

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 5414484 (England and Wales)
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1109262

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES
AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31st MARCH 2021
FOR HOME-START CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE**

HOME-START CENTRAL BEDFORDSHIRE

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES

For the Year Ended 31 March 2021

The trustees who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the recommendations of the Statement of Recommended Practice (FRS 102).

OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

Objectives and aims

Home-Start Central Bedfordshire (HSCB) offers support, friendship and practical help to parents and children. To help give children the best possible start in life, HSCB supports parents as they grow in confidence, strengthen their relationships with their children and widen their links with the local community.

The objects for which Home-Start Central Bedfordshire was established are:

- to safeguard, protect and preserve the good health, both mental and physical of children and parents of children
- to prevent cruelty to or maltreatment of children
- to relieve sickness, poverty and need amongst children and parents of children
- to promote the education of the public in better standards of childcare within the areas of Bedfordshire, Luton and Milton Keynes.

In setting our objectives and planning our activities, the Trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit.

Charitable activities

HSCB offers a unique service, recruiting and training volunteers - who are usually parents themselves —to visit families at home to offer informal, friendly and confidential support.

In addition to our family support work we also work to reduce the impact of domestic abuse through preventative education and through providing one to one support and group work for survivors of domestic abuse.

ACHIEVEMENT AND PERFORMANCE

Family Support Service

We support parents as they learn to cope, improve their confidence and build better lives for their children. The benefits of our support include improved health and well being and better family relationships.

HSCB recruits, trains and manages volunteers with parenting experience to support vulnerable families. After attending an initial twenty four hour Preparation Course Home- Start volunteers are carefully matched with a family, and visit for a period of time with a planned set of outcomes to work towards.

We provide early help support to families but also work with families where children are “child in need” or on a child protection plan.

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We work in partnership with a number of other agencies and receive referrals from other professionals such as Health Visitors, Social Care, Children's Centres and schools.

A volunteer is carefully matched with the family giving regard to such matters as their own skills, experience and availability. They will visit the family in their home for two to three hours each week.

The type of support depends on the family's needs.

This could be:

- Emotional support to help parents find ways to manage and resolve problems
- Listening visits for parents with mental ill health
- Encouragement and support to attend Children's Centres and local resources
- Assistance with attending medical appointments
- Advocacy
- Assistance and mentoring with managing children's behaviour
- Modelling good parenting
- Embedding parenting strategies e.g after attending parenting programmes
- Assistance and mentoring with developing household routines
- Assistance and mentoring with cleaning and decluttering the house
- Help with budgeting, nutrition and meal planning, cooking and making the home safe
- Translation services on an informal basis
- School readiness
- Support both in and after leaving Refuge for parents and children who have fled domestic abuse

As a non-statutory organization many families find being supported by a parent volunteer less threatening and stigmatizing. Research has shown that our support increases parental confidence in bringing up children, enables families to access local services, reduces isolation for parents and children and generally increases resilience in families making a lasting impact.

Home-Visiting Support

Lockdown and other restrictions due to the pandemic meant that we were not able to offer our volunteer home visiting service. As a result we quickly adapted our service to phone and online support. In order to ensure that our volunteers were equipped to work in this way we gained a grant from Beds and Luton Community Foundation which enabled us to develop and deliver phone support training – Phone Start.

However some families elected to wait until we could return to support in the home.

At 31st March 2021:

127 families were referred from **Central Bedfordshire** for home visiting support.

65 families had volunteer support

33 families received office support

29 were waiting to be matched

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For the Year Ended 31 March 2021

47 families from Luton were referred for support

At 31st March 2021

26 families had volunteer support

13 families received office support

8 were waiting to be matched

The SEND Parent Mentor project began in September 2020 as an 18 month pilot project funded by Central Beds Council. Parents of children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities received an average of 6 weeks support by trained volunteers who were also parents of SEND children, with the objectives of offering emotional support and practical help and knowledge around the pathways and services available.

Over the summer of 2020 we recruited and trained a cohort of 12 SEND Parent Mentor volunteers.

On 31st March 2021

10 families were waiting for support

30 families had received volunteer support

11 had received office support

We have a robust monitoring and evaluation system based on the Outcomes Star which tracks each families journey of change in order to ensure that the support given is sufficient and correct. The type of support given may change at review. This year the main reasons for wanting support were coping with feeling isolated, coping with mental ill health and managing children's behaviour.

The five parameters tracked were parent's health and well-being, children's health and well-being, more confident and positive parenting and improvements in the family home.

Domestic Abuse Services

The Need

It is estimated that one in four women and one in six men will experience domestic abuse at some point in their lifetime. This may include years of psychological abuse.

Children are often the silent victims of domestic abuse. In homes where domestic violence occurs, 90% of children are in the same or next room during an incident.

A further 62% of children living with domestic abuse are directly harmed by the perpetrator of the abuse, in addition to the harm caused by witnessing the abuse of others. In Central Bedfordshire alone, in 2015 there were 3,238 police incidents of domestic abuse recorded - over eight incidents reported per day. An estimated 350 children live with high risk domestic abuse and a further 300 living with medium risk abuse that are currently visible to services. "Central Bedfordshire Council Domestic Abuse Strategy 2016-20

Our response

Alongside our home visiting service for women and their children in Refuge and after leaving Refuge we also were part of a consortium with other domestic abuse services in the Bedfordshire area to deliver services for victims across the area. The project was called Safety Net.

Our part in this was to deliver the **Own My Life course** (funded by the Office of the Police and

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Crime Commissioner).

Own My Life

Own My Life is a ten week programme. The purpose of the course is to educate and empower women who have been subject to domestic abuse to regain ownership of their own lives.

Due to the pandemic we were no longer able to run the Pattern Changing courses as they are not designed for online delivery. However we were able to be a part of the first cohort to be trained to deliver the new Own My Life course which has similar content to Pattern Changing but was also possible to be delivered online through videos and individual and group work.

We began the first delivery of the course online over the summer of 2020. The course was very well received and as it was run in an evening was accessible to women all around the county including those who were working during the day or looking after children.

We ran five Own My Life courses between July 2020 and March 2021. All were held online and were attended by 43 women from different areas of Bedfordshire. Significant increases in emotional and physical health were reported.

Helping Hands

Helping Hands is a six week course developed by Women's Aid for children aged between 7 and 11.

The objectives of the course are for children

- to understand their right to a safe home environment,
- develop resilience and good self esteem,
- to realise how their behaviour affects others and
- to learn to manage strong feelings without violence and gain a knowledge of non violent problem solving skills.

Due to the lockdown and later restrictions on outside services entering schools unfortunately we had to suspend delivery of Helping Hands.

However we are planning to restart the course in the autumn and have adapted some of the materials to be particularly helpful for children who are experiencing mental health issues and anxiety.

Mental Ill Health Services

A significant number of our referrals continued to be for families affected by mental ill health. Not surprisingly the pandemic caused levels of anxiety to increase for many families.

For some parents having the regular weekly call from a volunteer to provide emotional support and to listen made a real difference. Some volunteers also helped with home schooling activities using the internet or sending ideas of activities for families to do together particularly during the periods of lockdown.

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For the Year Ended 31 March 2021

Brighter Start Group for women with post natal depression and anxiety

As we were not able to deliver a face to face Brighter Start group this was moved to an online group where the women were able to talk through issues and concerns and to gain support and friendship from each other.

We also played games as a way of fun into the evenings in what was an otherwise anxious year. We are planning to restart the group in our building in September and to take on new members. **9** women attended the group over the year. (15 children in the family).

Videos

We realized that a good way of reaching families was through producing short films and advertising them on line. This resulted from a contract with Central Beds Council to deliver training to parents about the development of the teenage brain and how it affects behaviour. This also included strategies to help parents. Our target group was 300 parents in the South Beds area. Soon after beginning delivery of the workshops the pandemic occurred and we were not able to continue. We therefore developed the **Teenage Brain workshop** online using animations on our Youtube channel. This resulted in a greatly expanded reach (2300 views) and good feedback from parents.

Building Resilience for Children videos

We therefore applied for a small grant from BBC Children in Need to develop two short animated taster videos around helping children with resilience. Parents could then click through to our website for expanded help and ideas to help their children's emotional health. These again proved to be a popular way of reaching parents.

Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities

Over the year we continued to deliver the Empowering Parents Empowering Communities programme (EPEC) on behalf of Central Bedfordshire Council.

(EPEC) is a programme from the Centre for Parent and Child Support, South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust. EPEC parenting courses are led by local parent facilitators who have completed accredited EPEC training and receive ongoing training, supervision and support to ensure safe, high quality, and effective practice.

Parents attend nine weekly two-hour sessions. During these sessions, parents learn strategies for improving the quality of their interactions with their child, reducing negative child behaviour and increasing their efficacy and confidence in parenting. The sessions involve group discussions, demonstrations, role play and homework assignments.

EPEC is underpinned by rigorous research and practice evidence showing a significant impact on children's social, emotional and behavioural outcomes, parenting, family resilience and social capital. The programme encourages engagement in other local services and wider community resources. EPEC has been independently rated as an effective, low cost parenting programme (EiF, 2016, AIFS, 2015).

Impact

- Improved parenting and family resilience through teaching well-evidenced parenting strategies and methods.
- Greater understanding of managing family stress.

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- Increased social capital and employability through training parent group facilitators.

As with our other group work we had to suspend face to face group work due to the CoVid 19 pandemic. We have worked hard to adapt the programme to delivery online and were able to continue to deliver both the Being a Parent and Being a Parent of a Child with Autism programmes. The Autism course has proved to be particularly popular and using an online evening delivery has also meant that more parents are able to attend.

Number parents attending Being a Parent	23
Number of parents attending Being a Parent of a Child with Autism	41

Financial Help for Families

More families suffered from financial issues over the last year with some work being furloughed and others losing employment. We were able to help through two schemes.

1. We were pleased to be chosen to be the delivery partner for Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation Surviving Winter appeal and gave out £4000 in grants to families to help with fuel bills and warm clothing and bedding.
2. We also gained a grant from Home-Start UK to give away £1045 of goods, toys and caring bags to families.

Volunteers

This year has been a difficult year for everybody and we are therefore very grateful for the selflessness of our volunteers who have given them time to help others. Some volunteers have had to rest from their role over the year though as they had other responsibilities such as home schooling children or were unwell themselves. Others were less comfortable giving phone support and preferred to wait until we are able to return to home visiting.

Volunteer training

Volunteers are at the very heart of our service delivery. We adapted the Preparation Course to be delivered online and ran two courses. This year we recruited and trained a further **19** volunteers (7 home visiting and 12 SEND Parent Mentors).

Over 20/21

No of volunteers in Central Beds	76
No of volunteers in Luton	25
No of SEND volunteers	12
TOTAL	118

Our volunteers come from a wide range of social, educational and employment backgrounds. They are also from different age groups and cultures. Many use volunteering as a way into work or education particularly in the fields of social care, nursing and midwifery. We usually provide a placement each year to a BSc Social Work student from the University of Bedfordshire but this

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year have not been able to due to CoVid19.

Our volunteers attend a 24 hour Preparation Course before being placed with families which includes training on safeguarding, domestic abuse, confidentiality and equal opportunities and also attend a mandatory yearly safeguarding update and ongoing training. They complete diary sheets after each visit and have 6-8 weekly supervision with a paid Co-ordinator. There are regular ongoing training sessions throughout the year both in house and also from outside speakers.

Training

We have had a full training programme this year both as a way of ensuring a professional service and also to keep our volunteers engaged and to feel a part of the Home-Start community. All of the sessions have been delivered online. We have particularly focused on Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and we have had a variety of outside speakers. Our training has included talks from the Sexual Assault Referral Centre, an Own My Life taster session, Dyslexia and Autism and Puberty. We have been grateful for some small training grants which have enabled us to be able to offer a number of training sessions on Autism and also Suicide Awareness.

Our thanks to our volunteers without whom there would be no Home-Start.

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Financial Review

We have been able to maintain funding from contracts and grants to continue our main projects. In addition we have been able to add in other services, specifically around helping families and children through the pandemic. This has been possible through grants and donations from businesses and the public. These funding streams have also enabled us to be able to distribute fuel grants such as through the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation Surviving Winter project and other goods to benefit families in financial need.

Our running costs such as staff and volunteer mileage expenses have been greatly reduced due to not being able to travel as a result of the pandemic which has added to our reserves.

We also have the Helping Hands projects on hold at the moment until we are able to return to going into schools. Donations for this project are being held until that time.

Reserves policy

The Trustees have considered the likely risks to the charity over the year and have designated reserves of £250,000 as last year in order that the charity may be able to continue to operate or to wind down if appropriate. These include twelve months operating expenditure, pension fund deficit on closure, redundancy payments, equipment replacement and rent and relocation costs if it was necessary to move our premises.

Plans for the future

We are fortunate to keep our core funding for the coming year from the Central Bedfordshire Council. They have also continued the funding for EPEC. BBC Children in Need grant will come to an end in January and further work will be funded from reserves.

We continue to seek other sources of income to improve the sustainability of our funding and to finance new projects to meet the needs identified in the community. With the likelihood of a financial depression in the future, due to Coronavirus, there is uncertainty as to the impact this

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will have on our funding and the way we can continue our work. We are fortunate in having sufficient reserves to help us through this difficult time.

The work of HSCB would not be possible without the generous support of organisations, trusts and individuals in giving grants, money, quilts, toys and necessary items for our families in need to whom we are very grateful.

A special thank you to our wonderful volunteers who donated both time and expenses.

Future Plans and Risks

Our main risk is from the current COVID-19 pandemic. As yet the long term financial impact for us as a charity is unknown.

We also anticipate that the numbers of families requiring support will increase as we come out of the pandemic and that families who were already vulnerable have become more vulnerable. On the positive side we have been able to innovate and adapt and have learned new ways of working that are successful and increase accessibility. We will continue to look for new effective ways to help families as we move forward.

**STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT
REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

Structure and Governance

HSCB is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 5th April 2005 (amended 9 June 2015). Including the activities of its predecessor organisation HSBC has been delivering family support services since its launch in 1984.

The members of the Board of Trustees of the Charity during the year ended 31st March 2021 were:

- Sue Fuchter Chair
- Enid Miller Treasurer
- Alison Kelly
- Patricia Marchbank
- Alison Packer
- Peter Raza

All of the Trustees of the Charity are also directors of the charity and their responsibilities include all the responsibilities of directors under the Companies Acts and of Trustees under the Charities Act.

Day to day management of the charity is delegated to the Chief Executive Linda Johnson

Company Secretary

Linda Johnson

Staff during the year ending March 2021

Staff	Role	Additional responsibilities
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Linda Johnson	Chief Executive	Own My Life /Brighter Start
Janine Henderson	Co-ordinator Luton	Co-ordinator South Beds
Clare Diggins	Co-ordinator Mid Beds	Own My Life
Colette Fletcher	EPEC	Co-ordinator South Beds
Annette Brown	Co-ordinator South Beds	
Margaret McShane	Administrator	

Reference and Administrative details

Registered Company Number:

5414484 (Registered in England and Wales)

Registered Charity Number

1109262

Registered Office

The Annexe,
Downside Neighbourhood Centre,
Oakwood Ave.,
Dunstable
LU5 4AS

Independent Examiner

BW Wilson
Chartered Accountant
4 Saturn Close
Leighton Buzzard
LU7 3UU

Bankers

CAF Bank Ltd
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4JQ

Cambridge and Counties Bank
Charnwood Court
New Walk
Leicester
LE1 6TE

Shawbrook Bank Ltd.
Lutea House
Warley Hill Business Park
The Drive
Great Warley
Brentwood
Essex
CM13 3BE

Nationwide Building Society
Kings Park Road
Moulton Park
Northampton
NN3 6NW

Hampshire Trust Bank

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55 Bishopsgate
London
EC2N 3AS