

HOME-START NORTH BELFAST:

OUR IMPACT 2024/2025



At Home-Start, we believe every child needs a happy and secure childhood. We believe parents have the key role in ensuring children have the best start in life.

The first five years of a child's life are vital for development. We focus on supporting parents during this time to have the skills, confidence and strength to nurture their children.

We tackle the difficulties families encounter rather than waiting to patch up the consequences.

Home-Start North Belfast has been working for better outcomes for children under 5 for 30 years. Thanks to compassionate volunteers, generous donors and committed partners, this is what we achieved in 2024/2025.

Impact on Children

257

Children were positively impacted by Home-Start North Belfast's work in 2023/2024

Volunteer Impact

15

Volunteers give on average 3 hours every week to visit families at home

"I have enjoyed working with 2 families this year and it is amazing to see them grow in confidence and enjoy their family."

Volunteer, Home-Start North Belfast

Donors

- Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
- Halifax, The National Lottery
- Cash For Kids
- Deans sit out

83

Children benefited from regular home visits. Trained volunteers listen, encourage and be an extra pair of hands to families who are struggling.

75

Children benefited from the diverse family support group, which provides vital support as children start nursery and school

31

Children benefited from food bags, electric, gas, clothes and bedding thanks to Cash For Kids and Storehouse. This helps families budget for other necessities

5

Volunteers served on the Management Committee

2

Advisors offered guidance and support

"When a family is hit by one of those bad patches that lie in wait for all of us, and whatever the specific need, a Home-Start volunteer has friendly support to offer."

Penelope Leach, Author and Child Care Expert

Partners

- Belfast Health & Social Care Trust
- Home-Start UK
- Home-Start East Belfast

TRUSTEES REPORT 2024-2025

STRATEGIC REPORT

North Belfast has significant pockets of social and economic deprivation that has been exacerbated by the legacy of 30 years of conflict. The area was disproportionately affected with a large number of related deaths. Statistics indicate that there are higher levels of poor mental health and a greater dependency on prescription drugs in the area which research has been linked to this difficult history. Transgenerational trauma is also now regarded as an issue as the anxieties of those who lived through the Troubles now impact on their children. Home-Start support is available to any family, irrespective of socio-economic status or religion.

Achievements and performance

Home-Start North Belfast has a committed staff and volunteer team, strong partnerships and generous donors. From 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025 Home-Start North Belfast supported 30 families in the area by home-visiting. The scheme delivers the home-visiting core service of parent volunteers supporting families under stress, in their own homes, where there is at least one child under five. It also provided a Family Group to 36 families which meets weekly during term-time. This group allows parents and children to come together to learn to play and develop as a family. The group is structured and all activities are planned in advance and in consultation with the families, volunteers and staff. Activities practice school readiness and encourage parents to continue this at home. We also provided a food-bank service to a large number of our families as well as gas, electric, clothes and bedding when funding allows.

Financial review

In a difficult economic climate, we have managed to sustain the organisation financially this year. The trustees thank the donors who supported projects during the period, including Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Awards for All and Halifax. The overall income for the year was £74,889. The Trustees are mindful that the organisation needs to secure grant funding for periods longer than one year to provide stability and enable better planning. We are also mindful that unrestricted funding needs to be in accordance with our Reserves Policy which strives to have at least three months operating costs in the reserve account.

Plans for future periods

- Maximising opportunities to secure funding remains a priority. In particular, we will endeavour to diversify our funders and secure funding for periods longer than one year.
- We will seek to strengthen existing, and develop new, partnerships with various stakeholders, including for family referrals and volunteer recruitment.
- We will work to maximise synergies, particularly for larger funding applications.
- Throughout the next year, we will seek to recruit new trustees to diversify skills and experience on the Management Committee.

Structure, governance and management

The organisation has 5 Trustees on the Management Committee who bring a range of skills and experience to ensure oversight and guide the strategy of the organisation. The Management Committee meet 7 times a year at 6 week intervals, except during the summer, to review income and expenditure, discuss key activities and future plans. There are 3 staff in the scheme. Every week the Co-ordinator works 30 hours, 2 Project Workers at 15 hours and 16 Hours. The organisation works closely with Home-Start UK and completes its quality Assurance to ensure standards are maintained.