



Banbury, Bicester &  
Chipping Norton

# 2024 - 2025 Annual Report



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We are a part of the Home-Start UK Federation.  
The four aims of Home-Start UK are:



#### GROWTH.

A collective ambition to reach significantly more families



#### VOICE.

Home-Start will stand alongside families to make the case for support



#### INCLUSION.

Home-Start will advance inclusion and equity in all we do



#### IMPACT.

Local Home-Starts will be stronger together

Working as part of the Home-Start movement, we adapt our local response to the needs of the Banbury, Bicester and Chipping Norton communities.

We connect with other local agencies to widen our reach, and through communications media we aim to raise our profile and extend our involvement with the wider, diverse local community. As part of the Home-Start UK family, we work closely with the Home-Start Oxfordshire consortium to ensure all families in Oxfordshire can access Home-Start support. Together we seek to build our resilience, including access to future sustainable funding.





# ABOUT US

## Our Vision

No parent should feel alone when parenting young children and should have the support they need to give their children the best possible start in life.

## Our Mission

Our mission is to provide support to families and children under the age of five across North Oxfordshire who are finding it difficult to cope with the early years of family life. We work alongside parents as they realise their strengths and worth, build solid relationships with their children and widen their links with the local community - giving families the opportunity to reach their full potential - *because childhood can't wait.*

## Our Approach

Children thrive with strong relationships, a nurturing home life and empowered parents. Our model centres on parent-powered support and self-help, tailored to each family's needs. We recruit and train volunteers to work in partnership with families to address challenges, build resilience and ultimately to cope independently. Supported families face a complex web of challenges such as mental health struggles, financial strain, relationship problems, domestic abuse, disability, illness, inadequate housing or being a refugee/asylum-seeking family.

- 1:1 home-visiting support from a matched volunteer is our core offer. A dedicated, trained volunteer visits a family in their home for 2-3 hours each week providing non-judgemental emotional support and practical help.
- Our Family Support Worker offers **specialist support** for families experiencing more complex situations.
- We run three weekly **drop-in play sessions** that local families in Banbury and Bicester can access.
- Additionally, we provide various **social events** throughout the year for supported families to enjoy including trips out, gardening sessions, picnics, our annual summer outing and our much-loved Christmas party.

This **holistic approach** enables our volunteers to connect with families. They become safe and trusted partners, empowering families to tackle obstacles that make life feel overwhelming.



## STAFF

**Louise Sansom** / Senior Manager  
**Angela Esland** / Organiser  
**Karen Mullins-Blyth** / Organiser  
**Kim Wheddon** / Senior Family Support Worker  
**Emma Ford** / Fundraiser  
**Ansa Kausar** / Stay & Play Facilitator  
**Faith Altamura** / Administrator  
**Jenny Jordan** / Volunteer bookkeeper

## TRUSTEES

**Chloe Woodhead** / Chair until Nov 2024  
**Amanjit Dhillon** / Vice Chair  
**Douglas Keir** / Treasurer  
**Josephine Graves** / Personnel  
**Anne Waters** / Health & Safety  
**Pete Welply** / Safeguarding & GDPR  
**Laura Peabody** / QA  
**John Karlake** / Policies  
**Nick Case** / Finance / Chair since Nov 2024

## RETIRED VOLUNTEERS

|          |         |
|----------|---------|
| Aggie    | Gillian |
| Kath     | Gill    |
| Patrizia | Emily   |
| Sarah P  | Tei     |
| Beth     |         |

## VOLUNTEERS

|          |           |          |           |
|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Alison   | Mary-Jane | Lorrie   | Liz       |
| Maxine   | Claire C  | Kate     | Ann       |
| Sarah B  | Denise    | Diana S  | Nerina    |
| Lynne    | Diana C   | Beryl    | Kylie     |
| Claire H | Su        | Laura    | Hayley    |
| Helen    | Emma      | Victoria | Jenny     |
| Susie    | Fodi      | Marilina | Wendy     |
| Isobel   | Sheila    | Shannon  | Katherine |
| Linda    | Tara      | Deborah  | Philippa  |
| Lorraine | Hilary    | Fiona    | Rebecca   |
|          | Jean      | Dimple   |           |
|          | Janet     | Louise   |           |
|          | Jacee     | Marigold |           |

# OUR TEAM



*“ I feel I made a friend for life; they genuinely cared about myself and daughter. Home-Start has been a life saver for me when I really needed someone to talk to and allowed me to grow in confidence to take my daughter out to groups. I am forever thankful for the help and support. ”*

**Supported parent**



# A reflection of the year from our **Chair**, Nick Case

I am pleased to report the year to March 2025 was less challenging than the previous 12 months. Demand for our services remained, and still remains, high which inevitably meant another very busy year for our team.

Having experienced a degree of staff turnover leading up to the beginning of the year we now have a settled team of highly qualified staff at all levels. However, we are not complacent and are looking to build the team further. This will mean we can provide our services to more families whilst also allowing for greater resilience within the team as new challenges arise.



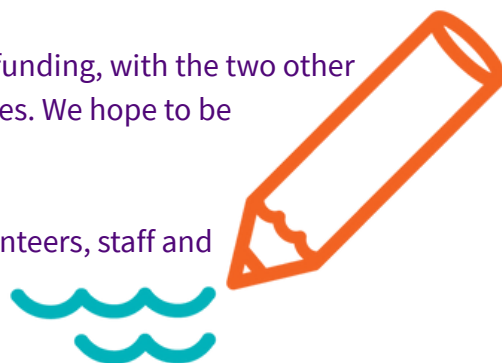
In February 2025, we held a Strategy Day attended by Trustees and our Senior Manager to discuss where we are and where we would like to be over the next 3 years. We restated our Core Objectives, which remain similar to those shown on page 13 of this report. The main challenges identified and discussed at length were, not surprisingly, the twin areas of Funding and Volunteer Recruitment.

For the former, it is becoming increasingly clear that the climate for financing from our traditional sources of Trusts and Foundations is getting more difficult. This means we have to work even harder to maximise our opportunities within this sector whilst pursuing new avenues. During the year we were successful in attracting a number of new donors which helped us end the year with a modest surplus. We now monitor closely our likely income over a rolling 3-year period to ensure that we see well in advance where funding gaps may be looming and take action accordingly.

At the heart of everything we do is our ability to recruit, train and retain a group of volunteers willing to dedicate time to supporting a family in need. We have a core of dedicated volunteers, but are finding it difficult to recruit new volunteers as those with many years working with us inevitably feel the need to retire.

Before beginning the year, we received confirmation of multi-year funding, with the two other Oxfordshire Home-Starts, from Oxford Health to support our services. We hope to be able to bid for further countywide funding.

None of this would be possible without our team of dedicated volunteers, staff and trustees to all of whom I would like to extend my sincere thanks.



“Home-Start has been amazing. Having someone who really understood me. I felt it was a lot easier to get out with her support. Having that consistent support made all the difference.”

**Supported parent**



# A celebratory message from our **Senior Manager, Louise Sansom**

Wow - what a rollercoaster of a year! 2024-25 marked my first full year as Senior Manager of Home-Start Banbury, Bicester & Chipping Norton. I could not be more proud of everything we achieved together this year, and I wish to extend my deepest thanks to everyone who played a part, especially our fabulous staff team.



It can be a rather thankless role to be responsible for fundraising, and I am grateful to Emma for her endless enthusiasm and tireless work. While there were some nail-biting moments at the beginning of the year, the excellent fundraising successes were a delight for us all, especially our board of trustees. Highlights included a successful tennis tournament arranged by our trustee Chloe, cheering on six amazing runners in the Oxford Half Marathon and our incredibly successful Big Give Christmas Campaign in December, which earned us the honour of being named The Big Give's Best Small Charity. We are incredibly grateful to everyone who contributed – your support helped raise vital funds for our work with local families.

And what a fabulous year it has been for our family support team! Angela, Ansa, Karen and Kim were instrumental in continuing to provide high-quality family support. 79 families received home-visiting support, and a further 184 families accessed our Stay & Play sessions – in total, 711 individuals were positively impacted by HSBBCN – an incredible achievement. In addition, Home-Start families also enjoyed a summer outing to Rookery Farm, a joyful Christmas party, gardening sessions at Bridge Street Community Garden and many took part in our Slow Cooker project. One parent shared, “Home-Start has been a life saver for me when I really needed someone to talk to and allowed me to grow in confidence” – a powerful reminder of the life-changing impact of our simple, heartfelt support.

People are what makes HSBBCN the wonderful place it is. A huge well done and thank you to Angela, Ansa, Emma, Faith, Karen and Kim – you are the most wonderful team to work alongside. Your enthusiasm, dedication and love of HSBBCN is truly appreciated. Faith, your calm efficiency in keeping our admin running smoothly throughout the year was essential.

Thank you to our brilliant trustees – Ami, Anne, Chloe, Douglas, John, Laura, Nick, Pete – your unwavering support does not go unnoticed. And a heartfelt farewell to Jo – your support meant so much and will not be forgotten. A special mention to Kate and Maxine who, although they officially joined us in 2025-26, were already ‘learning the ropes’ during this year. Thank you to Jenny, who looks after our bookkeeping, as well as supporting our Stay & Plays.

Most importantly, thanks goes to our incredible Home-Visiting and Stay & Play volunteers. We simply could not do this without you. The emotional and practical support you provide to local families makes such a difference to their lives now and in the future. You are all superstars!

To everyone – staff, trustees, volunteers, supporters, referrers, funders, partner organisations – thank you for making HSBBCN the incredible charity it is. We may be small, but our impact is mighty. It is a pleasure and a privilege to work alongside you all – thank you! Here's to another year of making a difference together!





# A financial report from our Treasurer, Douglas Keir

Last year saw a dramatic recovery in our income: the result of strongly focused efforts by the new fund-raising team. Total income rose by £84,000 (53%) to £241,000 (22-24: £157,000). Within this, it is pleasing to note that statutory funding (county, town, district and parish councils) also grew strongly from £8,000 to £58,000, better reflecting our contribution to statutory bodies' social responsibilities. Another very positive aspect is the increased number of multi-year grants received.

Expenses in 2024-25 rose by 6% to £204,000 (23-24: £193,000) largely due to the increased cost of fund-raising. Other costs were held at much the same levels as in the previous year.

The combined effect of the substantial rise in income and the constrained increase in expenses led to a very welcome surplus of £37,000, more than offsetting the previous year's deficit of £35,000. The total year end reserves consequently rebounded to £102,000 (2024: £65,000). The unrestricted, uncommitted, year-end reserves represented 35% (4 months) of the year's expenditure. The Trustees are aware that this is below their target minimum reserves, and are continuing to take steps to ensure their improvement.

At the time of writing (October 2025), we are optimistic of once again seeing a modest surplus in 25-26.

We very much appreciate all the financial support we receive, as well as the outstanding family and other support provided by the staff and volunteers, always in the face of increasing need and complexity.



## Home-Start Banbury, Bicester & Chipping Norton summary 2024-25

### INCOME

|                                     |                 |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Statutory grant funding             | £57,603         |
| Trusts & Foundations                | £112,555        |
| Home-Start UK                       | £8,604          |
| Other contracts/ restricted funding | £50,460         |
| Other income & donations            | £12,015         |
| <b>Total</b>                        | <b>£241,236</b> |

### EXPENDITURE

|                                        |                 |
|----------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Staff costs                            | £172,668        |
| Volunteers costs                       | £5,811          |
| Family events inc Stay & Plays         | £5,080          |
| Rent, insurance & general office costs | £11,232         |
| IT costs                               | £4,701          |
| Fees                                   | £3,714          |
| Fundraising                            | £1,249          |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>£204,456</b> |

**SURPLUS / DEFICIT** £36,780

**NET ASSETS** £101,979



“ I think it has really changed my life. She helped me come out of a very dark place . To have someone there for me who cares has really made such a difference. Thank you for being there! ”

**Supported parent**

# FAMILY STORY



**Despite the difficulties faced when parenting young children, to gather strength and summon immense courage whilst feeling at your very lowest is truly a remarkable display of resilience.**

I was referred to Home-Start in July 2024. It was my first month in my new council house and I asked for a visit from my Health Visitor. On her arrival, I burst out crying due to needing help and feeling completely stuck. She then told me that there was someone who could potentially help me and she would refer me to Home-Start.

My first impression of Home-Start was wonderful. I was absolutely shocked that this kind of support was provided. I hoped for someone who can make me see all the positive things in my life and show me that things can get better. I really hoped that I would trust whichever volunteer I was blessed with, so I could finally have a few minutes away from my son.

Where do I start? Lovely Jean has made a massive impact on my life in the most positive way. She made sure to listen to me and made me feel like I was heard. Like my opinion mattered. She made sure to remind me that certain things I did were extraordinary even when I thought I was failing.

Before she started to help me, I had not been out in public for months. I was stuck in this tiny village. I didn't drive nor did I have money to get taxis ect. Jean would offer to drive me wherever I wanted whether that would be shopping, cafe, woods or appointments, she was always up for it. This has made me regain my confidence massively.

Jean would often take my son out for a couple of hours, playing with him, teaching him and reading to him. Although he was only two, he still mentions Jean to this day. She made a huge impact on his life. All of this was incredibly important to me because I completely lost myself as a person. I didn't know what I liked anymore. I had no hobbies. All that was on my mind 24/7 was my son.

Overall I'm incredibly grateful for the support I received from Home-Start. I feel very fortunate to have met Jean and I'll cherish it forever. You really do remember who was there for you when you have a little child and Jean was always there although we didn't know each other well. Thank you so much to Jean and the Home-Start team!





# OUR IMPACT

## Home-visiting support



**79**

families received  
1:1 support



**173**

children received  
1:1 support

## Stay & play groups



**184**

families attended  
our Stay & Play  
sessions



**217**

children came and  
played

## Our AMAZING volunteers



**64**

volunteers supported  
families and the charity's  
work (incl. trustees)



**2895**

hours of volunteer time  
given (inc. trustees)



*“I will never forget you L.  
Thank you so much. I  
was empty, but you filled  
me up.”*

**Supported parent**



An incredible total of **711** individual lives were brightened

*“[My volunteer] has made such a huge difference to me and my family - she helped me believe in myself as a person and a mother. Her help came at a time where I was struggling so much - she provided so much support over the last year and a half and I am not sure what we would have done without her. No amount of thank yous will ever be enough.”*

**Supported parent**

# OUR IMPACT

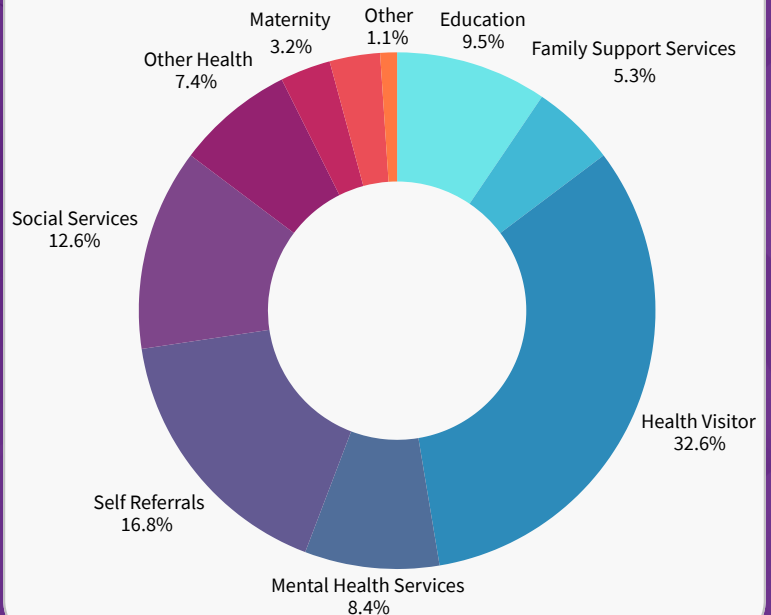
**100%** of parents reported improved or sustained self-esteem

**100%** of parents felt better or equally able to cope with their own mental health and isolation

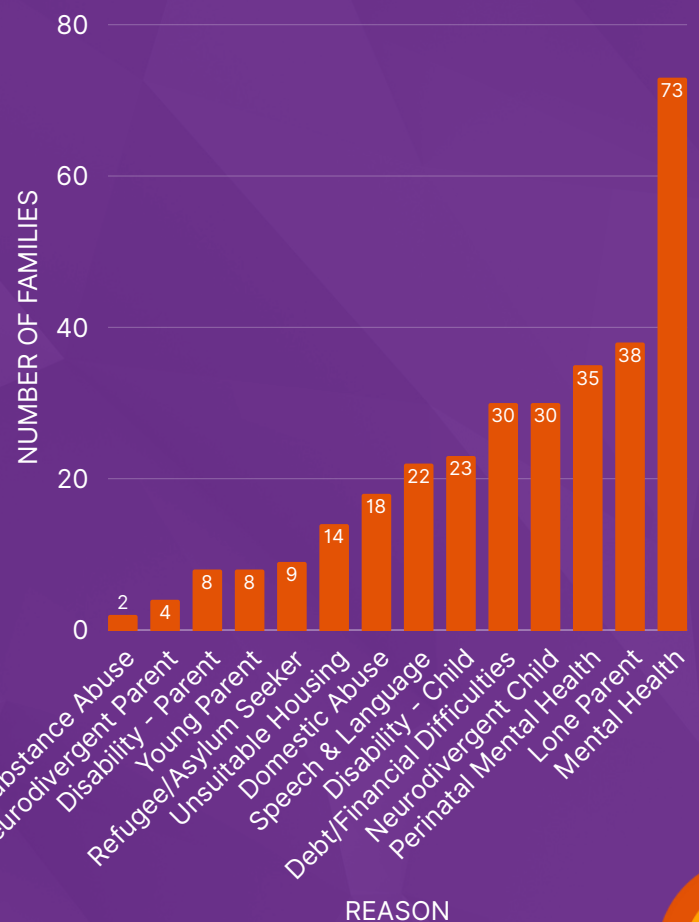
**96%** of parents felt more or equally as involved in their children's development

**92%** of parents felt better or equally able to cope with their children's mental health

## Source of referrals:



## REASONS FAMILIES WERE SUPPORTED



“Thanks so much for all you have done for this family. A shining example of Home-Start at its best.”

**Referrer - Health Visitor**



# OUR IMPACT

Through the eyes of a child...



“She brings toys for us and books and colouring books to entertain us. She has been here for 2 and a half years. She has been here because our mum gets more time to get some help or help calm B down when she is hungry or tired.”

**Child from supported family**

## Parent/carerer feedback from Stay & Play groups:

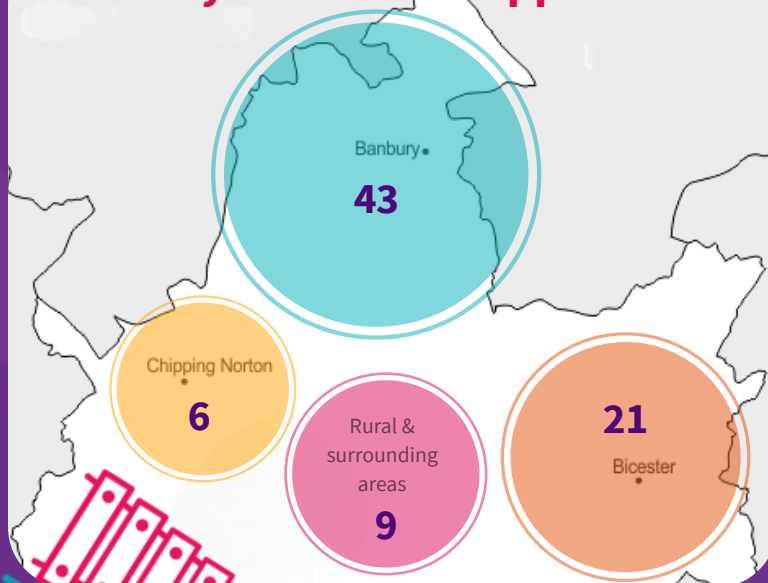
“I like the kindness of the people and the variety of activities [for my children].”

“A supportive and welcoming space...the group has helped me access YouMove. If possible, can you add an extra day?”

“I like that I have met new friends and we now meet outside of the group.”

“Thank you for all your hard work. It is very much needed to help the young families.”

## Locality of families supported:



# VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

**A journey of fulfilment...the unique joy that comes from giving of your time.**



I was interested in volunteering for Home-Start Banbury, Bicester & Chipping Norton 20 years before I did it. I had always intended to make this one of my volunteering roles when I retired, because I believe that every child once they arrive in the world has equal opportunities in life for seconds before it sadly disappears. The first five years are so extraordinarily important, so if for any reason children need some support to make those early years count, they should be helped. That is absolutely my reason for volunteering for HSBBCN. Earlier this year, I saw the Home-Start advertisement in a local newspaper and that was the start of my journey with HSBBCN.

I found the process of applying for the new volunteer preparation course clear and easy, and I learned an enormous amount during it. I particularly found the session on how to listen and how to communicate useful and I also enjoyed meeting the other eight people on the course. Volunteering has been what I expected. There have been no surprises. With my work I had experience of going into people's houses and attending to people who have some problems to cope with. I felt completely prepared for it. The support from Home-Start is huge. Anytime I have had questions or needed some guidance, someone has been there.

The family that I currently support cannot really go outside the home with their child due to illness. A lot of time is spent in their home. While I play with the child, Mum will be talking to me about her challenges. I try to encourage Mum to come out for a short walk, and again, this gives us time for me to listen to her. I have also supported them during the endless hospital appointments they have to attend, and I try to fit in a visit to an outside cafe as part of my visits whenever we can.

I have very positive feelings about volunteering for Home-Start Banbury, Bicester & Chipping Norton, because I know that it's very helpful for mum. It's helpful for the child too, but particularly for mum. I'm one of the only people she has to talk to. Since retiring, being involved in Home Start is one of the best things I have done. I really feel I am making a difference!

“ *She went above and beyond to help me and the children. We have loved having her with us.* ”

**Supported parent**







# HIGHLIGHTS

**Volunteer Preparation Courses and Volunteer Celebrations:** 14 new volunteers completed training and plenty of get togethers were held to celebrate our incredible volunteers.

**Family Summer Outing:** 'The children had the best time.' Families enjoyed a very special day out at Rookery Open Farm.

**Slow Cooker Project:** 20 families enjoyed engaging with their volunteers in creating easy and healthy home-cooked meals with slow-cookers they were given.

**Bridge Street Garden Banbury:** This amazing partnership continued to grow and strengthen this year with numerous, enriching nature-based play and gardening activity sessions thoroughly enjoyed by families, staff and volunteers alike.

**Oxford Half Marathon:** Six dedicated runners took on the Oxford Half Marathon and raised vital funds for us through their efforts while we cheered them on through the streets of Oxford.

**Family Christmas Parties:** Our annual, much-loved Christmas parties always bring everyone immense joy.

**Big Give Christmas Challenge:** A very successful campaign, exceeding our target and being awarded Big Give's 'Best Small Charity' for our campaign achievements and detailed case study.





# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

2022-2025

## **1. Consolidation:**

Ensure a highly functioning and efficient employee and volunteer team.

Succession planning and resilience across the team will be built into development plans and employees valued. Home-visiting by volunteers will remain the core of our service, complemented by the staff team. In addition, the universal access Stay and Play sessions will be supported in Banbury and Bicester.

## **2. Recruit new volunteers and support existing volunteers:**

Through a robust communications plan, including social media and a renewed website, we aim to reach a wider audience and expand our profile in the locality. Existing volunteers to advocate on our behalf, supported families will be encouraged to join us after support. We will ensure volunteers are put forward for community awards, that they feel valued and recognised.

## **3. Improve multi-agency working and system partnerships:**

Improve multi-agency working and extend collaborative bids for funding. Create a consistent approach to family support across Oxfordshire Home-Starts to offer best value. Expand collaboration with other Oxfordshire agencies and charities.

## **4. A Smooth transition from paper to digital:**

Ensure hardware and software are fit for purpose. Plan transition from paper-based operations to digital. Ensure staff and volunteers have the relevant level of access, training and support. Enable self-referral for families via our website.

## **5. Families are empowered and their needs are met:**

Non-judgemental emotional support and practical help delivered on a weekly basis by a volunteer will remain our core activity. We will use feedback from families and referrers to inform and shape our future service. Ensure caseloads are manageable and monitor changes in demand and complexity of need. Maintain wider services including Family Support Worker, Stay and Play sessions and regular family events.

## **6. A comprehensive Funding Strategy to enable the organisation to achieve its aims:**

Increase collaborative and joint funding bids. Secure more multi-year funding. Increase local corporate giving. Raise profile through fundraising events. Support staff fundraiser with training, trustee committee and external consultants when required.

**Our Vision for the future builds on our strengths.**



**We will be there for parents and carers when they need us most.**



**Because childhood can't wait!**



# THANK YOU

We most certainly could not do what we do without the incredible support and kindness we receive in so many ways from our community of supporters, donors, partners, referrers, volunteers, trustees, staff, family and friends. Our immense gratitude goes out to all who have been a lifeline to local families this year when they needed us most - together we have truly made a difference!

A big thank you to all the trusts, foundations, councils, local businesses, churches, community fundraisers and individual donors, and our volunteers and trustees who 'donate back' their expenses. Some of these include... \*\*



\*\*Not an exhaustive list.



Banbury, Bicester &  
Chipping Norton



Interested in joining our  
**volunteer** team?

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT OUR  
VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES HERE



Looking for other ways to **get  
involved** and **support** us?

FIND OUT MORE ABOUT HOW TO  
DONATE OR FUNDRAISE FOR US HERE



|||||●●●●WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!●●●●|||||

**Home-Start Banbury, Bicester & Chipping Norton**

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Grove Street,  
Banbury,  
Oxfordshire  
OX16 5DN

Patron: Lady Hayter

Registered Charity Number 1114860

Company Number 0565931



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