



**Birmingham Central
And South-West**

ANNUAL REPORT

April 2022 – March 2023



Chair's Report

Welcome to the 17th Annual Report of Home-Start Birmingham Central and South-West.

This past year has been its usual mix of successes and challenges. The foundations remained sound in our pool of volunteers, staff and Board of Trustees and from which we could meet the positives with negatives in equal measure. Our one mission, as ever, to empower the families we supported in our part of the city.

Many thanks to the whole team, without whom we would not have delivered the services we have. In terms of our staffing team, our administrators have worked well together to support the Scheme, working tirelessly behind the scenes. Our Senior Family Volunteer Coordinator has excelled in the support she has provided to volunteers and families, stepping into the breach to manage the Scheme when our Manager moved to pastures new. She was ably supported by our newest Family Volunteer Coordinator who seemed to learn the ropes very quickly and settled into her role of being the bridge between volunteers and families.

We have been fortunate to have Targeted Support Workers working hard with families with more complex needs that has given our Scheme enhanced level of service. This expansion of our service from a few years ago has fast become a staple of our Scheme. It has proved invaluable to our community. Together, our dedicated and resilient staff went over and above to ensure that the support offered to families was second to none.

I am always humbled to have such a committed board of Trustees around me, who give of their time so generously. The talent and skills from the Board has emboldened us to steer our way through the opportunities and difficulties we have faced over the last 12 months. I want to take this opportunity to give a word or two to each of the Trustees that have given so much of themselves and their incredible contributions.

Our Health & Safety Trustee has been conscientious and her wisdom from her years of service was priceless. Our Secretary is efficient, reliable and always willing to lend a hand. She constantly undersells her knowledge but her insights give balance to the Board and often provide a unique perspective. We have the benefit of an all round Trustee with a questioning mind. She has worked diligently to ease the pressures on what has seemed at times an overstretched Board.

Our volunteer representative Trustee has been a long-standing volunteer but an ardent advocate for our volunteers. As our safeguarding trustee, she also offers an overview of child protection for families in need.

Our two fundraising Trustees have continued to streamline processes and are key to developing strategies of widening our income streams. They have worked in tandem to explore all fundraising opportunities but also offer crucial thinking in the overall strategy for the Scheme.

Financial security is the foundation of all that we do, and our treasurer has kept a careful rein on our income and expenditure. She has kept abreast of our accounting obligations and in so doing

has enabled us to make decisions with sound economic reasoning underpinning those decisions. I am thankful for such a powerful, cohesive and committed board of Trustees.

I may be the Chair but that is merely a title. Truth be known, the Scheme is what it is because of the strength within it from our volunteers, staff, Board, consultants, funders and supporters. To all our volunteers, Trustees included, there is a quote I came across that I think sums up rather well what I want to say, 'volunteers don't necessarily have the time, they just have the heart.' Thank you for all that you do.

Finally, to the families we support, thank you for sharing your lives with us and allowing us in to support you as best as we can. You inspire us to do more, and we remain committed to help effect positive change with you.

Operational Summary

This year saw some great achievements for the scheme but also some challenges, as the Scheme Manager left in August 2022 and was not replaced until the following financial year. Our Senior Volunteer Coordinator Ria Jones stepped up to take on management duties as well as fulfil her coordinator role, and she did a sterling job of holding the fort for the remainder of the financial year. Our Targeted Support worker also left in August 2022 which left the scheme extremely short staffed.

Positively, we welcomed a new Targeted Support worker in November 2022 and a second Volunteer Coordinator in January 2023. Despite these changes the scheme met its delivery targets and provided high quality support to local families, who's needs have become increasingly complex.

Achievements

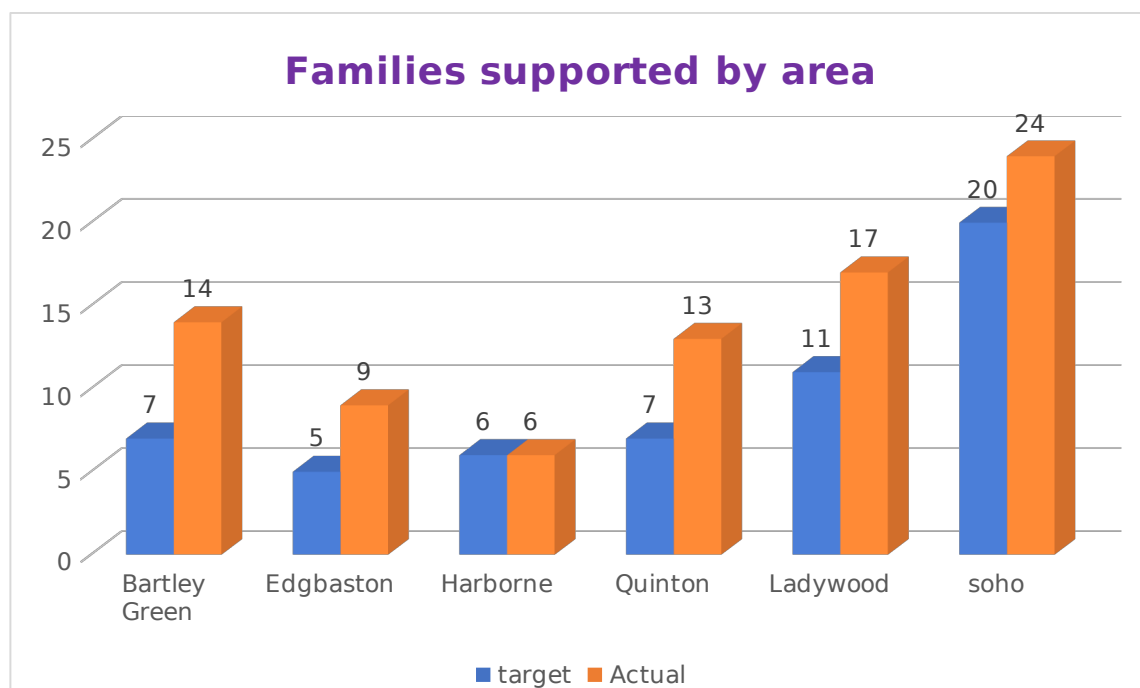
- The scheme supported a total of 83 families during the year (including families still open from 21-22), providing group support, targeted support or volunteer home visiting, as appropriate. Some families accessed more than one area of support.
- We introduced our first nurture groups in January 2023, providing a safe space for children to play, parents to meet and build community connections. This continues to be valuable for families whose own accommodation means they have limited opportunities for children's development. By reimbursing travel costs to the group, we have made this facility accessible to all families who need it. 8 families attended the group between January and March 2023.
- 24 families accessed our targeted support provision, which is for families with complex needs, where a volunteer would not be appropriate. Our Targeted Support workers helped with applications for schools and nurseries, as well as universal and disability benefits. They supported families with housing issues, by helping families in temporary accommodation to secure permanent housing and by advocating for families living in damp or unsafe homes.
- The scheme obtained funding to set up a hardship fund to provide essentials to vulnerable families. Items provided included nappies, toiletries and stairgates. We also provided supermarket vouchers to 30 families over the winter period to help them purchase food for

their families. We completed successful baby bank referrals for over 70% of our families and hardship fund referrals for 85% of families.

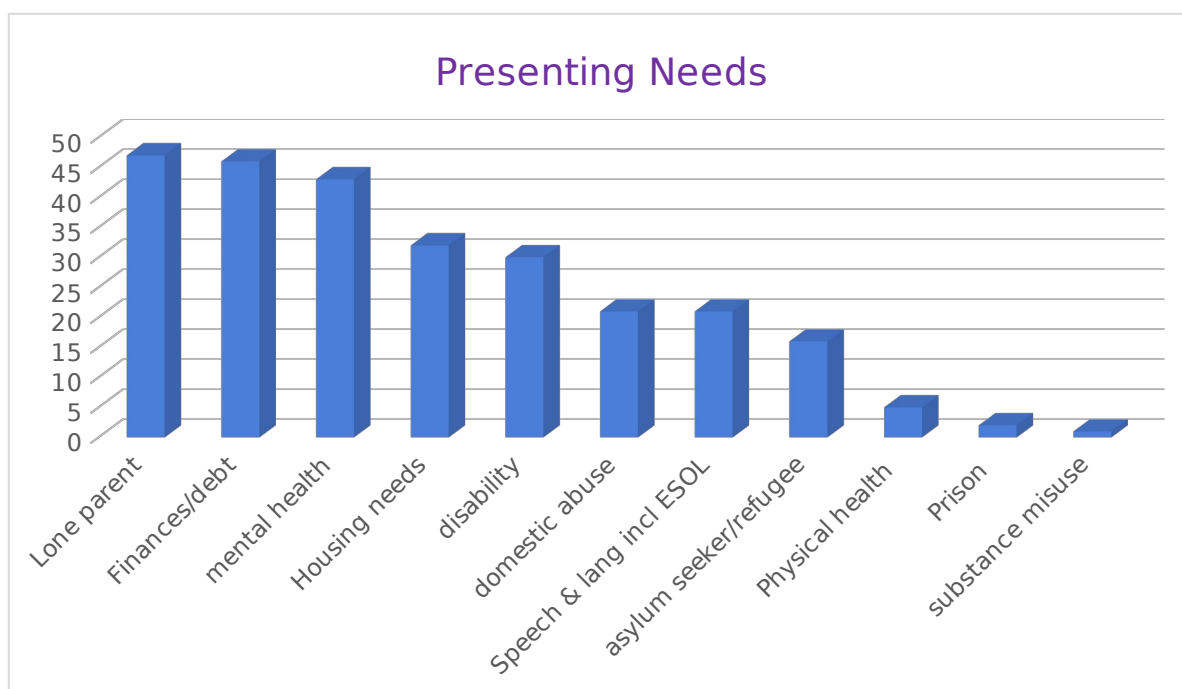
- Home-Start BCSW also held a Christmas Party for all our families and provided gifts and essential items such as pyjamas to every child under 16. We linked in with John Lewis, Waitrose and Dunelm to ensure that Christmas happened for our families.

The way we work

We received 106 referrals for the year, although only 87 were appropriate for our service. These families were all offered an initial home visit to confirm their needs and to determine which type of support would suit them best. Gaining the families' views about their situation and about what they need from us is integral to our process. Once support was in place, we carried out regular review visits to monitor progress, ensure that the right support was in place and to identify any new needs. We supported families across all our six areas, as the chart below shows, and met or exceeded our support targets in every area.

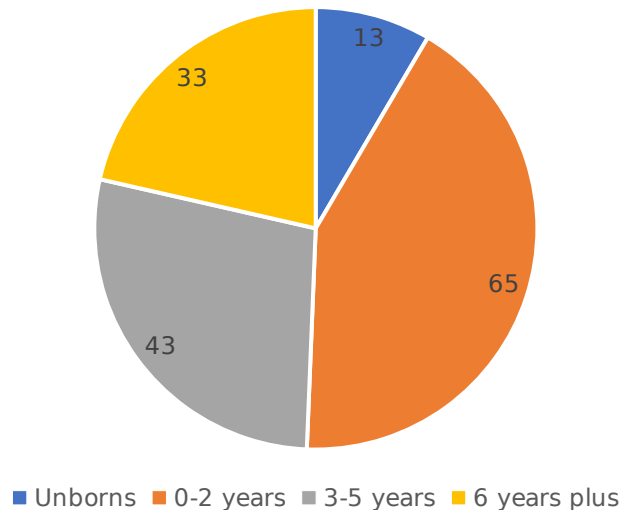


Families came to us with increasingly complex needs, and the chart below shows the breakdown of these needs, with many families experiencing three or more issues.



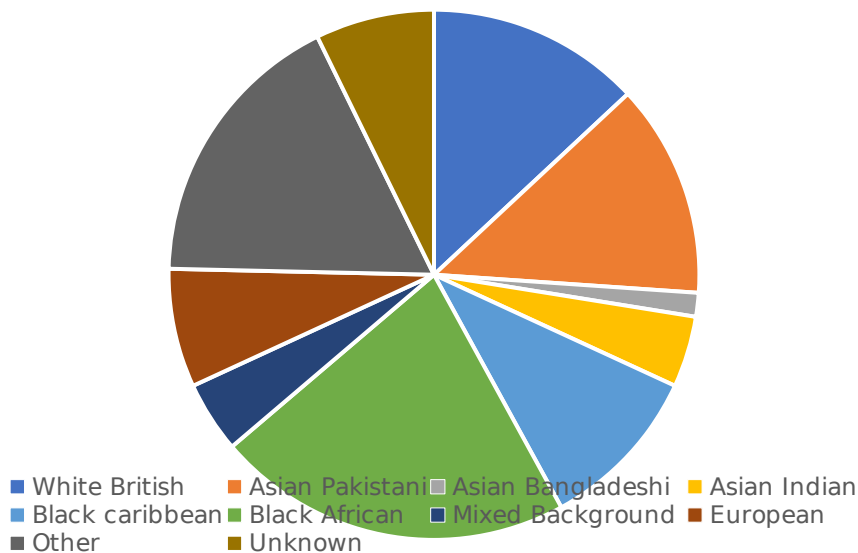
Our remit is to support children under 5 years of age directly, but we acknowledge that providing support to parents is likely to result in improvements which will benefit all children in the family. Here is the breakdown of the number of children we supported in 2022-23.

Children supported by age



The localities that we work in are racially and culturally diverse, and this chart shows the ethnic breakdown of the families we supported during this year.

Breakdown by Ethnicity



In terms of our outcomes, 2022-23 was very successful in helping families to meet their identified needs. The chart below shows the percentage of families who reported an improvement in an area where a need had been identified. There are actually 14 categories, but I have selected the most commonly identified needs.



Nurture Group Case study

Background

One of the families that attends our Nurture Group told us how thankful they were for us and the service we offer. They are a family of three who have fled their home country to safety here in Birmingham. Mum, Dad and their only child, a one year old boy, are housed in a hotel. They have been there since Xavier (name changed) was 6 months old and do not know where or when they will be moved. They are grateful for being given a safe place to live, however, the conditions are not ideal for family life.

Current challenges

Baby Xavier has started to crawl and is cruising, but due to the bed taking up majority of the space in the one room they share, he can only crawl around the bed or cruise along the edge of bed as there is no other space. Xavier has few toys and, although we have provided some, the family do not have space to have many.

The hotel is in a central area with no baby groups within walking distance, so they have to pay for transport to go anywhere. They are only receiving £24 per week to live on, due to being housed and some food being provided, so this money does not stretch to transport. The hotel houses several other families, but there is no opportunity to interact with peers due to their being no communal area where they can meet.

How we are helping through the Nurture Group

Since coming to the group, Xavier has been able to explore a larger area, giving him the opportunity to build on his gross motor skills. He has been able to walk between parents, with a soft, foam mat beneath his feet and can enjoy more space to move about.

He has a range of age-appropriate toys to play with and can use his fine motor skills to grab and move the building blocks. He has a range of board books to look at, which staff and parents read, and there are small world toys such as animals to play with, supporting his language development and encouraging curiosity about the world around him.

Children around his age also attend, and he has started to observe the other children and play alongside them, which he has not previously been able to do.

Mum and dad are also able to build friendships by talking to the other parents and gaining familiarity with the setting, staff and other families. They can also get advice and signposting information, whilst at group. This has built their confidence in going out and about, and visiting different places. We reimburse transport costs so that there is no additional cost to accessing our services.

Outcomes

The family identified needs of child development and isolation. Attending group has resulted in improved integration into the local community and the confidence to access local services. It has also provided opportunities for Xavier to socialise and to reach his developmental milestones.

What our families said

"You guys have been brilliant, you've really helped me so much. My mental health has improved so much, I couldn't go out before, now I can go to the shops no problem. I still have up and down days, but I know how to cope with it and know I am going to have bad days, but I can deal with it much better now. I'm in a really good place and positive about the future for me and my kids. My volunteer was the perfect match, she's been great."



'Your support was very helpful while we were in a difficult time, really thank you very much. We enjoyed it [the group] so much'

'I've made so much progress over the year, I wouldn't be where I am now without you. I've still got progress to make, but you've given me the tools



'Thank you for all your help and support it has made an immense difference to my mental health in order

Our amazing Volunteers

Over the year a total of 24 volunteers supported 34 families through our home visiting programme. They offered a wide range of support, from being a listening ear and acting as a positive role model, to supporting parents to attend groups and appointments, as well as engaging with the children to facilitate their development. We could not do what we do without these dedicated people and would like to extend a huge thank you to our volunteer team. We also ran two preparation courses for new volunteers, who were then matched with families. Volunteers were also able to access Mental Health training through Mind (which was provided online), as well as a two-day Domestic Abuse training course, provided by BSWA.

Feedback from our volunteers.

'It has been such a great experience, it has actually made me re-think my career plans and now I've decided I want to be a social worker'.

'Thank you Ria, it was lovely to see you all. I enjoyed my [volunteer] morning coffee, see you all soon 😊'

'Just wanted to say thank you and to let you know how much I enjoy supporting families and hopefully I will be able to increase the number of families next year. I am grateful for all the support from Home-Start,, Ria and Janine. Always helpful and kind and ready to answer any enquiries or issues with families'.

'It feels nice to know that mum has me to talk to'

'Home-Start has given me ways of encouraging others and to give back experience in the community. Home-Start's families have given me joy and confidence, knowing that I can give help where I can, to encourage others.'

Partners and Stakeholders

We have continued to work closely with other support agencies, in the delivery of the Birmingham Forward Steps contract. We attended weekly allocation meetings during the year, which were still being refined. This has allowed us to be part of a multi-agency discussion and to ensure that we accept only appropriate referrals. We worked closely with the local Children's Centres and have linked in with many of their services, such as emotional wellbeing support for parents, parenting programmes, the Henry programme and the Freedom program. We liaised with health visitors, nurseries and with any other agencies involved with a family. We regularly attended Early Help or Child in Need/Child Protection reviews, to ensure that families received joined up support.

We have also signposted families to a large range of services, such as Birmingham Women's Aid, Birmingham Settlement, Karis Baby Bank, Cranstoun Housing, Step Change, food Banks, Big Water Scheme and Charis (energy saving support) to name but a few.

Onwards and Upwards - Plans for 2023-2024

- Firstly, we would like to recruit a dedicated group worker to be able to expand our nurture group provision, running two groups per week. Groups would become more structured, last for 90 minutes, and offer refreshments to children and parents.
- We will further improve the way that we collect and collect demographic and key performance indicator outcomes, so that this information is more readily available for a range of funding bids and reporting requirements.
- We intend to seek alternative office space, which will enable us to provide support and services to families and volunteers from our base. We hope to be based within the community, so that we are easily accessible and can expand our offer to families.
- Finally we will plan a comprehensive programme of training and social events for our volunteers, to bring them together for learning and friendships. This will cover the whole financial year and include training on Perinatal Mental Health and children with Additional Needs.

Thank you to our Staff Team

I would really like to acknowledge the hard work of all the team who supported Home-Start Birmingham Central and South West during this year:

Brett Malila - Scheme Manager
Siobhan Nelson - Targeted Support Worker
Mindy Rai - Administrator
Sobia Bibi - Administrator
Olivia Christie - Targeted Support Worker
Janine Meredith - Family and Volunteer Coordinator

And a special thank you to Ria Jones, who worked so hard to keep the scheme going whilst we were without a manager.

And our Trustees

A great vote of thanks and appreciation must be noted for the Trustees who have continued to support the scheme, as we have emerged from the Covid 19 pandemic during 2022-23.

Sheeba Eeswaramoorthy - Chair of Trustees
Lynn Openshaw - Health & Safety Trustee
Sarah Bowron - Fundraising Trustee
Sandra Wood - Volunteer & Safeguarding Trustee
Marie Newton - Secretary
Paramijit Kaur Mattu
Barry Cheema - Fundraising Trustee
Baksho Hayer - Treasurer

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all our volunteers and members of the Board of Trustees, who willingly give their time, expertise, and practical help for the benefit of the scheme and the families we support. We would also like to thank our Donors and Funders for all their continuing support during the year.

Home-Start Birmingham Central And South-West

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CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of

Charity Name

HOME-START BIRMINGHAM CENTRAL AND SOUTH-WEST

On accounts for the year ended

31st March 2022

Charity no (if any)

1114963

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended DD / MM / YYYY.

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (other than that disclosed below *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

Date:

SALLY BATEMAN

Name:

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

Address:

79 WITHERFORD WAY, SELLY OAK

BIRMINGHAM

B294AN

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.