



# IMPACT REPORT

2022-2023



**HOME  
START**  
Wandsworth

# Our mission

**We work with families to create an environment where young children can thrive.**



## Our vision

Our vision is a society where all children have the support they need from their caregiver for a positive, nurturing start in life, and families have resilience and hope for the future.

## Our values

**Humanity:** we see the families we support as individual people, and our approach is based on the fundamental human qualities of relationship, inclusion, kindness and compassion.

**Humility:** we know that it takes a village to raise a child. We seek to work in partnership as peers to build on the inherent strengths and capabilities in people, families, communities and organisations.

**Humour:** in the face of challenges in life, we approach our relationships with an aim to finding joy, playfulness and fulfilment from our connected journey.

## Our services

Our services focus on providing whole family support and include:

**Home-visiting:** one-to-one weekly support from a carefully matched, trained volunteer, providing practical help, guidance and emotional support.

**Bump to Baby:** one-to-one weekly support during pregnancy and the newborn stage from a volunteer trained in perinatal mental health and bonding and attachment.

**Group activities:** weekly structured meet-ups enable families to come together, chat and relax in a safe space. The warm and welcoming environment helps families to feel less isolated, more confident around new people and better able to cope. As well as our regular meetups we also organise day trips and host topic-focused workshops including first-aid, budgeting advice and early literacy, which give our parents the chance to build their parenting skills and confidence.



*“Our early childhoods, the time from pregnancy to five, fundamentally shape our whole lives.”* Royal Foundation Centre for Early Childhood

## Making the early years count

Home-Start Wandsworth believes that every child has the right to the best possible start in life, and we work with families to create an environment in which young children can thrive.

Extensive research shows that children who are raised in a stable, loving, family environment are more likely to have a positive and healthy future. Many factors including inadequate housing, mental and physical health issues and lack of support services can have a negative impact upon family relationships.

We believe that early intervention is the most effective support we can offer families and better than the alternative of spending ‘£17 billion per year on addressing the damaging problems that affect children and young people’, later in life. (source: [EIF](#))

Our Home-Start volunteers work alongside families, helping them to learn to cope, establish routines and instil confidence in their parenting ability. Parental involvement in early learning has one of the greatest impacts on children’s wellbeing and achievement. The bond and attachment between children and their parents are especially powerful in laying the foundations for future learning, health, behaviour and relationships.

We work in partnership with a number of organisations to help parents feel more attuned and involved in their child’s development. Through our partnership with **Learn to Love to Read**, early literacy sessions are made accessible to families and a lifelong love of reading is nurtured. Our group activities are also designed to enhance children’s mental and physical health. Children are encouraged to participate in creative sessions, explore new environments and take part in sporting activities run in partnership with **Open Air Fit** and **Enable**.



133 families supported



86 group sessions



Giving 220 children a brighter future



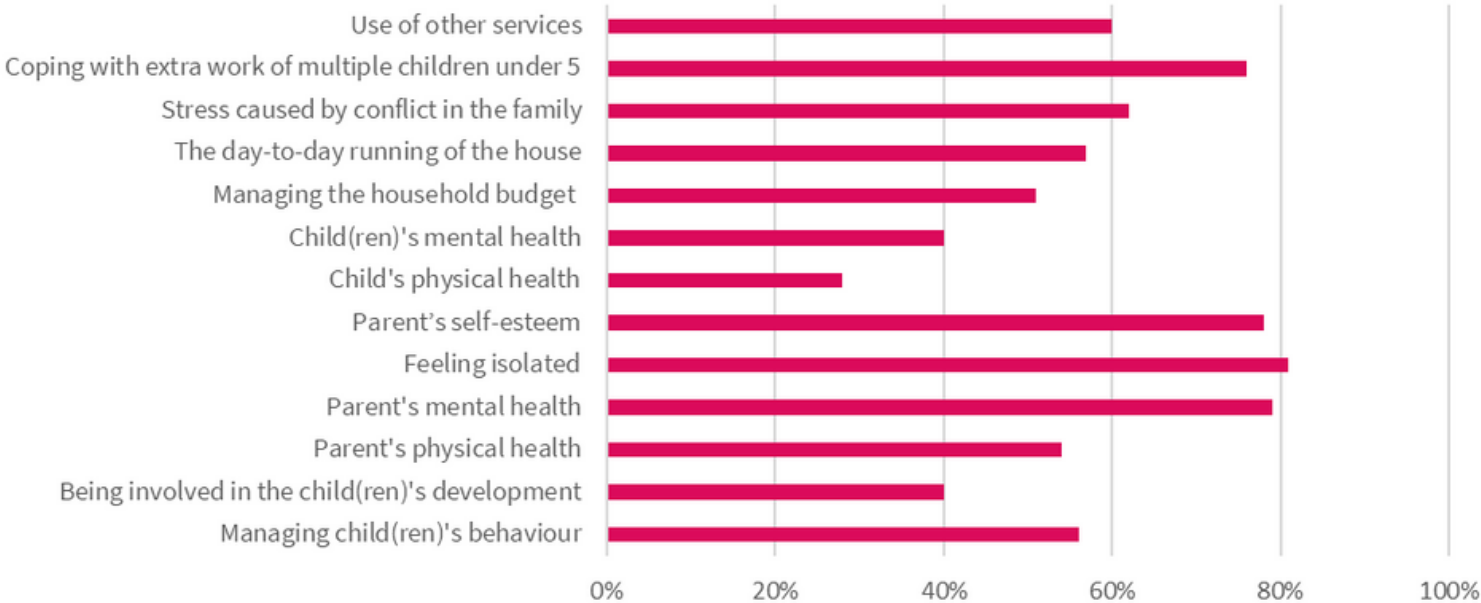
*“I now know what it means when you hear the saying, 'It takes a village to raise a child.' I really felt that from all of the team at Home-Start Wandsworth.”*

## Issues facing families

We measure the impact of our work for every family we support. Families are evaluated on a coping scale from 1-5 (1 being the lowest level of coping and 5 being the highest) at three stages (initial visit, review visit and at the end of Home-Start support).

The chart below highlights the issues that families are experiencing at the time of referral to Home-Start Wandsworth. It shows that families are struggling with **isolation** (81%), **poor mental health** (79%) and **low self-esteem** (78%). Being a parent has never been easy, but the pandemic and current cost of living crisis have turned families' lives upside down, creating added anxiety and increased financial pressure.

### Percentage of families with low coping scores (1-3) at initial visit



Data: 1 July 2022- 30 June 2023



## Rachel's story

***“Home-Start lifted me up, I’d be so low without them. Home-Start has helped me to find happiness, and to show happiness to my son and daughter. I didn’t have a good childhood, and because of my struggles my son’s childhood was marked by moving from hostel to hostel. I want my daughter’s childhood to be different, and I want to see my son build a bright future. We have been through a lot together, but now I believe life will get better.”***

*“My childhood was tough, but as difficult as it was, nothing could have prepared me for the heartbreak I’d feel as a parent, when my eldest son died in a terrible accident. My grief overwhelmed me. I felt so alone and I didn’t see any possible way to heal.*

*I couldn’t believe it when I became pregnant with my daughter at 45. In many ways her birth was like a new chapter, and I felt so lucky to have her, but my depression and anxiety returned. My GP referred me to Home-Start.*

*Sarah from Home-Start Wandsworth came to my flat and matched me with a volunteer, Petra. Petra walked through my front door and I trusted her straight away. When I talked to Petra I knew she was listening to everything I was saying. Her entire focus was on me – and that made me feel like I was worth something.*

*I live in an upstairs flat, so it’s hard to get out with my daughter and her pram. But, with Petra’s help, we were able to leave the flat and spend some time outdoors, attend playgroups and meet other mums.*

*It’s hard to describe how much Petra has supported me. By having someone to talk to, Petra helped me to work through my emotions. She built up my confidence and helped me see that I was a good mum and that both my daughter and son would be okay.”*



# Our impact

The chart below shows the improvement in coping scores between the initial and last visit. The issues that saw the biggest improvement were **'use of services'**, **'isolation'** and **'children's physical health'**.

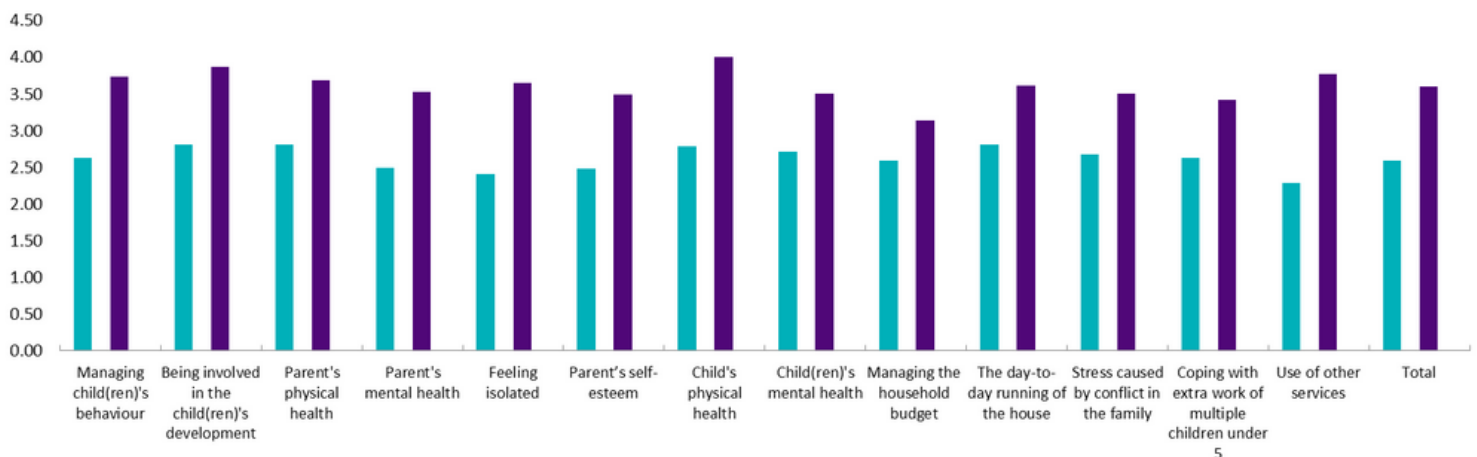
Our volunteers and experienced staff help families engage with local services and liaise with other professionals and partners to put in place support networks where needed. They work alongside families to identify the level and type of support needed to help them improve their circumstances.

A weekly programme of group activities, day trips and family fun days helps to reduce isolation and improve children's wellbeing through physical exercise.

The improved scores below show very clearly how families are benefitting from the services of Home-Start Wandsworth and where they would be without that support.

The areas with the lowest improvement scores were **'managing the household budget'** and **'child's mental health.'** These results are not surprising given that the pandemic has negatively affected children's mental health across the general population. The cost of living crisis has made managing household budgets especially challenging, with families struggling to put food on the table, pay utility bills and buy essential items like nappies. A survey carried out by Home-Start London<sup>1</sup> showed that 62% of families are cutting down on food and 23% said that their children were not getting enough nutritious food. We are seeing first-hand more and more families relying on charitable donations and food banks.

## Average coping scores before and after Home-Start support



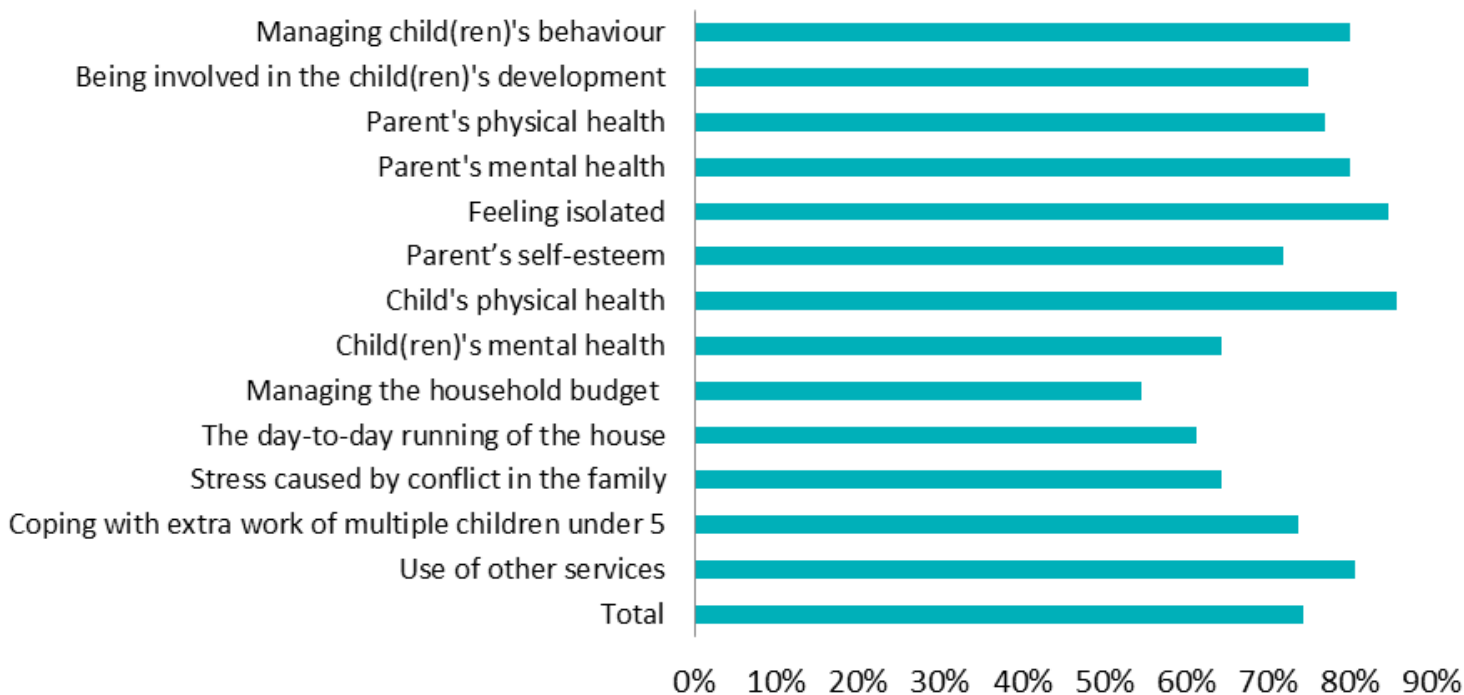
Data: 1 July 2022- 30 June 2023

<sup>1</sup>Home-Start London Cost of living survey October 2022



*“My Home-Start volunteer is the best thing in my week. She’s a consistent anchor, who is always objective. Her support is amazing.”*

## Percentage of families with improved scores after Home-Start support



**85%**  
of families feel less  
isolated

**4 in 5**  
parents see  
improvements  
in their mental health

**3 out of 4**  
families feel more  
involved in their child's  
development



## We support

Being a parent has never been easy and all parents struggle at one time or another. That is why Home-Start Wandsworth's network of trained volunteers and experienced staff team are here to support families through their most difficult times.

By providing practical and emotional support, our volunteers help parents build vital connections with their children and encourage a supportive, nurturing home environment in which children can thrive.

Our volunteers offer no judgement, just compassionate, confidential help and support tailored to the individual needs of the family.

Parents tell us that the amount of time and understanding they get from Home-Start Wandsworth, sets us apart from other organisations.

*“Home-Start has been an invaluable part of the care of our service users, playing an integral role in our support plans. The presence of dedicated volunteers, both individually and in group settings, has made a significant difference in the lives of our patients. The women we work with express a deep appreciation for the support they receive from Home-Start volunteers, as it validates their experiences and provides them with much-needed companionship. They particularly value the flexibility of Home-Start's approach, which allows for tailored support to meet each woman's unique needs.*

*Additionally, Home-Start's group activities have been highly regarded among our perinatal mental health service users. The women feel truly listened to and heard, creating a safe and supportive environment for sharing their journeys. This sense of validation and understanding has been instrumental in promoting their wellbeing and fostering a sense of empowerment.”*

Dr Heba Mohammed, Perinatal Psychiatry  
Consultant, South West London and St George's  
Mental Health NHS Trust







*“Having my volunteer gave me the space to be a more engaged mum.”*

## Tatiana’s story

"My second son, Khamani was born during the pandemic. He was an exceptionally clingy baby and I think I knew deep down that something wasn't quite right. When he was 7 months old Khamani was diagnosed with a rare eye disorder, and we were told that he had already lost 80 percent of his sight. Suddenly we were thrust into a world of medical appointments. Khamani had two operations back-to-back to save the remaining 20 percent of his vision.

Khamani’s disability makes life harder to manage and affects all of us. Getting out with the kids, keeping on top of the housework, managing Khamani’s appointments, cooking meals or spending time with my older son Micai, 6, when Khamani refuses to be put down is tough. Most of the time Micai would go to our bedroom where he’d sit on his tablet for hours as all my focus was on Khamani. I felt so guilty.

My relationship with the boys' father broke down and I was left on my own, struggling to cope. I didn't want to burden friends and family, so I put on a mask, pretending to the outside world that I was coping when in fact I was desperately lonely, isolated and crippled with anxiety. We were referred to Home-Start Wandsworth, and I was matched with a Home-Start volunteer, Cynthia, who immediately put me at ease.

Cynthia is a rainbow in our life. With her help, we are able to leave the flat and go to the park, and even go on family day trips. When Cynthia visits, I have time to catch up on household chores and I can play a game or read with Micai while Cynthia plays with Khamani. For the first time, I can spend quality time with Micai knowing that Khamani is happy playing with Cynthia; she has built a brilliant bond with him.

We are so lucky to have Cynthia in our life. The difference she makes to my family is huge. I can be having a bad week and then I’ll think Cynthia will be here on Wednesday and my anxiety goes down. She takes the pressure off and that makes me a more engaged and happy mum. The boys now have a mum who feels more confident and independent, less stressed and anxious.

I wouldn't be where I am today without Home-Start. By the time they got involved I’d lost all confidence in myself. I was struggling with Khamani’s disability and I was still coming to terms with being a single parent. I was feeling very low. When I look back I can’t believe how far I’ve come. I no longer feel guilty the children are missing out because they now have everything they need and more."



## We connect

In this digital age, the need for real human connection has never been more important. Having a strong support system with close relationships with those around us is key to maintaining a positive state of mental wellbeing.

Home-Start helps families to build confidence and self-esteem as well as signposting to specialist support services where necessary. 81% of families feel more confident using other services following Home-Start support. Families are significantly better off when engaging with their community or local support networks.

Our weekly programme of group activities and day trips helps to reduce isolation by bringing families together and building social and community links. Parents feel more confident and better able to cope after attending the warm and welcoming group sessions. Weekly Connect sessions at Home Community Café create a real sense of community and belonging. Parenting workshops, designed to help parents navigate the early years with confidence, provide a safe and supportive environment for learning, and relaxed conversation.

These strengthened social support networks are instrumental in promoting positive mental and physical wellbeing.

**Diagnosed with post-natal depression, Alloy was referred to Home-Start Wandsworth following the birth of her third baby. She was matched with Home-Start volunteer Sarah, a mum of five and a retired nurse. The two soon became firm friends and Alloy credits Sarah with helping her to regain her confidence and connection to the world outside.**

*“Last year was wonderful in that I had my baby, but it also became one of the darkest times in my life. After giving birth to my third child I was feeling low and I withdrew from everyone and everything. It was a time for me to be happy, but for some reason every thought was negative.*

*For months I was in a very dark place and felt so isolated. Despite being a nurse, I initially failed to pick up on the signs straight away as I thought I was having the baby blues. I felt so lonely and that the whole world was against me.*

*I was prescribed medications, had cognitive behavioural therapy, but the thing that made the biggest difference was the support and friendship of Sarah.*

*Whether I felt like crying or ranting she was there. Just having her there made me feel connected, and encouraged me to be positive. As for the children, they absolutely love Sarah and really look forward to her visits.”*

*“The work of Home-Start's volunteers is very special, and they make an extraordinary difference to the lives of some of the most vulnerable families in our community. That's why we are proud supporters, especially now when the need is greatest.”*

Florence Brocklesby, Founder, Bellevue Law



## Thank you for your support

We feel incredibly lucky to have the generous support of so many funders, donors, partners and supporters. Thank you to our event sponsors, **Savills**, **Bellevue Law** and **Metis Wealth**, who make our Quiz Night and Carol Service the success that they are.

We would also like to thank the Wandsworth community, whose kindness continues to overwhelm and inspire us. Without the extraordinary generosity of individuals, families, churches, schools and businesses we simply would not be able to help families today and in the future.

In particular we would like to thank:

**Ascension Church Balham**  
**Bags of Taste**  
**Battersea Arts Centre**  
**Bellevue Law**  
**BT**  
**Crew Energy**  
**Daisy First Aid**  
**Dr Niki Salt**  
**Enable**  
**Garfield Weston Foundation**  
**Give it Away**  
**Henry Smith**  
**Home Community Café**  
**John Lewis & Partners**  
**Learn to Love to Read**

**Julius Rutherford**  
**Kew Gardens**  
**Metis Wealth**  
**National Lottery Community Fund**  
**Open Air Fit**  
**Papa Johns London**  
**Pears Foundation**  
**Rotary Club Battersea Park**  
**Savills**  
**St Anne's Church Wandsworth**  
**St Luke's Church Battersea**  
**The Miles Trust**  
**Victoria Convalescent Trust**  
**Wimbledon Foundation**  
**White Stuff**

Thanks to the generosity of our corporate partners, **White Stuff**, **BT** and **John Lewis**, Christmas was an especially magical time of year for Home-Start families.

*"Our Christmas dinner was going to be whatever we could get from a food bank. But the thing that was stressing me out most was how to explain to my daughter why Santa missed our home. Money is so tight at the moment I couldn't figure out how to get her, or my son, a small gift to open. Thank you Home-Start."*

We would also like to thank our partner **Enable** for continuously supporting our day trips and family events.



We would like to thank our network of 65 volunteers for everything that they do for Home-Start and the countless hours of their time they give to supporting families.

Our volunteers are at the heart of Home-Start. The work that we do would simply not be possible without their continued commitment, knowledge and expertise.

We are also grateful to our staff team and Board of Trustees who work tirelessly to support families, preventing them from reaching crisis point.

# CAN YOU HELP?

If this report has inspired you there are several ways you can support our vital work.

- Make a donation **online** or scan the **QR code**
- Become a **regular giver**
- **Volunteer**
- Follow us on social media



## GET IN TOUCH

To find out more about the work that we do, fundraising, volunteering or partnering with us, please get in touch.

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