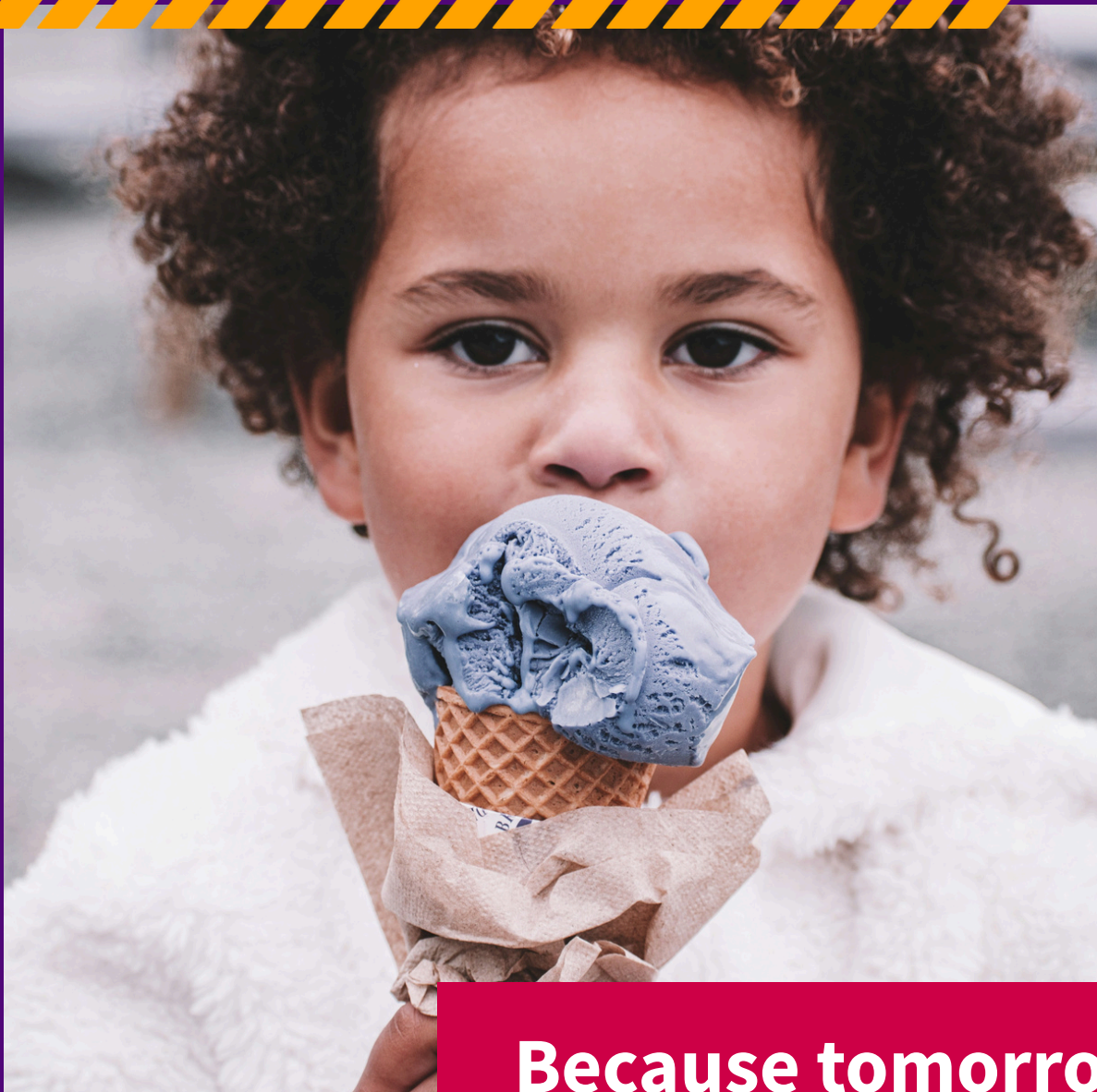




**Because tomorrow
starts today**

Impact report 2025-2026

**HOME
START**
Wandsworth



Making the early years count

The early years of a child's life are the most critical in shaping brain development and laying the foundations for learning, behaviour and long-term health. Research consistently shows that support during this stage leads to significantly better outcomes in education, wellbeing and future life chances, while also building resilience to cope with adversity.

At Home-Start Wandsworth, we recognise the importance of this vital period. We work to bring comfort, hope and essential support to families with children under the age of five, facing incredibly difficult circumstances. We empower parents with the encouragement to keep going when they feel they have nothing left and provide strength and reassurance to families on the brink of crisis to ensure children have the opportunity for a brighter and happier future.

This report highlights the lasting difference that Home-Start Wandsworth makes in the lives of children and families, ensuring that every child's early years are filled with the opportunities they deserve.

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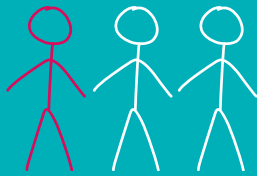
For my son, Home-Start Groups have supported his development by giving him opportunities to observe others, practise social skills and learn new things. Activities like sitting in a high chair, self-feeding and being around other children have helped build his confidence, and he really enjoys watching and engaging with what's going on around him.

Our mission: We work with families to create an environment where young children can thrive

Families Under Pressure

Today, families are facing increasing challenges, and the number of people in need of support continues to grow. 1 in 3 families in Wandsworth are living in poverty. 66% of Home-Start Wandsworth families are being negatively affected by their housing situation: living in damp, poorly ventilated and cold homes with many families concerned about their child's safety and health as a result. Nearly half (41%) of Home-Start Wandsworth families are reliant on food and clothing banks to meet basic needs, one third of families are going without heating or electricity and 14% are rationing nappies and formula*.

However, it is not just economic stressors that take their toll, parenting is intrinsically stressful and many parents are isolated from the support of friends or family that is so vitally needed to raise children.



**1 in 3
children live in poverty**



**66% of families impacted
by housing**



**Nearly half of families are
reliant on food banks**



**Our vision: A community
where every child has the best
start in life and is supported to
reach their full potential**



Referral reason:



35% of families were isolated



33% of families needed emotional support



32% of families were struggling with their mental health

Data 01 July 2025 - 30 June 2026

Our services

Our services provide tailored, whole-family support, recognising that every family's circumstances and needs are unique.

Home-visiting: Families receive weekly, one-to-one support from a carefully matched, trained volunteer. Working alongside families in their own homes, our volunteers offer a listening ear, practical help and encouragement, empowering parents to build confidence and make positive changes for their families.

Bump to Baby: Offering weekly, one-to-one volunteer support in the home during pregnancy and the early newborn stage. Volunteers receive specialist training in perinatal mental health, bonding and attachment, helping parents navigate this important transition and build strong foundations for family life.

Groups: Our weekly groups — including lunch clubs, stay-and-play sessions and walk-and-talks — give families opportunities to connect, share experiences and relax in a safe, welcoming environment. These sessions help reduce isolation and foster a sense of community. We also organise day trips and workshops on topics such as first aid and early literacy, helping parents develop their skills and confidence. Visits to Kew Gardens and the seaside enrich children's development by introducing them to new environments, activities and learning experiences.



83
trained volunteers



140
group activities

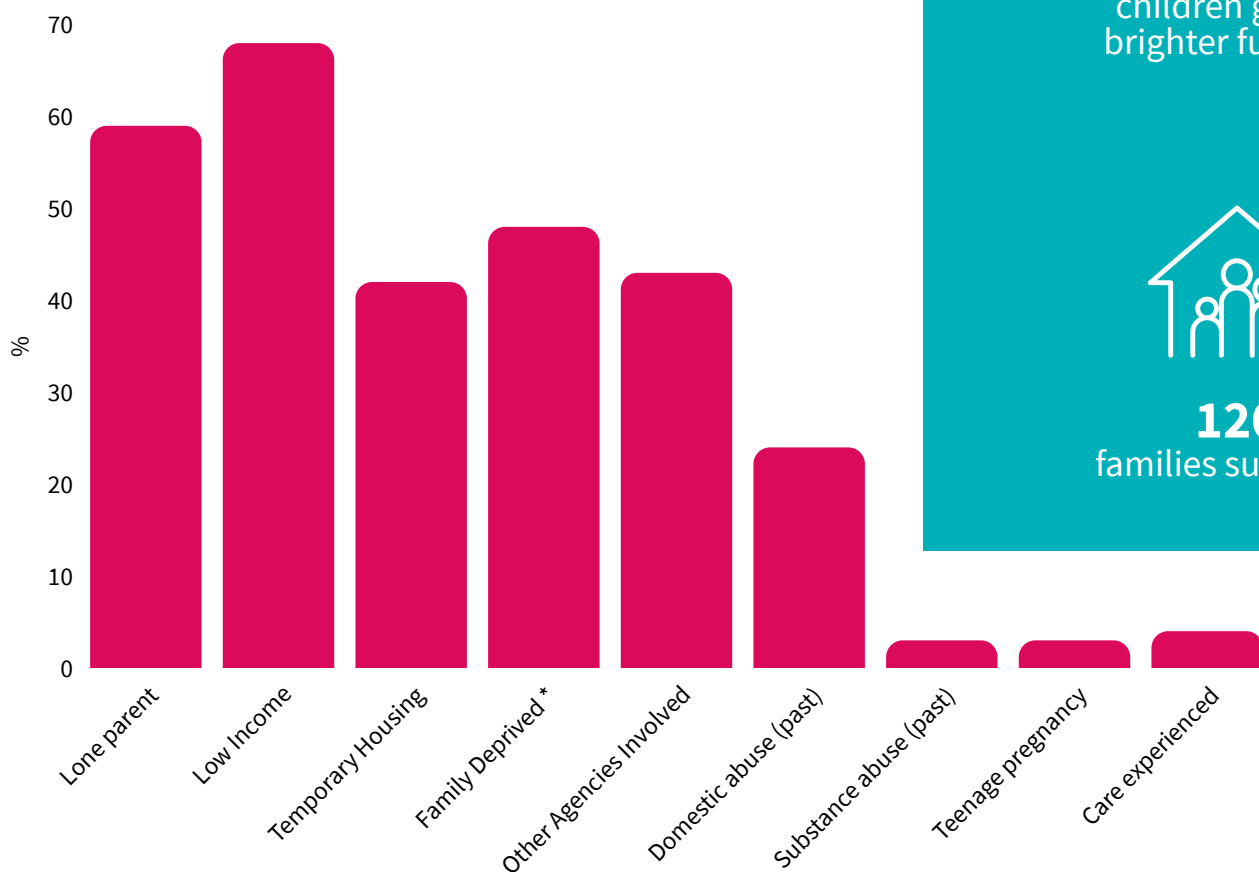


201
children given
brighter futures



120
families supported

The chart highlights the families' circumstances at the time of referral



*Family deprivation definition based on families experiencing one or more of the following: low income, temporary housing, refugee, emergency housing, living with family/friend and no recourse to public funds.

Data 1 July 2025 - 30 June 2026



My volunteer gave my children the trust that they needed to open up to the wider world. They only knew doctors who carried out painful tests, and for them getting to know someone that can provide playfulness, consistency, care and attention to them has made today's progress possible. For me as a mum, my volunteer has been a huge support. Having someone to talk to, someone who is there because they want to be. There are good people out there, people with hearts bigger than the sun and who can show you that there is a light at the end of the tunnel. She helped me start building the little steps that we have taken to get to where we are now.

Gabrielle's story

From the very beginning, life for Gabrielle and her twin boys, Freddie and James, was challenging. With complex medical and developmental needs, the boys spent much of their first year in hospital or attending relentless medical appointments. The boys' severe separation anxiety made even brief interactions with unfamiliar people overwhelming. With no support network, Gabrielle was left to cope alone - exhausted, anxious, isolated and coping with her own health issues.

The family was referred to Home-Start Wandsworth, where a careful and sensitive introduction was made between Gabrielle, the boys, and their Home-Start volunteer, Amy. From the very beginning, Amy brought a calm and steady presence into the family's life - gentle, reassuring and consistent. Over time, she became a trusted emotional anchor, building a strong and meaningful relationship with both Gabrielle and the boys.

Amy supported the family in both practical and emotional ways. She accompanied them to medical appointments, offering an extra pair of hands as well as much-needed reassurance. She also gently encouraged Gabrielle to begin taking small steps outside the home, initially attending community groups and Home-Start Stay & Play sessions.

Through Amy's calm and patient approach, the boys began to feel safer in the world around them. Gradually, their confidence grew - they became more comfortable in new environments and more open to engaging with others.

For Gabrielle, this support was transformative. For the first time, she felt less isolated, more confident and better able to cope. The boys formed a warm and trusting bond with Amy, and alongside this, their development and confidence began to flourish.

The family have recently returned from their first holiday together - something that once felt completely out of reach before Home-Start's support. Today, the family is more connected, actively engaging with local services and their community. With stronger foundations in place, they are moving forward with greater independence, resilience and hope for the future.

Names have been changed to protect the identities and privacy of the family

Build supportive, nurturing family relationships

Home-Start Wandsworth supports families to build strong, nurturing relationships while creating more opportunities for positive parent-child interaction. Shared activities such as play and reading are actively encouraged, helping to strengthen attachment, enhance children's emotional security and support early development. Weekly group sessions also provide safe, welcoming spaces where families can connect, children can play and parents can access valuable peer support.

Volunteers work alongside parents to develop essential parenting skills, helping them to understand their children's emotional and developmental needs, respond calmly to behaviour and establish clear, consistent boundaries. **77%** of parents felt more confident in their parenting skills and **78%** felt better able to support their child's learning and development* following support.

Home-Start Wandsworth's holistic approach helps families build confidence, strengthen relationships and create more stable home environments. For children, this means more consistent care, improved emotional wellbeing and stronger foundations for learning, growth and development.

*Family Voices Survey 2026



85%

of parents felt that their relationship with their child became warmer, stronger and more supportive

¹ Data 01 July 2025 - 30 June 2026

“

Attending Home-Start Wandsworth Groups has helped me feel less isolated and more supported as a parent. It has given me the opportunity to meet other parents, share experiences and build friendships. I've gained more confidence in my parenting skills and learned helpful strategies to support my child's development. The sessions provide a safe and welcoming environment where I feel listened to and understood.

Improve family resilience

Home-Start Wandsworth improves family resilience by equipping parents with the knowledge, confidence and connections needed to navigate challenges and access appropriate support. Through regular home visits, trained volunteers share practical information on topics such as child development, health, routines and managing family life. This guidance helps parents make informed decisions and feel more in control of their circumstances.

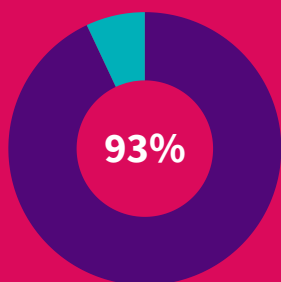
Volunteers and experienced staff also play a key role in linking families to local services, including children's centres, health services and specialist support where needed. By introducing and, where appropriate, accompanying parents to these services, Home-Start reduces barriers to access and builds parents' confidence in engaging with wider support networks.

Group activities further strengthen resilience by helping families build social connections within their community. Parents are encouraged to develop peer support networks which create a sense of belonging and reduce isolation. Over time, families become more confident in seeking help, sustaining relationships and accessing resources independently.

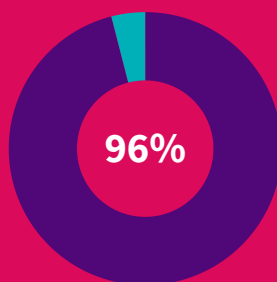
As a result, families are better connected, more informed and better able to cope with adversity. This increased resilience supports long-term stability, improves wellbeing and enables parents to provide a more secure and supportive environment for their children.

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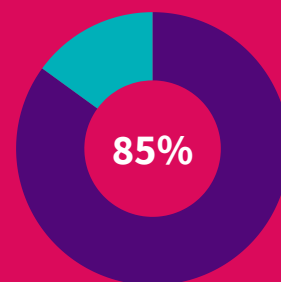
It's the village I don't have. I get very lonely and overwhelmed and the warm social contact restores me, and the practical advice and referrals are helping me regain confidence to face the future.



Parents felt more confident accessing other services



Parents felt less isolated



Parents felt better able to manage day to day running of house



Improve parental mental wellbeing

Research* highlights that children of parents with poor mental health are more likely to experience emotional, psychological and behavioural difficulties. With over two thirds of Home-Start Wandsworth parents managing issues such as postnatal depression, anxiety and isolation, this is an issue that requires targeted support.

Through home visits, group sessions and trips, parents are given opportunities to connect with others, reducing social isolation and helping them to feel less alone. The consistent support offered by trained Home-Start volunteers helps parents to recognise their strengths, build self-esteem and develop confidence.

Building resilience helps parents feel better equipped to manage the everyday challenges of family life. Volunteers provide practical guidance, emotional reassurance and support to help families establish routines that bring stability and confidence to the home. When families need additional help, we connect them with specialist services including perinatal mental health and counselling teams.

By combining emotional support, confidence-building and access to wider services, Home-Start empowers parents to manage their mental wellbeing more effectively, creating a more stable, nurturing environment in which their children can thrive.

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My volunteer was brilliant and really made me look at things from a more positive perspective. She really opened my mind and motivated me to change things for the better.



90%¹



of parents felt better equipped to deal with their mental health

91%¹



of parents felt their self-esteem had improved

¹ Data 01 July 2025 - 30 June 2026

*<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-living-with-parents-in-emotional-distress-march-2022-update/methodology-and-supporting-information-children-living-with-parents-in-emotional-distress-march-2022-update>



Promote healthy child development

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We had an amazing time at Kew Gardens and really enjoyed the Little Explorers session. The boys absolutely loved being out in nature and the opportunity to explore the gardens and learn about new things like bird nests, smelling herbs and looking for insects with their magnifying glasses.

The activities in the greenhouse were wonderful. M got stuck in straight away with the painting and we were so excited that we got to take our own plant pot and seed bombs home with us. The boys are loving watering their plants everyday and it feels like we got to bring a piece of Kew Gardens home with us.

Home-Start Wandsworth promotes healthy child development by creating opportunities for children to play, explore and socialise in a safe and supportive environment.

Through organised group sessions, play activities and family outings, children are able to interact with others, develop communication skills and build early friendships. Crafting sessions provide creative, hands-on opportunities for children to explore, express themselves and build confidence.

These group settings also provide children with opportunities to learn important social skills such as sharing, turn-taking and cooperation.

Home-Start volunteers further support parents to understand the importance of play, helping them to experience more positive, enjoyable days with their children and become more attuned to their child's needs and development. **76%*** of Home-Start parents felt better able to support their child's learning and development after support.

Through a partnership with Learn to Love to Read, families are given access to early literacy workshops to further support their children's language development and foster a love of reading from an early age.

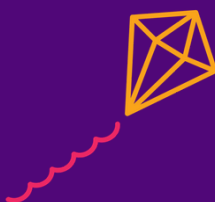
*Family Voices Survey 2026

90%



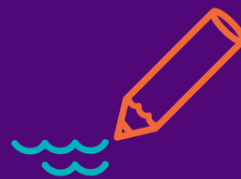
of children had more opportunities to play with other children

91%



of children had more opportunities to play outside

76%



of children showed improved communication skills

Strengthening support through collaboration

Home-Start Wandsworth works in partnership with a range of local organisations to strengthen the support available to families and maximise impact. By collaborating with specialist services, community groups and local organisations families are able to access a wider network of tailored support that meets their individual needs. We are immensely grateful to: **Learn to Love to Read, Kew Gardens, Home Community Cafe, Finton House School, Open Air Fit, Battersea Arts Centre and Wandsworth Council.**

We are incredibly lucky to have the generous support of funders, donors and corporate partners who enable us to continue our vital work in the local community and improve the lives of families living in Wandsworth. Whether it be sponsoring one of our fundraising events, donating raffle and auction prizes, volunteering on one of our family trips, fundraising or donating much needed funds.



Celebrating our volunteers - the heart of Home-Start

Our network of over 80 volunteers are at the heart of everything we do. By generously giving their time, empathy and experience, they provide vital support to families when they need it most.

Home-Start volunteers work alongside families, offering practical and emotional support through regular home visits. They listen without judgement, reduce isolation, improve parental wellbeing and create more positive home environments for children to thrive.



My volunteer makes such a difference. She's sometimes the only adult I speak to all week and she helps me feel less alone.



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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Company number: 06278007

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