

Impact Report 2022-2023

Helping to give children the best possible start in life

During 2022-2023 the demand for our services grew to their highest levels and we supported 1859 children and a total of 869 families. In November 2022 we reviewed our Strategic and Annual Plan to consider the emerging needs impacting on families due to the pandemic and cost of living crisis and the barriers that minority groups face due to inequalities of access to services. We are dedicated to reaching all local communities within Mid, West and South Essex through our family support Volunteers, Family Groups, with a rolling programme of School Readiness, Wellbeing programme and Behaviour Support programme. Where appropriate, we provide services both online and face to face and enable families to access a combination of services to meet the wider needs of the family as and when they need them.

In 2023 Home-Start, as a support service, celebrates 50 years of supporting families. As Home-Start Essex we remain dedicated to supporting parents to build their confidence in themselves and their parenting and to find ways to manage the challenges they face by building trusting, helpful relationships with families.

Why Home-Start Essex?

We work with families to build a bespoke programme of holistic support. We can provide families with at least 6 months support from one or more of our services, meaning that families have time to build trusting, helpful relationships with us and build their support networks.



869

Families
Supported

1859

Children benefited
from support

302

families
supported via
1-2-1
Volunteer
Support

419

sessions of Family
Group accessed by
307 families

84

sessions of
Wellbeing Group
accessed by 100
families

20

Family
Day Events &
Trips accessed
by 106 families



What are the 'Areas of Need' in Essex and Home-Start Essex (HSE)?

MENTAL HEALTH

The NHS Mental Health dashboard published in Q3 22-23, showed that for the previous 12 months, the number of referrals for women accessing specialist community **perinatal mental health services** has **increased by 21.6%** and overall, **the number of adults entering NHS Talking Therapies has continued to increase**. The NHS actual spend, per person in Essex, has increased to an average of £220 for Mental Health Services (Mental Health Watch, Royal College of Psychiatrists).

Home-Start Essex successfully supported (with positive impact), a total of 406 families who reported a need to improve their own and/or their child's mental health, potentially saving the NHS around £180,000, based on 2 beneficiaries per family unit.

73%

HSE families
reported 'Mental
Health' as an area
of need

72%

HSE families
reported
'Isolation' as an
area of need

POVERTY

According to data collected by the Essex Resident Survey 2022, **1 in 10 (11%) of Essex residents say their household is struggling financially**. Two percent of Essex residents said that they or someone in their household received a free food parcel from a food bank or other emergency provider in the last 12 months.

Essex Open Data Projections average that utility bills inflation is at **+20%**, **food annual inflation +13%**, **transport annual inflation at +15%** and **childcare costs** have also increased.

Home Start Essex assisted with distributing £57,306 worth of household vouchers to over 200 families, via the Household Fund from Essex County Council (consisting of food, fuel and household essential vouchers).

49%

HSE families
reported living in
social or temporary
housing

45%

HSE families
reported
experiencing debt of
financial difficulties

CHILD BEHAVIOUR AND DEVELOPMENT

In January 2023, the YouGov School Readiness Report was released by Kindred. This report revealed that **80% of 1000 teachers surveyed, said they are using, significant additional time supporting 'School Readiness Skills'**. This could equate to over £12,000 a year just for 1 class teacher and 1 teaching assistant.

By integrating a School Readiness programme into all our family groups, offering Behaviour Specialist groups, 1:1 behaviour support and supporting parents with coping with their child's general behaviour and developmental needs, we have reached 1288 under 5s.

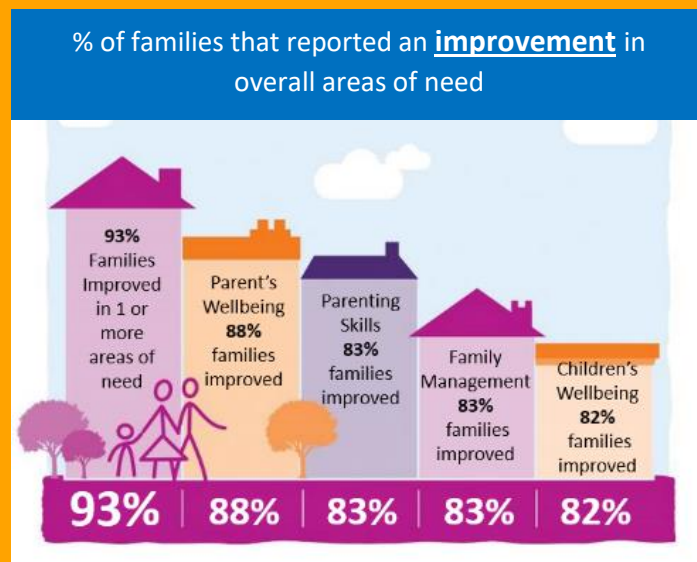
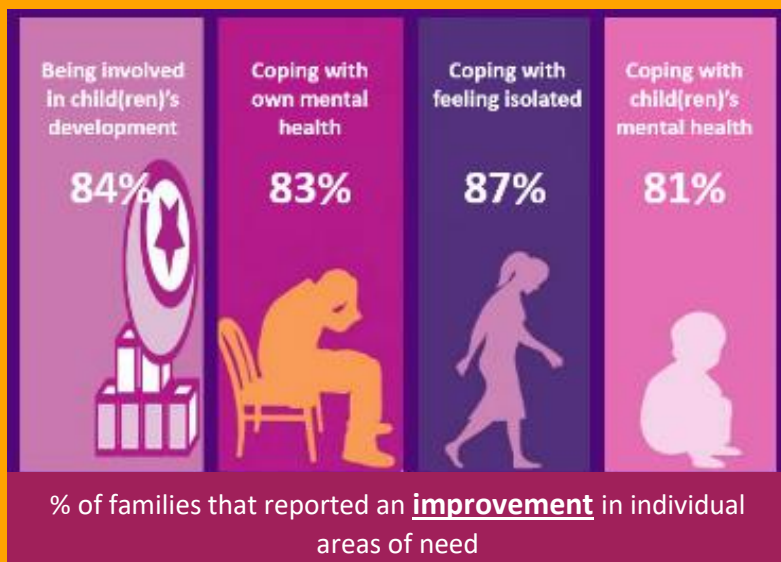
86% of Families who received focused support through Family Group and/or Behaviour Specialist Support reported an improvement in coping with Child's Behaviour and /or Child Development, potentially assisting with saving this essential teaching time and money.

76%

HSE families needed help with Parenting Skills or Family Management

Measuring Impact and Improvements

At the beginning of support, families score their coping skills on a scale 1-6 across 14 areas of need. These scores help inform their support plan. Families work with their Family Support Coordinator to assess progress towards their intended outcomes during, and at the end of support.



Broadening Horizons

During 2022-2023 the cost-of-living crisis and subsequent poverty levels have directly impacted on child development, children's behaviour and school readiness. As a result, we have expanded our service provision, to include a wider behaviour support programme, incorporating behaviour support within groups for parents struggling with common issues and 1:1 for those needing more focussed support around specific challenges.

Mental health and isolation of families continue to be the highest expressed needs and we have focussed on removing barriers for families by supporting transport costs for families accessing our groups. During this last year, we have expanded services to give additional Wellbeing support to meet local demand. This includes the introduction of a Baby Massage Group in one of our districts in January 2023, which has proven to be extremely successful. Mothers in Mind Groups (focussing on supporting during the perinatal period) have also been developed and will be offered in the 2023-2024 period.



Set up of Baby Massage Group

Volunteers have provided **7509** hours of their own time, which equates to a value of over **£90,000**.



98% volunteers say they feel proud to be associated with Home-Start Essex

94% volunteers say they feel valued by Home-Start Essex

96% volunteers say volunteering with HSE has had a positive impact on them

We delivered **10** initial preparation courses to **70** new volunteers. We have provided **11** ongoing training sessions for current volunteers.



"It was very evident the positive impact these sessions have on Mum's wellbeing. I can only imagine what a lifeline they present to those who are only able to attend online."

Feedback received from Funder Representative who visited a Wellbeing Group

Volunteers

Volunteers are essential to our support for families. The pandemic reduced opportunities for volunteers to support families and the subsequent Cost-of-Living Crisis, has resulted in many people being unable to consider volunteering due to needing paid employment.

We are focussed on building our volunteer capacity by broadening the scope of volunteer opportunities. 2022-2023 saw the implementation of a volunteer strategy to increase opportunities to reach a wider demographic including drivers to deliver supplies to families (such as food or clothing parcels), chaperoning families to events or local community services and promoting Home-Start Essex at community events. The Board of Trustees are committed to supporting staff and volunteer wellbeing, retention and recognition and embark on an equity, equality, diversity, and inclusion plan to attract, reach and support all communities within Mid. South and West Essex.

'It's wonderful to know that my experiences as a parent, and the training Home-Start Essex has given me, allows me to support families to make their lives better or easier. When I leave my families, I feel a sense of achievement that I have made a difference and it's reassuring to know Home-Start Essex are always there for me should I need support when volunteering.'
(Margaret, Home-Visiting and Group Volunteer)



Partners and Funders

Home-Start Essex is supported by numerous partners and funders. We are grateful to all our supporters who enable our continued service provision to families in Mid, West and South Essex.

- Essex Child and Family Wellbeing Service (ECFWS)
 - HCRG care group and Banardo's subcontract Home-Start Essex to deliver outcomes in family support.
- BBC Children in Need
 - Continues to support a number of Family Groups within Mid and South Essex.
- Essex Community Foundation (ECF)
 - Home-Start Essex received funding for a variety of different programmes through grants and trusts.
- The National Lottery Community Fund (NLCF)
 - Funding has enabled us to provide our home visiting support, family groups and wellbeing groups in Mid, South and West Essex.
- Garfield Weston
 - Supporting core costs of Home-Start Essex
- Corporate Partners
 - Seymour House
 - Nairnsley Fisher and Lewis

We have been able to re-establish our community fundraising events and would like to acknowledge special thanks to all our community fundraisers, Essex based companies who have supported Home-Start Essex, plus the John Lewis/Waitrose partnership for continued support.

"One of the really good things about Home-Start is being signposted to other organisations that can help you."

('Bobbie', Family Group and Behaviour Specialist Support)



"The support has been such a lifeline. After moving and being in lockdown I felt I didn't know anybody or had any support... I loved catching up with 'Frankie' (volunteer) and being able to offload, have somebody to listen to me, and give me ideas on how to manage 'Morgan's' behaviour."

('Francis', Family Group & Volunteer support)



'It's helped me to not be so hard on myself. It's nice to hear other people also have anxiety. I am going to join the WhatsApp group [instigated by another group attendee].'

('Sarah', Wellbeing Group)

'The group was really valuable. I am trying to find positives despite my difficult circumstances. I am trying to wash my hair more and am planning on meeting a couple of friends.'

('Jane', Wellbeing Group)



"Wow our first 30 min session she has understood and given me more information than I have received since the beginning of this journey with 'Charlie'. (I could cry) I have just walked away from that meeting with such a huge weight off my shoulders and given me a real, new sense of can-do attitude and feel like we can handle this, now I have someone in my corner who truly understands this journey."

('Chris', Behaviour Specialist Support)

"The Maldon Family Group was a really comfortable place as I knew I had staff, volunteers and friends I could talk to there... It felt like another home... 'Finley' is much more ready for school in September. It's nice to know that your children are normal, and we are being good parents. When you've got other people around you who have similar experiences it really does help. The group has been something to get out of the door for each week."

('Kate', Family Group)



"This support has changed my life, I am sad to lose 'Tobi' [volunteer] but deep down I know I no longer need the support, and she needs to help others.'

('Tara', Volunteer Home-Visiting support)