



Support and friendship
for families

Medway

ANNUAL REPORT

1st April 2012 – 31st March 2013



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Charity No: 1108057
Company No: 5135567
Patron: 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

Redevco

Ed Grundon

North Kent Joinery

MHS Homes

Marilyn Roe

Funkidz

ASDA Chatham

The Sunday Club

Cllr Dave Colman

Community Development Foundation

Wilkinsons

Brett Landscaping and Building Products

Salvation Army

The Co-operative stores

Tesco's

Odeon

Bridgewood Manor Hotel

Leeds Castle

Jo Friday

Diggerland

Alison Wallace

Janet Pearson

Kathy Moon

Jon Gauld

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
Office and Finance Co-ordinator:	Wendy Palmer
Area Co-ordinators:	Barbara Gunning Anna Costello-Mannering Jane Barty

VOLUNTEERS

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

Alison	Divilyn	Karen	Nicola
Angela	Elisa	Kate	Rachel
Angela	Gail	Kazzandra	Ravinder
Ann	Gina	Kelly	Sally
Annette	Grace	Kim	Samantha
Barbara	Hazel	Kim	Sammy
Carole	Heather	Leanne	Sarah
Caroline	Jackie	Leanne	Sarah
Catherine	Jane	Lesley	Sarah
Charlotte	Janet	Lisa	Sharon
Chris	Jeanette	Lisa	Sharron
Christine	Jill	Liz	Sonia
Claire	Joanne	Lorraine	Sophia
Clare	Juleigh	Louise	Sophie
Daniela	Julie	Martin	Sue
Debbie	Julie	Michele	Tamara
Deborah	Julie	Moira	Terry
Denise	Julie	Netty	Tracey
Diana	Karen	Nicola	Val
			Val

Chairperson's report

Since our 25th anniversary AGM of last year, Home-Start Medway has not had a quiet moment. It is a testament to the staff's commitment and hard work that the charity is still a strength in the community it serves and I am still ever proud to be involved.

We have unfortunately had to say goodbye to our Pop 'n' Play sessions and with deep regret also had to lose Jo Friday from our staff. We were all really pleased to find out that Jo has another job at her local church and we wish her all the best for the future. Pop 'n' Play was an excellent outlet for families; closing it was a difficult decision, made just a little easier by the loss of funding. However, everyone has been affected by its closing. I extend my thanks to all the volunteers who helped at Pop n Play over the years and to everyone who attended our Children In Need fundraising events.

News for our office premises: Medway Council sold their adult education Green Street complex in July and we now have a new landlord. The foreseeable future sees us intending to stay at Green Street and we look forward to the renovations that will make for a more palatable staff working environment.

More kind hearted souls have joined the board of directors. This year we welcomed Marsha Oza, Jacqui O'Carroll and Angela Dowsett. They have been a delight to get to know; the knowledge and experience they bring to the board has renewed passions to create more funding opportunities. Our annual away day was a success with a lot of ideas captured, so watch out for some inventive fundraising events! During the year Janet Pearson and Kathy Moon resigned from the board, and we would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their input and efforts whilst with us.

With regard to fundraising, we now have the wonderful Julie coming in regularly in her volunteer capacity to research fundraising grants and ideas for Charlie. Julie, with Charlie and Wendy, organised our collaboration with other local charities which resulted in a very successful indoor 'boot fair' at the Medway Park leisure complex. I also need to give a big thanks to those volunteers who gave up their time to run the stalls, hand out leaflets in Gillingham High Street, leaflet-drop local houses and donate sale items. I personally found a couple of gems on the tables and there were a lot of people pleased with their purchases, so hopefully we'll have more events like that this year.

I shall close with a promise that I smile as I finish writing this report. Home-Start Medway is still a source of great pleasure for me and I hope it is the same for all the other volunteers, visitors and board members alike. There is still much we all want to do and many ideas that we want to share. It is a life affirming feeling to be part of an organisation with such big-hearted people and for that I thank everyone who has ever contributed to the scheme, no matter how small. The faintest of touches can leave the biggest impression.

Shelley James
Chairperson/director

Scheme Manager's report

Once again Home-Start Medway has had a busy year where it has felt that we are constantly chasing our tails! Our biggest achievement was a successful Quality Assurance (carried out by Home-Start UK and accredited by the Charity Commission) where we scored 81%. This was an intensive piece of work; the report we received was positive and it made some good suggestions about how we can improve the way we work. We took these suggestions on board and responded by changing some working practices which will help increase capacity and reduce process. The Quality Assurance was a positive experience and I would personally like to thank all involved (they are mentioned on our 'thank you' page).

We have had a transient year for staff – we have said goodbye to Alison Wallace who managed our finances. She set us up with new systems and procedures which has made a massive improvement on our accounting processes. Wendy Palmer, who joined us in March 2012 as Office and Administration Co-ordinator, agreed to take on the finance role after making a marked and significant contribution to the team and the job. This has been a real learning curve for Wendy, but she faces new challenges with a positive attitude and commitment to the scheme. We have also said goodbye to our lovely play worker – Jo Friday. Although, after Jo delivered a well received 'importance of play' session on our volunteer preparation course, we'll definitely be seeing her on subsequent courses. We have also had a pro-longed period of staff sickness. However, the remaining team dug their heels in to ensure that the scheme continued working at the same capacity and provided high quality support to families. My thanks to all the staff, but particularly Barbara, who took on additional hours and managed two caseloads.

The economic climate remains a concern. Sometimes financial hardship can be unexpected and leave families in crisis and we have seen a rise in volunteers helping families with debt and benefit issues. In response to this, Home-Start Medway applied and was successful in a funding bid to the Gillingham South Community Panel. As a result a group of volunteers have been recruited and trained in financial fitness. They will support families by offering a variety of tools they 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 continue to use IT in our communications and are keen to expand the use of the website. We are trialing volunteers being able to download forms etc and hope to build on this over the coming year – my thanks to Ed, our volunteer IT 'guru'.

We continue to provide three volunteer preparation courses every year – however this year we are 'on tour'! After the Adult Education building was sold, we found that we were without a training room – seeing this as an opportunity, we are currently holding our training at Bligh Children's Centre and will continue to source other training rooms across Medway.

Regretfully we have had to say goodbye to several 'long standing' volunteers, this was mostly due to them getting paid employment, which is fantastic! We are still supported by our volunteer Julie Rees

who helps us to fundraise and she has been joined by another volunteer, Hazel Thorn – we hope to run a few fundraising events this year.

I have found that trustee's are like buses – you wait a long time for one and then three come along at once! We sadly said goodbye to two trustees, but we have been able to welcome three new trustees. It is pleasing to see the board of trustees being strengthened and new members bringing new skills. It has been a year of hard work for everyone and the board has provided the support and direction needed to see growth and positive development.

I mentioned above about the dedication of the team and I would like to end with a thank you to them as well. The year has brought many challenges and I feel that we have worked the best we have ever worked and that is because of good attitudes, team spirit and good old fashioned stubbornness! I am ever grateful to them for this.

Charlie Grundon
Scheme Manager / Fundraiser

Case study - June 2013

Sandra was referred to us by her health visitor on 28th August 2012.

She is a young mother aged 21 and she has two children - a boy aged 20 months and a girl of 8 months.

Sandra had recently had an abortion from a different partner, and was separated from her ex-partner who is the parent of the two children. He had the children on alternate weekends where they stayed with him and the paternal grandparents. He imposes certain conditions on her to comply with his wishes and he uses the excuse that if she doesn't comply then he will not have the children. Her relationship is not good with his family.

Sandra had separated from her ex-partner because of domestic abuse and his controlling behaviour.

He phones and texts her, putting her down some of the time.

He also turned up at her place of employment and she then lost her job. He has also had an affair with her sister so that relationship is now strained.

The health visitor said that there were a few health and safety concerns in the home as there was a big Staffordshire bull terrier and a couple of kittens. Sandra smokes cigarettes and cannabis, and also has mental health issues and has had suicidal thoughts. There was also a health and safety risk from the ex-partner and his parents visiting the house.

Sandra has found bonding with the children and managing the elder child's behaviour difficult as her ex-partner has different parenting style. This child was smearing himself and others and also biting.

Sandra gets limited support from her family as her mother lives with a partner in Devon. Sandra's dad works long hours running his own business.

On my initial visit to the family, Sandra said that she was hoping the support would:

- Enable her to gain in confidence
- Improve her emotional wellbeing
- Improve her daily routine and manage the household
- Provide some support with difficulties in nursery provision
- Give her someone to talk as she felt lonely and isolated and a bit vulnerable
- Give her someone who could accompany her and the children to the park
- Provide some help with the shopping as her little boy was a challenge.

Sandra was matched to Sally, a very experienced volunteer and the visits began. So they went to the park, Sally accompanied Sandra to visit some nurseries in the area. They went shopping, had a coffee and got to know each other and the relationship developed into a good rapport, and trust was gained.

However, Sandra's relationship with her ex-partner deteriorated and once again domestic abuse occurred. The police were called and Social Services became involved. The ex-partner was ordered not to visit the family home. He said that if she didn't drop the domestic abuse accusation he would stop having the children and any financial arrangements would also cease. He sent abusive texts, made abusive phone calls and left offensive 'presents' at her front door. Sandra couldn't prove that her ex-

partner had done this, but he hinted about them when he contacted her. She changed her number, the locks on the doors and got some extra security.

The volunteer was very supportive, she increased her support hours and researched domestic abuse websites and helped the family to refer to K-dash.

Around the same time the little boy's behaviour deteriorated and he was excluded from the nursery because he was biting and showing aggressive behaviour to the staff and the children. So Sandra had to find another childcare provision as she had got herself a part time job.

The volunteer signposted Sandra to a child minder as she felt the boy would benefit from accessing a child care provision with fewer children. The volunteer suggested that the family contact the Family Information Service. Then, armed with child minders' information, Sandra went to see some of them.

The children soon settled into their new setting and within a short time the behaviour issues and biting ceased; the children appeared happier.

Sandra now has a full-time job, she has grown in confidence. Although we have closed the family file, Sally has since become Sandra's friend and they regularly meet for coffee.

Sandra's comments at the final review were:

" I was unsure about having someone coming into my home as I felt it would be intrusive and they would be telling me what to do and how to do it. However, I discovered this not to be the case. I found my volunteer very friendly - a good listener, knowledgeable and reliable. She was just what I needed as I was experiencing a few difficulties in my life at and I knew that what we discussed was confidential."

"A big thank you to Home-Start"

Presented by Barbara Gunning
Area co-ordinator for Rochester

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 including:

- 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
- 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
- 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 Clearance by the Disclosure & Barring Service
- Have attended a preparation course before being matched to a family

Many of our 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 indentifying the referral reasons will be completed over the phone

WHAT HAPPENS AFTER A REFERRAL?

- An area co-ordinator will visit the family to identify their needs and the support which Home-Start Medway could offer
- The area co-ordinator will then consider the referral and the 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
- The referrer receives a copy of the referral form
- Family support information will be given to the referrer, throughout the time of Home-Start Medway involvement
- Written referrer feedback will be 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' volunteer feedback (as written)

You can't take her away

A perfect match, a chance to talk. It's like having an extended family member. It keeps me going through the week.

Great support, friendly and easy talking person. Very helpful. I received lots of advice.

It was great to have a visit every week to play with the children and give me a few minutes 'space'. Thank you so much for helping me.

It couldn't have been a better match, absolutely brilliant. She understands me. She is unassuming, extremely supportive. She comes up with good ideas.

Giving me a little space, I think I will be able to do things when she is here.

She is lovely, I enjoy our conversations together. Her experience of twins is an asset.

It was a relief for me having the support. It helped me so much.

She's great, very helpful. We get on very well. An extra pair of hands. Someone to accompany me to appointments and to give emotional support.

She's brilliant. Someone to talk to, an extra pair of hands, eyes and ears.

She's fab, she's really good. A friendly female face.

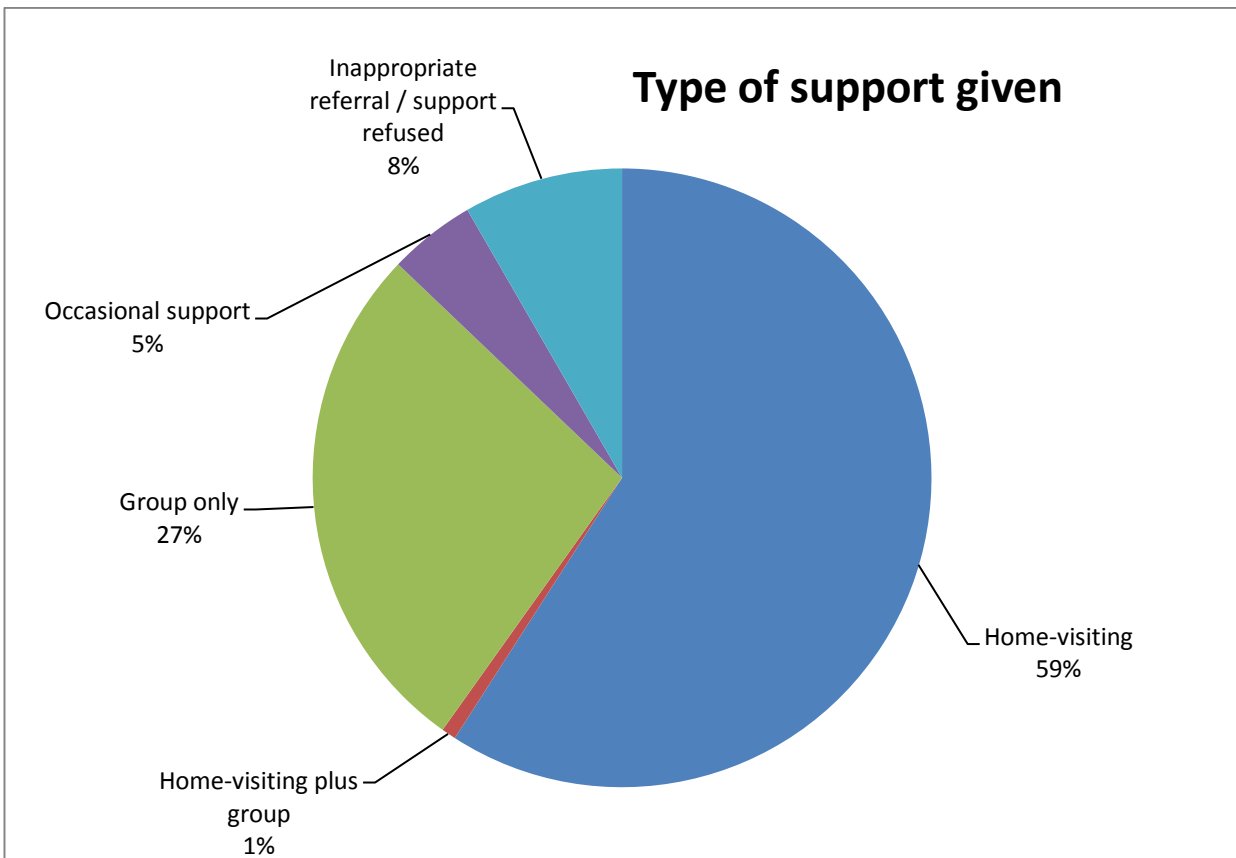
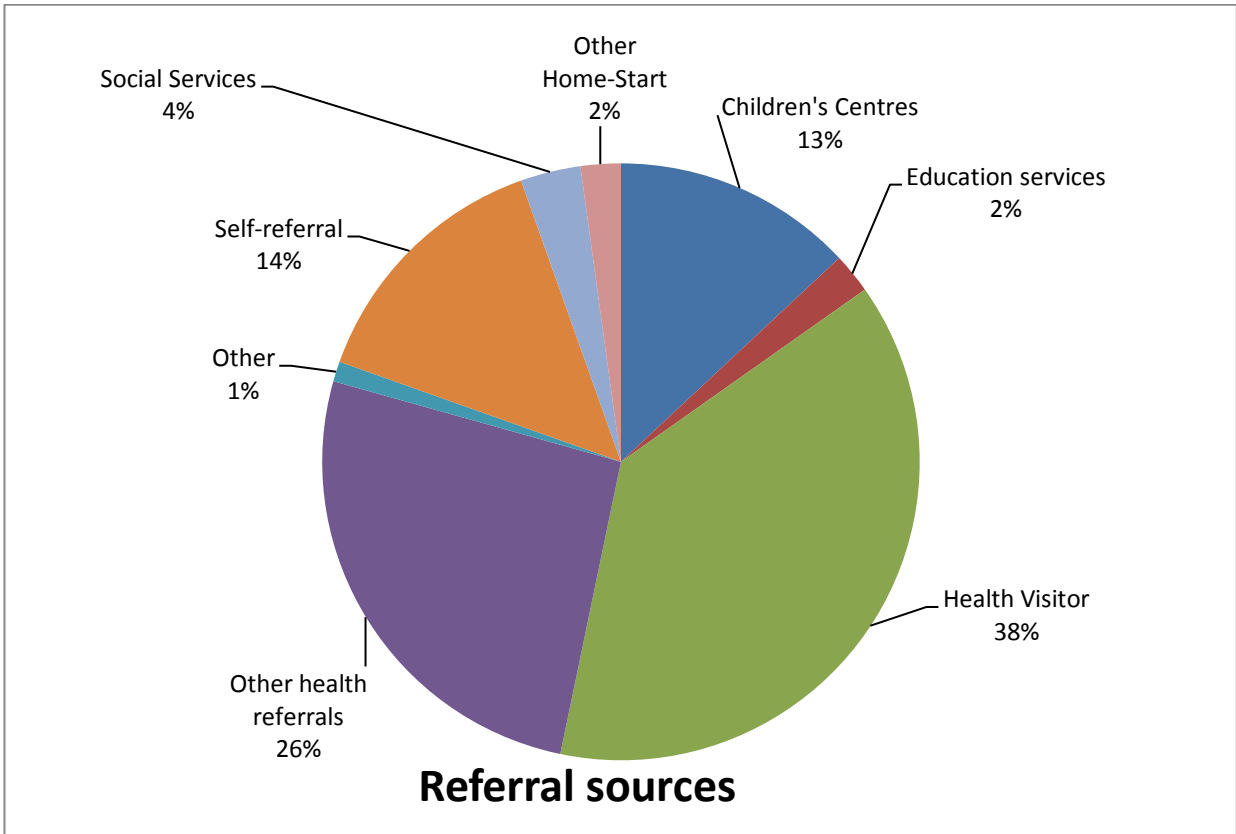
It's been helpful that she knows what is in Medway and she passes that onto me.

Referrer feedback (source – service review form)

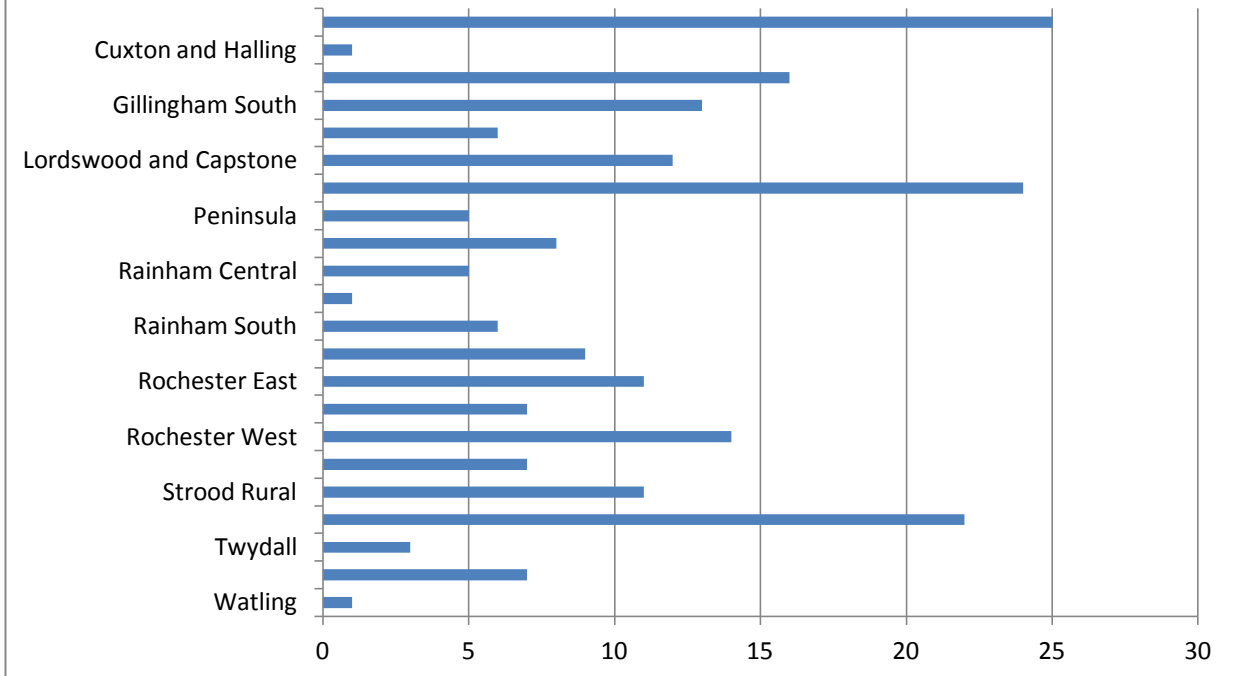
L was very happy with the Home-Start support given.

Thank you for the brief support you were able to offer whilst it was needed.

Vital statistics...



Home-Start Medway Families by Ward



Finance report

I have pleasure in presenting the Home-Start Medway Limited accounts for the financial year ended 31st March 2013.

Although not subject to audit, Home-Start Medway's records and financial statements have again been independently examined by Crossley & Co, in accordance with charity and company law.

In November our treasurer, Janet Pearson, resigned, our thanks to Janet for her contribution as treasurer and director.

Also, in November, my role changed from Office and Administration Co-ordinator to Office and Finance Co-ordinator. I have rapidly been learning the ropes and I was put in good stead by my predecessor; my thanks to Alison for her ongoing support.

Trustees have ensured continued careful financial management and strict attention to costs and budgets.

Medway Council continued to fund the scheme on an annual basis. This funding is now recorded as 'restricted' in our accounts.

Financial Fitness Champions – funding from Gillingham South Community Panel is restricted for a one year project.

Maintaining our current levels of service continues to be our priority, and increased fundraising efforts are ongoing.

Funding from BBC Children in Need was granted for only one year, and not three years as stated in last year's report.

Wendy Palmer
Office and finance co-ordinator

Accounts

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!