

Activities in Home-Start Stirling 2023-2024

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The Policy Context

getting
it right
for every child



Overview:

- Best Start Bright Futures – tackling child poverty through families accessing preventative, holistic support which is wrapped around their needs
- Getting It Right for Every Child – ensuring that families can access the right support so they can reach their potential
- The Promise 24-30 – All children can grow up feeling safe, loved and respected
- UNCRC – recognise, respect and promote children’s rights



Growth in need and demand:



Overview:

- 2021-22 – 87 families and 40 referrals
 - 2022-23 – 112 families and 56 referrals
 - 2023-24 – 132 families and 78 referrals
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- This shows a 52% increase in the number of families supported and a 95% increase in referrals to our service





Family profiles for 2023-24

- 53% of the families that we supported had social work involvement.
- 66% of the referrals were focussed on families needing supported with their mental health.
- 58% cited loneliness and isolation as key reasons why they would like support from Home-Start Stirling.
- **At present:**
- 80% of the families that we support are reliant on benefits as their main source of income
- 52% are lone parents
- 80% of the families that we support live in SIMD 1 and 2 – of note Raploch, Cornton, Mercat Cross, St Ninians and the Eastern villages.



2023-2024 – A focus on early intervention and prevention

- Our strategy this year has been to change our referral profile to ensure that we are taking an early intervention and prevention approach.
- We had 9 referrals for parents at the pre-birth stage and 61 parents who had children aged 3 and under. This is compared to 4 pre-birth and 38 aged 3 and under from the year before.
- In 2023-24 we had 78 referrals into our service – 56% of these were from the NHS and 39% from social work

Keeping 'The Promise'



Overview:

- Home-Start Stirling is committed to keeping 'The Promise'

This year we have continued to focus on the ten principles of intensive family support:



- We provide **patient and persistent** support which is open to families being re-referred into our service up to the youngest child being aged 8.
- This year we had one re-referral back to our service.
- Families are offered a wide range of **community-based** group programmes that enable them to develop new skills, knowledge and understanding, increase their social capital and enjoy quality play-based experiences with their children.
- This year we offered families: Play Club, Baby Nurture, Every Mind Matters, Circle of Security Parenting and the holiday activity programme



Keeping 'The Promise'



Overview:

- We provide a **flexible and non-stigmatising** 1-1 home visiting service to meet the needs of the families that are referred to our service.
- This year 117 families benefitted from our home visiting service – 102 from paid worker support and 15 from volunteer support
- Our service is **underpinned by children's rights**.
- This year we have undertaken 5 children focussed reviews; continued our buddy programme and developed our YPI project
- We work with **families assets** through our regular reviews of our 1-1 service.
- We support our families **empowerment and agency** through our parents forums. We use parents' voices to plan and develop our service and to understand the impact that our support provides.
- Our home visiting families review their support every three months and we held 3 family forums this year



Keeping 'The Promise'



Overview:

- We provide a range of **Therapeutic supports** enabling families to get the support that they need from staff that they know and trust.
- This year we have provided:
 - Video-Interactive-Guidance for 3 families
 - New-Born Observation for 8 families
 - Sleep Counselling for 8 families
 - Drawing and Talking for 2 children





Volunteers



We have a very experienced Board of Trustees

- Becky (Chair), Bob (Secretary), Kenny (Treasurer), Fiona (CP lead) Barry and Kevin.
- This year we welcomed Lisa onto the Board who was one of our home visiting volunteers.
- For our home visiting volunteers:
- One training courses ran in May 2023 – 5 completed the training and 3 went onto be home visiting volunteers and 1 to as a group volunteer.
- Training opportunities offered to volunteers: child protection update provided in June 2023
- Only 8% of our families were supported by volunteers last year demonstrating the strain that the cost-of-living crisis is having on families' lives

Easter Programme

Overview:

- In the Easter holidays we took the families to Solsgirth Farm. This is a venue that is not accessible by public transport, so we provided a coach for the families to attend. The families were guided around the farm and gained a really strong understanding of good farming practice and animal care. This also supported families to understand where their food comes from.
- The second session was a mini play in the park in our office grounds.
- The motivation behind this session was to give our families a safe experience of the Council's play in the park programme – in a venue they are comfortable with, with additional staff to support and experience this with families they know.
- The session gave them the opportunity to meet the Play in the Park staff, experience the activities and then have the confidence to attend these sessions in the summer holiday.



Baby Nurture group



Overview:

- This group began in May 2023 and runs in term time.
- This group began in Cornton Community Centre and now is located at St Mark's Church, Raploch. The group is small with up to 4 mums attending each week.
- The focus of the group is attachment and nurture.
- The parents get a chance to spend quality time with their baby. Stories, singing and sensory based activities are used to build confidence and support mums to enjoy time with their baby.



MAGIC
LITTLE GRANTS

HOME
START

Summer 2023



- We ran six sessions: to the Laigh Hills park in Dunblane, Doune Ponds, Callandar, Mayfield Centre, Kings Park and Briarlands.
- During these activity days families were given the opportunities to take part in a wide range of experiences such as guided walks, den building, pond dipping, sports sessions and arts and crafts. Staff were able to use the training provided by 'Under the Trees' during our 2022 provision to enhance the quality of the activities provided. We also supported them to enjoy free play within the park settings.
- For families that are very nervous the reassurance of staff is essential to them being able to take part. Families met at the bus station and staff members accompanied them on the bus to all the locations.



Planting and Growing



Overview:

- Parents got the opportunity in several sessions to plant vegetables in raised beds and to tend for them as they grew. These sessions also involved looking after and maintaining our orchard and edible hedges.
- One mum said “ It’s the highlight of my week. It’s so relaxed I feel really comfortable there. I’m surprised as I’m really enjoying watching the garden grow”
- We ran special sessions for the ‘Every Mind Matters’ parents and their children to harvest the crops which included potatoes, onions, tomatoes, radishes, peppers, sweetcorn, lettuce, courgettes and beetroot.
- The families were able to make and eat soup using the ingredients that they had grown.
- The edible hedges yielded berries that the families tasted on the group days. Apples have been harvested and shared with families.
- The parents demonstrated great pride in showing the children what they had planted and the children thoroughly enjoyed the harvesting and eating of the crops. Additional arts and crafts activities supported the children in their exploration of textures and taste.



Buddies



We had five children who volunteered to be ‘buddies’ for us this summer. They had a special role in supporting younger children while we had our family days out. This project ensured that younger children’s voices were heard and their needs were met. This project provided vital respite to their parents as they had an extra pair of hands playing with their children on our family activity days.

The Buddies spent time with a member of our team designing their own buddy T-shirts. This activity enabled the children to get to know one another and form an identity as a group. The children then took on an active role in the summer programme to play with younger children. The buddies were also very keen to support staff with tasks especially at lunchtimes. They helped make sandwiches and encouraged younger children to try the healthy snacks and fruit that were on offer.

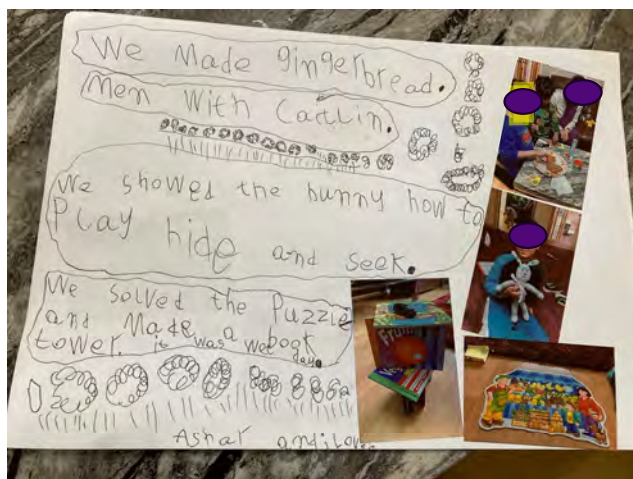
Summer Childcare Project 2023:

- Children that had previously completed 'Seasons for Growth' and buddies for the summer programme were consulted and they decided that they would like to have a day out at the beach.
- This was a hugely successful day..
- Partnership with Stirling Albion football club 8 children attended football camps



Children's Voices

- We continue to use our bespoke activity package to scaffold and support young children to share their views on Home-Start's support.
- Photography, flashcards and art are used to amplify their voices



Youth Philanthropy Initiative



Continuing our 'Hearing Children's Voices' work

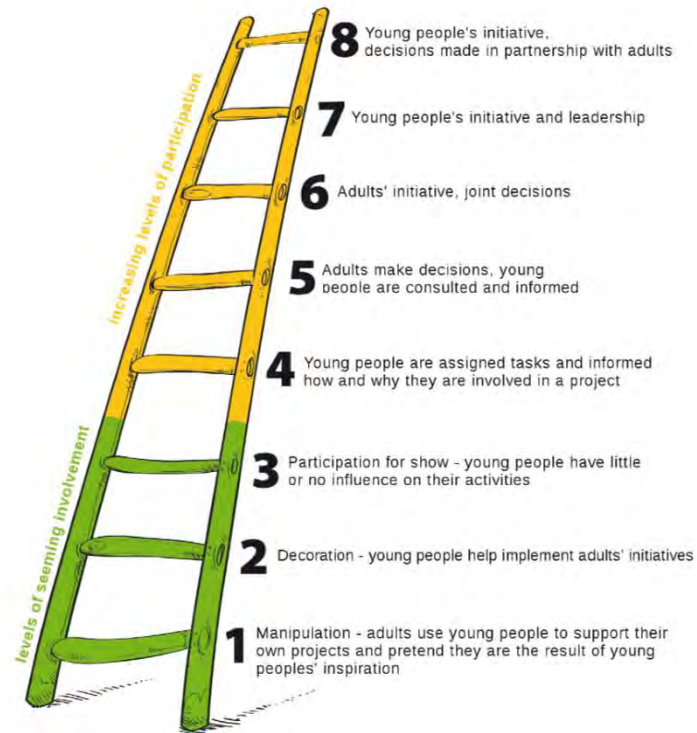
- The Youth and Philanthropy Initiative (YPI) is the biggest independent programme being delivered through Scottish education, empowering tens of thousands of young people each year to make a difference in their communities. Through teamwork, research, and competition, young people advocate for social issues in their communities in a bid to secure their school's £3000 grant.
- Worked with young people from Dunblane, Stirling, St Modan's and Wallace High schools
- Young people from Wallace High school devised a project in which they would volunteer with Home-Start Stirling



Youth Philanthropy Initiative

 The Wood Foundation


YOUTH AND
PHILANTHROPY
INITIATIVE
SCOTLAND



- An example of level 8 – completing our aim from 2022-23
- Saltire awards



Youth Philanthropy Initiative



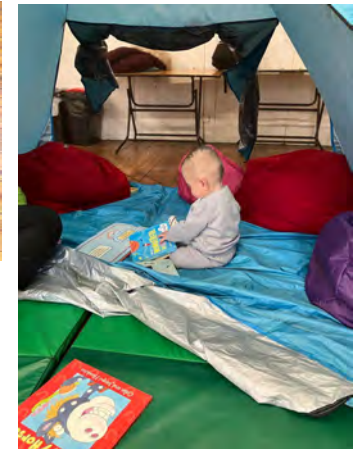
Wallace High pupils secured £3000 for Home-Start Stirling



- We ran a four-week training programme for the young people to become equipped with the skills, knowledge and understanding of how to be a volunteer
- During these sessions the young people learned about Home-Start Stirling, developed their understanding of confidentiality and boundaries. The young people co-created session plans with staff to run over the October holidays.



Play Club



- In the parents' forum in July 2023 – parents were asked:
- “Where, when and what they would like to do with their children each week”
- Families chose: Raploch, sensory play and sports.
- Staff have observed that the children have loved the change. They see smiles and the children being much more engaged with a focussed activity rather than free play that was previously offered.
- Staff have observed more parental involvement with activities with children
- This especially applies to the dads who attend the groups and have been very comfortable joining in the games.





Every Mind Matters

Overview:

- Up to 10 parents attended each week
- The group started each week with breakfast which was much appreciated by the group
- Activities included playing board games; making sensory bags; bingo; homemade stress balls; candle making and creating mosaic coasters.
- Parents have the opportunity to make and strengthen social connections. Parents report that the group provides a valuable structure to their week and time that they can focus on themselves.
- From this parents have reported improved mental health.

Autumn 2023 – October programme

Return to Solsgirth Farm and Plean Country Park
22 adults and 31 children attended



Autumn 2023: Parents Forum



Families shared that they would like support with their next steps:

- “It’s hard thinking about what’s next but I know I need to do it so we are not relying on benefits all my kid’s life. I don’t know how many hours I can work or where to start when applying for jobs so if I could get this help from youse it would mean the world”
- **So we applied for Employability funding to:**
- Expand and develop the Home-Start Stirling assessment and review tools
- Provide a clear pathway of support which will maximise the potential of parents being able to access employment
- Create a ‘Moving Home’ transition project for parents



Circle of Security Parenting

September 2023:



- We ran this eight-week programme for **3** parents this year. This programme supports lasting change through developing attachment relationships.
- One mum came on the course with her youngest child (aged 5) in mind. Through the course she actually found it more useful for her older child (aged 8). The course gave her time to reflect on how she parents each child differently and the impact that this is having on her relationship with her older child. She was able to reflect on the reasons why and make positive changes during the time frame of the course. She described the course as ‘Life changing’.
- Another mum, who has three children gained a great deal of insight as to why she reacts in particular ways to her middle child. Through the course we were able to share with her ideas to support her bedtime routine with her child and as a result he now settles much more quickly and sleeps through the night.
- The concept of it being ‘too late’ concerned the group and by the end of the course they were all confident that they knew that there is always time to repair relationships and move forward. One mum said “the most rewarding thing about the course is knowing that it is never too late to make things better” and another said “ I can forgive myself for not getting it right all the time and know that I am a good mum cos I want to do better and keep trying to”



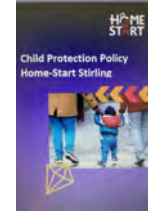
Child Protection themes

Overview:

- 14 Records of Concern and Action have been completed in 2023-24 for 10 families.
- Compared to 2023 – where 11 ROCA's were completed for 8 families
- Themes:**
- Domestic violence
- Parental mental health including self-harm
- Risky teenage behaviour including sexting
- Poor parental emotional regulation including physical admonishment
- Disguised compliance



Child Protection themes



Overview:

- The complexity of the families supported continues to be high
- 24 children supported this year were on the child protection register
- We formed a key part of social work plans for 90 children
- We ensured that a further 206 children's needs could be met without the need for social work intervention





Equality Equity Diversity and Inclusion

We have created an EEDI plan to support our growth and development in Home-Start Stirling.

- Through this we have discovered that 8% of Home-Start Stirling families last year were from an ethnic minority. This is above the rate expected as Stirling has 3.2% of families from an ethnic minority.
- We supported 29 parents under the age of 25 – 18% of our families. In Stirling 12% of babies are born to parents under the age of 25.
- Removing barriers: funding secured for summer programme for food and transport for families
- Supporting access to services – new welcome leaflet created

Partnership work with CAB



Home-Start Stirling's Cost of Living Project aimed to:

- Provide support to families of young children who are impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.
- Provide bespoke, tailored 1-1 support to families on budgeting, managing household bills, energy advice and income maximisation including supporting families to access to tier 2 consultancy support for more complex situations involving issues such as debt management and legal issues - 42 referrals have been made for 61 families
- Issue food and energy vouchers to families to those of greatest need – 34 families were supported on 51 occasions
- Our referrals have ensured that our most vulnerable family's needs are being met - providing them with vital energy grants and the benefits to which they are entitled.
- From this more secure base they can then begin to work on areas such as developing their confidence and raising their aspirations.



Christmas 2023

Incredible donations, Santa's Grotto



BABES IN THE WOOD



openreach
a BT Group business



HOME
START



Grub and a Game – Began in January 2024

Providing healthy and nutritious meals for families, cooking and play experiences



February 2024: Family Forum

Families were asked to rate their experiences in Home-Start Stirling and 100% of the participants rated Home-Start Stirling as ‘**Excellent**’ with regard to:

- I am treated with respect
- My support workers know me well and what is important to me
- I am involved in decisions about my support
- I feel confident and understand the support given to me by Home-Start Stirling
- If my circumstances or family life changes staff can recognise this and help me get the right help
- My support workers notice changes in my mood and support me if I get anxious or am worried about something
- My support workers have enough time to support me in the way that I prefer
- My support is **reviewed** regularly



February: Family Forum

- The families were asked about what Home-Start could do to support attendance at groups:
- **Financial barriers:**
- “a bus voucher would help when we have no money. The groups really bring me out of my shell”
- **Plan:** to apply for funding for bus vouchers
- **Social Barriers:**
- “I was anxious to come to the summer programme for the first time. It would be good if we could have met in a smaller group first so that I could have had some familiar faces” “I was feared to show up to group in case it was just me and no one else turned up”
- **Plan:** to arrange a new family welcome session for the summer programme
- **Childcare:**
- “I wish we had childcare for the parents group”
- **Plan:** to explore volunteer roles and options to support groups

February: Children's voices





Measuring Impact:

- **86%** of the families who moved on from Home-Start support last year reported positive outcomes.
- We have been able to demonstrate that these families have had:
 - An increase in their overall wellbeing scores
 - An increase in their confidence in managing day to day life
 - Reported reduced social isolation
 - Improved understanding of parenting
 - Increased involvement in their children's development, early learning and socialisation
- Designing initial support; 1-1 reviews - quantitative and qualitative , family reviews and 'Moving on' projects



PLANS

- Co-create a new strategy with families, staff, volunteers and stakeholders
- Develop our service based on the 5 foundations of The Promise – Voice, Family, Care, People and Scaffolding
- Parents and carers supported by Home-Start Stirling will have improved attachment with their children.
- Increase access to greenspace our term time groups to support our families to enjoy outdoor play together
- Create a gardening group ‘Weeding and seeding’ – for families to embark on a ‘growing’ journey together
- We will continue to provide a range of **therapeutic supports** enabling families to get the support that they need from staff that they know and trust.



PLANS

- Babies and children's voices will be captured as an integral part of the family review process and their voices used to shape the support provided to the family as a whole.
- We will expand our 'hearing children's voices' reviews to cover all children supported by Home-Start Stirling.
- We will continue to provide 'newborn observation' and expand this utilising tools such as the Lanarkshire infant mental health observational indicator set
- We will develop our buddy project within the holiday programme to become child led activities rather than adult led
- We will begin the process on creating 'Children's Rights Impact and Wellbeing Assessments' on all policies relating to Home-Start Stirling
- Continue to ensure that all communication from Home-Start Stirling is accessible for all



PLANS

- Families supported by Home-Start Stirling will have increased confidence, improved wellbeing, reduced stress and reduced social isolation.
- Refresh our approach to volunteer recruitment providing a more flexible route for people to follow
- Develop and embed our new paperwork to ensure that the principles of the National Practice model are at the heart of our review and evaluations processes
- Develop and embed our 'moving on' resources to ensure that we prepare and celebrate families ending Home-Start support with a joint understanding of the impact that our support has had
- To continue our positive and purposeful partnership with the Citizens Advice Bureau which will ensure that our families have a robust package of support around them

Thank You



To an incredible staff team who consistently go above and beyond for the families of Stirling

To our home visiting volunteers who support all our families and our Trustees for their guidance in supporting us to navigate through this year.



Thank you to all those who have donated their time, money or items – often anonymously – which have made a positive impact on all of our families this year.



And of course to our FUNDERS – without whom none of this would be possible!

