

Together
we make a difference
in our community



Helping vulnerable local families
build better lives for their children

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All children deserve the best start in life

A child’s parents are their first care–giver and their first and most important teacher. There is now an overwhelming body of evidence that a nurturing, loving and stable family and home environment strongly influences a child’s future life chances.



Introducing Home-Start ARUN

Home-Start ARUN offers a unique service to local families with young children. We recruit and train volunteers, who are parents themselves, to provide practical and emotional support to other parents who are struggling to cope.

The families we support face issues such as mental health, multiple births, financial hardship and domestic abuse.

We work to help give children the best possible start in life, by supporting parents to grow in confidence, develop and strengthen their relationship with their children and widen their links with the local community.

We offer:

- Trained volunteers who visit families in their own home each week
- Emotional support to help parents find ways to manage and resolve problems
- Direct support to children, including playing, listening and encouraging development
- Practical help to deal with budgeting, nutrition and meal planning, and making the home safe
- Family groups for parents giving access to peer support and allowing them to become more involved in their own community
- Information and links to other organisations, including health and educational services
- Help to attend meetings and moral support, especially in relation to coping with case conferences and dealing with solicitors or court cases

“ I feel more like a mum and not just someone who looks after a child.



Why we are needed in our community

Having a secure, loving bond with a parent and their support to develop good social, emotional and cognitive skills gives children a secure base from which to explore, learn, relate to others, and flourish.

But being a parent isn't always easy. Children whose parents are struggling to cope with problems such as illness, disability, poor mental health, poverty, homelessness and domestic violence,

can all too often miss out on the love, routine and support that are so vital for their future.

The families we support often have complex and long-term needs which create multiple risk factors for the children's development. In the last year, we received requests to help local families facing a range of difficulties, with some families facing more than one.

79

families were struggling with **mental health** difficulties



12

families with at least one member who is **disabled**



14

families faced **Domestic Abuse** as an issue



25

families had **English** as their **second language**



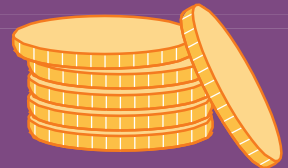
39

were **lone parents**



34

families needed help due to **debt and financial** problems



How families come to us for help

157 local families with young children were referred to us in the last year.

84%

of families were referred to us for help by other organisations

14%

of referrals were from Childrens' Centres

16%

of families self-referred, by getting in touch with us directly

45%

of referrals were from Health Visitors

9%

of referrals were from Social Services

Who we help in our community

We offer our support to all local families with a child under 5, whatever their background and need, with a particular focus on families who are socially excluded and not engaging with other services.

The five years between birth and school are vital for a child's development. By supporting families with children at this crucial early age, to improve the whole family's situation, we are helping parents build better lives for their children.

Last year we supported

113 families

233 children



across the Arun District

Case Study:

John's* young family found themselves in a difficult situation when he was hospitalised due to mental health problems and his wife, Charlotte*, was unable to work. Their Home-Start volunteer was vital in giving them the practical and emotional support they needed at this especially tough time.

“John had problems for some time before he received his diagnosis. It had made things hard, as I didn't feel I could get out of the house as much as I might have liked, which wasn't great for the girls. I actually felt quite down about things, which made it hard for me to deal with them both. When he went into hospital, it seemed like the future for our

whole family became so much more uncertain. He'd been the one who worked and supported us financially before and now he couldn't. It hadn't seemed important that we'd not sorted out my visa; it hadn't mattered that I wasn't allowed to work or get training.

But now that was another problem, on top of all the others, and it was making us both even more stressed. My Health Visitor could see things weren't going well and once she knew what was happening for us, she got in touch with Home-Start to ask if they could help us."

From an initial visit to the family home, the help that Charlotte and her family needed was identified and a volunteer soon began regular visits.


"The volunteer who came to us was great. From the start she got on with us all so well and helped in really practical ways, which is what we really needed. She helped me get legal advice about my immigration status; she went on trips out with me and the girls, to the park and playgroups; she helped me sort out funding so that Alice* could go to nursery, even though she wasn't yet 2.

Thanks to her, I came to feel like I wasn't so alone and met other mums I could talk to about things. Sounds simple, but it was the start of change for all the family. I knew it was better for the girls to get out and meet other children, but I

just hadn't been confident enough to do it on my own.

Feeling better about things meant John and I both were more able to cope with the girls. You know, if they were playing up or something. Having the volunteer here also gave me time to spend with them individually, which is something I'd not been able to do I much at all before. John could be shut up in the bedroom for days sometimes; sort of like a single parent really. So to get that time with them meant a lot to me and them.

I guess the biggest change though was when my visa came through. It meant that I could get training, look for work. Straight away, it was just such a relief for John and me; you could almost feel the stress level going down! And the best thing was, I could arrange a trip to go see my family and let them meet the girls for the first time ever.

 **The difference that has made for all of us is amazing!"**

* Written up from a Home-Start ARUN supported family case. Names have been changed.

How we help in our community

We tailor our support to each family and work with the whole family, providing a combination of:

- Emotional support
- Practical support
- Activities with the children
- Support to use other services

“She explained a bit about the help I might get, with somebody coming to the flat each week. I particularly liked that they would be a parent too.”

Home supported mum

Visiting families in their home

Our Organisers visit families following their referral to us and identify the family's needs and the type of support they require. Based on this, the Organisers ensure families are matched with the Volunteer who has the most appropriate experience and

skills to work with them.

Problems that families are facing and the help they need are monitored during the time they receive support from us, so that we can alter the help being given if necessary.

Family Support Groups

We run two weekly groups for isolated parents and their children. Support is available from the staff and volunteers running the groups, with particular focus on the socialisation of the children. Parents also have the opportunity to gain peer support from others in the same situation, who have a real understanding of the challenges they face.



“It can be very challenging but the rewards are huge. When I'm greeted with a warm welcome and a smile, it's a lovely feeling – and I also know I'm doing something to help when I'm able to watch families progress through difficult times and start to laugh and engage again.” Volunteer

Volunteers

Volunteers visit families once a week in their own homes for 2 to 3 hours, to support them with whatever difficulties they have. Being parents themselves, they bring with them personal experience, skills and knowledge of the resources available within the local area. In preparation for their Home Visiting role, they attend a training course which covers the essential skills that will be needed to take on this vital work.

This direct work with families usually lasts for several months with the same volunteer, allowing a supportive relationship to develop. During this time, the volunteer receives regular supervision from a designated Organiser. The volunteers are friendly and approachable and can be relied upon and trusted by parents to listen without being judgmental, and to respect the needs of each individual family.

Our Volunteers during 2014/15:



60 volunteers supported us



18 new volunteers were recruited and trained



10 were Trustees



5 gave support at our family groups



39 volunteers supported families by Home-Visiting



6 worked in admin and fundraising

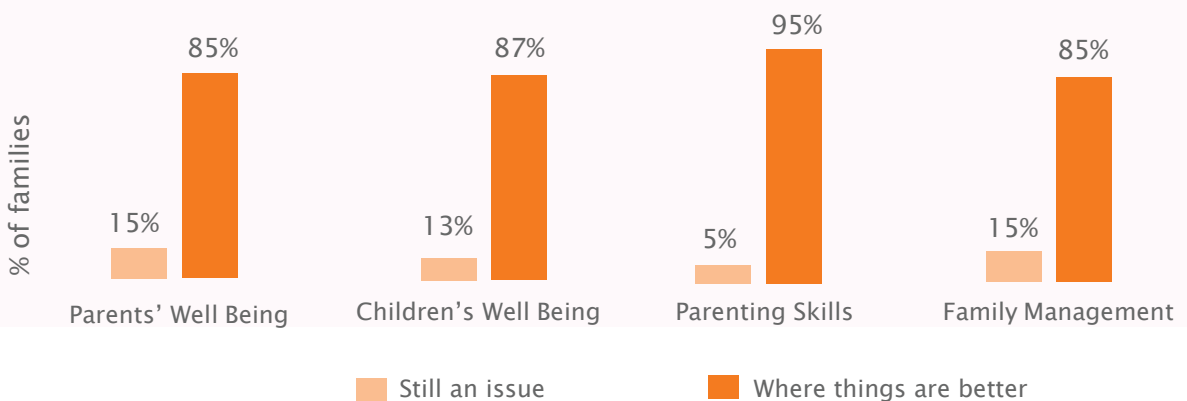
All our volunteers are committed and caring people who offer their time freely.

The difference we make in our community

Our support can transform the life chances of some of the most socially excluded local children and families. Working directly with struggling families, our volunteers change how parents think and feel about themselves, help them cope with the challenges they are facing and support them to provide good early parenting.

Issues that the families face and the progress being made are monitored. Improvements to be achieved during our support are agreed with the families. This enables us to determine the impact of our support and show the outcome for families and children when that support comes to an end.

Outcomes for supported families & children in 2014/15



Across all identified needs, there was an 88% improvement following Home-Start ARUN support.

Family problems are grouped into four key areas of need, which are critical to family health and well-being:

Parents' Well Being – covers parents' mental and physical health, feeling isolated & poor self-esteem.

Children's Well Being – covers children's mental & physical health.

Parenting Skills – covers managing behaviour and involvement in children's development & learning.

Family Management – covers household budgeting, running the home, stress from family conflict, dealing with multiple children under 5 and making use of other services.

Case study:

Helen and Steven both worked, had their own home and two healthy young boys when Steven was diagnosed with kidney failure. These are Helen's words...

“

.....my husband's health had continued to decline even though he had started dialysis and we were facing mounting financial pressures due to the cost of childcare. Steven was too poorly to work and wasn't well enough to look after the boys while I went to work. I could not afford to give up my job as we faced the prospect of losing our home. We had collection agencies ringing every day, utterly compassionless to our circumstance.

A friend mentioned Home-Start and that's when things started getting a bit better for us. The Organiser helped us make sense of the allowances Steven was entitled to and our volunteer, Linda, had a medical background, which helped her to understand the issues facing Steven, especially after a failed transplant early in 2013. The difference Linda made to all of us, but most

importantly the boys has been amazing. I firmly believe that this service is invaluable to the community and more importantly its children.

I can safely say that without Home-Start difficult times would have been much worse and a lot lonelier.”

Helen went on to join the Home-Start Arun Board of Trustees...

As Helen explains: “As a working mum of 3 small boys, I could identify with some of the challenges of raising a young family. Having had some pretty intensive support from Home-Start Arun ourselves I, quite simply, wanted to become involved because of the inspiring work of the Home-Start Arun volunteers, who offer time each week to help local families give their small children a better start in life.” “I've learnt first-hand what it takes to run an organisation like Home-Start Arun and I've had the chance to shape how the charity progresses, as well as to develop valuable extra business and personal skills myself.”

Making a difference together in our community

The backing of our local community is critical to us being able to meet the growing demand for our services. We are grateful to all those who have given us their support this year and look forward to developing new partnerships in the future.

VOLUNTEERS

“It’s a privilege to be welcomed into families’ homes and to start building a new relationship with them.” Home-visiting Volunteer

Volunteers offer us their expertise, skills and experience to help in so many ways – for Home Visiting, as Trustees, as well as in fundraising and office roles.

Included amongst our volunteers are parents from families who have received our support in the past.

We now have volunteers on our Board as Family and Volunteer Representatives, increasing the links with volunteers in all areas of our work and helping ensure we meet their needs.

ORGANISATIONS & COMPANIES

Financial support through grants and donations, gifts in kind and support for our fundraising events was given by a range of organisations including Big Lottery Fund, Children in Need, The Roddick Foundation, Sussex Community Foundation, The Body Shop Foundation and Carte Blanche.

We worked in partnership with other service providers such as Children and Family Centres, Think Family Service and Health Visitors, to directly provide the support families need. And specialist training relating to the issues families can face was provided together with organisations such as Worth Services and Lloyds Bank.

We couldn't possibly fit in all of those who have helped, so here's a small selection...

LOCAL COMMUNITY

Locally, Aldwick Baptist Church have made several donations throughout the year. Both the Vineyard and Arun Community Churches provide much appreciated Christmas hampers for all the families we support.

The George Inn at Burpham included us in their charitable fundraising, handing over a handsome cheque towards our work.

The Bognor Regis Lions, who year after year make a donation around Christmas time.

Numerous individuals provided support through donations in response to requests for items families have needed, as well as on-going regular financial donations.

FUNDRAISING EVENTS

The Felpham and Aldwick Hub supporters held a very successful and entertaining Antiques Lunch, numerous coffee mornings selling hand-made greetings cards, and they join with other hubs to hold a Christmas Fayre.

The Family Fun Day held with support from Mewsbrook Park Café was a great success as was a Barn Dance in February.


Some supporters raised money by taking part in our fundraising challenges: the London 10k and a Nuts Challenge.

Next year watch out for Walk with Woofies and a Firewalk!

A message from Home-Start ARUN

We hope our Annual Review has given you an insight into our work and the impact we make on the lives of local families. There are aspects of our work that can't be so easily measured but make us all so proud to be part of Home-Start ARUN. Here are a few words from our Senior Organiser:

"I have worked for this local family support charity for almost 7 years. I see first-hand how many families are facing the difficulties of parenting young children. I have been honoured to support parents whom have lost their partner or child, families dealing with lifelong disabilities and illnesses, people who are living in poverty, experiencing domestic abuse or trying to cope with mental health issues. Help is provided through our team of dedicated parent volunteers who work tirelessly to make life just a little bit better for the whole family. They offer a listening ear, an extra pair of hands, encouragement and reassurance. I have been privileged to see many families helped by Home-Start, and I would like for our support to be able to continue."

 My light in a very dark time of my life, Home-Start helped me to rebuild my self-esteem and make a better life for my family." Home-Start supported family

We're pleased to share with you some of the moments' that have warmed our hearts:

The mum told at school she would never amount to much, proudly receiving her certificate from Northbrook College for successfully completing a distance-learning course.

Achieving 100% for our Quality Assurance Review and Charity Commission Endorsement, which rigorously assesses our services under the Home-Start QA System.

Seeing our volunteers enthusiasm at range of new training opportunities for volunteers, including 'Supporting those with Depression' and 'Solihull Parenting' to help them in meeting families' needs.

A note from a supported Mum saying "you've guided me through some tough times. I would never have got through without you"

Collecting Christmas gifts from the lovely staff at West Sussex County Council and finding one for not just every child but every parent too.

How to get involved

Now you've seen what we do, the impact it can have and how the local community is getting involved, we'd love to hear from you about ways we can work together. Please help us make better lives for more vulnerable local children and families.

VOLUNTEERING



Work with local families
Hold a fundraising event

Become a Trustee
Help with office work



SUPPORTING



Make a donation
Select us as your 'Chosen Charity'



Offer gifts in kind
Sponsor an event

SNOWFLAKE APPEAL



Find out how you can join in our annual Snowflake Appeal

The Snowflake Appeal aims to increase awareness of the services we offer, together with raising much needed funds to support vulnerable local children. It is part of the nationwide campaign run by Home-Start schemes across the UK, which together form one of the nation's leading family support charities.

Running from November to January, the Appeal provides a focussed opportunity for local businesses, organisations and individuals to get involved and show their support.

Find out more and keep up to date with what's going on



www.home-startarun.org.uk



facebook.com/homestartarun



twitter.com/@HomeStartArun

Helping local families build better lives for their children

For a copy of our 2014/15 accounts please contact us on one of the following:

Registered office:

5C Park Farm,
Chichester Road
Arundel
West Sussex
BN18 0AG

Telephone: 01903 889707

www.home-startarun.org.uk

E-mail: admin@home-startarun.org.uk



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