

# Home StART

Support and friendship  
for families

## Home-Start Stoke-on-Trent Strategic Plan 2010 - 2013

Home-Start - working in partnership to provide a high quality support service to families in Stoke-on-Trent, that is flexible and responsive to need.



# **INTRODUCTION TO HOME-START STOKE-ON- TRENT'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2010-2013**

Home-Start Stoke-on-Trent is a voluntary organisation providing services to children, young people and their families, working in partnership with a range of other services to support the Stoke-on-Trent Children and Young People's Plan, as well as a range of other local plans and strategies concerned with their health and well being.

Set up in 1984, becoming a registered charity in 1987 and then a Company Limited by Guarantee in 2004, the scheme is one of over 340 local schemes supported by the national organisation Home-Start UK, who provide guidance and support through their Quality Assurance System and the Home-Start Agreement.

The service has seen significant development and expansion over the last 25 years and now provides support to families which is flexible and responsive to their needs. The service is unique in that it matches carefully trained and supported volunteers who have significant parenting experience themselves, to families who are experiencing difficulties.

Home-Start Stoke-on-Trent's new three year plan is essential in ensuring our continued growth, success and sustainability

This plan has been produced in consultation with staff, trustees

and other stakeholders to develop and agree our activities and priorities over the next three years

The plan reflects our needs and aspirations and is a confident statement of intent to continue to develop our staff and volunteers to provide high quality support to families which will help to improve the lives of families and help parents and children enjoy life.

We will continue to develop our structures and systems in order to be able to demonstrate best practice and value for money.

We will show our contribution to the Every Child Matters Change for Children, the Stoke-on-Trent Children and Young People's Plan and other local health and City wide plans and strategies, and national strategies.

## **MISSION**

Home-Start Stoke-on-Trent offers non-judgemental support, friendship and practical help to families through trained and supported volunteers and paid staff, who regularly visit families in their own homes, and through opportunities to attend weekly family support groups and the Little Stars crèche.





## AIM

To help give children the best possible start in life, Home-Start supports parents as they grow in confidence, strengthen their relationships with their children and widen their links with the local community.

Home-Start has a proven, lasting and positive impact on the development of children and the health and welfare of the whole family.

## Features of Home-Start Stoke-on-Trent:

- ✓ 26 years of support to families in the City
- ✓ Highly regarded and reliable service with sound reputation
- ✓ Provides long term support for the most vulnerable families
- ✓ Support for families who do not easily engage with other services
- ✓ Strong track record of partnership working
- ✓ Provides opportunities for people to learn/develop skills and knowledge

- ✓ Provides a learning environment for students on a range of courses including Social Work Degrees, Student Doctors Keele Medical School, Health and Social Care courses, Early Years Students etc
- ✓ Provides a variety of volunteering opportunities to enable people to become employable
- ✓ Parents supporting parents
- ✓ Unique Special Agreement awarded by Home-Start UK for the local scheme to work with families where there is no child under 5 years of age
- ✓ Implements the *Think Family* approach
- ✓ Staff qualified to minimum of level 3 and above
- ✓ Recently awarded the Parents Charter



## HOME-START 2010-2013

This strategic Plan sets out the key priorities that will underpin and guide the development of our service to families and partners over the next 3 years.

In 2009-10 we supported 190 families and 492 children, utilising the services of 96 volunteers and 34 paid staff.

Recognising the ever increasing complex needs of families, Home-Start Stoke-on-Trent also employs Family Support Workers to work alongside the Co-ordinators and their teams of volunteers.

Family Learning and Support Groups and Crèche have long been an integral part of our service to families.

Home-start is unique in Stoke-on-Trent, being the only VCS family support organisation to match carefully selected, trained and supported volunteers, who themselves have significant parenting experience, to identified families in need.

## CHALLENGES FOR THE FUTURE

Home-Start Stoke-on-Trent has been successful in establishing a highly regarded reputation as a respected and trusted service to families, developing the service to reflect the changing needs of families over 25 years. The next few years are likely to be challenging, a tougher funding climate, the effects of the economic downturn, increased demand from communities affected by the

recession and increased competition for resources are some of the trends and challenges to be faced.

Recommendations from a review undertaken in October 2009 identified 5 key priorities to focus upon to ensure the future development and sustainability of the service.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◆ Developing the business model and the management structure to support it
- ◆ Collaboration with other agencies to improve the delivery of service to families and to enable the organisation to bid for contracts
- ◆ Greater recognition and profile for the organisation
- ◆ Revisiting the volunteering model, building on this as the unique selling point of the scheme, and at the same time using the expertise built up over 25 years, recognising how volunteering has changed over the last 25 years
- ◆ Develop and improve the service by developing specialist projects and filling the gaps that statutory services cannot meet.



## OUR COMMITMENT TO FAMILIES



Families and family life are crucial to the success and regeneration of local communities. Parents need to feel confident with high levels of self esteem, appropriately managing the behaviour of their children and young people, taking an interest in and valuing opportunities for education for themselves and their children.

### *What we will do:*



- Deliver a service that is flexible and responsive to the needs of families.
- Continue to provide the core work of home visiting i.e. 1-1 in the families own homes through a team of trained and supported parent volunteers



- Provide opportunities for parents and children to attend family learning and support groups and crèche
- Provide opportunities for families to enjoy days out and family trips together
- Provide an inclusive service enabling parents and children to be involved in the planning and management of the service
- Pilot work with families where there is no child under 5 to influence national practice



- Work in partnerships to enable holistic services to families and implement the Think Family approach.

## **PRIORITIES**

### **1. Developing the business model**

The business of Home-Start is to provide non judgemental, friendly practical help and emotional support to families in Stoke-on-Trent who are experiencing disadvantage and isolation through:

- trained and supported volunteers
- opportunities for parents to attend weekly groups
- opportunities for children to attend crèche
- family support workers to provide more intensive support to families with more complex needs

This will be achieved through:

- Good Governance – ensuring Trustees are aware of their responsibilities and have the appropriate level of skills, knowledge and expertise
- Staffing – all staff are appropriately employed, qualified, competent and supported to undertake their role and responsibilities effectively
- Volunteers – all volunteers have the appropriate knowledge, skills and confidence to undertake their roles and responsibilities effectively

### **2. Collaboration and partnerships with other agencies**

Home-Start believes that it is only through working in partnerships with others that we are best able to support families to achieve successful outcomes. This ensures the needs of the whole family can be met, and works to the Think Family Approach.

It is becoming increasingly likely that funders are looking for organisations to collaborate and work in partnerships to deliver holistic and more responsive services to families. We will therefore continue to explore and identify opportunities for further partnerships and possible collaborations, to build on previous experiences of collaboration and partnership working.

### **3. Raising the profile**

Despite being the longest standing and largest family support organisation in the City, the name is not well known amongst the general population. This has meant that as other services have emerged with higher profiles and more resources and opportunities to promote themselves, Home-Start has remained very low profile. This means that others provide



strong competition for funds, volunteers and local status. We will therefore take much more positive steps to raise the profile with existing and potential clients, volunteers, referrers, funders, supporters and the general public, in a number of different ways, to ensure as far a reach as possible.

#### **4. Developing the volunteering model**

Home-Start Stoke on Trent is unique in that it matches carefully trained and supported volunteers to families to ensure the most appropriate relationships and trust can be developed and support can be immediately beneficial. Volunteers are crucial to the success of the scheme both in the governance and the delivery of the service. We will explore and implement ways of engaging volunteers in different aspects of the service to help develop the organisation and to provide more opportunities for people to gain valuable experience and to become employable.

#### **5. Developing specialist projects and filling the gaps statutory services cannot meet**

Home-Start offers a flexible service that is responsive to the needs of families, providing a service that can be tailor made to meet their needs. This also means that the organisation can be innovative and responsive to demand from families, identifying where the needs are and highlighting any gaps in services.

We will therefore be pro active to enable us to be prepared and ready to bid for funds to provide innovative and specialist services in partnership with others or independently, wherever possible and appropriate.



# CONTRIBUTING TO THE STOKE-ON-TRENT CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN

## BE HEALTHY

**Priority 1:** ensure children, young people and their families are able to access a range of services that meet their needs

**Priority 2:** enable children, young people and their families to make positive choices about healthy lifestyles

**Priority 3:** support children and young people to be emotionally healthy and resilient

**Priority 4:** support children and young people with complex needs and their families through integrated services



## STAY SAFE

**Priority 1:** strengthen our partnerships to keep children safe

**Priority 2:** ensure that our services can be safely accessed by children and young people

**Priority 3:** work to build resilience in our most vulnerable children and young people



## ENJOY & ACHIEVE

**Priority 1:** narrow the gap in attainment between the most disadvantaged or vulnerable pupils and those from more disadvantaged backgrounds, so that all learners make good progress

**Priority 2:** place schools and settings at the heart of their communities and support them to work together and with other partners

**Priority 4-:** provide every child and young person with an education pathway and support to develop their practical, social, emotional and academic skills and their health and well being

## MAKE A POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION

**Priority 1:** extend opportunities for all children, young people, parents and carers to influence decisions made about themselves, their families, communities and the national agenda

**Priority 2:** ensure children and young people have the self confidence and resilience to successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges

**Priority 3:** ensure children and young people engage in positive behaviour and choose not to bully, discriminate or offend

**Priority 4:** offer a range of positive activities which are safe, inclusive and accessible to children, young people and their families



## ACHIEVE ECONOMIC WELLBEING

**Priority 1:** enable young people to participate in learning until at least their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday

**Priority 2:** raise the aspirations of young people and improve progression in learning through high quality information, advice and guidance services

**Priority 4:** develop initiatives to reduce the number of children and families living in poverty.



## OUR COMMITMENT TO DIVERSITY

There have been many changes in the make up of our communities in Stoke on Trent, we welcome families from diverse communities, as well as the current Black and Minority Ethnic communities already existing across the City.

We work in partnership to help strengthen a strong sense of community with equal opportunities for all and where diversity is celebrated.

There are some fathers who may not easily engage with services to help them support their children.

Parents whose children have special or additional needs face long hard battles to access and use services that will be of benefit to them and their children, they do not always know of the financial benefits that they are entitled to, and if they do, they often lack the necessary skills, confidence or motivation to be able to make successful claims.

### *What we will do:*

- Implement our policy regarding Equal Opportunities for all, ensure this is embedded into practice throughout the organisation and that all families have access to our service, as appropriate
- Ensure integration of all families in activities and events such as day trips and social events
- Explore and provide opportunities for dads to be more engaged with the service, i.e. specific activities through family groups
- Continue to work with others to deliver services to families where children have special and additional needs
- Recruit and train staff, paid and unpaid, from all walks of life and background, to enable us to provide a service available and accessible to all



Home-Start have supported me in so many ways. The crèche have really helped both my children with their speech and interaction with others. They have always been there for me if I need someone to talk to and have helped by having my children for me while I go on courses and interviews. They do such a good job for the families and they have done so much to bring my family on. I have really enjoyed my time with Home-start and will really miss everyone there and so will the children.

Family



Mary is working well with myself, she is trying to stay on top of maintaining the house but sometimes needs a bit more motivation. She is learning how to cook healthy meals for herself and the children. Over the last two weeks there has been a change to how she engages with the children, they look looked after and cared for. Mary is making fun out of meal times and seems to appreciate time with the children more. She has made an effort to try to organise herself and the house before she starts work and I hope she continues.

Volunteer

Sarah's support has been outstanding regarding my mental health and running of the house. When she arrives to support me each week I feel much more positive and happy. Knowing she will try to help me with anything means the world to me.

Family

The thing I enjoyed most about our trip to Southport is spending the time with mum, what I haven't had in ages.

Child

Grandma feels better after the visits from Karen and that makes me happy.

Child

Debra had the support from Home-Start just when she needed it most. It came just at the right time. It obviously helped her through some of those difficult days and Eileen managed to offer the right balance of support, company and help she most needed. I feel it prevented Debra's mental health deteriorating below a manageable level. Thank you for supporting her so well.

Referrer

# Home START

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Thank you for your interest. For more information and further copies of this strategic plan 2010—2013, please contact:

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