



**Because tomorrow
starts today**

Impact report 2024-2025

**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 parent/caregiver for a positive, nurturing start in life, and families have resilience and hope for the future.

Our services

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 for families to come together in a safe and welcoming environment. The activities help reduce isolation, boost social confidence and strengthen the ability to cope with family pressures. Day trips give children experiences they wouldn't otherwise have and topic-focused workshops give parents the chance to build their skills and knowledge.

“The main difference Home-Start made to our lives was making us feel connected and part of the community. Often in our circumstances you can feel like you are living on the edge of society unseen, but everyone at Home-Start made us feel seen and heard.”

Introduction

At Home-Start Wandsworth, we understand the power of community and that by coming together to support the most vulnerable children in our society, we can create a brighter, better future for everyone.

We work with local families with children, from pregnancy up to the age of five, who may be struggling with poor mental or physical health, isolation, financial hardship and post-natal depression. These families lack the crucial support networks that many of us take for granted and are often on the verge of crisis. We seek to build on parent's strengths, empowering them to stand on their own two feet, giving them the confidence and resources to tackle their challenges. Trained volunteers offer a listening ear and a helping hand, and our group activities create a sense of belonging helping families feel less isolated and more connected to their community.

Today, families in Wandsworth face more pressures than ever. Wandsworth has one of the highest rates of mental illness in the UK and is seeing a rise in poverty with 1 in 4 children living below the poverty line*. This means that thousands of children in our local community are going hungry and are without a warm home or everyday essentials.

Early childhood fundamentally shapes our whole lives and it is during these critical years that children need nurturing care from their parents, and a safe and happy environment, to thrive. If children experience severe adversity during their early years, there is an increased risk of physical and mental health problems, behavioural issues, and poor social outcomes later in life. Our staff and trained volunteers provide practical and emotional support to parents, preventing them from slipping into crisis and ensuring that they are more attuned and involved in their child's development. The bond and attachment between children and their parents is especially powerful in laying the foundations for future learning, health, behaviour and relationships.

They say it takes a village to raise a child but today the village which was once a staple in our community has all but disintegrated. We strive to rebuild the 'village', offering support and resources to help parents navigate the challenges of raising young children, ensuring that more children have the best possible start in life.

"The support I received from my volunteer has been extremely valuable. She showed an interest in us, when even my own family didn't. When my confidence was lacking, she always sought to reassure me. I now know what it means when you say, 'It takes a village' to raise a child."

*Trust for London <https://trustforlondon.org.uk/data/boroughs/wandsworth-poverty-and-inequality-indicators/>



giving **202**
children a brighter
future



118
families supported



137
group activities



28
bump to baby
families



86
trained volunteers



166
new referrals





Jake's story*

“My volunteer, James, has helped me and my son a lot over the six months. We would go to the park, have picnics and James would let me talk about how I felt. He really helped my confidence as a dad grow, and I think just having James around took the pressure off me. My son and I have grown together step by step and I will always be grateful for the help Home-Start has given me and my son.”

Overnight, Jake's world was turned upside down when he became a single parent to his son, Peter. Peter had been placed in the care of his father by social services. Forced to give up work to care for Peter and move into temporary accommodation, Jake felt completely overwhelmed and isolated.

The trauma of his early childhood was causing Peter to exhibit challenging behaviour and emotion dysregulation which made caring for him exceptionally difficult. Jake was at rock bottom when he was referred to Home-Start Wandsworth, he was desperate to help his son but did not know how best to support him. Keeping on top of paperwork and advocating for his son was also made more difficult by Jake's own learning difficulties.

Jake was matched with James, a Home-Start volunteer. He was a listening ear, providing much needed emotional support and reassurance. James was instrumental in helping Jake keep on top of things, supporting him with family court proceedings and domestic tasks like meal planning and cooking. He would also accompany the family on trips to the park, often being an extra pair of hands and support during one of Peter's emotional meltdowns.

Over the course of six months, the transformation in Peter has been remarkable. He has formed a strong bond with James, learning to trust him and other adults within the wider support team. Now that he is in a loving, secure home environment, he is able to communicate his needs more clearly and the meltdowns are less frequent. Peter loves going to the park and his social skills have improved enabling him to play alongside others and form new friendships.

Jake's mental health and confidence in his parenting ability has also improved. He is now enjoying parenthood rather than just surviving it. His overall outlook is much more positive and he is more attuned to Peter's needs and being the best advocate for him. With renewed confidence and sense of worth Jake is looking forward to returning to work when Peter starts school in September.

*Names have been changed

Families need support



71% need practical and emotional support

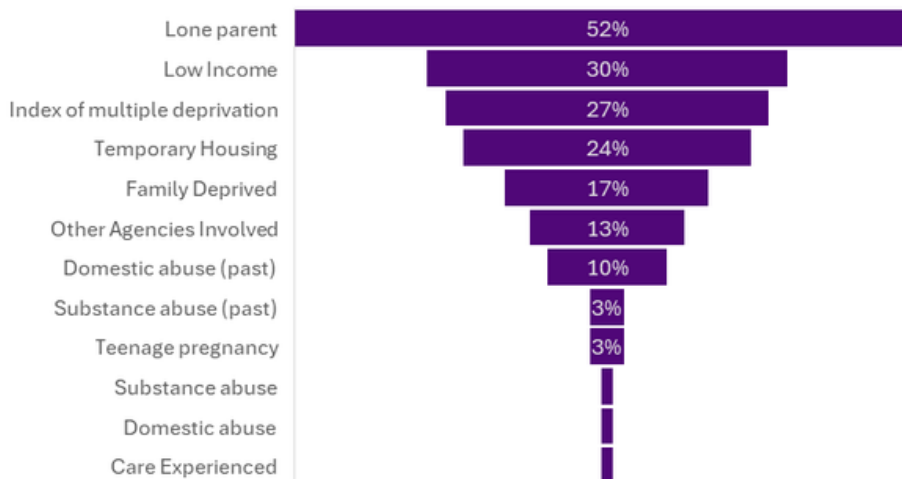


58% need support with housing

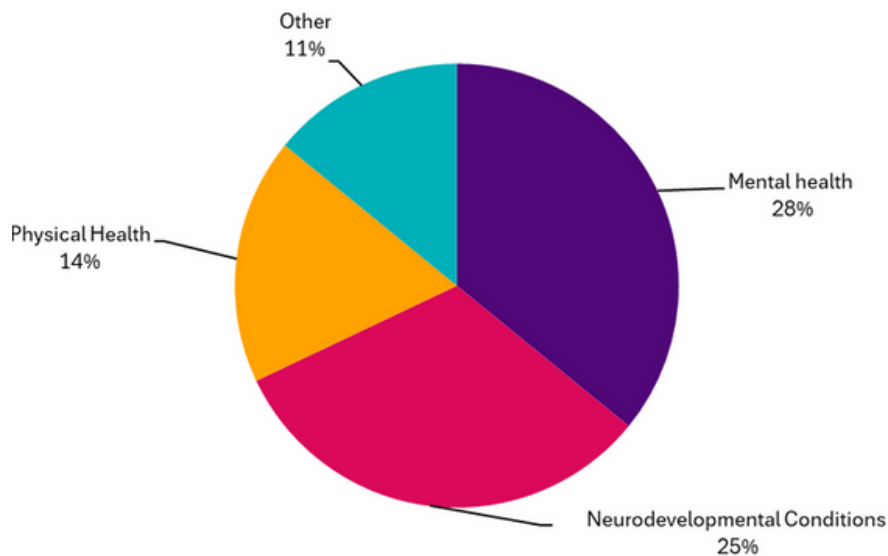


46% need support with their mental health

Family circumstances



Disability and health



*Survey sent to families February-April 2025

*Data 1 July 2024-30 June 2025



“Home-Start has been a place of respite for me, among people who get the physical and mental struggles of motherhood, especially when facing what feels like overwhelming other worries. They have created so many happy moments for my children and have been a safe space that has kept me from spiralling as I try to take back control of my life, find myself again, and look to the future.”



Parents feel overwhelmed, anxious and isolated



Being a parent has never been easy but for parents facing disadvantage, it can be particularly difficult. Research conducted in partnership with Home-Start London**, presents a stark picture of the financial and emotional strain that families living in Wandsworth are under. For single parent households and families with a disability the pressures are even greater. Families are feeling overwhelmed, anxious and concerned about their family's future.

- **65% of families feel overwhelmed**
- **60% of families feel anxious**
- **67% of families feel isolated**
- **Families are most worried about housing (60%), their mental health (50%) and their child's health and development (50%)**

"As a new mother with previous mental health issues and with no family support nearby, I often felt overwhelmed and isolated. Home-Start was there for me and they made me feel seen, understood and less alone. The support was crucial for my mental health, helping me build confidence as a parent and find joy in the little moments."

Money worries are making parenting harder

Making ends meet is a constant source of stress and anxiety for Home-Start Wandsworth families, with many having to make difficult choices like skipping meals or cutting back on children's activities. Single parents often face even greater financial pressure.

46% of Home-Start families are reliant on food banks, 42% are cutting back on heating and 38% are visiting families less.

Financial insecurity can further exacerbate mental illness, compounding emotional stress and isolation.

We aim to build resilience so parents are better equipped to deal with their financial challenges, signposting them to specialist support services such as the Citizens Advice Bureau, housing, food and baby banks.

79%
of parents agree
money worries are
making parenting
harder



“Attending group events has been a lifeline to me. I look forward to the social contact and supportive environment. The diverse range of events have exposed the children and I to activities that I would not have had the opportunity or courage to try alone.”



“Home-Start Wandsworth has been my rock, keeping me going through the tough times. The support was unparalleled. The entire team is just incredible, and their dedication is what makes Home-Start such an amazing service. They truly caught me before I could fall.”

Home-Start's support makes a difference



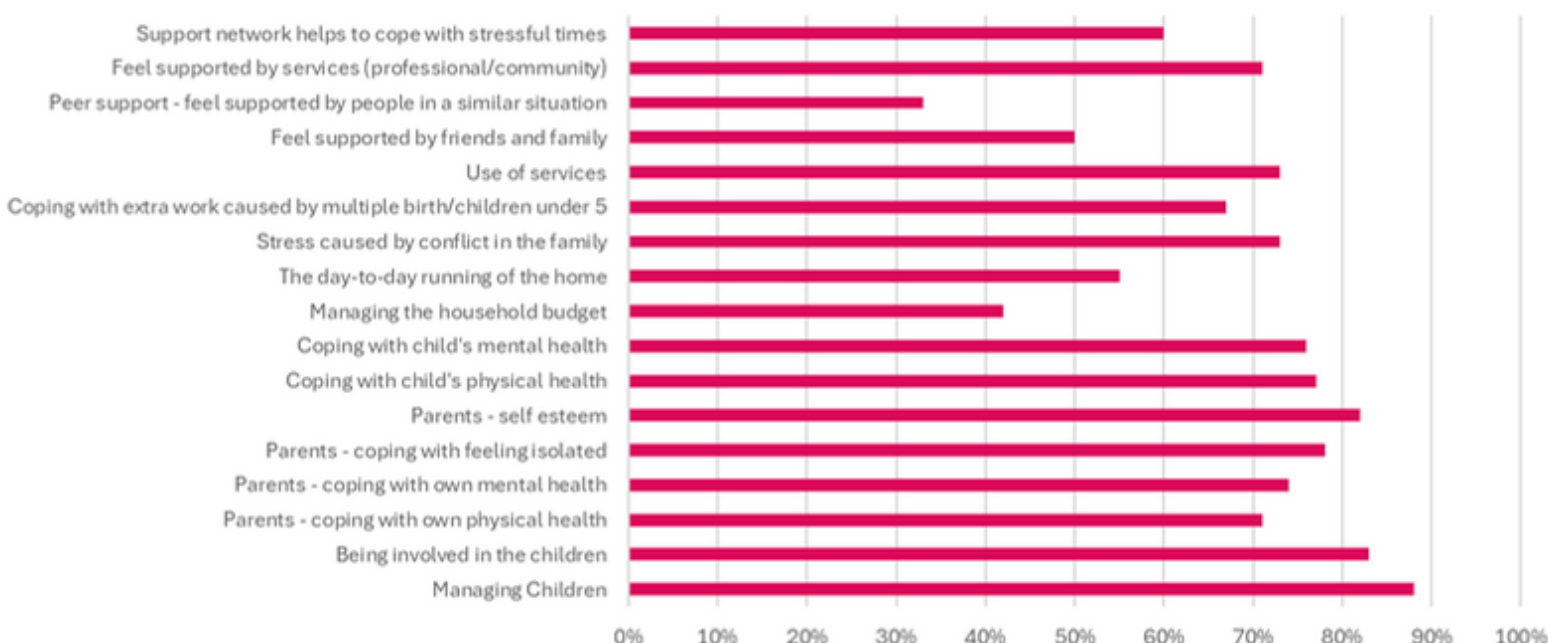
78%
families felt less
isolated

We measure the impact of our work for by evaluating families on a coping scale from 1-5 (1 being the lowest level of coping and 5 being the highest) at different stages of Home-Start support. The chart below shows the improvement in coping scores between initial and subsequent visits.

It is clear that Home-Start's support in the home and group activities makes a big difference to families. The outcomes that saw the biggest improvement were **managing their children (88%)**, **being involved in their children's development (83%)** and **improved self-esteem (82%)**.

Our tailored support aims to build self-esteem and help families engage with local services. Home-Start staff and volunteers liaise with other health care professionals and partners to put in place support networks to help families improve their circumstances. Families feel better supported as a result (71%) and are more likely to utilise other services (73%).

Percentage of families with improved scores after Home-Start support



Because childhood can't wait

The chart below shows the improvement in children's coping scores following Home-Start support. The outcomes that saw the biggest improvement were **opportunities to play with other children (79%)**, **improved opportunities to play outside (68%)** and **improved child's physical development (67%)**.

The crucial role of play in children's daily lives has become widely recognised. Play in early childhood has been shown to influence the way a child's brain develops.

The way in which parents play with their young children has also been shown to have an effect on their behaviour. Active play in early childhood helps build strong bones, muscle strength and lung capacity, helping them develop improved physical skills.

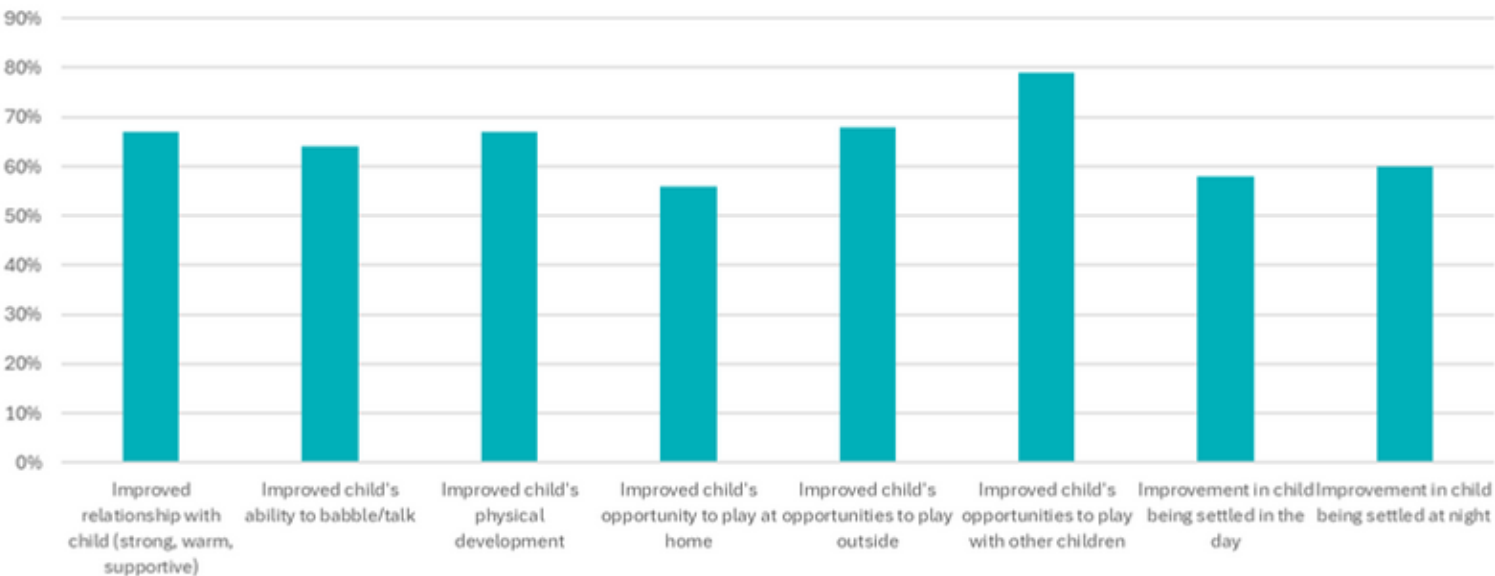
Our weekly stay and play sessions provide a structured environment for children to interact, learn to share, take turns, and develop problem-solving skills. Through play, children also build confidence, resilience, and learn valuable social skills like empathy and cooperation.



79%
of children had more
opportunity to play
with other children

Family fun days in partnership with Open Air Fit, day trips to Kew Gardens and weekly gardening sessions, provide children with the opportunity to run, climb, and explore new environments, which is vital for children's physical and mental health.

Percentage of children with improved scores after Home-Start support



*Data based on 25 families 1 July 2024-30 June 2025

Our volunteers

The number of families we've helped is thanks to the tireless passion, dedication and commitment of our volunteers. The work we do simply wouldn't be possible without their experience, knowledge and skills, they are the bedrock of Home-Start Wandsworth.

This year we have run two Volunteer Preparation training courses, recruiting **27 new** volunteers which brings our volunteer cohort to **86**.

We hear time and time again that Home-Start volunteers are quite literally lifelines, offering compassion and empathy, getting families through some of their most difficult times.



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



Over 7,330
home-visiting hours



Over 500
hours at groups

Mayor's charity

We were absolutely delighted to have been chosen as one of the Mayoral charities of the Year.

Thank you to Sana and her team for their support and outstanding fundraising efforts.

"Home-Start Wandsworth is a charity I'm really proud to support; their fantastic and vital work with vulnerable families in Wandsworth, through tailored services including one to one home visiting and group activities, makes a lasting difference and ensures all babies and children are given the best possible chance to thrive."

- Mayor of Wandsworth, Cllr Sana Jafri



Our community partners

We are incredibly grateful to have the generous support of our funders, donors and corporate partners who enable us to continue our vital work in the local community. Whether it be sponsoring one of our fundraising events, donating raffle and auction prizes, fundraising for us, volunteering or donating much needed funds, our partners help to improve the lives of families living in Wandsworth and give more children the chance of a brighter future.

We're also hugely thankful to our corporate volunteers who give up their valuable time to support our families.

- Ethos Farm at Battersea Power Station for volunteering at our family Christmas party.
- Gate One for hosting a family day out at the local zoo.
- Rampton Baseley for hosting a fundraising day for us, raising over £16,000.
- Savills for serving refreshments during our Carol Service.
- Enable for providing entertainment and games at our annual summer picnic.
- Naval Mair for providing osteopathy services to our families.
- Finton House School for hosting our weekly gardening club at Trinity Fields gardens.

"The team at Rampton Baseley got so much out of this enriching exercise, we will most certainly be partnering up again and we hope that this year was the beginning of a long-standing symbiotic collaboration. I would like to thank everybody at Home-Start for their passionate and meaningful contribution to this unbelievably effective grassroots charity."

- Joel Baseley Company Director



A special thank you to: Ascension Church - Battersea Arts Centre - Belleville Wix School - Bellevue Law - Cadent - Chalkboard - Chocolate Films - City Bridge Foundation - Enable - Ethos Farm - Finton House School - Garfield Weston Foundation - Gate One - GC Gibson Charitable - Give it Away Ltd - Henry Smith Foundation - Home Community Café - John Lewis Partnership - Killik & Co - Learn to Love to Read - Macquarie - Mayor of Wandsworth - National Lottery Community Fund - Open Air Fit - Prospect House School - Rampton Baseley - Savills - St Anne's Church - St Barnabas' Church - St Luke's Church Battersea - Studio V&C - The Childhood Trust - The Miles Trust - Victoria Convalescent Trust - Wandsworth GP Federation - Wimbledon Foundation



Partner with us today because childhood can't wait

To find out more about partnering with us, please get in touch:

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