

Home-Start Kirklees

www.homestart-kirklees.org.uk

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Serving young families across Kirklees

“Coming to group has given me a purpose to life – I look forward to Fridays and coming to group once a week has really helped me”

About the organisation

- Provides practical help and emotional support to families across Kirklees through a balanced combination of home visits, peer-support groups and telephone befriending that ensures assistance is flexible, personal and responsive to individual circumstances.
- Home-Start Kirklees embeds trained volunteers into family homes and community venues, enabling them to deliver hands-on practical help, consistent emotional support and structured peer-group sessions.
- Strong partnerships are maintained with health visitors, social care teams, family hubs and specialist agencies, to create joined-up approach that enables smooth referrals and early intervention.
- During 2023–24, 44 new volunteers were recruited and trained through six intensive 25-hour preparation courses. Collectively, these volunteers delivered more than 5,200 hours of one-to-one and group support and handled over 1,000 family contacts.
- 50 young parents aged 14–24 took part in a programme of workshops and one-to-one mentoring designed to build confidence, parenting skills and social connection. Over 80% of participants presented with mental health or social anxiety challenges at intake, highlighting the programme’s focus on supporting those with higher levels of need.
- Outcome data show impact across wellbeing indicators: 92% of families reported feeling more resilient, 88% felt less isolated, 89% accessed new community services, and 88% experienced improved mental health.

“I feel like I have got my life back together”

Context and rationale

Organisational representatives described how families across Kirklees faced a complex interplay of stressors. They pointed to the pressures of the rising cost of living, which left some parents anxious about providing basics and to persistent feelings of social isolation, particularly among young or first-time parents.

They also noted that practical barriers such as transport, childcare and navigating service eligibility made it difficult for many families to access support. Without strong networks or the confidence to seek help, some households were seen to be at risk of crises escalating.

With statutory services under strain, stakeholders emphasised the need for early intervention provision that could build resilience, reduce isolation and relieve pressure on stretched health and social care systems.

Activities and delivery model

Service delivery

Home-Start Kirklees delivered 1,012 support contacts during 2023–24 through in-home visits, telephone befriending calls and peer-support group meetings. Each contact was designed to provide practical assistance such as signposting to local food banks or budgeting advice alongside emotional support and parenting guidance tailored to the family’s unique circumstances. This approach ensured continuity of care with volunteers and staff maintaining regular touchpoints over engagement cycles.

Volunteer training and deployment

Six preparation courses that provided a total of 150 hours of instruction covered essential topics such as safeguarding protocols, trauma-informed practice,

“You gave me the confidence to take the kids out on my own, it’s helped my daughter get comfortable with other people”

child development and effective communication. Upon qualification, 44 new volunteers were matched one-to-one with families or assigned to lead peer-support groups. Collectively, these volunteers contributed 5,200 hours that supplemented the capacity of Home Start's 17 professional staff and enabled immediate responses to new referrals while preserving long-term continuity for existing participants.

Young Parents Service

Recognising the particular vulnerabilities of young parents, Home-Start Kirklees established a dedicated Young Parents Service for those aged 14–24. Between 2023–24, 50 young parents enrolled and participated in a structured programme of group workshops that covered perinatal mental health, budgeting on a limited income and child development, as well as bespoke one-to-one mentoring. At intake, 82% of participants reported mental-health or social-anxiety challenges. By the end of the programme, they showed significant gains in self-confidence and demonstrated stronger parenting skills and were more effectively connected to specialist support services.

Partnership and referral pathways

Home-Start Kirklees operates within an integrated early-help ecosystem. 72% of referrals originated from specialist services that were facilitated by its formal embedding in the 0–19 Healthy Child programme. Additional referrals came via targeted agencies such as the Family Nurse Partnership. This networked approach ensured families could be rapidly identified and supported at the first signs.

Learning and future directions

Home-Start Kirklees has long been valued for its relational model of early intervention with families. Organisational representatives emphasised the strengths of combining practical help with emotional support, delivered through trained volunteers who build trust with parents. Evidence shows that this approach improves family resilience, reduces isolation and supports parental confidence. Families themselves have reported positive change, with the majority indicating reduced isolation and improved mental health. Volunteer contributions are central, with thousands of hours donated each year, ensuring the organisation can maintain reach despite limited resources.

However, Home-Start Kirklees faces a number of pressures. Staff observed that families are increasingly affected by the rising cost of living, parental anxiety and social isolation. Many households lack the networks, confidence or resources to prevent crises from escalating, placing heavy reliance on early intervention services. Recruiting and retaining volunteers with the right skills has become more challenging given the intensity of support required in safeguarding contexts.

Economic value of activities

Organisation monitoring data show that 5,200 volunteer hours were contributed, valued at £65k. Organisational data indicated that 88% of families reported reduced isolation which was valued by the University of Huddersfield at £1.35m using HACT wellbeing proxies.

The same proportion reported improved mental health which estimated could save the NHS around £75k in avoided consultations.

All of this was delivered on a total programme cost of £611k which demonstrates strong return on investment for public and charitable funding.

Looking to the future, Home-Start Kirklees aims to further enhance its ability to evidence impact while maintaining its strong relational ethos and community-led approach. Planned developments include assigning clearer and more transparent monetary value to volunteer hours, as well as expanding digital inclusion support to ensure families can confidently access essential online services, resources and benefits.

Evidence of outcomes

- During 2023–24, staff and volunteers delivered extensive, hands-on support across the community. Over this period, a total of 1,012 direct support contacts were made with families, reflecting the team's sustained presence and responsiveness to local needs.
- In 2024–25, Home-Start Kirklees reached 361 families (68 more than in the previous year) demonstrating growing awareness, trust and demand for support. Through these efforts, 577 children benefited from interventions
- Volunteer involvement continued to expand with 150 volunteers engaged during 2024–25 - including new recruits and those from the previous year. Collectively, they contributed over 5,200 hours of time, valued at around £12.50 per hour, representing a meaningful social return.
- Overall, 92% of families reported being more resilient, 88% felt less isolated, 89% gained access to new services and 88% experienced improvements in mental health and wellbeing.