

**HOME-START WIRRAL
STRATEGIC PLAN 2012 – 2014**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Plan sets out the current position of Home-Start Wirral and details the strategic aims of the Organisation for the next 2 years.

The Scheme is now 11 years old and provides support to families who have at least one child less than 5 years of age. The service relies upon volunteers who receive a comprehensive training and support package. This continues to equip many individuals to move into paid employment with Home-Start and other organisations following a period of volunteer work.

Despite the apparent strengths of Home-Start's position the organisation is facing uncertainties over the period 2012 – 2014, not least due to the down turn in the current economic climate, increasing pressures upon local authorities and rapid pace of change within the children and family services sector.

This Plan sets out intended activity for the future centred around eight agreed strategic aims for continuing current services and incremental development of new provision. These are:-

1. To maintain current services to families in Wirral
2. To further develop the Home-Start Volunteering Scheme
3. To enhance the quality of support provided
4. To improve organisational sustainability
5. To work in partnership with statutory and voluntary organisations to develop services to combat poverty and improve the life chances of children
6. To work in partnership, with statutory and voluntary organisations, to safeguard and promote children's welfare
7. To recruit, train and develop volunteers (including Board Members) and staff
8. To ensure that the organisation meets the legal requirements of the charity commission and companies house

With this activity and focus these are the differences we will achieve:

- Families develop improved coping strategies and parents become more confident.
- Parents and children feel less marginalised.
- Families make better use of local services, are less isolated and have wider horizons.
- Children have fun and opportunities to enjoy new experiences.
- Stronger parent/child relationships are developed.
- Homes are safer with happier safer children.
- Individual volunteers are encouraged and supported into training and employment.
- Community capacity is increased: positive outcomes are achieved by local people for local people.
- Diverting families from more serious intervention by other statutory organisations.

A continuing focus upon fundraising and a careful strategic steer will be employed to ensure the continuing integration of Home-Start Wirral services with Wirral Children and Young Peoples Department, Children's Centres and Wirral NHS provision.

INTRODUCTION TO HOME-START WIRRAL'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2012-2014

All at Home-Start Wirral see the Plan as critical in ensuring the organisation's continued success, growth and sustainability. The Plan's aims will enable us to continue to develop our volunteers and staff and provide high quality support to families with young children. Together we all want to do practical things that improve the lives of families and help parents and children enjoy the precious and vital early years. Every parent and child deserves an equal chance to have a fulfilled life and to achieve their potential. Home-Start Wirral plays a part in making this happen.

This Plan reflects our commitment to continue to ensure Home-Start Wirral plays an active part in giving children the best start in life. In particular by contributing to the Wirral Children and Young People's Plan.

In 2012 Home-Start is as well placed as ever to have an impact on the lives of families today. To achieve our aims we need to work together with our partners in the public, private and voluntary sector, our funders, supporters, staff, volunteers, trustees and advisers. We welcome all your support.

Our multi-disciplinary management committee is drawn from members of the community, volunteer representatives and statutory advisers who bring a wealth of experience to the organisation. We have an incredibly dedicated and very experienced staff team and all these qualities will be essential to deliver this Strategic Plan. Everyone within the organisation is totally committed to achieving its aims.

Home-Start ensures consistent and high quality support for children and parents wherever they are and whatever their circumstances, by:

- Continuing to contribute to improving outcomes for children and their parents.
- Providing families with the opportunity to express their needs and comment on how Home-Start has helped to meet them through our Monitoring and Evaluation system.
- Meeting Quality Assurance targets is guaranteed through the Home-Start 'Agreement' which requires schemes to maintain certain practice standards to ensure the quality of Home-Start.
- Close monitoring and continuing training and development of all staff and volunteers.

We will monitor our progress through our annual Strategic Planning Day, our internal Monitoring and Evaluation database (MESH) and the Home-Start Quality Assurance System.

BACKGROUND

Home-Start UK was initiated in Leicester in 1973. Home-Start in Wirral was established in 1999 by members of the local community as a response to the needs identified in a social audit carried out by Charing Cross Methodist Neighbourhood Centre. We are a registered charity (1139517) and company limited by guarantee (7314767), funded and managed locally. Home-Start Wirral works within Home-Start Standards and Methods of Practice and the Home-Start Agreement and Quality Assurance System.

Since the scheme's inception in 2000 when Home-Start employed two staff and had an annual turnover of £77,000, the organisation has expanded and now employs 14 staff with an annual turnover of £450,000 in the 2011/12 financial year.

The number of families supported has steadily grown each year and services have expanded to meet local need. In the 2001/02 year we supported just 25 families and 67 children; compared to 1023 families and 1312 children in 2010/11.

The scheme, initially Home-Start Birkenhead, was set up to support families in the Birkenhead District; and expanded to become Home-Start North Wirral in 2005 with receipt of lottery funding. In 2009 we secured funding from Wirral Local Authority to provide family support to parents and children throughout Wirral and this led to a change of name for our charity to Home-Start Wirral. In November 2009 Wirral NHS funded Home-Start Wirral to provide a complementary service, Breastfeeding Peer Support.

We now have 4 family support co-ordinators each with specific responsibility for one of the 4 Districts – Birkenhead, Wallasey, South Wirral and West Wirral; and 3 breastfeeding peer support co-ordinators working across the borough.

The Home-Start Wirral Board of Trustees is legally and financially responsible for setting the strategic direction of the scheme and employing the staff. The Scheme Manager is responsible for the day-to-day management of the scheme and additional services.

Mission Statement

Home-Start Wirral believes that every parent should have the support they need in order to give their children the best possible start in life.

We aim to work in partnership with parents by supporting and encouraging them through the early years of family life.

Aims

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.

Home-Start Wirral plays an active part in giving children the best start in life. In particular by contributing to the Wirral Children and Young People's Plan. Our aim is to provide a preventative service, supporting families at the earliest opportunity and reduce the risk of crises that might result in statutory intervention.

The Home-Start Approach

Home-based visiting is essential to the Home-Start approach, which relies on a more realistic, flexible response and caring attitude, than on a clearly-defined method of working. The families visited, like the Home-Start volunteers, come from a wide range of educational, cultural and financial backgrounds.

The success of the service is based on 5 key foundations:

- **Focusing on Children Under 5**
Home-Start focuses its support on the early years, the most crucial time in a child's development.
- **Supporting Families in Their Own Homes**
Home-Start visits families in their own homes, where the dignity and identity of parents and their children can be protected, the individual needs of the family can be met and a parent's innate strengths encouraged.
- **Parents Supporting Parents**
Our committed and caring volunteers are all parents themselves. They are friendly, approachable people who other parents can trust and rely on to listen without judging, and help them gain confidence in their own abilities as parents.
- **Local Management**
Home-Start sees that families do better when they have the support of a strong community around them and that any support to families must be given in the context of the community in which they live. Home-Start Wirral is locally managed with the support of local volunteer trustees.
- **A Shared Ethos and Values**
All our people – trustees, management committee members, staff and volunteers work within and demonstrate the essential Home-Start ethos based on choice, openness, flexibility, partnership, encouragement, responsiveness and enjoyment; and have signed up to the Home-Start Code of Conduct.

Our Service

Home-Start Wirral's support for families is delivered by volunteers. They are recruited, trained (accredited through the Open College Network) and supported by a staff team of 14, comprising a Volunteer Development Officer, Co-ordinators, Administrators and Manager.

What Home-Start brings to the Community:

- Outreach to families: family support and breastfeeding peer support to support effective parenting.
- Partnership working and local expertise to enhance support for families.
- Trustees: local people selected, trained and guided to run a local service.
- Volunteers: local parents selected, trained and supervised to provide one to one support to other local parents.
- Added value: local and other funding and resources.

What do we offer?

Family Support

After attending an initial Home-Start course of preparation, family support volunteers are matched with one or two families, and visit for as long as is necessary, sometimes for a few months, but often for up to 12 months. Visits occur usually once a week for 2-3 hours. The approach varies according to the needs of each family and draws on the flexibility, good humour and imaginative skills of the volunteer. Talking with the parents, playing with the children, helping in the home or accompanying the family on outings or appointments, may all be offered. By sharing their time and friendship, volunteers offer families an opportunity to develop new relationships, ideas and skills.

Breastfeeding Peer Support

After attending an initial Home-Start course of preparation and completing the Breastfeeding Network Helper course, Unicef Baby Friendly training, and hospital induction volunteers offer information and support around breastfeeding during pregnancy and once the baby arrives. This is client centred support on the hospital wards, in the home and on the telephone.

How we do it:

- Provide tailored, personalised support to families, in their own homes, and Arrowe Park Hospital, promoting prevention and early intervention approaches to reduce health inequalities.
- Encourage wider social and support networks and opportunities for increased engagement in community life.
- Offer choices for parents and their children and opportunities for their voices to be heard.
- Offer consistent adult role models for parents and their children – other adults who care!
- Promote active citizenship, by involving local people in planning and provision.
- Ensure consistent, highly quality service through monitoring and quality assurance.

The difference we make:

- Families develop improved coping strategies and parents become more confident.
- Parents and children feel less marginalised.
- Families make better use of local services, are less isolated and have wider horizons.
- Children have fun and opportunities to enjoy new experiences, enhancing their social and emotional development.
- Stronger parent/child relationships are developed.
- Homes are safer with happier safer children.
- Reduced health inequalities
- Individual volunteers are encouraged and supported into training and employment.
- Families are supported to maximise and manage their income.
- Community capacity is increased: positive outcomes are achieved by local people for local people.

DELIVERING ON LOCAL PRIORITIES

The Wirral Children and Young People's Plan 2011-12 reflects national and local priorities for improving outcomes for children and young people. The Wirral Children's Trust brings together services for children and young people within the borough and focuses on improving outcomes for all children and young people. The delivery of integrated services for children and young people is supported by the Children's Trust at a strategic level – with joint planning and commissioning of effective child-centred services from a range of providers.

Wirral Children and Young People's Plan 2011-12 Our Vision

"To enable Wirral's children, young people and families to access services quickly in order to be secure, healthy, have fun and achieve their full potential."

Home-Start Wirral has the skills, longevity and proven method of service delivery to contribute to Wirral's vision to improve the lives of children, young people and their families, as outlined in their Children & Young People Plan 2011 - 12. This is a valued partnership and one which we look forward to strengthening further over the next 3 years.

Home-Start Wirral has an excellent track record of forming and working in effective and productive partnerships with statutory, voluntary and community agencies.

The organisation covers the same geographical areas as Wirral Borough Council

Wirral is home to about 76,000 children and young people aged 0-19. 1 in 4 of those children are living in poverty – around 17,000. Nearly 15,000 of these children and young people are under 16.

Roots & Wings (Wirral Child Poverty Strategy)

"As partners in the future of Wirral, we will work together to reduce the number of children and young people living in poverty and support them to build the foundations for prosperous, healthy and happy lives. We will also work together to raise the aspirations of all of our children and young people and their families so that their dreams for themselves and their communities can be achieved."

Home-Start Wirral is part of the local voluntary and community sector that is integral to any community. We believe that Home-Start Wirral contributes to and plays a part in:-

- Identifying the needs of children and parents by working closely with families.
- Developing local strategies for working in partnership.
- Identifying priorities when local services are being commissioned.
- Encouraging multi-agency, integrated working to give parents choice.
- Assisting parents to play an active role in the development of services and the scrutiny of their effectiveness.
- Encouraging local Commissioners of Services to build the capacity and adopt the principle of full cost recovery.

Home-Start Wirral will continue to follow trends closely to identify new initiatives that can provide long term funding streams and the stability and continuity that is essential for long term sustainability.

We believe Home-Start Wirral is ideally placed and ready to respond to any future changes in trends and seize the opportunities this will provide.

KEY STRATEGIC AIMS & OBJECTIVES

The scheme's key strategic aims and the specific objectives for the following year are:

KEY STRATEGIC AIM	SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES
1. To maintain current services to families in Wirral	<p>1.1 To continue to deliver and maintain current services</p> <p>1.2 To review existing services</p> <p>1.3 Review job roles where required</p>
2. To further develop the Home Start Volunteering Scheme	<p>2.1 To ensure we have volunteers in the right numbers and with the right skills by providing additional recruitment and training</p> <p>2.2 To review and update our training and development programme to ensure that our volunteers have the skills and knowledge they need to achieve positive outcomes for parents and children</p> <p>2.3 To develop volunteers through regular support and supervision</p> <p>2.4 Work hard to increase the diversity of volunteers to reflect the composition of the Wirral population more closely</p>
3. To enhance the quality of support provided	<p>3.1 Continue to use the monitoring and evaluation systems and use the data provided to demonstrate the effectiveness and impact of our service</p> <p>3.2 Use MESH to show Families how they have progressed with support from Home-Start</p> <p>3.3 Analyse feedback from families to improve the quality of our service</p> <p>3.4 To develop improved website</p> <p>3.5 To ensure staff continue their professional development and receive training and supervision appropriate for their role</p>
4. To improve organisational sustainability	<p>4.1 To maintain a dedicated workforce of staff and volunteers who are valued and managed appropriately</p> <p>4.2 To continue to adapt and respond to needs and opportunities whilst maintaining the Home-Start ethos and integrity</p> <p>4.3 To secure funding to ensure the financial viability of the scheme</p> <p>4.4 To ensure appropriate financial controls are in place that continue to meet the needs of the organisation and funding bodies.</p> <p>4.5 Annually review the Finance Strategy</p>
5. To work in partnership, with statutory and voluntary organisations to develop services to combat poverty and improve the life chances of children	<p>5.1 To ensure appropriate representation from Home-Start Wirral</p> <p>5.2 To identify organisations with similar aims and desired outcomes</p> <p>5.3 To explore ways of working together on identified projects that will be of mutual benefit to the organisations and the</p>

	<p>families we support</p> <p>5.4 Ensure clarity of role of each partner and expected input and outcomes</p> <p>5.5 To apply quality assurance principles to partnership working</p> <p>5.6 To undertake evaluation of partnership projects and adjust delivery accordingly</p> <p>5.7 To work with families to ensure the best possible start in life for children to improve their life chances</p> <p>5.8 To work with families to maximise family income</p>
6. To work in partnership, with statutory and voluntary organisations, to safeguard and promote children's welfare	<p>6.1 Build and strengthen our partnerships and collaborative work with voluntary, community and faith organisations; and the statutory sector</p> <p>6.2 Work in partnership to deal with the early signs of concern within families that may lead to an incident where a child or young person may be harmed</p>
7. To recruit, train and develop Board Members and staff when necessary.	<p>7.1 Identify gaps in Trustee & Adviser representation</p> <p>7.2 Ensure staffing levels accurately reflect the needs of the scheme</p> <p>7.3 To review staff and management committee training needs</p> <p>7.4 To develop staff through regular supervision, annual appraisals and appropriate training</p>
8. To ensure that the organisation meets the legal requirements of the charity commission and companies house	<p>8.1 To undertake quarterly Health and Safety risk assessments to identify any risks to the organisation that needs to be addressed</p> <p>8.2 Maintain CRB policies and procedures</p> <p>8.3 Ensure that Trustees and staff are operating to equal opportunities legislation</p> <p>8.4 To ensure that all other government legislation e.g. HRMC/Companies House/Charities Commission are complied with</p>

A further breakdown of the objectives can be found in the annual operational plan.

For more information and further copies of the
Home-Start Wirral Strategic Plan 2012-2014,

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