

Over the year 2023/24 we are grateful to have had the on-going support of our volunteers :

Chairperson

Joanna McQuillan

Management Committee

Rosemary Clarke (Vice-Chair)
Eileen Anghel (Treasurer)
Breda Connolly
Paddy Donnelly
Marion Khosravi
Linda Kirk
Kathryn Baxter (Safeguarding Advisor)

Scheme Organiser

Michelle Boyde

Secretary

Jacky Sinclair

Registered Office

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Pamela McDowell

Marion Khosravi

Imogen Hallam

Linda Kirk

Eelco Westerhuis

Jacqueline wright

Marci Kocova

**HOME
START**

**South &
East Belfast**

Annual Report

**Home-Start South and East Belfast
annual report and accounts 2023-2024**



Chair's Report 2023/24

My second year as Chair of Home-Start South & East Belfast has been very challenging, but with some exciting new developments. Like all voluntary organisations, we are still struggling to attract volunteers, both for home visiting and to help in the children’s shop. As home visiting is at the core of the service we provide, recruiting volunteers must remain our main focus. As a consequence of having few volunteers, we have also not received many new home visiting referrals. Thus, we must continue to seek new ways of supporting families and providing alternative services.

As ever, funding has also been an issue over the past year. In June 2023, Sure-Start South Belfast advised that they were completely withdrawing our funding. In order to remain financially viable both our senior Organiser, Eelco, and our administrator, Jacky, retired earlier than planned in October 2023. As a result, Michelle Boyde became the sole employee and took on the Organisers role. Our Treasurer, Eileen and myself took on as many extra tasks as we could to support Michelle. By the end of March 2024, our finances had stabilised somewhat as we continued to look for funding opportunities elsewhere to allow us to appoint a Family Support Worker and administrator to support Michelle.

On a brighter note, we successfully negotiated with the landlord of Connswater Shopping Centre to provide us with free accommodation for both our shop and office. We moved premises in October 2023 and again to a larger unit in the centre in March 2024. This has greatly increased our income from the Children’s charity shop, whilst at the same time saving us rental costs. I would like to thank Michelle and Jacky for managing these moves which required a lot of extra work and effort.

We were delighted that Bullhouse Brewery chose us as their partner charity for 2023. As well as raising money for HSSEB through their Bullapalooza event in June and a very successful quiz in November, they also held a toy drive at Christmas for our families. We also received some funding from the Black Santa sit-out and Christmas toys from Cash for Kids.

Personally I would like to thank the Committee and especially Eileen for their on-going support and advice over the past year. Michelle has worked very hard to keep the scheme running whilst also managing the shop and seeking and supporting volunteers. Eelco has always been at the end of the phone providing his expert advice when needed. Lastly, we wouldn’t be a Home-Start charity without our volunteers, both visiting families and running the shop, whose number we can hopefully increase over the next year.

Joanna McQuillan (Chair)

Organiser's Report 2023/24

The process of recruiting families and volunteers has been slow this year. We lost our Sure Start funding which pushed us to look for improved premises for the shop and office to Connswater Shopping Centre. This move took up a lot of time and once we got settled in the unit in Connswater, we moved again 6 months later. Once we were settled into the new unit the shop got very busy and we had to recruit more shop volunteers.

We have continued to support our existing families with home visits from their volunteers and providing them with other services. We have been able to get families food bags when needed. They also have access to clothes from the shop. The families received their Christmas hamper on Christmas eve from Store House. We also applied to the Cool FM Cash for Kids appeal at Christmas. We were overwhelmed with the amount of toys we received, but we managed to get them all out to the families that needed them. We also applied to the cost of living fund from Cash for Kids and received £1850. We helped our families by giving them Tesco gift vouchers to buy food over the Easter holidays.

Moving forward we are planning to apply for funding to recruit a Family Support Worker and part time Administrator. This will allow us the run another Healthy Eating Project, Laundry Project and start some group sessions. We are looking at new ways of advertising to recruit more volunteers through Volunteer Now, the East Belfast Community Development Association, Community NI and on Facebook. We attend monthly meetings of the local Family Hubs to encourage referrals to our service.

Michelle Boyde (Scheme Organiser)



Treasurer's Report 2023/24

This year provided challenges with the loss of Sure-Start funding and things looked somewhat bleak by the summer, however the Autumn provided some hope although bittersweet. Income was boosted by the premises move to Connswater Shopping Centre which led to a significant rise in shop takings due to increased footfall. Fundraising was difficult during this period so Bullhouse East’s choice to support our charity for the 2023 year was fortunate. Successful applications to the ‘Cash for Kids’ grant supplied £1,850 of vouchers which supported 15 families. Expenditure was greatly reduced by the retirement of the Senior Organiser and Administrator whose expertise was greatly missed but financially kept the charity afloat. The move to Connswater resulted in reduced overheads, a better display of stock and a brighter working environment. The end of the financial year provided a more promising outlook but it required a lot of effort and I echo the thanks that our Chair, Joanna, has expressed to all concerned and add my own special thanks for her leadership.

Eileen Anghel (Treasurer)

ACCOUNTS 2023/24

Expenditure 2023/24		Income 2023/24	
Salaries/PAYE	£ 38,624	Belfast Trust	£35,736
Core Costs	£ 6,200	Sure Start	£ 2,750
		Bullhouse East Fundraising	£ 822
		Other Donations	£ 325
		Cash for Kids	£ 1,850
		Charity Shop	£ 6,855
Total Costs	£ 44,824	Total	£ 48,338



Charity Shop Report 2023/24

Since October 2023, we have moved from our original location on Albertbridge road to Connswater shopping centre. After starting in a shop next to the Range with low traffic we moved to a higher traffic area within the shopping centre allowing for a greater income, new generous donors and a variety of new customers.

Over all, the shop is proving functional in our mission to support families by generating a good income.

The opportunity provided by having a larger floor space meant that we could review the layout and make every section easily visible with all the age groups clearly displayed and having a more organised and professional approach has made the shop more accessible and user friendly.

This has clearly increased turnover. The shop also still remains a place were families can come and chat to the Scheme Organiser and Family Support Worker if required. A private area is available at all