



Support and friendship
for families

Home-Start Medway

ANNUAL REPORT

1st April 2013 – 31st March 2014



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Charity No: 1108057
Company No: 5135567
Patron of Home-Start UK:
HRH Princess Alexandra, The Hon. Lady Ogilvy, KG, GCVO

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Thank you!!

We would like to record our appreciation to the numerous people and organisations that have assisted and supported Home-Start Medway in many different ways during the past year.

A big thank you to the directors, they are the management board of trustees. Their support, dedication and loyalty enable Home-Start Medway to offer its valuable service to families.

A big thank you to all the volunteers for the time, commitment and enthusiasm they have given to support families in the Medway community.

Special thanks to all the agencies, companies, trusts, members and individuals who have supported our work over the past year.

And a further thank you to all the speakers and trainers on our volunteer preparation courses and volunteer information sessions.

Special thanks go to:

Medway Council

Medway Primary Care Trust

Ed Grundon

CAB – Energy Best Deal

Marilyn Roe

Turn2Us

Cllr Dave Colman

Greggs Foundation

Wilkinsons

Friends and family of Anthony Verrall

Salvation Army

The Co-operative stores

Tesco's

Yorkshire Building Society

Jo Friday

Kent Community Foundation

Jon Gauld

Cabot Financial

Kingsway International Christian Centre

Sarah and Alan Carroll

Ian Chappell

Marsha Oza

HOME-START'S MISSION

Home-Start offers support, friendship and practical help to parents with young children in local communities throughout the UK and with British Forces in Germany and Cyprus.

Home-Start offers a unique service, recruiting and training volunteers – who are usually parents themselves – to home visit offering informal, friendly and confidential support to families who have at least one child under the age of five.

To help give 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.

OUR CORE BELIEF

Home-Start Medway believes:

- That children need a happy and secure childhood
- That parents play a key role in giving their children a good start in life
- That parents help children to achieve their full potential

OUR VISION

Home-Start Medway wants to see a society in which every parent has the support they need to give their children the best possible start in life.

OUR VALUES

Home-Start Medway will, in all external and internal dealings, work within and demonstrate the essential ethos of:

- | | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| * Choice | * Partnership |
| * Openness | * Encouragement |
| * Flexibility | * Responsiveness |
| * Confidentiality | * Trust |
| * Support | * Non-judgemental |
| * Caring | * Respectful |
| * Friendly | * Empowering |

..... and Enjoyment!!

SCHEME PROFILE

STAFF

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| Scheme Manager / Fundraiser | Charlie Grundon |
| Senior Area Co-ordinator | Barbara Gunning |
| Area Co-ordinator | Anna Costello-Mannering |
| Area Co-ordinator | Sarah Carroll |
| Volunteer Recruitment & Development Co-ordinator | Sara Nash |
| Office and Finance Co-ordinator | Wendy Palmer |
| Business and Administration Apprentice | Amber Freeman |

VOLUNTEERS

These volunteers generously gave their time and support during the year:

| | | | |
|--------------|-------------|------------|------------|
| Allison S | Hazel B | Laura C | Rebecca R |
| Angela B | Hazel T | Leanne W | Sally T |
| Angela D | Irene J | Lesley B | Samantha B |
| Ann W | Jackie C | Lesley E | Samantha T |
| Anthony V | Jacqui O'C | Lisa D | Sarah C |
| Barbara T | Jade S | Liz S | Sarah O'B |
| Beth P | Janet A | Lorraine P | Sarah T |
| Bose D | Jeanette F | Margaret G | Sarah W |
| Caroline T-P | Joanne W | Margaret T | Sharron H |
| Catherine G | Juleigh M | Martin B | Sheena B |
| Christine W | Julia C | Michele S | Shelley J |
| Claire G | Julie B | Moira S | Sonia A |
| David A | Julie G | Natalie E | Sophia B |
| Debbie R | Julie R | Natasha S | Sophie W |
| Deborah D | Julie T | Netty P | Sue C |
| Denise A | Karen E | Nicola A | Sue S |
| Denni K | Karen W | Nicola G | Tamara Z |
| Diana M | Katie H | Nienna L | Teresa K |
| Diane B | Kazzandra J | Nurten P | Terina C |
| Elisa S | Kerry G | Paul G | Terry E |
| Faith A | Kerry K | Rachel N | Tolulope A |
| Gail P | Keryl W | Rachel S | Tracy W |
| Gemma T | Khariss C | Rachel B | Wendy |
| Gloria O-A | Kim P | Ravinder J | |



*Financial
Fitness
Champions*

A free service from Home-Start Medway

Registered charity number 1108057



Support and friendship
for families

Home-Start Medway

1. Would you like to talk to someone about financial concerns?
2. Could you benefit from some benefits advice?
3. Would a budget be useful for you and your family?

If you have answered 'Yes' to any of these questions, our *FINANCIAL FITNESS CHAMPIONS* can help you!

Our *FINANCIAL FITNESS CHAMPIONS* are ready to meet you and discuss your concerns.



They may be able to help you by:

- i Highlighting priority debts
- ii Looking at the TURN2US benefits advice
- iii Giving you easy to understand information

We will support you to get back on track with your finances.

We are non-judgemental.

The service is strictly confidential.

If you would like a visit from one of our *FINANCIAL FITNESS CHAMPIONS* speak to your volunteer or your area co-ordinator, or contact the Home-Start Medway office on 01634 570 717.



Chairperson's report

The last year has been a whirlwind of changes and new challenges but this seems par for the course with Home-Start Medway!

We have welcomed a new co-ordinator, Sarah Carroll, who is an ex-volunteer. Sarah has come to us with a wealth of knowledge of what Home-Start Medway can do for families and has, to coin a corporate phrase, 'hit the ground running'.

From Charlie Grundon's fundraising efforts we have seen the training of our new Financial Fitness Champions. These volunteers have been helping our families with their financial issues, signposting families to the right services and giving them confidence to face financial challenges. This initiative is very important to us at Home-Start Medway as financial worries can raise the burden of other issues that families are getting support with. Having this service quickly gives extra help and in unison with support families are already getting.

The board has seen more changes. We have lost Marsha Oza and extend our thanks for the knowledge and energy she brought to the meetings and groups she attended whilst with us. We have gained two new trustees, Irene Jeffrey and Chris Giles. Both have very valuable skills and experience with charity accounting, charity governance and the unique life that comes with living and working in Medway.

I still remain extremely proud of our charity and am honoured to have been chair of the board of directors for a third term. I extend the thanks of the board of directors to the staff and each and every volunteer for their commitment and support not just to the charity, but to the families of Medway. It can never be said enough that the volunteers we are lucky enough to work with are the most valuable asset the Medway towns have.

Shelley James
Chairperson/director

Scheme Manager's report

This year has felt like a year of settling in – this may sound strange from a scheme that is 26 years old. By 'settling in' I am referring to what feels like a settled and content staff team.

In April last year we said goodbye to Jane Barty – the Chatham Area Co-ordinator. Jane had been with Home-Start for a very long time, but wanted to swap the hills of Chatham for the waves of Sussex.

We then welcomed Sarah Carroll, who used to be a Home-Start volunteer, as Jane's replacement. Sarah very quickly picked up the reins and is a very well-liked member of the team; she makes a positive contribution to the scheme.

Barbara Gunning has also seen a change of job title; she is now Senior Area Co-ordinator. This title reflects the work Barbara was already doing for the scheme as well as 'manning the ship' when I take annual leave.

The scheme has also seen a growth within its Board of Trustees. The trustees now offer a range of skills, experience and knowledge. We are very well advised and guided!

We have been very busy in the community, with trustees attending events on behalf of Home-Start Medway.

Office re-developments continue and are set to continue for the next 2 years. The Adult Education building is being converted to student flats, so we are in the middle of a building site – literally! The downside is that we have loss of parking (which as you can imagine isn't ideal in the middle of Gillingham!). However, the positive side is that the landlord has said we are able to stay and continue on our peppercorn rent! He has also 'lent' us a room which is perfect for our volunteer training. So, we have been able to offer on-site training which has made it easier to run our 3 courses. Being on-site has also meant that the volunteers have enjoyed being able to meet the team.

Building on what I reported last year about our Financial Fitness Champions project, we successfully applied to buy new laptops and dongles. This means the Volunteer Champions are able to visit families within their own homes. The project has had contact with many families, with varying degrees of success! We are continually reviewing and amending the project in order that our approach is the right one.

The Financial Fitness Champions project supports families by offering a variety of tools.

The Volunteer Champions are proficient in:

- Budgeting
- Implications of not paying bills
- Identifying priority debts
- Different types of bank accounts.

In the current financial climate Home-Start Medway thought it very important to be able to help and signpost families who are in financial difficulty.

We are very fortunate to have so many dedicated volunteers, I would particularly like to thank Julie Rees. Julie is a family support volunteer, a volunteer fundraiser, a Financial Fitness Champion and the organizer of events. Julie offers us over and above the amount of time we expect from our volunteers, she is invaluable to us, offering capacity and support.

Lastly, I extend my thanks to my staff team. They are a very dedicated bunch. Each of them truly has Home-Start within their hearts and I firmly believe that as long as this remains, Home-Start will continue in Medway for a very long time.

Charlie Grundon
Scheme Manager / Fundraiser

Case Study presented by Sarah

Angela was referred to Home-Start Medway by her health visitor on 22nd November 2012.

Angela has fibromyalgia, which affects her mobility, and she has additional health issues. When out of the house she sometimes uses a wheelchair.

Angela lives with her husband, Andrew. At the time of referral their daughter Poppy was 2 weeks old. They had no local family support and Andrew's job meant he commuted daily to London. For long periods of time Andrew was away from the family home.

Angela was positive with the addition of Poppy to the family, but she was quite aware that things would be difficult given her mobility issues.

At the initial visit to the family, Angela said that she was hoping the volunteer would be able to support her with:

- Improving her daily routine and managing the household
- Accessing children's centre groups in the local community
- Attending hospital appointments
- Helping Poppy interact with other children.

Angela was matched with Betty. Initially, the visits were inconsistent because Angela would often cancel if she was feeling unwell or having difficulties. On these occasions Angela's husband would either:

Drive Angela and Poppy to her mother's house. Angela's mother lives quite a distance away and Andrew would do this drop off on his way to work.

Or Andrew would take time off work to stay at home with Angela and Poppy.

At six months the relationship improved between Angela and Betty - visits were made more flexible and Angela also came to understand that Home-Start support could lessen her need to rely on her family and she could become more independent.

A good rapport developed between Angela and Betty and much trust was gained. Visits mainly focused on Angela being supported to attend a stay and play group at the local children's centre, in addition to supporting attendance at medical appointments.

At a subsequent review, Angela was very happy with Home-Start support as it meant that Andrew was able to go to work more often and took less time off.

Angela had begun talking to and making friends with some of the other mums at the children's centre groups. Angela felt that Home-Start support had improved her mental and emotional well-being. It had made her feel less isolated and more trusting, and more willing to make new friends. Angela felt that Betty was an amazing volunteer and was thrilled with the lovely relationship that Betty had formed with Poppy.

During the 2013-2014 Christmas and New Year period, Betty was visiting family abroad for 6 weeks. Angela decided that she would not have temporary support from another volunteer in Betty's absence. During this time Angela explored her options of support from Adult Services, given that her physical health had deteriorated and she was now using a wheelchair indoors.

When Betty returned from being abroad, she resumed visiting.

Then, when Andrew was away for two weeks working in America, Betty supported Angela three times each week of that fortnight. This was really appreciated by Angela as Betty had really gone above and beyond her expectations of the support.

After this, Angela felt much more confident and able to attend the children's centre group with a newly made friend. They were discussing attending another group that interested them, on another day. Home-Start contacted the children's centre on behalf of Angela to make them aware that the volunteer support would be coming to an end. This would enable the children's centre staff to continue to support Angela's attendance as required. Home-Start also provided and signposted Angela to external support from DIAL (Disability Information and Advice Line) to enable her to complete and submit a claim for DLA/PIP.

Angela was very positive about her experience with Home-Start support. She said that Betty had gone above and beyond her expectations and that Betty was "an angel".

Who can Home-Start Medway help?

Any parent or carer with a child under the age of five can ask for help.

Volunteers support parents through difficult times, such as:

- Loneliness and isolation
- Relationship problems
- Coping with twins, triplets or several pre-school children
- Ill health, disability or special needs
- Lone parenting, first-time parenthood or new babies
- Post-natal illness and children's behavioural problems

Will anyone else find out?

Home-Start Medway support is confidential. Personal family information is not disclosed to anyone outside Home-Start Medway without a family's consent, except where there is a concern about child safety or welfare.

What does the volunteer do?

Following introduction by an area co-ordinator, the volunteer will regularly visit the family once a week for 2-3 hours and offer:

- Friendly support through difficult times
- Understanding that when bringing up children, problems are not unusual
- A listening ear and a shoulder to cry on
- An extra pair of hands to help cope with everyday situations
- Practical help with play activities and help to keep appointments

Who are the volunteers?

Home-Start Medway volunteers come from all walks of life. They have parenting experience and understand the complexities of family life. They want to use their experience and skills to support others.

Volunteers:

- Will visit a family in their own home and accept them as they are
- Are non-judgemental
- Are carefully selected for their friendliness, practical approach and understanding
- Have undertaken an Enhanced Disclosure & Barring Service Clearance
- Have attended a preparation course before being matched to a family

Some volunteers have themselves been supported by Home-Start Medway.



HOW TO REFER A FAMILY

- Ensure the family has at least one child under the age of five
- Ensure there are no child protection issues
- Talk to the family about Home-Start
- Suggest to the family how Home-Start could help
- Ask the family's permission for you to contact Home-Start
- To make a referral telephone Home-Start Medway on 01634 570 717
- A referral form, identifying referral reasons, is completed over the phone

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REFERRAL?

- An area co-ordinator will visit the family to identify their needs and the support Home-Start Medway could offer
- The area co-ordinator will then consider the referral & available resources
- A volunteer is carefully selected and introduced to a family
- A family may need to wait for a suitable volunteer to become available
- Family support information will be given to the referrer, throughout the time of Home-Start Medway involvement
- Written referrer feedback is requested when family support comes to an end

Further contact between Home-Start Medway and the referrer may be made through the Home-Start Medway office, as necessary.



Families' feedback about volunteer support (as written)

It's reliable, regular support that allows consistent company, and access to groups to give the children opportunities to develop.

Thank you all so much for all your help :-)

Feel more confident going out. Now happy to take kids out on my own. H-S has shown the kids that they can trust people and that people will persevere with tough times and still support us.

Leanne said the three visits she benefitted from during the summer holidays were greatly appreciated.

Adult company, distraction from very stressful time, having some 'home help' while not having any other support. H-S has been very helpful for me, knowing I wasn't alone and that there was some support out there while going thru very stressful time

At first I was unsure about the whole Home-Start support. But since having N as my volunteer, I can actually say it is one of the best things I've done. She has been brilliant: friendly, willing, supportive and understanding. Thank you.

Thank you so much for all your help this year! The volunteer's amazing :-)

Thank you so much for all your help and support. Your service has been brilliant. A special thank you to S for all her hard work.

J was a Godsend... Her experience of life was a great help if you were unsure of things. The children loved her and she kept them occupied when I was cooking dinner etc. Most of all it gave me a break and someone to talk to. Thank you, J x

Going to college has changed my life and it is because my vol encouraged and supported me. Thank you for my wonderful vol, we always look forward to her visits and although she will no longer be our vol, I now have her as a valuable friend.

Been like a rock, I know she'll be there if I need to do anything difficult. It's been a lifeline, from emotional support to building confidence; consistent encouragement and friendship. Enabled me to attend stressful meetings etc.

Referrers' feedback (source – service review form)

Thank you for all the work & support, without which P would not have coped. I am very pleased with the support and will use your service again.

H-S supported C and her twins for approx 18 months. C had no recourse to public funds and H-S assisted with nappies and food. H-S made weekly visits to C, and complete liaison with professionals and agencies.

H-S is a valuable service to our clients, it helps share support we can give to more vulnerable families. Sharing info on a 'need to know' basis is extremely useful. HVs appreciate this service very much indeed.

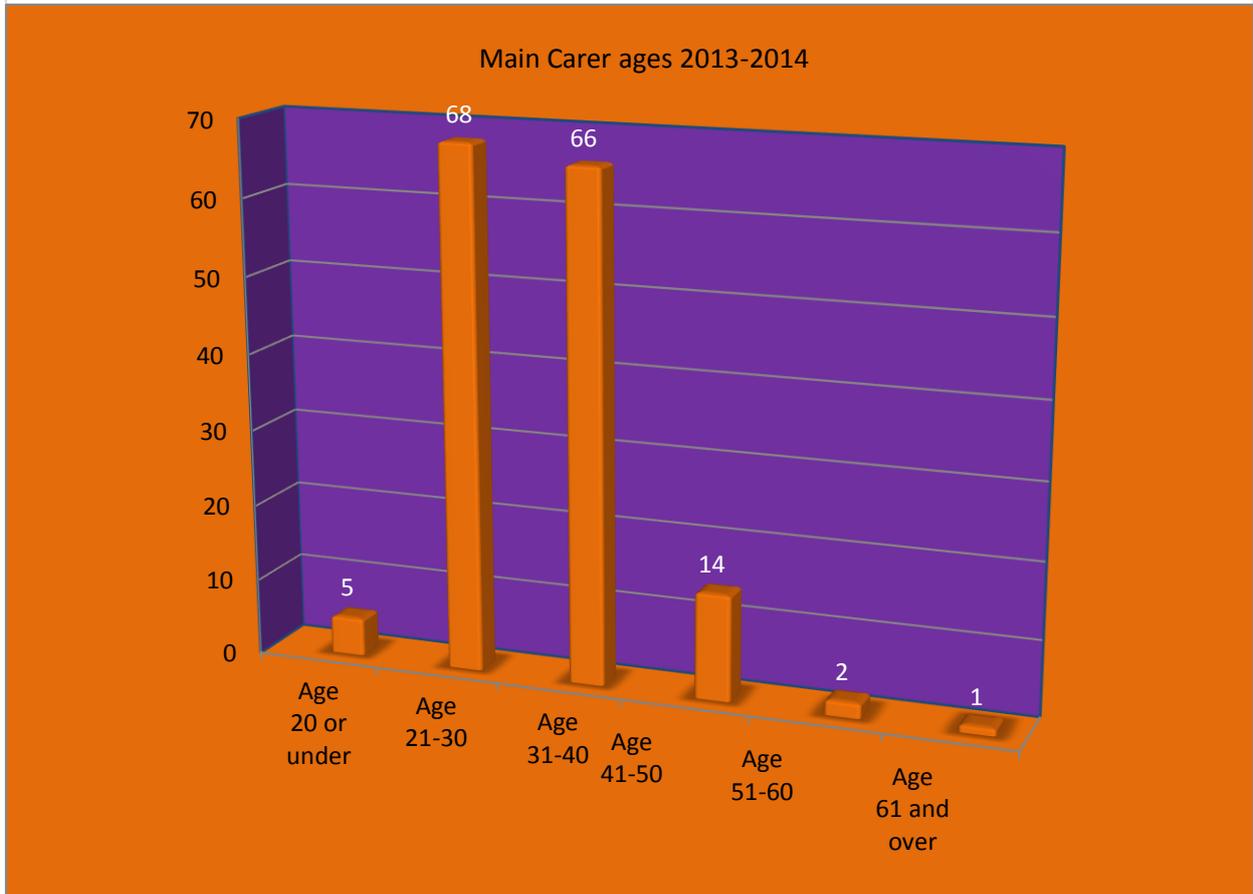
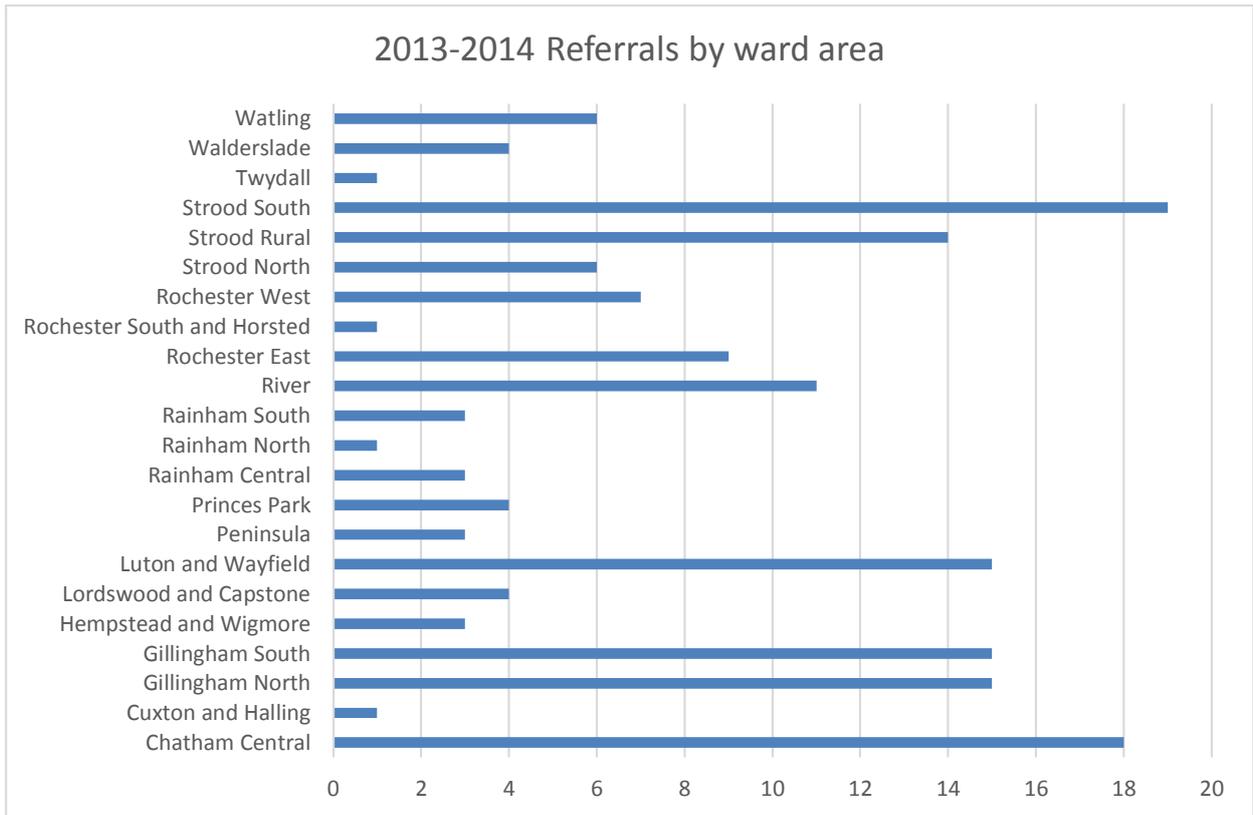
H definitely benefitted from weekly visits. She is calmer, focused and happier. She is looking to re-train and feels she is more in control of her life and family. H said T was great and the support she provided enabled H to look at what she wanted and what her family needed to be more content than before.

H-S support given to this family has been excellent. Made a huge positive difference to the family. Enabled them to improve quality of day to day living and to improve their structure and functioning. H reports that this support has been invaluable.

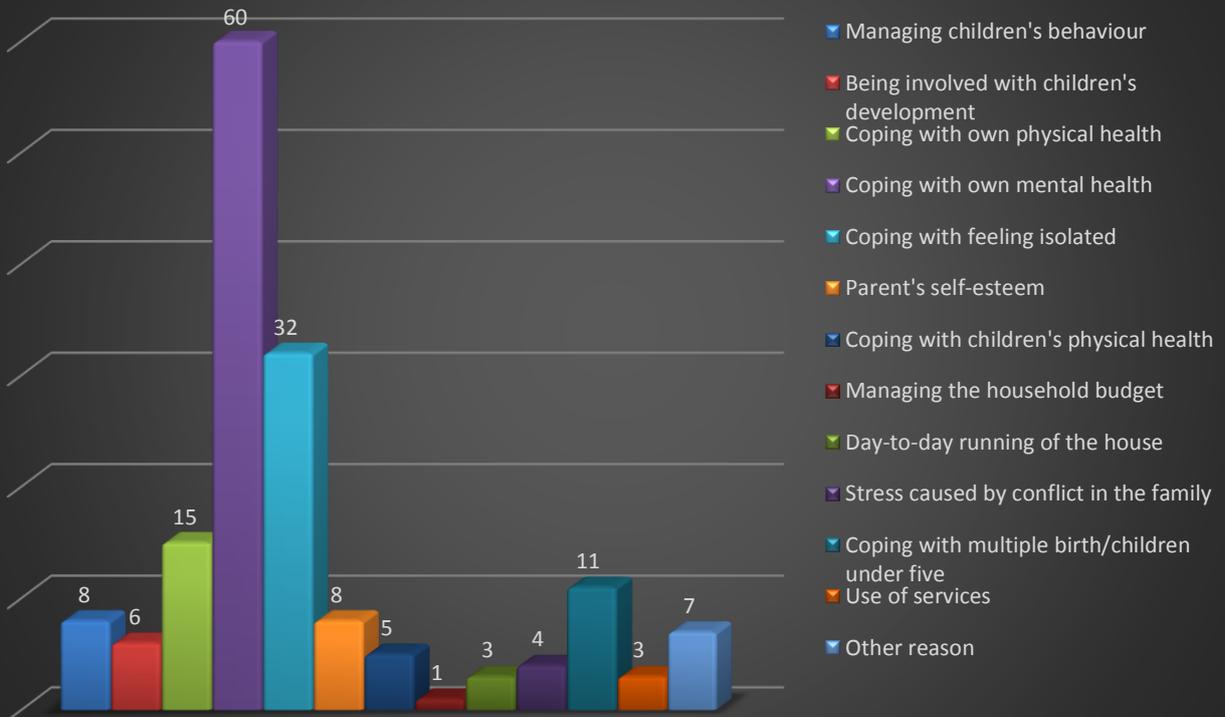
Home Start has played an integral part in the mother's recovery and the success of the family as a whole. Without the support of your agency the mother's ability to contain her parenting role may have been compromised. Minimising the stigma she faced when arriving in a new area while promoting her well-being has been a positive outcome for the family. Thank you all for your support and encouragement in her time of need, which has allowed her to have a more independent stake in the community.

I felt the support given to this family by Home-Start was very satisfactory. I have recently spoken to the family and she was very happy with the Home-Start support given.

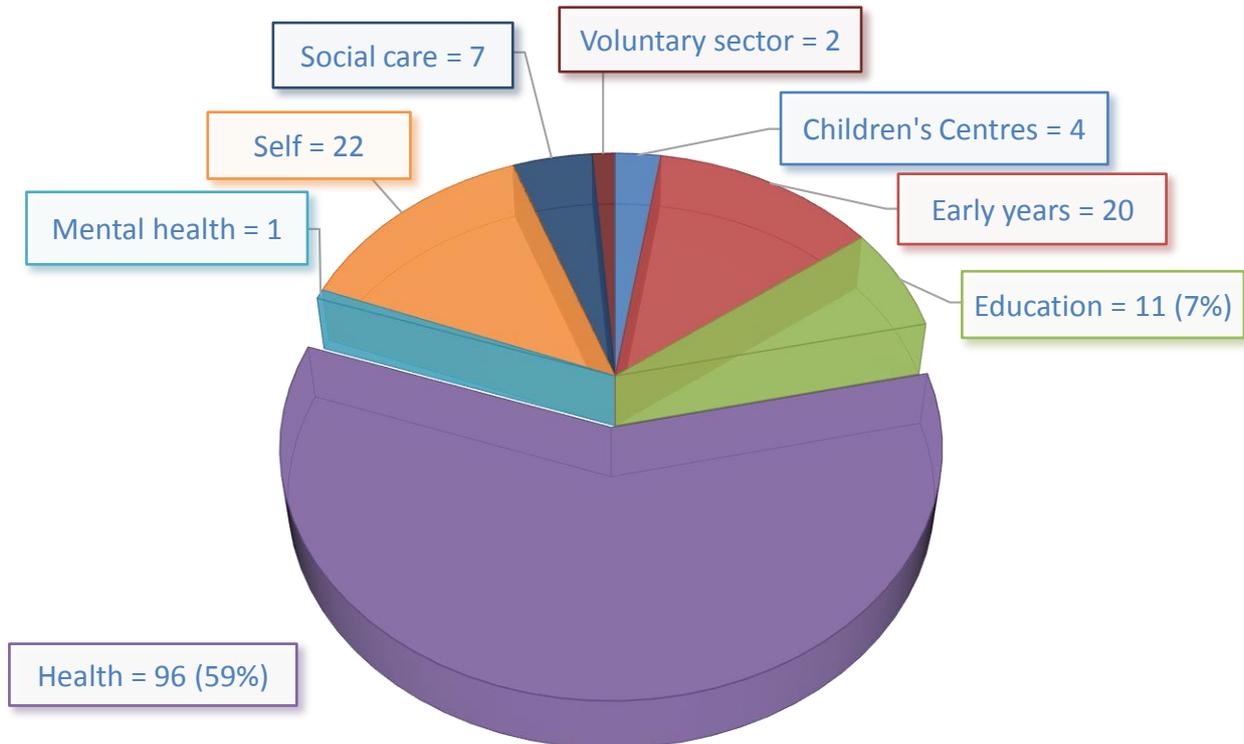
Vital statistics...



Main referral reasons 2013-2014



2013-2014 REFERRAL SOURCES



Treasurer's report

Having taken over the role of Interim Treasurer in November 2013, I was grateful for the able support I received from our Bookkeeper, Wendy Palmer, and our Scheme Manager, Charlie Grundon. I would like to take this opportunity to thank them both.

Looking back at the activities during the year, we have benefitted from a period of stability in our funding from Medway Council, which offset the slight reduction in other funding we have been able to attract during the year.

We have introduced a new financial package to help with the production of management accounts and to ease and automate our year end processes. Although there have been teething problems, as with all new IT packages, the system has embedded well and is being complemented by a review of financial standing orders.

The Charity has reserves of £106,066 which will allow us to continue to support families during periods of funding uncertainty as well as meet our obligations to staff, funders and suppliers.

The funding landscape going forward is likely to pose many challenges with the effects of Government funding reductions being felt in the year ahead. We will aim to increase our funding from other sources through grant applications and fundraising events as well as control expenses through careful management.

Irene Jeffrey
Interim Treasurer

Accounts available upon request

Volunteer for Home-Start!!

YOU can make a difference to a family in your community!

All parents know that a child's early years are vital before they go off to school.

At Home-Start Medway we believe parents have a key role in creating a secure childhood for their children.

It's just that sometimes parents need a bit of help...

YOUR HELP!

***WE* also need your help!**

If you have 3-4 hours spare per month, why not be a trustee?

Telephone our offices to discuss further volunteering opportunities!



You'll be glad you did!