want to be here to look after her. I’ve come a long way thanks to the support and encouragement from Home-Start”



Addressing isolation and loneliness

Recognising the ongoing impact of the pandemic, Home-Start Kirklees expanded its peer support model to include parents of all ages. With funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, the programme now supports families facing loneliness, social anxiety, and geographical isolation.

Weekly sessions in Huddersfield and Dewsbury are accessible by referral. Families receive tailored bespoke support from staff and volunteers. One-to-one support is also available to help parents build their confidence by being handheld into group sessions.

The sessions are co-produced with parents and have covered themes such as mindfulness, healthy eating, emotional resilience, and positive parenting. Children have benefited from school readiness activities and opportunities for social development, ensuring a holistic approach to family wellbeing.

“I feel like I have got my life back together and have made some good friends now and we keep in touch”

Community Led and Inclusive

Our joined-up approach ensures families receive wraparound support and smooth transitions into wider community services. Community outings, such as visits to libraries, parks, and local events, help families discover affordable opportunities and strengthen their connection to their local area.

“It gave me the confidence to take the kids out on my own. It has helped [my daughter] get more comfortable with other people”

“Home-Start got me out of the house and doing stuff I wouldn’t have done on my own. They encouraged me to enrol on some online courses, which I passed. I was shocked!”

The complexity of needs amongst families continues to grow. Many young parents have experienced trauma, or are navigating the criminal justice system. For all-age parents, the lingering effects of the pandemic - particularly isolation and poor mental health - remain significant barriers.

Flexibility has been key to meeting these challenges. Home-Start Kirklees’ trauma-informed, relationship-based approach allows for tailored support that adapts to each family’s unique circumstances. The organisation has also embraced the opportunity to support families from marginalised communities, including asylum seekers. These families often face language barriers, cultural differences, and limited access to support networks. We have responded with culturally sensitive support, helping families integrate into the community and access the help that they need.

“I am so thankful. You are so kind to help people like me. In my country nobody would help me and we would be left by the road”

The feedback from participants has been overwhelmingly positive. Parents have expressed gratitude for the support, encouragement, and sense of belonging they have found. Many have gained the confidence to engage in community activities, pursue education, and build lasting friendships.

“Coming to group has given me a purpose to life”

“It has become the key part of our week. I’ve made friends with lots of mums and their little ones and found mums who are going through similar situations. Things just feel a little lighter after we leave”

In April 2025, due to a lack of funding we had to make the difficult decision to suspend the peer support groups for young parents; whilst young parents still receive 1:1 support in the home, the ability to sustain the support groups became financially unviable. We are seeking every available opportunity to secure income to introduce peer support groups for young parents once again.

“I am beyond grateful for the support I received. I honestly don’t know where I would be without it. The team are all super friendly and understanding. They all genuinely care about you & will help with so many different aspects of life”

Volunteers and the value they bring

Volunteers are at the heart of Home-Start Kirklees and without them we wouldn't be able to provide the bespoke and personalised service to communities across Kirklees. We are always looking for volunteers to enable us to support more families. Last year we welcomed 54 new individuals bringing the total number of volunteers in the year to 150. Volunteers supported families in a group setting, over the telephone, directly in the home or community. Home based volunteers provided unique and specialist support directly to those parents who needed it, within their own environment.

Each volunteer is unique and bring a set of skills, experience and expertise to the workforce. Volunteers are a huge asset to the organisation, and within the team there are:

- 9 languages spoken in addition to English, including Mandarin, Urdu, Polish and Bengali
- Parents who received Home-Start Kirklees support themselves and now want to go on to provide the life-changing support they received to others
- Volunteers who are qualified practitioners eg. teachers and counsellors
- Plus many volunteers who have experience of personal life-changing events themselves that shape the support they give to parents

“

In 2024-25 we recruited two volunteers into paid staff roles within the organisation

”

We thank each and every one of our volunteers and welcome the skills and experience that they bring. However, there is always the need for more volunteers to enable Home-Start Kirklees to support more families. Over the next year Home-Start Kirklees has ambitious plans to grow volunteer capacity whilst ensuring it is reflective of the diverse community within Kirklees - this includes volunteers from all communities, age ranges and the different geographical areas. The organisation would particularly like to recruit volunteers who have experience with children with neuro-diverse needs, volunteers who speak community languages particularly South Asian languages and those that live within the Dewsbury, Heckmondwike and Cleckheaton areas.

We are committed to volunteer progression to ensure a positive and beneficial experience for all. We were proud to have secured the Kirklees Volunteering Quality Award for a further three years in December 2024, recognising the quality of the training and experience volunteers receive. As well as comprehensive initial training, volunteers gain invaluable first-hand experience supporting families. This ensures volunteers are utilising the skills they bring to the role and also gain skills for their future development.

“

Volunteering with Home-Start Kirklees has given me confidence, helped my career and helped with my university course. I've learnt so much from my Co-ordinator, including professional boundaries which has really benefitted me for the future

”

“

My volunteering position definitely enhances my CV and has been a positive talking point during interviews. My experience is not only personally beneficial but professionally too

”



In 2024-25 Home-Start Kirklees will focus on continuing to develop a wider variety of volunteering opportunities. This includes volunteers that want to be involved but don't have the time or opportunity to accommodate weekly family visiting, and ways for local companies to come and support via their employees. We have links with Huddersfield University offering student placements to those on relevant courses enabling professionals of the future to have direct work experience with families needing help.

Scan the code to find out more ➔



Volunteer with us



5,100 = £108,967

Volunteer Hours

A Journey of Strength and Renewal: One Parent's Story

At Home-Start Kirklees, we are privileged to walk alongside families during some of their most challenging and transformative moments. Every story we hear is a powerful reminder of the resilience that exists and the difference that timely, compassionate support can make. One parent's journey this year stands out as a testament to courage, growth, and hope.

When her first child was born, she was a lone parent silently battling post-natal depression. She kept her struggles hidden, bottling up her emotions and trying to carry on. Just as she began to feel a little stronger, she was devastated by the sudden loss of her father who was her main source of support. Grief overwhelmed her and her mental health deteriorated. She began using alcohol to cope and, recognising that she couldn't be the parent her daughter needed at that time, made the painful decision to allow her daughter to live full-time with her father. Tragically, this led to a complete loss of contact, deepening her sense of isolation and despair.

But this is not a story of defeat - it is one of remarkable resilience.

By the time her son was born in March 2023, she had been sober for three years and had a supportive partner. Yet, the emotional scars of her past remained. She was anxious, lacked confidence, and rarely left the house. Living in a new town, she had no friends or family of her own nearby. Her Social Worker referred her to Home-Start Kirklees, and that's when her journey began to change.

When her son was just three weeks old, she received a visit from a Home-Start Co-ordinator. She was hesitant about joining the peer group offered and initially found it difficult to engage. She considered leaving but her Co-ordinator gently encouraged her to give it a little more time. That encouragement made all the difference.

Her confidence began to grow. Through peer support, she made new friends including one best friend with whom she

now shares regular outings to play gyms, art sessions and summer adventures. The group became more than just a weekly meeting - it became a lifeline.

Home-Start supported her in many ways: emotionally, practically and socially. She received advice on parenting, health and wellbeing. She was encouraged to stop smoking, start exercising and explore healthier eating habits. Conversations about weaning her son inspired her to try new foods and cook more at home. She began to take better care of herself, not just for her son, but for her own wellbeing. Importantly, she was never alone.

Home-Start were always just a phone call away, ready to listen and offer support. They encouraged her to enrol in online courses, which she completed successfully, something she never thought possible. She got married, an event she once believed she could never face due to anxiety. Now, she's studying for her GCSEs at Kirklees College and dreams of working with children in the future.



Her words say it best:

“

Home-Start have been brilliant. They do an amazing job helping families who have challenges. My son loves coming to group, he smiles so much when we come through the door”

Her journey didn't stop there. In September 2024, she began volunteering in one of Home-Start's ESOL groups. Her confidence continued to grow as she built strong relationships with the children. One little boy, who is non-verbal, initially played alone in his own world. Over time, he began to seek her out, bringing her books to read and laughing during play. Her gentle, consistent presence made a real difference, and we are hopeful she will continue supporting the group in the coming year.

This story reflects the heart of Home-Start Kirklees. We walk alongside families through their most difficult times, helping them find hope, build resilience, and create brighter futures. We are proud of every parent who takes that first brave step to ask for help and grateful to every volunteer, staff member and supporter who makes our work possible.

Home Based Support

Home is where life unfolds - where children grow, parents nurture, and families weather life's highs and lows together. But for many families, the challenges at home are growing heavier and harder to manage alone.

In the homes of Kirklees - across Huddersfield, Dewsbury, Batley, and beyond - families are facing mounting pressures that too often go unseen. The cost-of-living crisis, mental health struggles, housing insecurity, and the lasting impact of the pandemic have left many parents and carers feeling overwhelmed, lonely and isolated. For parents of babies and toddlers, these challenges are magnified by sleep deprivation, isolation, and the emotional weight of wanting to get it right. For some, the daily challenge of simply keeping things together, and being able to complete basic daily parenting tasks has become a hidden crisis.

Many families are navigating life with a child with complex needs, including special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Many are struggling with communication and connection with educational settings that do not have the resources to be able to care for their children whilst meeting their developmental needs. Language barriers and cultural stigma can make it even harder for parents to ask for help.

It is not uncommon for families that we support to have had a lot of input from many other professionals in the past. It is also a common theme that those families say nobody is

listening to them, or they are frustrated at having to tell so many different people their story, over and over again, and still not receive the bespoke support that they need.

The power of early, consistent support in the home cannot be overstated. It prevents crisis from escalating, keeps children safe with their families, and relieves pressure on statutory services like Social Care and health providers. More importantly, it strengthens the family unit from within, helping parents become calm, capable and attentive to their children's needs.

This is where Home-Start Kirklees steps in to support families when they think that there is nowhere for them to turn. With us there is no judgment, just lots of empathy, practical help, and a belief in every parent's potential.

Our fully trained volunteers support families directly in their own homes, offering tailored, compassionate help where it matters most, whether that be parenting, practical help with routines, budgeting, and school readiness, or emotional support, a listening ear, and providing a friendly face to a family facing loneliness and isolation. The support we provide is bespoke and aims to empower parents to be able to continue with their lives as independently as possible. Each family is met with understanding and without judgment, allowing them to rebuild trust, resilience, and confidence at their own pace. The impact of this is profound.

One of the most powerful elements of our approach is peer support. Many of our volunteers are parents themselves with lived experience who have faced the same challenges that they are supporting parents with. They use their valuable knowledge and insight to lift others and show that the outlook can be different. Families can go on to lead full and positive family lives. The volunteers can also help to break down barriers, and families report that they feel less judged, and more importantly, heard and understood.

We work closely with schools, nurseries, Locala, Perinatal Mental Health, Early Support, and Social Care to ensure families receive fully co-ordinated wraparound care.

Evaluation shows great results. Families report improved mental health. They have much better confidence and self-esteem. They are able to manage their own feelings well, and these do not then impact as much on their daily lives and care of their children. Their parent-child relationship is stronger, which allows them to better deal with poor behaviour and get the children into good routines. Children are more settled in school. Parents feel less alone. And crucially, fewer families reach crisis point. If we intervene early enough most support work avoids crisis and risk support, enabling parents to be resilient and self-manage in the future without the need to be re-referred back into services.



Bridging Gaps through Language: ESOL at Home-Start Kirklees

In response to a growing need within the community, Home-Start Kirklees identified a significant barrier preventing many families from accessing English language support: the lack of childcare provision. Parents of preschool-aged children—particularly those from ethnic minority backgrounds—were unable to attend ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes due to having no one to care for their children during sessions. This gap left many families isolated, lacking confidence, and unable to fully engage with their communities or access essential services.

To address this, Home-Start Kirklees developed a tailored ESOL programme that removes this barrier by offering on-site childcare alongside language learning. Delivered in partnership with Kirklees College, the service provides free, term-time ESOL modules (Conversational ESOL, Family ESOL, Life Skills in ESOL, Maths in ESOL) for parents, whilst their children are cared for in the same space by trained

staff and volunteers. This dual approach not only supports parents in developing their English skills but also promotes early learning and school readiness for their children through structured play and social interaction.

Each term includes 6–8 week classes, with up to 10 parents and their preschool-aged children attending. Sessions are supported by a Co-ordinator and a team of trained volunteers who facilitate both the childcare and the delivery of Home-Start's school readiness initiative.

The impact of the ESOL provision is already evident. Parents are gaining confidence, improving their language skills, and building social connections.

Children are developing communication and social skills in preparation for nursery and school. The service promotes inclusion, reduces isolation, and empowers families to participate more fully in their communities.

“Support has been amazing. I can't thank Home-Start enough. I am now attending English classes, and I am more confident in going out to appointments and places alone”



**14 families supported
in ESOL sessions
2024-25**

Supporting Early Transitions: School Readiness at Home-Start Kirklees

Our School Readiness programme was launched in 2018 to support families with preschool-aged children who were not accessing their free early education and childcare (FEEC) entitlement. The initiative aimed to help parents understand what “school readiness” means and how they can play a vital role in preparing their children for the transition into educational settings.

Since its inception, the programme has evolved through continued funding and learning from delivery. It now includes a set of four home visits, during which trained volunteers use specially developed resource bags filled with play-based activities to model how parents can support their children’s development. These activities promote communication, independence, and confidence - key skills for a successful start in school.

The School Readiness programme continues to be a core part of Home-Start Kirklees’ offer, available to referred families and partner organisations. It not only prepares children for school but also empowers parents to create nurturing, structured home learning environments that support long-term development and wellbeing.

In 2024-25 we reviewed our school readiness offer to help children transition into full-time school extending support into the first term of school to ensure a smooth and stress-free experience for parents and their children.

We have also delivered school readiness workshops in libraries and schools for parents to access (that do not need to be formally referred into our support programmes)



65

**families
supported with
school readiness
in 2024-25**



Director's Report

This past year, we have supported more families than ever before. The demand for our services continues to grow, with 321 referrals, as more families reach out for help to support their everyday life challenges. The rising cost of living, isolation and loneliness, mental health and parenting pressures remain significant issues for those we support.

We are incredibly fortunate to have a dedicated team of volunteers and staff who work tirelessly to offer compassionate and relational support. Their efforts provide a vital listening ear, practical help, and a wealth of information and guidance. Through their work, parents/carers feel more confident, better equipped to cope, and empowered to make positive choices for their families.

Our volunteers, staff and trustees remain deeply committed to sustaining and expanding our charitable work. We are driven by the belief that every family deserves the opportunity to thrive. Our services are built on trust, and it is this trust that enables us to work alongside families to achieve meaningful and lasting outcomes.

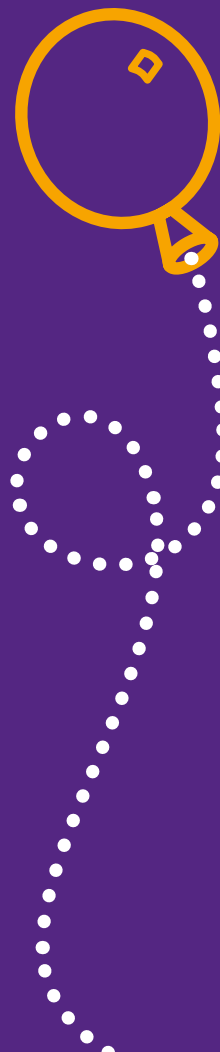
We are passionate about helping parents build resilience and confidence, especially during times when they feel low or isolated. Our goal is to support them in a way that fosters independence, so they can flourish without ongoing intervention or reliance on statutory services.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the families who have welcomed us into their homes and trusted us during vulnerable times. It is always inspiring to witness their strength and the transformation that occurs when they begin to believe in themselves.

We are also deeply grateful to our funders, partners, and wider stakeholders. Your continued support has been instrumental in helping us make a real difference in the lives of families. We are thrilled to be able to bring a new service into Kirklees to support dads in 2025.

And finally, to our amazing volunteers - thank you. Your generosity, kindness and unwavering commitment to your communities are the heart of our organisation. You give your time selflessly, and your impact is immeasurable.

Kerri Flanagan
Director



Active Fatherhood (Dad Matters National Programme)

In early 2025, Home-Start Kirklees secured three years of funding from The National Lottery Community Fund to launch the Active Fatherhood project—an initiative designed to better support dads during the perinatal period (from conception to age two). Dad Matters aims to improve father engagement and provide tailored support to dads - particularly those who may not access traditional services. Already active in Calderdale, Wakefield, Leeds, and Bradford, the model is now being embedded in Kirklees through Home-Start's local expertise and community connections.



Key Activities

➤ **Outreach:** Sessions on bonding and attachment, mental health and signposting to relevant services

➤ **Online Support:** A dedicated webpage and social media presence provide dads with accessible, information and advice, both locally and nationally

➤ **1-to-1 Support:** Available via referral or self-referral, this personalised support is tailored to each dad's individual needs and circumstances

➤ **Training for Professionals:** We are actively engaging with local services and key partners to raise awareness, encourage referrals, and improve father-inclusive practice

Looking Ahead

➤ Recruit Dad Champion Volunteers to offer peer support to other dads

➤ Targeted support for vulnerable dads (e.g. young dads, LGBTQ+ dads)

➤ Walk 'n' Talk groups

➤ Online and in-person drop-ins

➤ New Dad Workshops

We want to ensure that dads across Kirklees feel supported, informed, and empowered during the early years of parenthood.

Stakeholder feedback

Families

“Feeling heard, understood and for being able to share common concerns. Reassurance about current positives in my home and sharing tips and ideas with other parents as well as the Home-Start team. Thank you!”

“I am so grateful that you have always helped me. You are working so hard and trying so hard to help me”

“The great thing about you guys is you never tell me I told you so and you don’t judge”

“Thank you for everything you have done for us for the past 2 years. I will never forget it! We are sad to be leaving but excited for the future”

“Home-Start has made a big difference. It’s got me out when I needed it because I wasn’t getting out before. I’d recommend it anyone because they are a really good help for loads of things, mental health and other things”

“My volunteer helped me a lot with getting school places for the children, PIP application and my divorce. Home-Start was very supportive”

“I can now play with my children and have a better relationship with them”

“The way you guys care for our wellbeing is really great. You really care and that goes a long way. I can see that it is genuine care and concern, not just because it is your job. I am so glad I got introduced to Home-Start. It has helped my confidence and self-esteem”

“My volunteer was lovely, she was caring and went over the time of 3 hours when I needed extra support. I am grateful for the support and my son who has multiple complex needs”

“I built confidence and it gave me ideas where to start and help me to have routine and timetable so I can achieve my goals one by one”

“Thank you, feel like I’m connecting much more with XXXX now I’m letting my guard down more it’s really hard for me but she’s absolutely amazing honestly couldn’t ask for someone better so thank you so much”



“

Volunteers

“Thank you for my time as a volunteer. You do an amazing job in our community supporting families”

“When my children were younger I really needed some extra support, so it feels good to give something back. I love helping out in the group sessions and seeing parents move forward and thrive. It is great to see how a little bit of advice or kindness can make such a big difference”

“So so so supported the whole time! My co-ordinator enabled me to change my life for the better and then supported me to help others to do the same. It beat my expectations! I felt so supported and valued by Home-Start, and it felt lovely to help and mentor others! I was supported by Home-Start and loved it. I learned so much during my time that I wanted to give back to women in similar positions to what I was in”

“It is so nice to be able to see the difference I am making to the family and makes the time I give so worthwhile”

“Super friendly welcome atmosphere”

“You provide such an amazing supportive experience to local families”

Referrers

“I always feel a sigh of relief when I hear that Home-Start are working with a family as we have a really good relationship and know that they are on top of any safeguarding issues”

“I just wanted to share some feedback on the incredible support you provide to (mum). (Mum) has told me the support she receives at Home Start is outstanding and has helped her to have more confidence in her parenting abilities. It is very apparent that your dedication, patience, and professionalism makes the world of difference to (mum) and to know that she feels so well supported. I have appreciated being able to work with you in a collaborative way to ensure positive outcomes for (mum) which is a testament to your commitment and example of you going above and beyond. I hope we can work together again in the future

”

Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to present this year's financial summary for Home-Start Kirklees. Despite a challenging funding environment following the closure of the Thriving Kirklees Partnership, the charity remains in a stable financial position with healthy reserves and continued delivery of essential services.

Total income for the year was £665,339, broadly in line with the previous year. Statutory income declined from £406,957 to £338,611, but this was offset by a significant increase in grant and trust funding, which rose to £293,496 and interest and other donations of £33,232. This reflects strong efforts by the team to diversify income and secure support from organisations such as The Garfield Weston Foundation, The National Lottery Community Fund, and The Tudor Trust.

Total expenditure rose to £667,010, around a 9% increase from last year, reflecting inflationary pressures and a gradual reinstatement of staffing and services following last year's cost controls. As a result, the charity reported a deficit of only £1,671, which was met from reserves.

At the end of March 2025, total funds stood at £373,284, comprising £52,302 unrestricted, £236,553 designated, and £84,429 restricted funds. This represents a modest drawdown of reserves, consistent with the Board-approved budget.

Looking ahead, we continue to face funding uncertainties but remain well positioned to adapt. The Finance Committee will continue to provide robust financial oversight as the organisation navigates the next phase of strategic development.

I would like to thank the entire team and my fellow trustees for their support throughout the year.

Andrew Smith
Treasurer



Trustees

David Mason, Vanessa Stirum, Andrew Smith, Karl Yates, Clare Mulgan (resigned October 2024), Julie Grindley, Kieran Brady, Pegah Parandian, Helen Thewlis, Sally Rhodes

Staff

Kerri Flanagan	Director
Michelle Steadman (left)	Operational Manager
Amy O'Neill	Business Development Manager
Sarah Christian	Senior Co-ordinator
Shabana Amin	Co-ordinator
Christie Lanquetin	Co-ordinator
Rachel Gordon	Co-ordinator
Kate Cooper	Co-ordinator
Marina Taylor	Senior Group Co-ordinator
Rosanna Todd	Group Co-ordinator
Maggie Baines	Group Co-ordinator
Katie McCrea	Group Worker
Amy Covell	Family Support Worker (maternity leave)
Claire Eastwood (left)	Family Worker (maternity cover)
Katy White	Family Worker
Rachel Holloway	Volunteer Co-ordinator
Emma Franks	Administration & Finance Manager
Mandy Wain	Administrator

This is a summary of the statutory accounts which have been approved by the trustees. The full annual accounts and the Trustees Annual Report, together with the Independent Examiner's report, can be obtained from the registered office. They will be submitted to the Charity Commission following the AGM.

Summary Accounts for the Year ended 31 March 2025

	2024/25	2023/24
Incoming Resources	Statutory Agencies	338,611
	Charitable Trust Funds	293,496
	Other Donations	23,923
	Gift Aid	-
	Interest	9,309
	Other income	-
	665,339	661,068
Resources Expended	Salaries, NI and Pensions	542,098
	Coordinators' and Volunteers' Expenses	14,680
	Contribution to National Home-Start	11,899
	Licences	3,900
	Other Charitable Expenses	11,457
	Rent	33,894
	Computer and Office Costs	49,083
	667,010	610,843
	Net (Expenditure)/Income for the Year	(1,671)
	Resourced from previous years	374,955
	Resources at year end	374,955
Represented by:	Fixed Assets	4,738
	Cash at bank and in hand	478,784
	Debtors	-
	483,522	564,253
Less	Income received in advance	99,955
	Other creditors due within one year	10,283
	110,238	189,298
	373,284	374,955

For more information please contact:

HOME START

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www.homestart-kirklees.org.uk

Charitable Incorporated Organisation, registered with the Charity Commission. Registered Charity Number 1099770

