



Support and friendship  
for families

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Home-Start Banbury &  
Chipping Norton

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# Annual Report

Home-Start Banbury & Chipping Norton Annual Report 2011/2012



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## About Home-Start

Across the UK more than 16,000 Home-Start volunteers visit families at home each week, supporting parents in situations as diverse as isolation, bereavement, multiple births, illness, disability or who are just finding parenting a struggle. They provide non-judgemental practical and emotional support and help build the family's confidence and ability to cope. Home-Start runs more services and has more volunteers supporting more families than any other family support charity in the UK.

### **Home-Start Banbury & Chipping Norton**

Britannia Road Children's Centre,  
Grove St, Banbury, Oxon, OX16 5DN.

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Email: [info@home-startbanbury.org.uk](mailto:info@home-startbanbury.org.uk)

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Patron: HRH Princess Alexandra, the Hon. Lady Ogilvy, KG, GCVO

Local Patron: Lady Marie Stubbs

Registered Charity No. 1114860

**Home-Start Banbury & Chipping Norton** is a voluntary home-visiting scheme in which volunteers offer confidential support, friendship and practical help to families with at least one child under five, and where there are difficulties or stress.

**Home-Start Banbury & Chipping Norton** aims to try and ensure that every family gets the help they need to give their children the best possible start in life. Home-Start supports parents as they grow in confidence, strengthen their relationships with their children and widen their links with the local community



**SureStart**

Making life better for children and families in our county

## Staff

Jane Skelton ~ Senior Organiser (from March 12)  
Christine Yarborough ~ Senior Organiser (retired March 12)  
Karen Mullins ~ Organiser  
Diane Adams ~ Organiser  
Angela Esland ~ Administrator

## Trustees

Jo Graves ~ Chair  
Douglas Keir ~ Treasurer  
Viv Bennett  
Deborah Hayter  
Janet Owen ~ Volunteer Rep  
Helen Hughes  
Ann Waters ~ Volunteer Rep

Retired this Year:  
Carol Henderson  
Annie Roy -Barker

Advisors to the Trustees:  
Karen Turnor ~ Health Visitor  
Liz Hutchings ~ Ace Centre  
Jill Phipps ~ Child Protection named Nurse, Oxon PCT

## Volunteers

Deborah Alexander ~ Pam Archdale ~ Carla Barrow ~ Mary Ellen Branch  
Kelly Babbington ~ Julie Ann Briggs ~ Liz Broughan ~ Lynne Cheetham  
Helen Craft ~ Angela Esland ~ Libby Fuller ~ Sarah Gee-Murphy  
Sue Greenaway ~ Sarah Gee-Murphy ~ Kate Gray ~ Angela Hale  
Camilla Hanbury-Williams ~ Sheila Hartwell ~ Louise Harwood ~ Kim Hawkins  
Gay Holden ~ Sheila Harris ~ Georgia Higgins ~ Polly Hume ~ Helen Hunt  
Julia Humphrey ~ Sheila Hurdwell ~ Marijke Jones ~ Rachel Knight  
Kate Mallock ~ Shabnam Malik ~ Jenny Martin ~ Jean McIver  
Eve McKenzie-Green ~ Jill Morgan-Lynch ~ Amanda Nimmo  
Janet Owen ~ Fiona Pancheri ~ Gemma Page ~ Nicola Ponsonby ~ Nikki Potter  
Katie Rowe ~ Gail Seward ~ Christine Stephenson  
Trisha Tibbetts ~ Anne Turner ~ Kylie Venn ~ Fred Volans ~ Anne Waters  
Alison Wells ~ Jo White ~ Zoe White ~ Claire Whitam  
Retired this year: Mary Tohill ~ Jayne Seville ~ Carol Cubitt ~ Amanda Cherry ~  
Jo Bucknell ~ Lindsay Piltz ~ Angie Clayton ~ Simone Withers

**CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT FOR HOME-START  
BANBURY AND CHIPPING NORTON  
FOR THE YEAR 2011-2012**

This year has been one of changes on the personnel front within the Home-Start Banbury and Chipping Norton scheme. At the end of March we said goodbye to Christine Yarborough, our very dedicated and experienced Senior Organiser of some twenty plus years, who retired. The number of people who attended her farewell party was testament to her effectiveness and popularity. The Trustees are very happy and fortunate to have appointed Jane Skelton as our new Senior Organiser. Jane brings with her a wealth of experience in the early years field and so the transition from one Senior organiser to another was almost seamless. Jane is supported in the office by Karen Mullins who is our full-time Organiser with particular responsibility for Chipping Norton and district, and, thankfully, we are pleased to be able to welcome back Diane Adams, who will be working as a part-time organiser for a year. Such are the vagaries of our reliance on charitable funding that at one point during the year we did not have enough funding to sustain this post and so we lost it. This is where the tenacity and ingenuity of our Funding Committee under the leadership of Deborah Hayter, comes into its own. We were able to secure a grant which means we are able to have the skills of Diane for a further year.

There have been changes too, on the Trustee front – a vital role within the Home-Start Banbury & Chipping Norton scheme. We said good bye to 3 Trustees after a short period with us and we are really sad to be saying goodbye to Viv Bennett, a long-serving Trustee who has given much wisdom and commitment, both as a trustee and as a volunteer. We do need to increase the number of Trustees, a role which demands skills and commitment and so it is with great pleasure that we welcome Ann Waters on to our board.

Our Volunteers really are the “face” of Home-Start and we have been able to run two preparation courses this year, both of which have been full. Judging by the recent increase in referrals, it seems that the need for good trained volunteers will be with us for a long time. We are very indebted to our Volunteers and thank them for their service.

It seems to me that Home-Start UK have grasped the nettle of advertising and there has been considerable exposure in the media of the work of Home-Start nationally. On a local level our Trustees and Volunteers have been working hard to raise the profile of Home-Start Banbury and Chipping Norton, with talks to Rotary and other organisations, features in the Banbury Guardian and fundraising events around the area – all this is important and often brings in much needed funding and donations. Another addition to our profile-raising initiative has been our facebook page and our social media involvement, skilfully managed by Angela Esland, our office administrator and Helen Hughes, a Trustee.

We are entering exciting times as the future of the building at Britannia Road looks to be changing. Home-Start Banbury and Chipping Norton would hope to be a part of any future Business Plan devised.

As a scheme we have taken on board the changes which have been implemented by Home-Start UK and we are indebted to Heather Alexandra, our previous Regional Adviser. Despite her changing role she still manages to find time to give us support and advice.

We wait with eager anticipation for the appointment of a new Chief Executive, as Kay Bews, who has undertaken the role for many years, takes retirement next year. Home-Start could be entering a new phase and at Home-Start Banbury and Chipping Norton I feel that we are able to end our year even more positively than we were at the beginning.

Finally I would like to extend my thanks to the board of trustees, especially Douglas Keir, our treasurer, who manages our budget so well. Thanks too, to the staff. I hope that the coming year will provide a period of consolidation as we take on increasing referrals and special thanks to the Volunteers for having such big and caring hearts.

*Jo Graves*

Chairman  
June 2012



## Treasurer's Report for Annual Report: 2011/12

The year started with a lot of uncertainty and a very challenging, some would say, somewhat depressing budget: a need to raise approximately £20,000 to break even, to cover the envisaged expenses if our family support work were to continue without reduction. The outcome, a small surplus, is a reflection of the generosity of many: of charitable trusts who supported us; of individuals and organisations who made donations; and of our volunteers who gave of their time not only to support fund-raising events in addition to helping families, but also, in many cases, to donate the expenses incurred in doing so.

As mentioned above, the year ended with a small surplus. Our revenue increased by £25,000 in total, from just below £70,000 to over £94,000. Service related grants from local Children's Centres reduced marginally, income from our Big Lottery grant increased by £5,000 and we received over £5,000 from a new grant from BBC Children in Need to support families in districts whose local Children's Centres were unable to fund Home-Start. Our income from charitable trusts increased by £10,000 (£7,500 to £17,500), while individual donations and the receipts from fund-raising events were up by over £4,000.

Fund-raising success does not just happen spontaneously...far from it.... and I would like to pay tribute to my colleagues on the Funding Committee led by Deborah Hayter, who so tirelessly sent out applications for funds to many grant-giving charitable trusts and other potential donors as well as organising or assisting with fund-raising events.

In line with our increased financial ability to provide support to local families, our expenses increased, in total by slightly under £12,000, to just below £94,000. The majority of the increase (over £9,000) was direct charitable expenditure, directly related to supporting families.

Accumulated funds at the year-end were £34,000, still slightly below our ideal of four-and-a-half months' expenditure plus wind-up costs, an objective which is periodically reviewed to ensure that the trade-off between holding back funds for contingencies and spending them on supporting families is still optimal for current conditions. Despite the past year having been better than expected, we will maintain our efforts to replenish our funds to meet our desired reserves position, as the funding uncertainty and the need for a buffer remain extremely high. Full details of our financial operations last year as well as the year-end position are contained in the Annual Financial Statements.

The outlook remains difficult. Much of our funding comes from local Children's Centres whose organisational structures are themselves now being discussed at county level. Even without changes, they certainly do not have any idea yet of their own future budgets, on which we in turn depend. By their nature, grants and donations from charitable trusts, local organisations and individuals are not guaranteed to be renewed and indeed the continued low interest rate environment means that grant-giving charitable trusts, from whom funding requests from service-providing charities like Home-Start are increasing, find it increasingly difficult to increase their own distributable income. We have no option but to live with the uncertainty, but it does not provide a sound platform from which to plan and budget for the future.

*Douglas Keir*

Treasurer

## A Farewell.....

I couldn't resist the urge to get a final few words into this year's Annual Report.

When you retire from an organisation after 25 years, there's an inevitable sense of bereavement to be confronted, the end of a certain pattern in your life and a blank canvass ahead of you. Well, it's thanks to everyone at Home-Start that the end for me on Friday 30<sup>th</sup> March didn't feel like bereavement but a joyous celebration. So many lovely gifts and cards, it was a splendid party; I was truly overwhelmed and will have it all as a lasting, VERY happy memory.

Little did I know back in 1987 that the rest of my working life would be with Home-Start, but how lucky can someone be! Not far short of 1400 families have passed through my hands one way or another since the service was launched from within the Children's Society project. I hope that Home-Start helped them along the way a little, indeed, on many occasions, we know that it did.....but I have been a beneficiary too.....touching other people's lives as only Home-Start does, is an enormous privilege.

I worked through 45 Volunteer Preparation Courses full of warm hearted, skilful, loving, compassionate and caring people. Many have spent years with the scheme and I am honoured to call some of them my friends. They have all enriched my life and been the backbone of Home-Start.

It is perhaps the people you see on a daily basis, your work colleagues, who know you the best, who give such a lot and make coming into the office a positive adventure every day. I shall miss Karen and Angela and Diane a great deal.....but at least they won't have to put up with me fumbling about with my mobile phone anymore or jumping out of my skin when it rings!

I must mention the Board of Trustees as well. They are volunteers too and they deserve much praise and gratitude, for without their back up and prolonged support, my story could have been completely different.

Everyone carries a level of responsibility in Home-Start, it's team work that counts, being valued and appreciated, always holding the welfare of children and families at the centre of everything.

There is one constant of which I am sure....being a parent is as demanding today as it was 25 years ago. An item on Woman's Hour recently compared the differing approaches to parenting of writers Penelope Leach and Gina Ford.....a listener called in to make a valuable point "the trouble with 'how to bring up your baby' books is that babies don't read them". The best support you can have is someone alongside you.....Home-Start.....hurrah!

*Christine Yarborough*

former Senior Organiser

## .....and a Hello

I am delighted to have been appointed as Senior Organiser for the Home Start Banbury & Chipping Norton scheme following Christine's retirement in March & this is a really good opportunity to tell you a bit about myself.

I come to Home-Start after working for 14 years for the Pre-school Learning Alliance (PLA) - another charity based on volunteering. In fact I first got involved with that charity as a volunteer when my daughter started at the local village playgroup 25 years ago!

Following a period of seven years as Supervisor of the playgroup I started my working career with the PLA. Initially I was employed as a Development Worker based in Northamptonshire visiting pre-schools and other Early Years settings to support their work with young children and families. Latterly I had the role of Area Manager overseeing Alliance projects running in several different local authorities (Warwicks, Oxon, Swindon, Solihull & Coventry). Along the way I have also had opportunities to hone my tutoring skills and have experience of delivering a range of training, something that I'm sure I will be able to put into practice with Home Start.

On the personal side, I am recently widowed, live in Charlton and have 2 children, a daughter and a son, who are both in their twenties and have now flown the nest to pursue their own careers.

Everyone (trustees, staff & volunteers) has made me feel very welcome. I look forward to working with you all and hope I can meet the high standards set by my predecessor!

*Jane Skelton*

Senior Organiser



## Organiser Report

The year has firstly been significant in celebrating the 25 Years of Home-Start in Banbury. This is a true reflection of the commitment, passion and determination of Trustees, Staff and Volunteers in striving to sustain what we know is such a unique and effective support service. This was marked by a huge celebration and saw people past and present coming together to rejoice and reflect on our organisation and its journey over the years. We have Trisha Tibbetts to thank for opening up her home for this event.

Our strong staff team of four started the year off in good stead alongside our first preparation course of the year recruiting 12 new volunteers for the scheme. This was then enhanced by another course in the autumn welcoming a further 11 new recruits.

Regular Volunteer Support Group Meetings and ongoing training sessions continue to take place, helping us to keep in touch with volunteers and provide training opportunities as well as an opportunity to get together socially.

Keeping in touch with external agencies and attending local community events is a vital part of what we do in terms of raising awareness of our service to families, professionals and other organisations. This year Home-Start attended two connecting communities' events in Banbury, one of which took place at the newly opened Banbury Hub. We had a prime location at the Chipping Norton Festival and provided an awareness session to North Oxfordshire Counselling Group.

Towards the end of this year we saw a threefold increase in referrals to the scheme. Perhaps this is an indication of the increased financial pressure of recent times on family life. Alongside this came the news that Senior Organiser Christine Yarborough was to retire at the end of March. Her wealth of experience and gentle approach will be greatly missed and her knowledge and guidance has been essential to the success of our scheme over the years.

With an end comes a new beginning and we welcome Jane Skelton with open arms to our team as well as welcoming back Diane with a grateful intake of funding to the scheme.

It is with great optimism for the future that we go into the new financial year ready and willing as always to provide vital support to vulnerable families in our local community.

*Karen Mullins*

## Volunteers Stories

I was drawn to volunteer for Home-Start because it was a local charity working with children. I was looking for a challenge and the opportunity to meet new people, whether it's the families we work with, or through the social side meeting with other volunteers. It was after Christmas 2010 that I had seen Home-Starts website whilst looking for volunteering opportunities in the Banbury area, it seemed like the ideal thing for me.

At the end of January 2011 I gave myself a kick up the backside (I was suffering from a lack of confidence) and called into the Home-Start office, there I meet Christine, she was so lovely, warm and welcoming and made me feel at ease. I told her a bit about myself, including the fact I had been suffering from depression, she said that could even be a bonus as often families they deal with have similar issues, and that I would understand them. She offered me a place on the next Preparation course. I left the office feeling great.

The preparation course was a bit nerve racking on the first day, but I think we all felt the same. We soon felt at ease because the staff at Home-Start are brilliant at their job, and some of the exercises we did soon made everyone feel more comfortable. The course was great, every time I went it made me feel more confident in my ability to do the job. I can honestly say it's one of the best things I have ever done!

I feel incredibly proud to say to people that I am a Home-Start volunteer, I have been with my family for nearly a year, it's quite a complicated family with child protection issues. I know that the family appreciate my support and I am very fond of them, watching the children grow has been a joy.

Being a volunteer can at times be difficult, but you know that you have the support of your supervisor and also the other staff and volunteers. I hope to continue being a volunteer for many years. I think Home-Start does an amazing and almost unique job, going into a family's home and becoming part of their lives, and helping them at a time of need. I think it's a vitally important role that we do and long may it continue!!

*AW*

I first heard about Home-Start four years ago at our village church. I believe the vicar at that time was one of the trustees, and the nominated charity that Christmas was Home-Start. It sounded like a brilliant scheme and just the sort of thing I might be able to contribute to.

Working with children had been my job for fifteen years whilst we had been living in Europe, and since moving back to the UK I was missing the contact with young people. I hoped that my experiences of living away from close family for twenty years and bringing up our own two children, plus working in primary schools and playgroups would help me to empathise with other families.

The volunteer Preparation Course was led by both Christine and Karen, and was a great mix of discussion, information and visits by professionals. I know that we all left at the end of the weekly sessions feeling more confident, and assured of the support we would have from everyone at the 'office'. I have to say though that the words 'role play' still make me feel nervous!

Over the last two years I have worked with three different families, all with different needs or problems, but all really appreciative of any help or support. In some cases families who are living in isolated rural areas need help to attend appointments or to get out to the shops or park with the children. Other times just having a chat and playing with the children while mum has a rest or a bath is what is needed.

One young mum developed mobility problems after having her first baby and needed practical help with everyday tasks including climbing up and down two flights of stairs with a baby and pushchair.

It is very hard to finally say goodbye to the families, but hopefully that means that your job is done, and you have gained new friends and helped them through a difficult time. It is lovely to see a mum or dad become more relaxed and confident and actually enjoying their children, and realising that you don't have to be superhuman!

*SH*



## What our families say about us.....

I'm very grateful for the help I've been given by my friendly volunteer

My volunteer has been very helpful and I have enjoyed every minute of her coming to visit me

The support I received from my volunteer and the organiser was excellent. They didn't do anything dramatic but their input has made a big difference to me and my family. I hope that I might be able to do the same for someone else in future.

My volunteer gave me friendship and support when I needed it most

The support allowed me to feel more confident and more in control of my life, which had the knock on effect of my relationship with my child

Home-Start has been fantastic, they made me feel less isolated - everyone should have a Home-Start volunteer!

My confidence was so low I had a job to get out of the house - now I'm a different person, I go out and socialise a lot more and my confidence has blossomed.

My relationship with my children has improved as I'm more patient and play with them more and follow through with discipline

It seems initially that 2-3 hours per week may not be a huge help but it really is. It became a very valued time for me and my children. That, plus the social events and trips, make you feel you are not alone. A truly valuable service.

My Home-Start volunteer was someone I could talk to very easily about things that were worrying me. She offered practical advice and was fantastic with my son.

I am extremely grateful for the support given to me by Home-Start during my first year as a mum. Many thanks for everything.

Home-Start was crucial in helping me through a time where I was exhausted. I felt they enabled me to get back on my feet and put proper structures into my home and family life

My volunteer was absolutely amazing - she gave me the time to breathe.

My volunteer was hugely helpful and had a very positive impact on myself and my son.

Home-Start has been an enormous help to us through a very difficult time. The relief it provided has improved relationships within our family. Our volunteers have very effectively targeted our needs and been very supportive emotionally.

When our volunteer came, it was like an oasis to look forward to throughout the week. It's been great to know that someone is coming for me.

The support has been wonderful. I never would have expected 2 hours a week to make so much difference.

### Feedback from Referrers:

Home-Start helped mum cope and manage better as a parent

Having a volunteer made mum much more happy and confident

Home-Start has helped A in so many ways and I know that she, and I, are very grateful for the support and friendship that was given.

I'm very grateful for all your support with this family.

Thank you for all the support you have given to mum.

S found your service extremely supportive through a very stressful period of her life. She has said the volunteer gave her the emotional support she needed at that time.

Many thanks for your support at a very difficult time for mum.



# Facts and Statistics

## Staff Hours:

Jane Skelton	30 hours per week
Karen Mullins	37 hours per week
Diane Adams	16 hours per week
Angela Esland	22.5 hours per week

Volunteers who have been available to support families this year

44

21 volunteers completed a Preparation Course

Number of referrals this year

87

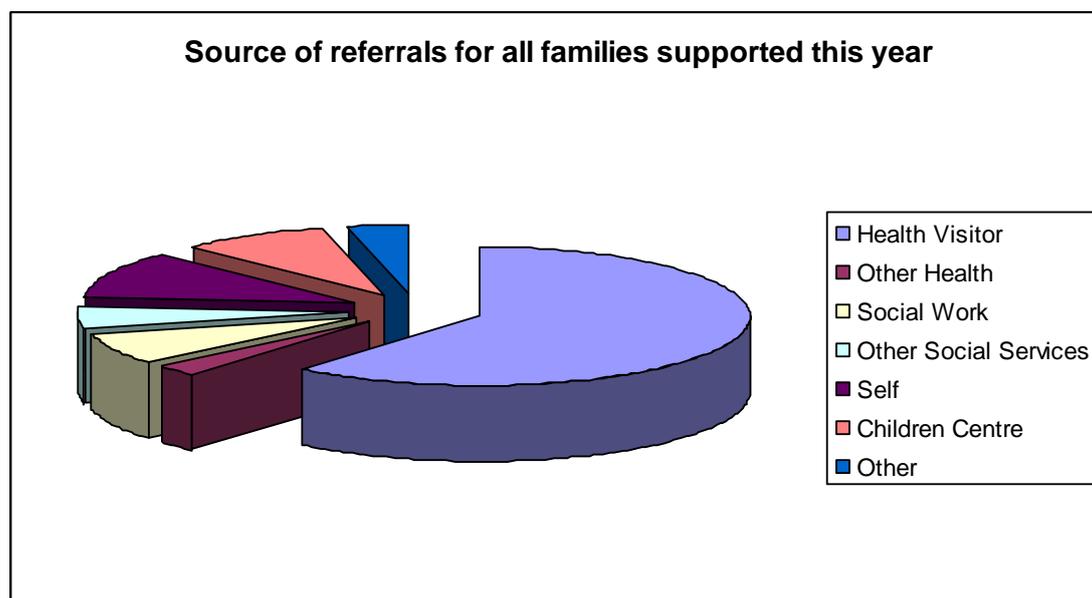
43 Families for whom support ceased

Families supported this year

80

186 children supported -

124 under 5's and 62 over 5's



# Thank You.....

We would like to thank all our Volunteers and Trustees who give so generously their time to Home-Start, and thank you to all our supporters for the various types of help they have given us this year.

Banbury Tangent  
Easyfundraising  
Inner Wheel Banbury  
Maurice Humphris  
Alice Kirk  
Childfirst Nursery  
Chenderit School  
The Heath Allotment Trust  
Katie Rowe  
Janet Owen  
The Cumber Trust  
Carol Pollard  
North Aston Singers  
St Marys Church, Cropredy  
Gillian Bronger  
PF Charitable Trust  
Banbury Charities  
Pyes Charitable Settlement  
The Singer Foundation  
Robert Waley-Cohen  
The Albert Hunt Trust  
Sanctuary Housing  
Mark Jenkins  
Nigel Banks  
Douglas Keir  
Britannia Road Children's Centre  
North Banbury Children's Centre  
Bloxham Rural Children's Centre  
The Big Lottery  
Children in Need

