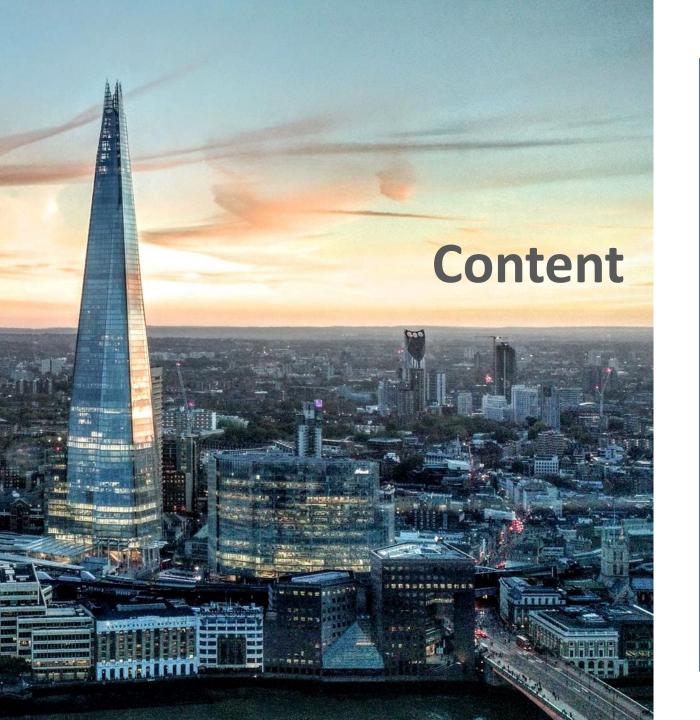
Annual Report 2020 - 2021

HART Southwark



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What We Do

Coping with pregnancy, a new-born or young children, alongside emotional, financial or housing issues, can be challenging.

We focus on early intervention with families at this critical moment, providing high quality support for babies, children and their parents in the most deprived areas of Southwark.

Our Approach

Our approach centres around local trained volunteers who are themselves parents and share our families' lived experience of raising children in complex circumstances.

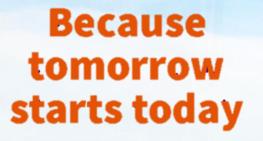
A volunteer would visit a family once a week for two to three hours, over 6 to 9 months, offering practical and emotional support, to help parents, with at least one child under five, work through challenging times and find ways to cope and flourish.

Our Networks

Our greatest strength lie in our reputation in the borough which enables us to successfully work in partnership with Children's Centres, health professionals, and voluntary and statutory agencies to support families that are hard to engage but have been identified as in need of targeted support.

OUR MISSION

To provide practical and emotional support to struggling parents enabling them to create happier lives for their children.





Chair's Report – Sarah Messenger

It has been a remarkable, challenging and yet inspiring year in so many ways and I could not be prouder of the resilience, creativity, compassion, and sheer determination that we have demonstrated as an organisation. That is due to the brilliance of our staff team, volunteers and of course families who, in circumstances none of us could have envisaged let alone planned for, decided that they would do everything they could to look after each other, make things work and get each other through. In the early days of the pandemic when fear and confusion were all around us, the staff team worked tirelessly to swiftly adapt our ways of working and reach out to families and volunteers to keep the show on the road. It is sad that for some families, HSS staff and volunteers were the only people they saw in the spring of last year but also a strong testament to the importance of the relationships we build and the human empathy that underpins all our work.

I know that the impact of the pandemic is still being felt and experienced by all of us and the challenges are still there. This isn't over but I know that the learning we have gained and the resilience we have built will stand us in good stead to continue our work. There is a difficult winter ahead and the economic effects of the past 18 months will continue to impact hardest on the most vulnerable in society; organisations like HSS will be needed as much as ever and we are committed to being there.

Amongst the staff team, we have welcomed some new colleagues over the past few months, and we are delighted to have Klaudia Hajduk, Helen Glanville, Ola Adegbenro and Luciana Schwitzer as part of the team. We are also very happy to welcome back Juliet Thompson to continue our work with volunteers. A special mention should go to Becca Jones, who was appointed as Team Manager in May and has done a brilliant job in her new role in the most difficult of circumstances. On the other side, we have also said goodbye to colleagues and the trustees would like to thank them for everything they have contributed to HSS. One of the many downsides to the past year has been the limited opportunities for the trustees, especially the newer ones, to meet the staff team face to face. Whilst Teams and Zoom have enabled working life to go on, we have missed the chance to interact directly with colleagues, but we remain hugely impressed by their work and secure in the knowledge that the organisation is in very safe hands.

All our funders, large and small, are integral to us being able to do the work we do, and we appreciate support from everyone. We are pleased that our work continues to resonate with funders such as The National Lottery Community Fund and BBC Children in Need and we value their support. I would like to thank Henry Smith for the funding they have provided for 3 fiscal years and Peter Minet for their award of unrestricted funding using a user-friendly approach to their applications that makes life so much easier for small organisations like HSS. I also want to thank United St Saviours for switching their funding to unrestricted as a response to the pandemic and supporting us with both of our London Funder bids. Other individuals have excelled in their fundraising activities, and we are grateful for all their efforts.

Finally, I want to thank my trustee colleagues. Many of them are new to HSS and collectively they have supported Cheryl and I to make sure we survived and indeed prospered throughout the challenges of the past year. Every trustee brings valuable knowledge, experience and insight which collectively is so valuable to the organisation, and we have an ambitious and exciting year ahead to build even greater levels of sustainability and efficiency into the way the organisation operates.

Forward – *Cheryl Rhodes, Director*

The year 2020-21 has highlighted the strength of grass roots organisations such as Home-Start to meet the unprecedented challenges that the pandemic thrust on our local community. Our team worked incredibly hard to ensure no child or family that we worked with were alone or had their basic needs unmet. Families told us that we were often the only support they had during the various lockdowns they experienced reducing their sense of isolation and ensuring they always had someone they could rely on.

Our ability to respond to immediate physical and emotional challenges that people face has been invaluable. We were enabled to do this by a powerful response from trusts and foundations who came together as London Funders to provide financial support to small charities enabling us to swiftly respond to families' needs in highly practical ways. We were able to provide families with supermarket vouchers, baby packs, play and learning resources, gas and electric payments and give each family a Kindle Fire providing online capability. We also funded parents who suffered with their mental health to access online counselling services.

Initially we moved all our support to video and telephone support and suspended new referrals to ensure that none of the families we worked with were at risk. As time went on, we began an e-friending service and developed a range of online early learning groups to engage children and help parents with isolation. Our volunteers met virtually monthly, and we were able to engage several partners to provide virtual training to ensure their development even when we were physically distanced. We also worked with some early years specialists to develop the Being Together programme which helps parents to play with their children using everyday items around the home. This initiative enabled parents to engage with children's development, as well as helping children develop skills they would normally have learnt at pre-school.

Working virtually with families and volunteers ensured we stayed connected but has not been a replacement for compassionate relationship-based support delivered in the home. Our challenge as we have moved through 2021 has been to resume our core support initially in open spaces and latterly in the home as parents have told us that seeing others face to face is crucial to them. We are actively working to broaden our offer in line with community needs to ensure our ongoing relevance, effectiveness and community purpose. The Board of Trustees has been reinvigorated and are actively working on 3 strategic areas of: Service Development, Financial Sustainability and Communications (including developing a digital strategy). These groups will work together with key personnel to ensure a holistic approach to growing services, funding the work and communicating with our stakeholders to encourage broader participation, partnership and individual giving.

We have come through these last 18 months as staff, as an organisation having learnt a lot about ourselves and our ability to adapt, as well as about our community. I want to thank our staff team, our volunteers, trustees and our funders (however large or small) for making a huge difference to children and their families in Southwark through their dedication and commitment.

In 2020-2021

Our Impact

2020 has been a difficult year for everyone and more so for our families. While our core model relies on personal face to face support, the pandemic and lockdown meant that we had to find new ways to reach and support our families.

We reviewed our engagement processes shifting our support to existing families online and gradually reintroduced volunteer support where possible. Crucially families had uninterrupted support throughout lockdown.

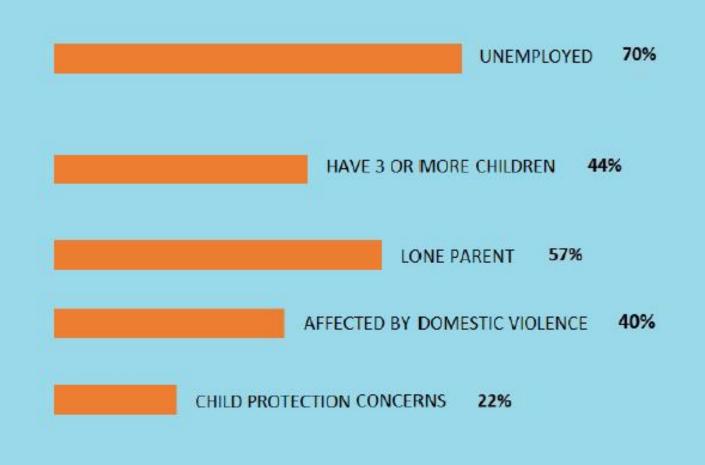
While volunteers continued to support families, some faced a reduction in their capacity due to childcare and home-schooling demands. Family Support staff stepped up their direct work with families to bridge the gap.

We are proud that were we able to continue to deliver our existing programmes such as Core Support, Bump to Babe and Made of Money.

To address the effects of digital exclusion we provided 100 tablets and Wi-Fi access to families that needed it, to continue providing our support, help families stay connected and enable children carry on their learning.

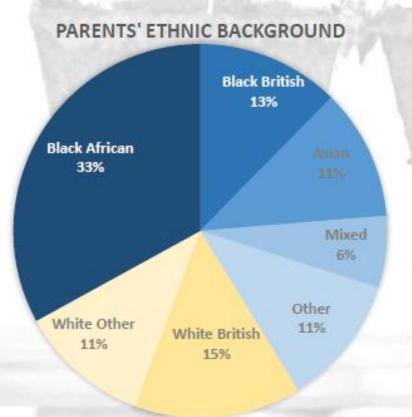
Some of our families also saw their income affected and so toaddress food poverty we distributed £6,000 worth of supermarket vouchers and referred 41 of our families to Food Banks, to help parents struggling to provide for their families during lockdown.

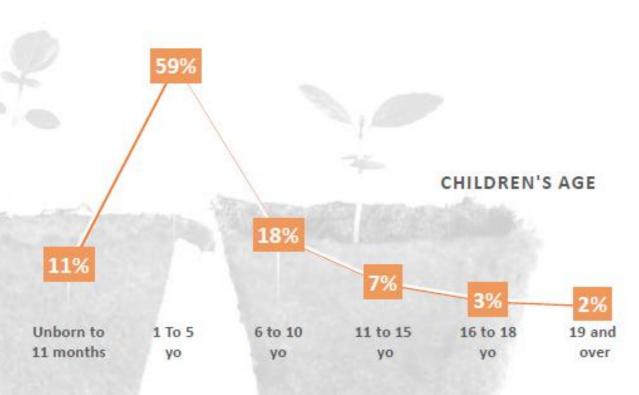




Family Circumstances

75% of our families are from Black, Asian and other minority ethnic groups, which is well matched by the 67% of volunteers from similar backgrounds.





As we work with the whole family, the 30% of the children who are over the age of 5 also benefited from a safer, happier environment at home and a positive outlook from their parents.



Families' prevalent conditions

Family Outcomes

Involvement in children's development, learning and socialising		72%	
Improved parent's confidence and self-esteem	<mark>69</mark>	9%	
Accessing local services	68	3%	
Managing children's behaviour	<mark>67%</mark>)	
Coping with loneliness and social isolation	58%		
Better able to manage stress caused by conflict in the family		<mark>78%</mark>	
Better able to manage the household budget		<mark>77%</mark>	
Parent improved ability to handle the day-to-day running of the h	nome	72%	
Coping with extra work caused by multiple birth and children	<mark>65%</mark>		
Coping with child's physical health			86%
Coping with child's mental health		83	3%
Coping with adult physical health	<mark>62%</mark>		
Coping with adult mental health	61%		

"Thank you so much. Everything Home-start have done for me and my baby has been so kind. My husband and I have not had a lot of kindness and you have seen the best in us and never been down on us when things have been hard." **A mum**

A family story

We received a referral for a young mother who had just had her second baby and was looking after her four-year-old son. The referral came from Social Services following a physical assault from her partner whilst pregnant. A child protection plan was in place as the dad, although not living in the family home, had an ongoing drug misuse problem.

There were concerns around Joy's mental health, and potential post-natal depression as she felt isolated and overwhelmed by the added responsibilities of another child and the anxiety of raising two children alone and had initially indicated that she may give her daughter up for adoption.

Following an initial visit from our Family Support Coordinator, to carry out a detailed needs analysis, several objectives were identified together with Joy to adequately support the family for the next nine months. We agreed to provide Joy with emotional support to help her build her resilience, give her weekly practical support with her shopping and helping her attend appointments and activities to reduce her isolation and to provide support with the developmental needs of the children, to help her son adjust to his new baby sister and enable her to feel more connected and confident in her parenting role. The support was initially delivered in the home for two hours a week, switching to video calls and remote support when lockdown was announced.

The co-ordinator worked closely with Joy in a family-led way. Through listening and informal conversations, the co-ordinator was able to encourage Joy to build her confidence in her own parenting abilities, improving her bond with her baby daughter and enabling her to address her concerns around her son's ability to learn from home by providing a free Kindle Fire and accessing online activities to support his learning. Joy was able to widen her social circle and feel more connected in the community through support to attend online groups and activities for herself and her baby including weekly Storytelling and Song-time and Baby massage and as lockdown eased by attending outdoor activities at the children's centre and the local park.

We also provided other support to help Joy manage her day-to-day life including providing vouchers to help with heating costs and baby needs, helping her access a refurbished computer, enabled her to access feeding babies' groups, and referrals to Little Village, baby banks and food banks to support the family's needs.

By the end of the nine months of support, Joy felt confident in caring for her two children, having been able to improve her children's routines and felt less isolated as she built a social network and connected with other local mothers.

Bump to Babe

Our Bump to Babe (BtB) project provides weekly support to women in their third trimester of pregnancy, and families with young babies. Volunteers are trained specifically in pregnancy care, attachment, developmental milestones of babies, and perinatal mental health.

The pandemic was incredibly challenging for pregnant women and families with newborns; from not being able to have a supporter in hospital during labour, to not being able to attend baby groups and activities, it was a time when many new parents became increasingly isolated. New parents are at an increased risk of deteriorating mental health – particularly if there are pre-existing conditions or additional vulnerabilities. The isolation and anxiety caused by COVID-19 meant that many of our BtB families, became overwhelmed.

For many families, the Home-start Southwark support from staff and volunteers was the only regular contact they had with someone after discharge from midwifery. The regular video calls were a crucial part of navigating life with a new baby. Support was carefully risk assessed depending on individual circumstances at regular intervals to enable families to meet with their volunteers, initially outside, as restrictions eased. As a response to the needs of our BtB families, we set up regular online baby massage classes and one-to-one sessions, online baby song-time groups, and as restrictions eased, a weekly walk and talk group.

Positive outcomes for BtB families this year

Equipment sourced to set up the home for new babies: cots, buggies, clothing, nappies etc.

Grants for childcare during labour and recovery – this prevented children needing emergency foster care.

Babies stepped down from Child Protection Plans following progress made.

Parents completed online education – including ESOL – leading to increased ability to express themselves in multiagency meetings and progression into further studies.

A Bump to Babe Story

Hannah and her partner John were referred to Home-Start by Family Early Help due to concerns around John's mental health, drug use and bipolar disorder. The couple had two children, Ben aged 2 and Karen 4.

John explained he was worried when Hannah gave birth, he added "I didn't feel safe with the children on my own because when the baby cried, I wanted to hurt myself." Hannah also needed support with the new baby and John's disability, she said, "it's like having three children because I have to look after him too and I'm so tired all the time doing everything, we just fight all the time." Hannah and John were also struggling to manage their finances as well as managing Ben's behaviour, setting routines and eating habits. This increased their stress leading to missed appointments and the family not engaging with services and support available in the community.

National lockdown began very shortly after the family's referral, which added a strain on our services. However due to the high support needs and the assessed risk of potential harm in the family, we continued to provide face-to-face support through doorstop visits and meeting outside where possible as well as twice a week zoom calls. We also supported the family to attend weekly online groups including Baby Massage and Song and Story time; and referred them to other groups including Parent Support and Fathers Support Groups, Evelina's Cook and Eat Healthy course and Parents Therapy from the Tavistock centre.

At the end of the support the family told us they felt more connected in their local community and felt more at ease in taking up offers of support from their extended family. Hannah becoming aware of how the new baby impacted Karen's behaviour and began giving her more positive attention. She also became aware of her baby's stimulation and exercise needs and started engaging in more activities as a result, improving attachment and connection between.

Hannah started attending a weekly support group to help her cope with Mental Health. She said "the group gave me the one opportunity to talk and think about me and know that someone is just listening to me and not going to judge me". John also experienced positive change, joining family outings, eating healthy and starting regular exercise. By the end of the support Hannah had found a job in a nursery and John was going back to college and had a part time job at a local radio station.



Big Hopes Big Future

Big Hopes Big Future (BHBF) is Home-Start Southwark's school and nursery readiness programme, working alongside families with children 18 months+ at home and in group sessions. We provide tailored support focused on child development and family routines to enable children to meet milestones and parents to feel prepared for sending their children to education settings.

In response to the pandemic, in March 2020 we adapted the BHBF sessions and started delivering them through zoom. These were weekly sessions averaging 4 to 5 families per week. Activities were short and fast paced to keep children engaged, and were designed so that families could source materials from their homes. For instance, making musical instruments with bottles and pasta for listening games, matching socks for maths activities, scavenger hunts for household items to encourage children to follow instructions.

Sourcing Kindle Fires for Home-start families made the process of zooming so much better. One mum who had struggled to connect on her phone said she was thrilled how much easier it has been. She added: 'My daughter really enjoys it, singing the goodbye song and the nursery rhyme songs'.

Another parent said 'For me and my child it was difficult to attend on zoom, but the sessions we attended, helped my child concentrate and have fun'.

Parents felt reassured and empowered by the support. One of the parents told us that 'The sessions gave me a clear vision of the next stage in Nursery. My daughter ran into nursery and waved goodbye! I was so relieved! Parents were not allowed to stay due to restrictions, so I had been very worried as settling my first child at nursery had been very different".



Groups and Resources

In July 2020 HSS partnered with PACT (Parents and Children Together in Southwark). We delivered a more intensive 4 -week Nursery and School readiness online programme for eighteen families with 3 and 4 year-olds, spilt over two sessions per week. The focus of these sessions was to prepare parents and children transitioning from lockdown at home to school in September, both practically and emotionally.

Early Years Specialists trained our staff and volunteers and developed videos and work cards to be used with Water Play, Rhymes, songs and stories, finger strength, 'Moving to Learn' and 'Learning to Move' activities. These resources are now available to our volunteers and families to equip and empower them with ideas that are simple but accessible and which they can share and have fun with their children while supporting their development.

We also ran weekly zoom groups including Baby Song and Storytime, Baby Massage, All About Boys and a Parent support group. When restrictions allowed, groups included outdoors activities such as a Walk and Talk group for new parents, and Healthy Movers in the Park. Healthy movers emphasised the importance for children to move for 180 minutes per day and helped families to see that moving and dancing was not only about getting exercise, but also developing their coordination, balance, concentration, and cognitive abilities.

90% of the children taking part in these groups demonstrated a positive attachment with their parents and positive relationships with other.

In August 2020 we had support from Early Years specialists, who developed the Being Together Toolkit aimed at promoting emotional wellbeing and quality interactions between parents and children through simple shared experiences. Over the course of several weeks parents and their children repeat the activities, to build a bond over reunite. This also helps parents see the progress their child has made.

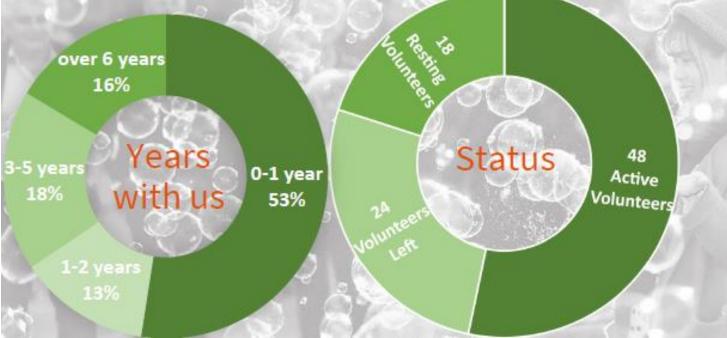


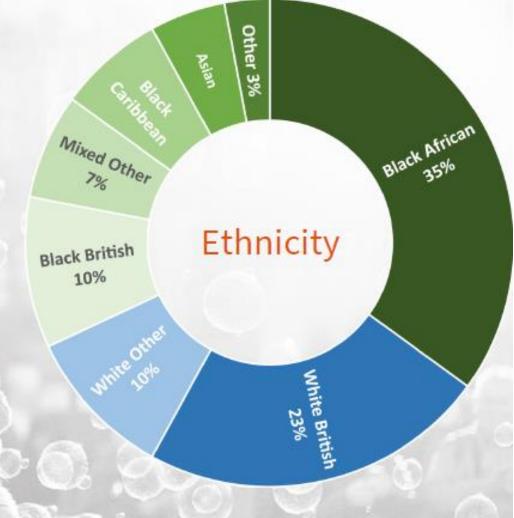
"Being a parent myself, I have so much empathy for how difficult this year had been for our families, and pride for the perseverance of our volunteers who have stuck with us and our families, when giving support has not been straightforward".

Co-ordinator

Our Volunteers

- 48 Active volunteers delivered virtual support to families,
 8 also provided socially distanced face to face support
 67% of volunteers are from minority groups, reflecting our families
 2256 Hours logged by active volunteers
- Left to progress into education, training or employment
 identify as disabled





"It's been challenging to see the difference I was making over phone, but I've kept going. Meeting the family at the end of the support was amazing. I saw I was part of this family's story, as the person they had most regular contact with during lockdown". A Volunteer

A Volunteer's Story

My Home-Start journey started with a bit of uncertainty due to the pandemic. I wasn't sure how I could be of service to families given we couldn't see each other in person. Despite being well trained on how to support families within the community, I didn't know how this would translate to virtual sessions. But thanks to the virtual Early Years training, I was able to gain the skills and knowledge on how to support Low-income families with children under 5 in using household items to engage with their child through play; making playdough, using toilet roll and cereal box to create toys. The training gave me the confidence to support a family via zoom.

When I was matched with a family, I was excited to find out how I could provide emotional and practical support to the mum and her twins. The family was a good match for me, given my knowledge of mental health and child development. I was however nervous about our ability to form a bond, but it turned out great! She was appreciative of the support and very receptive to my suggestions.

During my first visit before, mum said she needed support with potty train; as she didn't get around to it due to work. I provided information from the Toddler resource bag for her to gain the confidence to start the process. At my next visit we discussed her thoughts about the process and I reassured her that children were ready at different stages, as she kept telling me that her twins were the last in their class to wear nappies.

Another issue was the fact that the son's speech didn't matching his age. Mum believed it was the reason he became aggressive at home and withdrawn at nursery. I directed her to a website that highlighted what parents could do at home to build a child's vocabulary to give him the confidence to express himself.

Without the support from charities like Home-Start, families would struggle to manage their households, well-being and children development which would be devastating. I'm really happy and proud that I was able to help a family in these very difficult times. I learnt a lot about myself and my strengths. I was satisfied with Home-Start's support and guidance before and during the family support. Most of all, I am proud of the appreciation shown by the parent. I liked how I was challenged to find new and innovative ways to assist using technology yet maintaining a rapport despite the limited face-to-face sessions. This experience has moulded me into a more confident, communicative and creative person and I am so grateful for this opportunity.



End of Year Financial Review 2020-21

We are pleased to report the Home-Start Southwark 2020-21 results. Our total funding for the year was £417,225, an increase of 35.9% compared to prior year, and our 'total resources expended' for the year was £319,451, an increase of 10.9% driven by increased staff costs in 2020-21. Resultant 'net resources after transfer' for the year was £97,774 increasing fund balances carried forward at 31 March 2021 to £252,526 (which includes £170,726 of general unrestricted funds).

As with all organisations across the UK, Home-Start Southwark was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic from March 2020 onwards. With the introduction of the lockdown, our offices were closed, and our teams transitioned to working from home. Our projects, plans and budgets for the year were reassessed as was the focus of our services and the way in which these were delivered. The outcome was that we were unable to deliver, or were required to change the delivery method of, many of our planned activities. However, given the critical nature of the support and services offered by Home-Start Southwark to the community, all our employees continued to work tirelessly from home or as key workers in the community. No employees were furloughed, and Home-Start Southwark did not access the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme. Additionally, it was prudent to put on hold a number of our strategic and growth objectives. As a result of this, our overall costs for the year came in below plan resulting in an increase in funds carried forward. The expectation is that excess carried forward resources will be utilised going forward in line with a return to our strategic growth plan.

Our key grants this year included funding from the following charitable organisations:

- The Big Lottery Reaching Communities: £88,231
- The Henry Smith Charity: £40,000
- London Funders: £31,440
- Peter Minet: £20,000
- Adrian Swire: £5,833
- St George the Martyr: £2,500

- BBC CIN: £41,416
- United St Saviours Charity: £33,168
- City Bridge Trust £38,600
- Home-Start: £16,908
- Clarions: £4,000

In addition to these grants, we are hugely grateful to our generous benefactors and private individual donors who recognise the ongoing importance of our work and continue to support us. Our special thanks this year go to Marquesado who donated £62,905, The Robert Holman Memorial Trust which donated £3,000, The Elizabeth Prince & Zaiger Trust which donated £2,000 and Dentons UK who donated £1,000. We would also like to thank J Swedberg, T Colclough, Grindall and South who so generously donated £2,000, £1,170, £600 and £500 respectively. Final thanks go to the Lady Captain of Dulwich and Sydenham Hill Golf Club who chose Home-Start Southwark as her charity of the year and in doing so helped raise £2,801.

We continue to focus our attention on securing ongoing funding to ensure that we can provide high quality training to our volunteers and exceptional service delivery to the families in our community in need of our support. Further funding and replacement funding (as grants draw to a close) is required in order for us to fully achieve both our near- and medium-term business plan goals and to secure our long-term future. With this at the forefront of our minds, we continue to seek to identify and apply for new sources of funding to cover both our project delivery and core costs whilst also maintaining close control of our expenditure.

Opening funds balance: £154,752

Closing Funds Balance: £252,526

The Management Committee has agreed a formal policy on reserves which requires that reserves are maintained at a level of which ensures that Home-Start Southwark has sufficient resources to continue its core activity (on a short-term basis) in the event of unforeseen circumstances such as a reduction or cessation of funding. The trustees have reviewed the charity's need for a reserve and agree the appropriate level. This will be in line with the annual review of this policy, latest legislative requirements and best practice advice by the Charity Commission and Home-Start UK. The level of reserves in this fund at 31 March 2021 was £81,800 (2019/20: £81,800).

Thank you...

to our funders, supporters, sponsors and critical friends for their continued support and inspiration to continue making a difference for our families and their children across Southwark.



... and mor

Thank you!

Private Individuals

- C Richard South
- 🗘 Celia and Charles Randell
- Chris and Charlotte King
- Pamela & Howard Jacobs
- 🔓 Dr N. Johnson
- C Tina Colclough

Voluntary & Community Organisations

- Advising Communities
- Albrighton Community Centre
- Bede House
- 🗘 Citizen Advice Bureau
- Community Southwark
- Contact a Family
- Kids Portage Home Learning
- Link Age Southwark
- Cittle Village
- PACT (Parent & Children Together)
- C Pecan
- Shakespeare's Globe
- Solace
- Southwark Food Bank
- Southwark Young Carers

Charitable Trusts & Foundations

- G Adrian Swire Charitable Trust
- G Barton Trust
- G Buttle UK
- Children's trust
- G Eaton Fund
- Elizabeth & Prince Zaiger Trust
- Family Fund Business Services
- Glasspool
- Peter Stebbings Memorial Charity
- Richardson Charitable Trust
- Robert Holman Memorial Trust
- G The Big Give

Local Authority/Statutory and Health Agencies

- 🗘 Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service
- King's College & Guy's & St. Thomas's Hospitals' Community Midwifery & Health Visiting
- Nutrition and Dietetics Team
- South London and Maudsley: Parental and Perinatal Mental Health Teams
- Southwark Children's Services: Social Care & Early Help Teams
- Southwark Council Parks and Leisure Department
- Special Educational Needs team
- Speech and Language Team
- Sunshine House

Children and Family Centres:

- Bermondsey & Rotherhithe
- Camberwell and Dulwich
- Peckham, Peckham Rye & Nunhead
- 🖉 Borough, Bankside & Walworth

Others

- 🖏 Arcadia
- C Amazon
- Basket Brigade
- Cavendish Care
- Dulwich Runners
- Dulwich & Sydenham golf club
- EasyFundraising
- 💪 John Keats Primary School
- S M&G plc
- Morrisons (Peckham)
- Marquesado
- New life Covenant Church
- Price Waterhouse Coopers
- Sainsburys
- Sammy sounds
- 👌 White Stuff

Everyone needs help at some time in their life

We depend on donations and grants to train volunteers and fund our work with parents and children. Every donation is truly appreciated because it enables us to make a real difference to a child's life.

If you wish to support our work, please visit our website to find out more about ways to donate

homestartsouthwark.org.uk/support-us

Hàng Me Start Southwark

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