



**Southern
Oxfordshire**



Annual Report 2020/21

Our year during the COVID-19 pandemic

www.homestart-southernoxfordshire.org.uk

Standards and Methods of Practice

Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire works with families who are experiencing difficulties or very stressful situations, and who have a child/children under five years of age.

We are an independent registered charity, and work towards the increased confidence and independence of the family by:

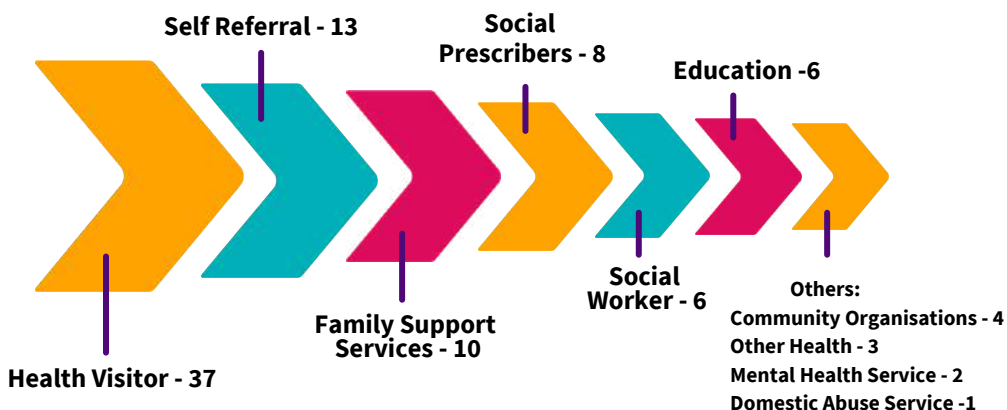
- offering support, friendship and practical assistance
- visiting families in their own homes, where the dignity and identity of each individual can be respected and protected
- reassuring parents that difficulties in bringing up children are not unusual and encouraging enjoyment in family life
- developing a relationship with the family in which time can be shared and understanding can be developed; the approach is flexible to take account of different needs
- encouraging the parents' strengths and emotional wellbeing for the ultimate benefit of their own children
- encouraging families to widen their network of relationships and to use effectively the support and services available within the community



Our year at a glance



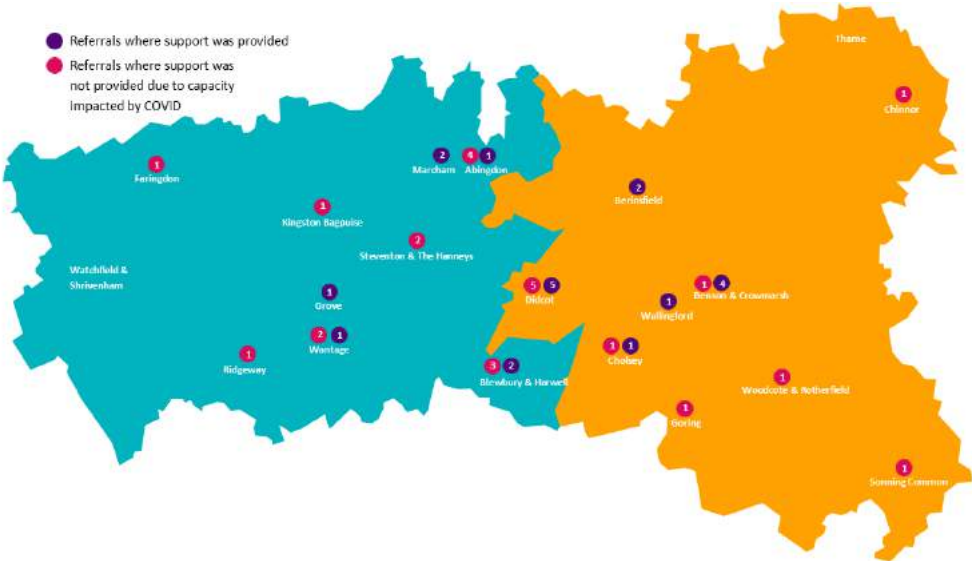
Where our referrals came from



The Area We Cover



Referrals received by district council ward



Families supported by district council ward



Chair's Report

Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire reaches its 32nd year of supporting struggling and vulnerable families in our area. No one could have imagined the impact that the COVID-19 pandemic would have not just on our local community but the whole world order!

The trustees and I are extremely proud to say that despite the difficulties of the last year, Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire managed to maintain our service of support to families. We were fortunate to obtain funding to provide all the team with laptops and smartphones to enable them to work from home. The staff team were incredibly resourceful in rising to the challenges of adapting their ways of working.



During the year we had some staff changes.

In May, Rhiannon McCobb our excellent Scheme Manager of 8 years left us to pursue new challenges. We were very fortunate to have kept her for so long and we wish her every success for the future. Organiser Amy Rutherford left us in July to take up a role working with older children at the Aureus School in Didcot. I am pleased to say that we were able to recruit Lucia Prentice for the Organiser role, as we had previously had to withdraw the offer of a Group Worker/Family Support role we had made to Lucia in February.

I am delighted to say in November we appointed a new Senior Organiser, Linda Cheong. Linda has had a long involvement with Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire, she was one of our supported families over 20 years ago, when she was a young mum of twins with a toddler under 3.



Linda's previous role as part of The Early Help Team for Oxfordshire County Council means she has lots of transferable skills to bring to the role. Linda also served as a trustee of the Scheme for over 12 years.

Chair's Report



In February, we were very fortunate to be able to re-recruit our previous Group Worker, Jacquie Boshell. Jacquie left us to go travelling with her husband, and when we were ready to restart our groups again Jacquie was back in the country and applied for her previous role. She was by far the best candidate we interviewed.

At last year's AGM our guest speaker was Tanya, whose family had been supported by a Home-Start volunteer. Tanya shared her experience of suffering from postnatal depression alongside fibromyalgia. Tanya spoke about the support she received both physically and emotionally, and the positive impact this had on her family. Tanya was incredibly grateful for the invaluable skills she gained and wanted to share how much Home-Start support makes a difference to the whole family. It was a very moving tribute to the skills of the volunteer, and to the work of Home-Start, and not least of all to Tanya herself! I am delighted to say that Tanya has joined our Board of Trustees.

"All our staff and volunteers have been outstanding!"

The trustees would like to thank the staff team and all our amazing volunteers for their commitment and resourcefulness in meeting the challenges of adapting the delivery of support to vulnerable families during these difficult times of COVID.

Finally, I would like to thank my colleagues on the Trustee Board for their support, guidance and enthusiasm for the work of Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire. Their contribution is invaluable to the successful running of the Scheme!



Doreen McNulty
Chair of Trustees

Treasurer's Report

The scheme had an overall surplus of £19,187.89. This resulted from a combination of additional funding being provided for COVID-19 recovery and lower than anticipated expenditure resulting from a combination of staff vacancies and reduced costs during lockdowns and restricted home-visits.

We are pleased to report the fantastic support from:

- The National Lottery Community Fund of £44,600.92, allowing us to support families in the Vale of White Horse District
- The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust of £24,408, allowing us to support military families
- South Oxfordshire District Council of £16,183, as a contribution to supporting families in the South Oxfordshire District
- Oxfordshire Community Foundation Growing Minds Project – supporting families in Berinsfield
- BBC Children in Need of £8,093.50, for our Home-Start Parenting Group



We have received funding from many town and parish councils, as well as grant giving trusts, organisations and individuals. We thank them all. A special thanks to Faye, who has done exceptionally well in fundraising this year.

Expenditure was well within budget, as a result of tight controls and the lockdowns. We did incur additional expenditure to provide staff with the ability to work from home, and for family support while visits were not possible, during the lockdown periods. We thank all of our staff for their flexibility during these difficult times.

The accounts show an unusually high charge from Oxfordshire County Council for premises service charges, which we are querying.

Treasurer's Report



Reserves Policy

Our reserves policy is to hold sufficient reserves to cover potential liabilities if the scheme were to close, plus anticipated funding requirements for the forthcoming year, as well as a general reserve of no more than 12 months of annual income.

We had reserves at the financial year end totalling £156,790.92. This is represented by three reserves:

- A designated reserve of £41,000 - to cover a Pension Trust liability of about £28,000 and potential liabilities from redundancy payments and closing down costs
- A reserve of £37,626 to meet a budgeted deficit in 2021/22, as the Directors/Trustees have agreed this to ensure the level of our services can be maintained in the coming year
- A reserve of £9,741.44 from underspends in Restricted Funds during 2020/21
- A general, free reserve of £68,423.48. These free reserves represent 5.5 months of the budgeted expenditure for 2021/22

Once again, we offer our sincere thanks to all the organisations, individuals and trusts that have supported us throughout the year. We cannot thank the staff enough for their tolerance and understanding in another year in which there has been great change. We also thank our volunteers for their flexibility during lockdowns.



We are fortunate to have reserves to cover potential shortfalls but ongoing funding will always be a challenge.

Colin Campbell
Treasurer

Senior Organiser's Report

Well, what a year this report covers! It starts a week after the country entered the first COVID-19 lockdown. All home visiting and groups were suspended, and staff began working from home. Virtual support was put in place, with families being supported remotely by staff and volunteers.



We remained open to referrals, but had to decline some where remote support was inappropriate, either because the family wanted practical support, or had needs too complex to address without face-to-face contact. We cancelled the Volunteer Preparation Course that was about to start when the pandemic took hold, and several volunteers decided to take a 'rest' for their own health or personal reasons, so Organisers took on the support of some families themselves. All this affected the number of families we could support, but we anticipated that figures would eventually return to 'normal'.

We were able to support families experiencing a wide range of difficulties, including isolation, domestic abuse, mental health difficulties, and housing problems – all exacerbated by pandemic restrictions. Staff and volunteers delivered shopping, clothes and toys to families, and helped with accessing food banks, community larders and food parcels.

Staff were creative in producing weekly activity guides for families, and setting up Zoom 'Time for Tots' sessions, publicised on our social media and to Health Visitors, and described later in this report. Zoom sessions were also introduced for volunteers to increase their confidence in giving remote support.



Senior Organiser's Report

We assembled Easter activity packs and delivered them to families, which gave the opportunity for socially distanced doorstep chats. The packs were really appreciated, and were followed by further packs in the summer holidays, and stockings at Christmas filled with gifts from local companies and the community.



In June, when restrictions eased, staff returned to the office, on a rota basis and with risk assessments and COVID precautions in place. In September some volunteers began outdoor meetings with their families, but it was back to remote support for lockdown 2 in November.

I joined the team as Senior Organiser in January 2021, but had been a trustee prior to this so was aware of the different ways of working that staff had developed. We urgently needed more volunteers, so put our energies into planning an online Preparation Course to run after March 2021. This was a whole new experience and steep learning curve! The year ended as some of the restrictions of lockdown 3 were easing.

Thank you to all staff, volunteers, trustees, supporters, funders and Home-Start UK who helped us make a difference to families' lives through such a different and difficult year!

Linda Cheong
Senior Organiser

Thank
you

Alison M
Amanda W
Anne T

Barbara G
Beth D
Carol P
Caroline C
Carrie P
Claire D
Clare J
Debbie B

Elaine R
Emma J
Francia K
Gill B
Gill G
Helen G
Jane D
Jane S

Janet R
Jean D
Jill F
Judy L
Layla J
Lucy C-D
Maria W
Mary B

Mary-Jane C
Nikki P
Pam S
Paulene T
Rachel L
Rose R
Roseanne C
Sam B

Sandy S
Sarah C
Saras R
Sue P-J
Sue R
Suzanne W



Family Case Study

When support from Home-Start began, Maryam knew no one in the area. English is her second language which proved to be quite perplexing. Maryam had moved to refuge accommodation to ensure the safety of herself and unborn baby after leaving her husband due to domestic abuse. Maryam divorced her husband and he flew back to his homeland.

Maryam's rights to reside in the UK were linked to her husband, however when he returned to his homeland, Maryam was required to request rights in her own right. Maryam was supported by Asylum Welcome to apply for pre-settled status which was granted. However this did not automatically entitle Maryam to apply for benefits.



Before Maryam became entitled to Universal Credit, Home-Start were able to secure grants and apply to her housing association for financial support. Weekly requests for food parcels were provided for her. We were able to source milk, nappies, clothes and toys for baby Youssef. Eventually, after many applications for Universal Credit, it was granted.

Maryam and Youssef have greatly appreciated the support of June, one of our volunteers. Maryam felt very isolated particularly during the pandemic. She greatly valued the weekly phone calls. When restrictions were lifted Maryam was able to meet face to face with June outdoors and looked forward to June's weekly visits. She has since had the confidence to find a nursery for her son which has allowed her to work two days a week.

"To see Maryam settle so well into her new life as a single mother in an unfamiliar town, in unprecedented times, is quite remarkable. She's revealed how resilient she is. She feels far less isolated and her self-esteem has greatly improved since having the support and guidance from June."

**all family names have been changed*

**Lydia Davison
Scheme Organiser**

Volunteer Q&A

Amanda Wood 🟡 Volunteer since 2015 🟡 Supported 7 families

What made you want to volunteer for Home-Start?

I always loved being home with my children and I wanted to be able to give other mums the confidence to enjoy spending time with theirs. I wanted to be a positive support to other parents.



What is your proudest achievement as a volunteer?

The first family I worked with was very complex and had lots of social needs. The mum attended a panel meeting to find out if she could come off her child protection plan, so I went with her and looked after the children. When mum came out of the meeting and had been told the positive news she became a different person, that was a proud moment for me.

What is the most difficult thing you have dealt with as a volunteer?

Lockdown has been very challenging. Providing support over the phone was difficult as it allows people to hang up at any point and you can't get the full picture of what's going on. It's also challenging dealing with the conflict between social services and a family.

What do you see as the biggest challenges facing families nowadays?

Post lockdown, the backlog of services, families having to wait longer than usual to be seen by mental health services and longer to get diagnoses for children with additional needs.

What have you learnt from being a volunteer?

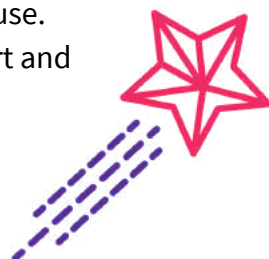
You can't change everything! Little things are enough. Just be yourself.

What impact have you seen on families during the pandemic?

Increase in anxiety, especially around leaving the house. Difficulties getting food. Difficulties accessing support and children being at home due to school closures.

What is the best part of your role?

Making a difference.



Home-Start Groups

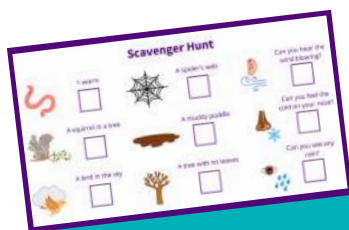


Our First Babies and Monday Groups closed during the pandemic. I kept in contact via phone calls and texts with parents who usually attended our Monday Group, a small weekly group funded by BBC Children in Need for referred families who would find large groups difficult to attend.

In November 2020 we decided to launch an online group for our Monday Group to help increase support. This Zoom group was called *Time for Tots* and was run weekly by myself and Gill Jones, our Family Support Worker. Unfortunately, due to the nature of Monday Group, some of the mums did not have the confidence to join virtually so we had very little uptake. We very quickly opened the group to all parents of children under 5 years old living in South Oxfordshire and the Vale of White Horse to try and attract more families, which it did.

Gill and I wanted to give the families an opportunity to talk about their parenting experience and discuss any concerns they may have, as well as help them meet other mums in the local area.

We then sang songs and read a story for the children which always had a lovely positive response.



Lucia Prentice
Scheme Organiser

Early in lockdown, we published weekly activity guides, full of ideas on ways parents could keep their children busy and learning. The guides were emailed to families and made available on our website. We also produced one-off Easter and Autumn activity guides and a Creatures and Minibeasts activity guide during half-term.

Family Support and Community Liaison

We are now in the second year of our three-year funding from the Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, for our 'Removing Barriers to Family Life' project.



I continue to work with families, offering intensive and individually tailored support, on a one-to-one basis. This includes military families, living both on and off bases, in Dalton Barracks (Abingdon), Vauxhall Barracks (Didcot), RAF Benson and the Defence Academy (Shrivenham). My support covers many areas including, mental health, parenting, domestic abuse, isolation and building self-esteem.

In 2020 my support extended to families in the Berinsfield area. This is part of the Growing Minds Project, funded by Oxfordshire Community Foundation. Its main aims include: improving the home learning environment for families in disadvantaged communities, to engage families with community support (starting from registration of the birth of their child), and to increase school readiness. To date my support is very similar to that of the military families.



The past year and a half have seen many challenges. Initially, offering virtual support had very mixed reactions! Gradually families accepted the situation and virtual support became busy and very successful, with people adapting very well!

Virtual contact also enabled me to continue the Community Liaison side of my role, albeit less often. I have been able to attend meetings held by Family Links, developing close links with them and I continually use their family nurturing programme in my support of families. I look forward to things getting back to normal.

Gill Jones

Family Support/Community Liaison Worker

Highlights

The Give A Little Love campaign is an amazing partnership between Home-Start and the John Lewis Partnership, which hopes to help 100,000 families in need and inspire an outpouring of kindness. We've been supported with funding, gifts for families and gift cards for volunteers from Waitrose stores in Abingdon, Wantage and Wallingford and John Lewis in Oxford. The Give A Little Love campaign was even the star of the famous Waitrose and John Lewis Christmas 2020 advert!



To help us celebrate World Book Day, Rob Jones, an Author and Illustrator from Abingdon, performed a lovely reading of his new children's book, *Where's Brian's Bottom?*. Rob also kindly gifted copies of his other book, *Bernard*, which we added to one of our doorstep deliveries to the children we support.



Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic meant that we were unable to run stalls at local events and local businesses were unable to run fundraising events in-store. We would like to thank all our funders, from Parish and Town Councils to Trusts and major grant funders who continued to support us throughout this time.

THANK
YOU

Highlights

We were fortunate to be chosen as one of the beneficiaries of the popular year-long Co-op Local Community Fund campaign. Every time a Co-op member bought selected Co-op brand products and services, a donation was made to us. We ended up receiving an incredible donation of more than £2,500! Thank you to Co-op and all their members for supporting us!



A huge thank you to Play2Give who once again supported us through its Sleigh2Give Christmas toy drive.

They provided a huge amount of toys and gifts for the children we support! White Stuff also supported us by donating warm hats, scarves and gloves to add to our children's Christmas sacks! We managed to spread lots of Christmas cheer!



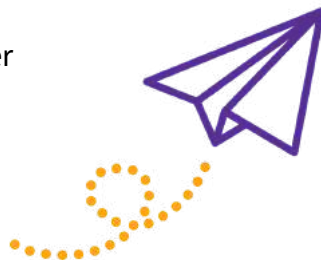
We organised doorstep deliveries of children's Easter activity bags. Funded by Home-Start UK's *Caring for Families during COVID* fund, the bags were filled with Spring-themed activities such as bunny mask kits, cress planting kits and chocolate Easter nest baking kits! Thank you to Waitrose in Abingdon and Didcot Tesco Superstore for donating all the Easter eggs!



Trustees and Staff 2020/21

Trustees:

Doreen McNulty	Chair
Gill Bodey	Vice Chair
Colin Campbell	Hon. Treasurer
Rosemary Knagg	
Barbara Guast	
Helen Conway	
Lorraine Meadows	
Linda Cheong (until Dec 2020)	
Rob Hufton	
Tanya Skelton (co-opted March 2021)	



Staff:

Rhiannon McCobb	Senior Organiser until May 2020
Linda Cheong	Senior Organiser from January 2021
Lydia Davison	Scheme Organiser
Amy Rutherford	Scheme Organiser until July 2020
Lucia Prentice	Scheme Organiser from August 2020
Gill Jones	Family Support/Community Liaison Worker
Jacquie Boshell	Group Worker from March 2021
Faye Golding-King	Development Manager
Janet McIlvennie	Finance Administrator
Gill Rose	Office Administrator

Independent Examiner:

Sue Scane, CIPFA

Home-Start Safeguarding

Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults, and expects all trustees, staff, volunteers and members to share this commitment. Our policies on safeguarding children and adults are available on request.

Funders

Parish Councils

Crowmarsh, Little Milton, Stoke Row, Watchfield, Lewknor, Kidmore End, Blewbury, Steventon, Sonning Common, Long Wittenham, Upton, Nuffield, Great Milton, Horspath.

South Oxfordshire District Council

Revenue Grant, Additional Restrictions COVID-19 Grant.

Town Councils

Wallingford, Abingdon, Didcot, Wantage.

Charitable Trusts

The Armed Forces Covenant Fund Trust, BBC Children in Need, The National Lottery Community Fund, OCF Growing Minds, Albert Hunt Trust, PYE Charitable Trust, PF Charitable Trust, Stanton Ballard Charitable Trust, Lord Faringdon Charitable Trust, Faringdon United Charities, Doris Field Charitable Trust.

Home-Start UK

Connecting families at Christmas grant, Caring for families during COVID fund.

Business Donors

Tesco Bags of Help, Newbury Building Society, Waitrose Community Matters Schemes in Abingdon & Wantage, Co-op Local Community Fund, Rugby Group Benevolent Fund; Infineum SMILE programme.

Groups and Individuals

Skylark Golfing, Aston Tirrold United Reformed Church, Wallingford Bridge Estate Charity, Abingdon Rotary Club, Wallingford and District Rotary Club.

Families and Volunteers, past and present, who donate their expenses, make donations in lieu of birthday gifts, and/or make regular donations to the scheme, often boosted by Gift Aid.



Quality Assurance

We are proud to be quality assured through the Home-Start Quality Assurance System – a programme of self-assessment against nationwide quality standards. The process looks at the continuous improvement of all our practice areas relating to governance, management and service delivery. At our last Quality Assurance Review in February 2018 we were categorised as ‘Demonstrating High Quality’, having met 100% of the legal, safeguarding/child protection and other mandatory performance indicators.

Public Benefit Statement

The Trustees have a duty to report on the scheme’s public benefit. They have taken into account the Charity Commission’s guidance on public benefit in planning the year’s activities. This report demonstrates how Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire fulfils its charitable objectives which are:

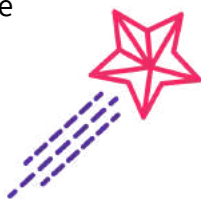
'To safeguard, protect and preserve the good health, both mental and physical, of children and parents; to prevent cruelty to or maltreatment of children; to relieve sickness, poverty and need amongst children and parents; to promote the education of the public in better standards of childcare in southern Oxfordshire'.

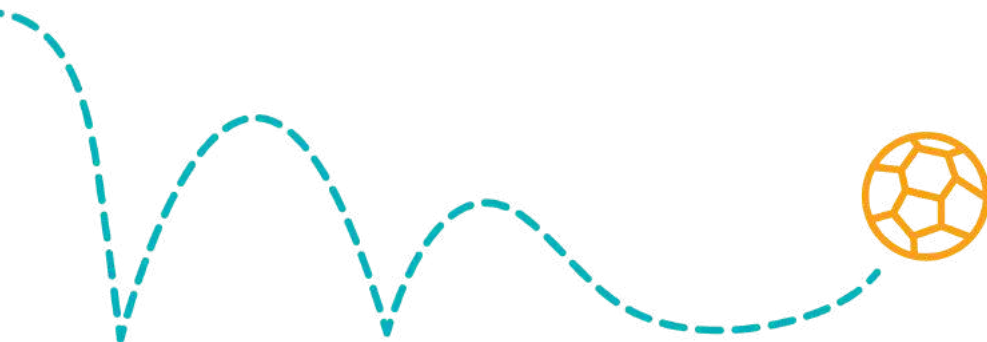
Membership

Membership of Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire is open to any person interested in furthering the objectives quoted above, and approved by the trustees. Members are entitled to vote at the AGM and other general meetings. Application forms are available on request from the scheme.

Risk Management

The trustees have assessed the major risks to which the scheme is exposed, in particular those relating to finances and operations, and believe that arrangements are in place to mitigate those risks.





Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire

197 Broadway

Didcot

OX11 8RU

01235 511152

admin@homestartso.org



HomeStartSouthernOxfordshire



@HomeStart_S_Ox

www.homestart-southernoxfordshire.org.uk

Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire is a company limited by guarantee,
registered in England and Wales Number: 05443274
Registered Charity Number: 1113941

Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire

Registered Charity No: 1113941

Company Registration No: 05443274

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31st March 2021

INCOME & EXPENDITURE FOR 12 MONTHS TO 31st March 2021 (£.p)

	<u>2020/2021</u>		<u>2019/2020</u>	
	Unrestricted Core	Restricted	TOTAL	
<u>Income</u>				
Big Lottery Fund		44,600.92	44,600.92	48,495.42
MOD Covenant		24,408.00	24,408.00	32,933.00
OCF Berin Project		13,500.00	13,500.00	
BBC Children In Need		8,093.50	8,093.50	9,970.00
South Oxfordshire District Council	16,183.00		16,183.00	12,546.00
Donations & Fundraising	28,252.31		28,252.31	20,682.13
Council Grants	8,425.00		8,425.00	4,675.00
Total Income	52,860.31	90,602.42	143,462.73	129,301.55
<u>Expenditure</u>				
Staff Salaries	18,993.04	67,267.40	86,260.44	106,379.73
Stationery / Post / Telephone	2,609.55	1,155.00	3,764.55	5,191.68
Rent / Service Charge	7,040.09	6,339.00	13,379.09	5,233.88
Staff Training / Travel / Expenses	1,176.39	1,366.00	2,542.39	4,786.30
Volunteers Training / Travel / Expenses	493.33	150.00	643.33	6,386.10
Home-Start Consultancy	1,496.45	1,500.00	2,996.45	2,254.47
AGM	350.00		350.00	671.44
Other Expenditure	9,076.59	5,262.00	14,338.59	12,370.05
Total Expenditure	41,235.44	83,039.40	124,274.84	143,273.65
Excess of Income over Expenditure	11,624.87	7,563.02	19,187.89	-13,972.10

Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire

Registered Charity No: 1113941

Company Registration No: 05443274

STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR ENDED 31st March 2021 (E.p)

Accumulated Fund

	2020/2021	2019/2020
Brought Forward from previous year	2,178.42	-13,972.10
Surplus / Deficit for the year	7,563.02	-13,972.10
Transfer to/from Reserves	9,741.44	-16,150.52
Balance Carried Forward	9,741.44	2,178.42

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31st March 2020

Current Assets		
Debtors and Prepayments	2,243.63	1,436.83
Cash at Bank and In Hand	199,026.29	148,716.15
Less Current Liabilities		
Creditors, Accruals & Payments in Advance	44,479.00	11,660.72
Net Assets	156,790.92	138,492.26
Represented by:		
Restricted Accumulated Fund Carried Forward	9,741.44	2,178.42
Pension Deficit / Redundancy / Closing Down Reserves	41,000.00	41,000.00
Reserve to meet budgeted deficit in forthcoming year	37,626.00	28,090.00
Free Reserves	68,423.48	67,223.84
Total	156,790.92	138,492.26

SUMMARY OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31st March 2021, which are set out above. In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
- (a) to keep accounting records in accordance with section 41 of the Charities Act 1993 (the Act); and
- (b) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the Act.

- have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Susan Scane

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF HOME-START SOUTHERN OXFO

I report on the accounts of the Trust for the year ended 31st March 2021, which are set out on pages 1 and 2.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the Accounts; you consider that the audit requirement of section 43(2) of the Charities Act (the Act) does not apply. It is my responsibility to state, on the basis of procedures specified in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 43 (7)(b) of the Act, whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures used do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the view given by the

Independent Examiner's statement

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Susan Scane
26/11/2021
151 Lydalls Road, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 7EA
CIPFA

INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF HOME-START SOUTHERN OXFO

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Susan Scane
151 Lydalls Road, Didcot, Oxfordshire, OX11 7EA
CIPFA

26/11/2022