



Annual Report

2022/23

Charity No. 1113432
Company No.5659978

Alex James - President

I have always found it a privilege to enter a home wearing the Home-Start cap. We find ourselves walking into the inner sanctum of a very private place, and we are welcomed. Because our wonderful staff prepares us, the initial meeting is made easier, but after that, we have to make our own way. Of course, we have backup and wisdom from our team. Still, when we visit, we use our life knowledge, personalities, and expectations on top of all the training we have abided by. But it is our ourselves that create the relationship with the family. Many of us have had to pull on our own life experiences to untangle the problems our families face. We have the power of listening, caring, understanding, and, above all, kindness. I am not saying we are a bunch of saints; I most certainly am no saint. But I care. After a few visits, relationships develop, suggestions are made, happy hours together, and laughter begins to blossom. A few little kindnesses come between you and your family, and I return home happy.



So to all our wonderful volunteers, I know you are all like-minded kindred spirits and, like me, find our Home-Start journey a personal privilege too.

Andy Walkden - Chair of Trustees

Last year Home-Start Herefordshire (HSH) celebrated its 40th anniversary. I said at the AGM that one of my personal aims for HSH is to ensure that the organisation will be there to celebrate its 50th (even if I am not!). Why? Because the need for services HSH provides is increasing, not diminishing, children and families are facing more pressure than ever from daily life with the cost of living and other challenges.



HSH can only do what it does with the support of people who give us the gifts of their time, money, and expertise. So my first thank you is to everyone who helps make a difference to HSH so that we can make a difference to the families we support, ensuring no child's future is limited.

I would also like to thank all the organisations that fund the important work we do. As budgets are squeezed and charitable trusts see increasing demands, we are grateful for the funding we do get. Yet while early intervention and prevention are far more cost-effective in any scenario, the national trend is for interventions to be increasingly late and less cost-effective (10,000 more children in care in 2020 than in March 2013, 48% more child protection investigations over the same period (Source: "Too Little Too Late: Early Help and Early Intervention Spending in England" Action for Children 2022).

We realise the statutory sector, both for Herefordshire and beyond, has to manage increasingly complex cases with less resources, and the amount of money spent on early help/intervention is also in decline. If, as a country, we do not find a way to reverse this trend and increase support for early intervention, statutory children's services will be overwhelmed.

Over the next ten years, HSH is aware that raising awareness of our early intervention services is crucial to supporting children, families, and Herefordshire Council. As part of the Strategic Plan, we aim to inform people and organisations we work with or would like to work with about the Early Help/Early Intervention work and the cost benefits HSH delivers. We have started this process at our 40th AGM. For example, we welcomed as keynote speakers Sarah de Rohan, the then High Sheriff of Herefordshire, and Peter Grigg, Chief Executive of Home-Start UK.

This year we have added two new faces, David Welton and James Teppin, to the organisation. David has joined the Board of Trustees and brings a wealth of experience from running European-wide multi-million pound projects. James is the first male family coordinator for HSH and comes to us from a commercial background. I welcome both to HSH and look forward to working with them.

If I was asked what unites the people who work for HSH, both in paid and voluntary roles, it would be compassion and a desire to change the world into a better place for others. To our home-visiting volunteers, employees, and trustees, I thank you all for your time, energy, and for caring. Everybody does a fantastic job. However, this year I'd like to especially thank Mandie Preece, Scheme Manager, who is not always recognised for her important role in ensuring HSH remains viable and a crucial source of support for Herefordshire children and families.

Thank you.

Mandie Preece – Scheme Manager

2022 marked the 40th year of Home-Start Herefordshire, which gave us the perfect opportunity to celebrate and reflect upon all we have achieved working with Herefordshire families who need our unique support service. The difference we have made to the lives of families and children within our local community and the legacy that the support can provide is invaluable; as an organisation we are indebted to the kindness, generosity, and dedication that all staff, trustees, and volunteers have shown and the valuable contribution that each and every person has played in the past four decades.



It has been a challenging year for us as an organisation with many changes both internally (experienced staff retiring and recruitment of new staff, some challenges with volunteer recruitment) and externally (lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and current difficulties with the cost of living) to manage effectively. However, I feel as an organisation we have risen to these challenges with determination and resilience, thus providing overall a very positive year supporting Herefordshire families.

Challenges of Cost of Living: Due to the current cost of living crisis, we have seen a greater number of families struggling financially and experiencing associated challenges such as poor mental health, isolation, and poverty. For these families, we have worked with several of our partner agencies (Citizen Advice, debt crisis support, the Department for Work and Pensions, countywide food banks, and utility providers), enabling access to the help, advice, and expertise they desperately need, i.e., help and advice with energy payments, warm weather grants, benefit checking, food and care packs, fuel payments, debt management advice, and warm weather clothing. Certain times of the year have been incredibly challenging for families struggling financially, with added costs at the start of school terms and holiday periods and struggles at Christmas.

We have been especially grateful to the following for their support over the festive period:

- BT kindly offered us 12 months of free Broadband and Chromebooks for those families experiencing digital exclusion. This has been invaluable for families to support children's education and homework, access resources, and provide a platform for connection with others.
- White Stuff provided emergency funding and gifts to struggling families for Christmas and the festive period, which have been very well received by many.
- Sunshine Radio provided us with many wonderful toys through their 'Christmas Toy Appeal'; this has meant that all our supported children received a toy for Christmas, reducing the worry for many parents and carers that their children would go without and providing lots of happiness for all.

Volunteer Model: With the lifting of Covid restrictions, we saw the return to our successful model of providing volunteer family support in the home. This support has been gratefully received by the families and volunteers eager to see each other face-to-face.

Volunteer Recruitment and Training: It has been a disappointing year regarding volunteer recruitment, with us only being able to successfully recruit a small number of new volunteers. However, we have seen several of our resting volunteers return to volunteering, enabling us to effectively support 87 families and 171 children. We have also continued through the delivery of online and in-person training sessions to up-skill our experienced volunteer team by providing new training on topics such as ADHD, Autism, Healthy Eating, Domestic Abuse, and Safeguarding refresher. This additional training has enabled our volunteers to approach the associated challenges experienced by families with confidence, compassion, and awareness while also enhancing their experience and expertise.

Increased number of children supported with complex additional needs: Over the past few years, resources and support services for children with complex additional needs have greatly reduced. As a result, our organisation has provided increased support for families struggling with children with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability). Our specialist volunteer team has been instrumental in ensuring some of our most vulnerable children receive the best possible help and support to enable them to reach their developmental milestones and ensure their feelings are considered, and their voices heard when planning for their future.

Despite the challenges of the past year, I am proud of what we have achieved as an organisation and I am looking forward to the year to come. Again thank you to all our past and present volunteers, staff, trustees, families, and supporters who have made our work possible. Although times have been tough, I am always inspired by the dedication and passion everyone has for the organisation and what we do.

Many, many thanks; we couldn't have done it without you all!

2022 marked 40 years of
Home-Start Herefordshire, and we
celebrated at our AGM

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Thank you to all who attended the event

Tam Thomas - Family Group Coordinator

Monday mornings see families from Kington and the surrounding villages converge on the Kington Parish Room for a little bit of "Home-Start TLC" for a couple of hours. The kettle is on from 10 am, and toys and crafts are set up to entertain and keep our little ones happy and busy so that parents can sit down and enjoy a hot drink, chat and relax. We have a fabulous team of Home-Start volunteers in Amber, Caroline, Jan, and Elaine who go above and beyond to make sure everyone has a nice time, feels comfortable, and of course, has a good giggle!! They also entertain the children and offer support/shoulder to cry on and even vegetables from their gardens!



This year we have received funding from The Mumford Memorial Trust and Kington United Charities that has enabled us to visit our local play cafe and offer our families hot drinks and cake as a treat and meals for the children, which was very much appreciated. We have had picnics in the parks and walks by the river. However, our favourite outing was to Shobdon Airfield (when the sun shone), where we watched the planes, played football, had our picnics, and were even allowed to go in the Hangers and get up close to some of the aircraft. I hope all our families are left with lovely memories, and we look forward to meeting many new families in the new term for more fun and laughter.



Jan Doran - Volunteer Representative

As the Volunteer Representative to the Board of Trustees, I have had a lovely sociable year. So far, I have held seven informal coffee mornings in the market towns to meet fellow volunteers, attended most Support meetings to maximise meeting people, and met all new volunteers before they go out into the wider Home-Start world. These have all been very enjoyable times on my part, and enlightening to discover other people's impressions of Home-Start volunteering. I have fed back the ideas and concerns to Mandie, and we are working on them. I am looking at arranging some further times and venues to meet up soon, so keep an eye out for my emails. Feel free to attend any venue. Please come and meet up. Don't feel location bound.

I have completed eight modules of the Healthy Happy Home training course. I personally found the training valuable and interesting (lots of useful links and easy recipe ideas) and delivered in an accessible way. I look forward to seeing you all.

New recruits

James Teppin - Assistant Coordinator

One day I was shopping at my local Co-Op, and a poster caught my eye. It was asking for dads to volunteer for Home-Start Herefordshire. Hmmm, why Dads, I thought, surely a family support charity needs women? Well, perhaps some children do not have a positive father figure, I reasoned, or maybe it doesn't matter if you're a man; you could still help people. What a position of trust, what an honour, so I became a volunteer. Easier said than done during Covid, but the Home-Start team got me there. I instantly found the training fascinating, and the more I completed it, the more I realised I had found my career path, something I actually wanted to do.



I quickly signed up with the Open University for a course in social studies; it was a balancing act combining study, full-time work, and my family life with volunteering in the summer holidays. However, Home-Start Herefordshire was advertising for a new Assistant Coordinator, so I decided to apply. Retail's loss...

Well, what a whirlwind it has been. The Home-Start Herefordshire team couldn't have been more helpful, so friendly, and supportive. The job? Well, have you heard the phrase no two days the same? You have your day organised, then the phone rings, your emails ping, and yes, Mandie has a new family for you. But I wouldn't change it. I love it. And as for being the man on the team, I'm proud to be one of the girls.



David Welton - Trustee

I knew a little about Home-Start from a bystander's perspective. Still, I was unaware of the dedication and professionalism of everyone involved and exactly what support Home Start delivers daily to so many families and individuals. What I found within the Home-Start family is simply amazing!

Working as a Home-Start Herefordshire trustee has given me the opportunity to meet others working in the charity sector locally and across the county in differing originsations. All greatly regard and admire what we do and the dedication of our volunteers and coordinators. Home-Start is seen as providing real and focused early support where needed and, in many cases, defusing and soothing situations well before they escalate. I am proud and privileged to be a trustee in our organisation.

Maggie Matthews - Fundraising Volunteer

During Maggie's 78th year, she decided to undertake a similar challenge to the one she set herself in her 50th year; 50 miles swim in the year, 50 mile walk in a week, and a 50 mile cycle on her 50th birthday. This year Maggie is completing her 80th birthday challenge to complete 800,000 steps, an 80,000 metre swim, and 800 km on a gym bike in a year. No mean feat, as a new knee at the start of the challenge meant that, inevitably, the start was delayed. However, March 2023 found the challenge on time and on target.

Support has been promised from various sources such as Cargill, The Lions, Tupsley Women's Institute, and the Fownhope, Marches, and Gateway Bridge Clubs. Friends and family have also been very generous, increasing the initial target of £800 total to £800 per charity. The chosen charities are dear and important to Maggie's heart, Home-Start Herefordshire, Mind and Carers in Herefordshire. Watch this space.



Other events this year



Hereford Lads Club Information Day



Cathedral Christmas Fair

Sunshine Radio Christmas Toy Appeal



New volunteers being trained



The Lower Deckers Sea Shanty evening



Bartestree Village Fete



Vouchers from Home-Start UK Cost of Living Crisis Appeal

Feedback

"Before I met B (volunteer), I felt excited but a bit nervous; she made me feel happy and important. I loved playing Frozen Unicorn. I now feel happier, and I feel bright. I really loved B. I didn't want her to leave, but I feel a lot better now. Thank you so much."
(Child 8 yrs)

"G (volunteer) was funny, calm, kind, and happy. She made me feel happy, relaxed, safe, listened to and important." (Child 7 yrs)

"The volunteer was lovely, welcoming, made an effort with the kids, and clearly wanted to be there for us."
(Mum)

"Thank you ever so much for your support and taking my son out and letting him express himself, it's really helped him open up and feel better about himself." (Mum)

"Before I met H (volunteer), I worried about secondary school and friends. I now feel safe and happy and listened to. H helped Mum as well because we now do more together. I enjoyed playing games and chatting with H; she has made a difference in my life." (Child 11 yrs)

Jeremy Stobart - Treasurer

In financial terms the 2022/2023 has been a reasonably satisfactory year. Although there has been a marked uptick in expenditure (approximately 9% on 21/22), there has been a greater increase in income, mainly from increases from existing institutional funders and/or new funding grants.

Total expenditure has increased this year at £165,385 (2022 : £152,006). This is mainly due to increased staff costs/pay rises. Total income (core and restricted combined) was significantly increased as mentioned above on last year at £178,982 (2022 : £146,734). This increase is slightly skewed by the fact that last year's income was down on 2021's income which was a slightly 'Freak' year due to Covid related 'Emergency Funding'. There was a surplus for the year on core/unrestricted activities of £12,383 (2022 : £1,408 surplus). In addition our restricted reserves have rallied slightly with a surplus of £1,124, so our overall restricted reserves deficit has reduced from negative £7,580 to negative £6,456. Our overall reserves have increased to £79,501 (2022: £65,994). Note that within the overall reserves figure above, £20,750 of this is designated, by funders, towards operations in 2023/2024. Thus cleared undesignated funds stand at £58,751



As ever my praise goes out to Mandie and her hard-working and fairly newly installed team for their achievements, not just financially but operationally as well, in keeping costs down and drawing in additional income streams.

Our current unrestricted reserves only provide minimum cover for emergencies such as shortfalls in funding or unexpected expenditure. The Trustees continue to believe that reserves equivalent to six months expenditure, i.e. circa £80,000, are the optimum required to ensure continuity of operations and will continue to work towards this goal. Although the current reserves provide for just under six months of expenditure cover (2021: 5.5 months, just under 4.5 months taking into account designated funds), the Trustees believe this is sufficient to meet the minimum requirements to continue operations.

These are still difficult times. Although we have experienced a slightly less tumultuous year in respect of staffing and operations, we are starting to see greater challenges arise in the public sector with regards to funding models. Many companies and charities continue to struggle to fill staffing posts and we are not immune to this. The rise in the cost of living, energy costs, inflation allied with depressed financial markets will have an effect on us all, and everyone, including Home-Start will feel the squeeze in the coming year/s.

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, The SR & PH Southall Charitable Trust, Kington United Charities, Tesco Community Grants, Asda Foundation, Waitrose & Partners, John Lewis & Partners, Pontrilas Developments, William A Cadbury, Philip Witcomb, White Stuff, Mumford Memorial Trust, Brailsford Charity, Four Acre Trust, Hereford City Rotary Club and Friends who make regular donations. TRP Sealing, Adsa and SIMTECH also kindly loan out their boardrooms for Trustee and Volunteer meetings. We are grateful for their support. In addition money was received in the form of donations from individuals and the proceeds from fund raising events.

We are grateful to the donors for their generosity and to all those involved in fund raising events for their hard work and commitment.

Financial Summary

	Year Ending 31 March 2023 (£)	Year Ending 31 March 2022 (£)
Incoming Resources		
Donations	5,990	6,360
Fund raising income	1,876	1,256
Social work students	0	0
Grants	166,094	133,650
Other income	5,022	5,468
	178,982	146,734
Resources Expended		
Staff and volunteer costs	139,682	130,760
Fund raising costs	0	0
Office costs	13,310	11,327
Scheme expenses	5,798	2,533
Governance costs	2,205	1,280
Other costs	4,390	6,106
	165,385	152,006
Net movement in funds		
Unrestricted funds	12,383	1,408
Restricted funds	1,124	(3,864)
Funds at 31 March		
Unrestricted	85,957	73,574
Restricted	(6,456)	(7,580)

Thank you for your support:



SR & PH
Southall
Trust



The Brailsford Charity



Kington United
Charities

The Rathbone
Memorial Aid Charity



The Witcomb Fund



Mumford Memorial
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