



ANNUAL REPORT 2023/24

**HOME
START**

Herefordshire

Charity No. 1113432
Company No. 5659978



Andy Walkden Chair of Trustees



Looking back, it has been a relatively quiet year for Home-Start Herefordshire (HSH). Last July we had a Garden Party, inviting people who have helped us to thank them for their support. We were pleased to welcome the then-current High Sheriff Robert Robinson and his wife Sue to the event. Robert's focus for his tenure in office was "Life Chances", and he spoke eloquently about the impact of the first three years of a child's life on their future, something very close to the interests of HSH.

There was little change in the staff and trustees of HSH; however, we were all sad to hear about Judy Hooley's passing. I first met Judy when she was acting as a volunteer representative on the Trustee Board, and I was always impressed with the insights she was able to give the trustees into the thoughts and concerns of the family visiting volunteers.

Looking to the future, 2024/25 will be a busy year. Most recently we have been negotiating with local charities, Vennture and The CLD Trust, to form a partnership to help young children and families. HSH will deliver School Readiness interventions as part of an overall initiative to provide school-based support for children and families. This is an exciting development, and we look forward to further partnership working in the future.

Two other work areas will be Quality Assurance and the Strategic Plan. The first is implementing the quality assurance procedures being introduced by Home-Start UK – these will ensure HSH remains fit for purpose; the second is redrafting HSH's Strategic Plan – this will guide our decision-making and priorities for the next four years.

Whether it is quality or strategic plans, though, having a diverse pool of people is fundamental to HSH's continuing success. As always, I take this opportunity to thank everyone who supports us by helping to help the families and children of Herefordshire.

My first thanks are to Herefordshire Council and the other funders who understand the economic and social value of early intervention in families before their needs become complex. I thank our staff who work tirelessly to ensure that families are well supported through the volunteers they are matched with, and that no child's future is limited. Thirdly, I thank my fellow trustees who voluntarily give their time and expertise to the important task of providing strategic oversight of HSH's operations.

And lastly, but by no means least, I thank the home visiting volunteers and those other volunteers who help with fundraising, for example. I was deeply moved by a recent Home-Start UK video that brought home to me the lasting impact that volunteers have on families. It focussed on a volunteer and the family she had helped several years previously and illustrated how much those people's lives had turned out for the better. All I can ask of you all is to carry on being the amazing people you are.

Andy

Mandie Preece Scheme Manager



It's amazing to think another year has passed and at such speed! It has been a year of change and, at times, challenges, with the cost-of-living crisis, national difficulties with volunteer recruitment, and the continuity of specific issues often seen in rural areas (isolation, loneliness, poverty) impacting our local families. Despite this, we have seen so many wonderful achievements and successes in terms of our service delivery and the effective and often life-changing support our service brings to some of the most vulnerable Herefordshire families.

Meeting needs

We couldn't do the work we do without our fabulous team of volunteers, who always approach the challenges experienced by families with confidence, compassion, and awareness, something that makes our service so special. Many families we support struggle with poor mental wellbeing, isolation, socio-economic difficulties, domestic abuse, physical and mental health challenges, and struggles with children's behaviour, or have felt ignored or disempowered by other services and sources of support previously. Our volunteers see the uniqueness of every family, and by listening to their expectations and needs, many families feel empowered and confident to make meaningful and positive changes for the first time. The work that our volunteers do isn't always easy but the dedication and care they show really does make a difference to the families we support.

Volunteer Recruitment and Training

Due to the national challenges in volunteer recruitment, we have had to develop new and innovative ways of attracting potential volunteers. After feedback from some potential volunteers around barriers to accessing training (days/times/family commitments), we have recently successfully trialled hybrid training courses, which offered a combination of both online and face-to-face evening sessions. With this positive change, we have been able to recruit and train an additional 15 volunteers to join our wonderful team!

Collaborative Early Intervention and Prevention Work

Many vulnerable families within Herefordshire struggle to access specialist services when they need them most, increasing the risk of poor outcomes for parents and children. This year, through the continuation of our volunteer-delivered early intervention and prevention support, we have been able to provide a multi-agency, family-centred approach whereby we work in collaboration with local and national agencies, organisations, and services to connect families to the additional systems of support they need. By working collaboratively over the last 12 months, we have assisted 91 families (174 children) to access further and specialised support when they needed it, helping remove some of the barriers in seeking help and preventing or reducing the impact of crisis.

As an organisation, Home-Start Herefordshire is extremely grateful for the ongoing support of our volunteers, trustees, friends, and all our stakeholders through 2023/24. This enables us to continue to provide our vital service in times of challenge and hardship. We are positive for the future and will continue to show our resilience and aptitude in the face of adversity to provide support for those families that need it most.

With grateful thanks

Mandie

Alexandra James President



Another year passes, and still, Home-Start Herefordshire looms high in my life. I want to take this opportunity to thank the team who keep us all on the straight and narrow. For all the courses they provide to keep us up to speed and to the volunteers whose compassion and kindness give families the courage and knowledge to move forward.

Your President

Alexandra

Jan Doran Volunteer Rep



As a volunteer representative, I have actively connected with numerous volunteers over the past twelve months, whether chatting over coffee, attending a support meeting, or participating in in-house training sessions. I ensure that any suggestions or queries raised are effectively communicated to Mandie.

I have also participated in external training (such as Cybersecurity and The Neurodiversity Lens) to enhance my knowledge, and I've been encouraging other volunteers to take up similar learning opportunities. I also remain dedicated to providing ongoing support to families whenever the need arises.

Jan

Tam Thomas Family Group Coordinator



With funding from The Mumford Memorial Trust and Kington United Charities, we are able to meet on Monday mornings. Invited families join us in the Parish Room, Kington, for a little bit of me time and fun activities for children and their carers. A warm welcome is guaranteed, and our volunteers Amber, Caroline and Elaine are always ready with a hot drink, cakes, snacks, and TLC for all. We sing, we play, we try different crafts, we read, we dance. During the school holidays, we try to get outdoors with buggy walks, picnics, and playing in the parks.

On a recent picnic/walk, I told the families I was writing a piece for the annual report and asked their thoughts. The answers went like this - "My safe place", "Don't like the singing", "Always welcome - never judged", "Fun, Laughter, Friendship", "My happy place, just love watching them play", "Help and support", "hot coffee - never time at home, always goes cold", "Crafts, as never time at home", "I have made lots of friends", "lots of support and new ideas", "Please, no more walks in the rain", "Great help at Christmas with lovely gifts". I hope this gives you an idea of what our family group is all about.

Tam

The Team

Trustees



Andy Walkden
Chair



Jan Frances
Vice Chair



Jeremy Stobart
Treasurer



Helen Tank
Safeguarding Trustee



Philippa Wride
Trustee



Virginia Taylor
Trustee



David Welton
Trustee

Staff



Mandie Preece
Scheme Manager



Kay Gray
Lamplight Administrator



Karen Marriott
Scheme Administrator



Imogen Potter
Coordinator



James Teppin
Coordinator



Sally Jones
Coordinator



Tina Rowlands
Marketing & Volunteer
Recruitment Coordinator



Tam Thomas
Family Group Coordinator



Facts

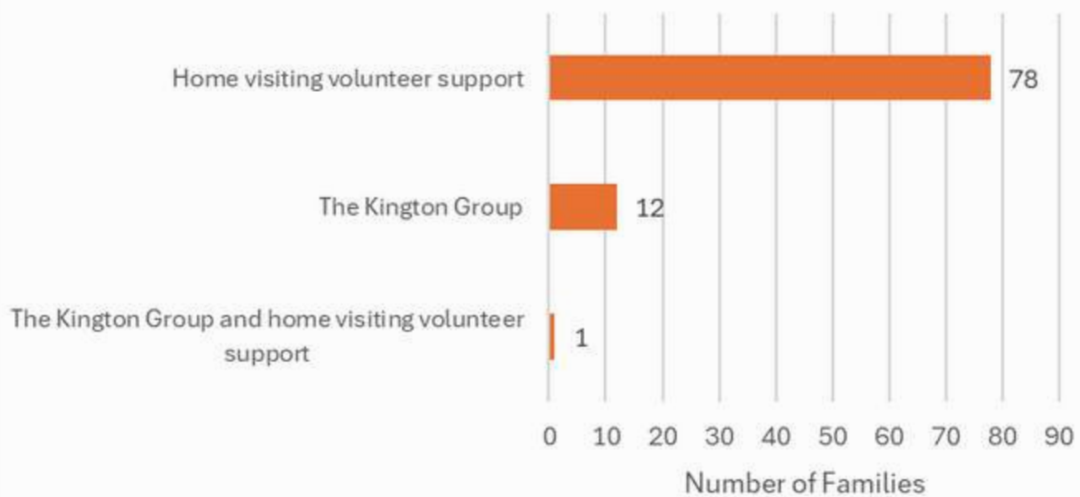
91

families supported

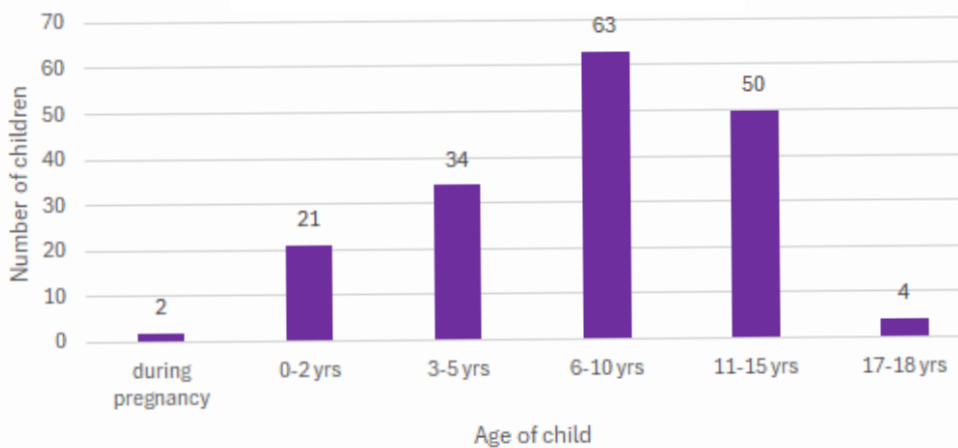
174

children supported

Families supported in 2023/24 through the following services



Number of children supported

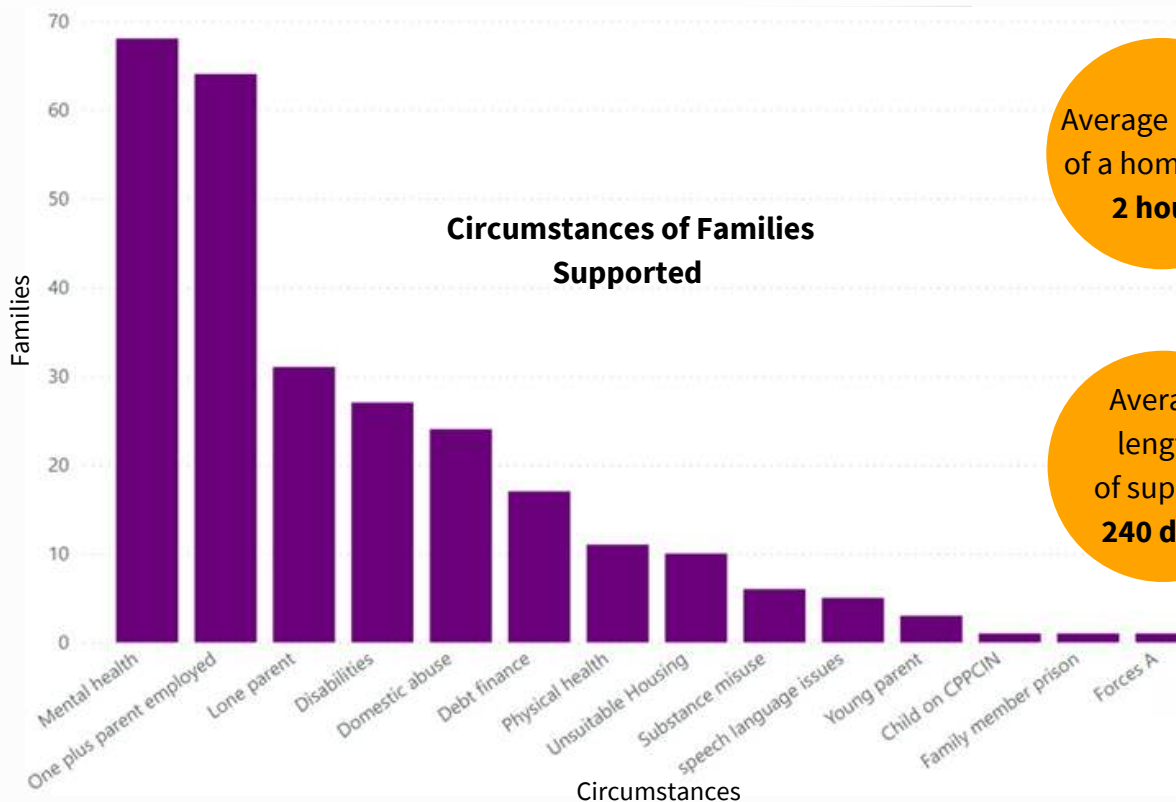


40
active
volunteers + 24
resting
volunteers

Average length
of a home visit
2 hours

Average
length
of support
240 days

Circumstances of Families Supported



Jeremy Stobart Treasurer



In financial terms, 2023/2024 has been a difficult year. There has been a marked increase in expenditure this year, mainly due to higher than expected staff costs (22/23: £139,682, 23/24: £154,600). This has particularly skewed losses in restricted activities due to allocations being a percentage of over three-year historical revenues, and sadly, income from these activities has remained static whilst expenditure/staff costs have increased significantly. However, the reduction in unrestricted income has also been a significant factor (22/23: £92,382, 23/24: £73,332. Total expenditure has increased this year to £180,661 (2023: £165,385). Total income (core and restricted combined) was significantly decreased last year at £155,333 (2023: £178,982).

So, the unfortunate corollary of the above has been a deficit for the year on core/unrestricted activities of £8,452 (2023: £12,383 surplus). In addition, our restricted reserves have also worsened with a deficit this year of (16,876), so our overall restricted reserves deficit has increased from negative £6,456 to negative £23,332. So, our overall reserves have decreased to £54,173 (2023: £79,501).

On a more positive note, we are more hopeful for the coming year. A new contract working with Vennture should provide a much needed bolster to our cash position as well as help with the amortisation of staff costs. Along with some significant new unrestricted income streams, the outlook for 24/25 is looking rosier.

As ever, my praise goes out to Mandie and her hard-working team for their achievements. This has very much been a year of cementing in skills and knowledge for the newish staff team, and hopefully, this will assist in moving the charity towards more stable ground in financial terms.

Our current unrestricted reserves only provide minimum cover for emergencies such as shortfalls in funding or unexpected expenditures. The Trustees continue to believe that reserves equivalent to 6 months expenditure, i.e. circa £90,000 (based on current expenditure levels), are the optimum required to ensure continuity of operations and will continue to work towards this goal. Although the current reserves currently provide for just over 3.5 months of expenditure cover (2023: 5.5 months), although not ideal, the Trustees believe this is sufficient to meet the minimum requirements to continue operations.

These are still difficult times. The public sector continues to struggle with funding models and providing a steady stream of referrals. As I mentioned in last year's report, the cost of living crisis has not gone away. Although there are signs of improvement, the cost of living, energy costs, and inflation allied with depressed financial markets will continue to have an effect on us all, and everyone, including Home-Start Herefordshire, will continue to feel the squeeze in the years to come.

Amounts were received from Eveson Charitable Trust, Herefordshire Council, BBC Children in Need, EF Bulmer Trust, Herefordshire Community Foundation, HFT Forklifts, Rathbone Moral Aid Charity, HAYES Travel, Victoria Charitable Foundation, Ned Potter Limited, SR & PH Southall Trust, Kington United Charities, Waitrose & Partners, John Lewis & Partners, Pontrilas Developments, William A Cadbury, Philip Witcomb, The Mumford Memorial Trust, Hereford City Rotary Club and friends who make regular donations. TRP Sealing, ASDA and SIMTECH also kindly loan out their boardrooms for trustee and volunteer meetings and Sunshine Radio and Haines Watts for the donation of toys at Christmas. We are grateful for their support. In addition, money was received in the form of donations from individuals and the proceeds from fundraising events. We are grateful to the donors for their generosity and to all those involved in fundraising events for their hard work and commitment.

Jeremy

	Year ending 31 March 2024 (£)	Year ending 31 March 2023 (£)
Incoming resources		
Donations	4,745	5,990
Fundraising income	2,604	1,876
Grants	143,776	166,094
Other income	4,208	5,022
Total	155,333	178,982
Resources expended		
Staff and volunteer costs	154,600	139,682
Fundraising costs	405	0
Office costs	14,305	13,310
Scheme expenses	6,706	5,798
Governance costs	940	2,205
Other costs	3,705	4,390
Total	180,661	165,385
Net movement in funds		
Unrestricted funds	(8,452)	12,383
Restricted funds	(16,876)	1,124
Funds as of 31 March 2024		
Unrestricted funds	77,505	85,957
Restricted funds	(23,332)	(6,456)

Events

We held a wonderful Garden Party in Byford to give thanks to all our volunteers, friends and supporters



Thank you to all our
volunteers, friends and
supporters who have been
there for us this year



Events

Maggie's Challenge

Longtime supporter Maggie Matthews challenged herself to complete 800,000 steps, swim 80,000 metres and cycle 800 kilometres all in time for her milestone 80th birthday in 2023.



She exceeded her goals in all areas.



1,070,408
steps



80,200
metres
swam



828.5
kilometres
cycled



Events



Thank you to our
supporters



The Mumford Memorial Trust

Kington United Charities

SR and PH Southall Trust

Phillip Witcomb

Rathbone Moral Aid Charity

