



Support and friendship  
for families

# strong families make strong communities

Home-Start's Social Impact Report  
2017



# Introduction to our 2017 Impact Report

Home-Start's research shows that children who are raised in a stable, loving family environment are more likely to have a positive and healthy future<sup>1</sup>.

Across the UK families struggling with post-natal depression, isolation, physical health problems, bereavement and many other issues are receiving the support of a Home-Start volunteer. Each week the volunteer spends around two hours in the family's home supporting them to develop the skills needed to cope with the challenges life throws at them.

Local Home-Starts are also innovating to develop a range of additional home and community based services to meet the needs of their communities. This includes drop-in groups for dads,

peri-natal mental health programmes, support groups for teenage parents, outdoor play activities and school readiness activities.

The relationship between family and volunteer is entirely voluntary. It means they develop a relationship built on trust and understanding, which is the basis of our support.

This impact report is based on data collected by local Home-Starts between April 1 2015 and March 31 2016. It shows the difference Home-Start support makes for families, children and the volunteers who give their time to support members of their community.

## our impact on families by the end of our support:

94%

of parents said they felt less isolated



94%

of parents reported improved self-esteem



96%

of parents said their children's emotional health and wellbeing improved



## THE CHALLENGES families tell us they face:

44%

of families were lonely and isolated



41%

of families had mental health difficulties



27%

need help managing children's behaviour



## Home-Start in 2015/16:

59,628

CHILDREN HELPED



28,926

FAMILIES SUPPORTED



11,586

VOLUNTEERS giving their time



268

LOCAL Home-Starts



"I had so many thoughts in my head. I couldn't sleep at night. Home-Start helps me a lot. I was free to talk to my volunteer and I can talk about the things I feared. She gives me hope. I am stronger because of Home-Start."

Aminatu, a mum being supported by Home-Start Butetown, Grangetown, Riverside's dedicated programme to support refugee and asylum seeking families

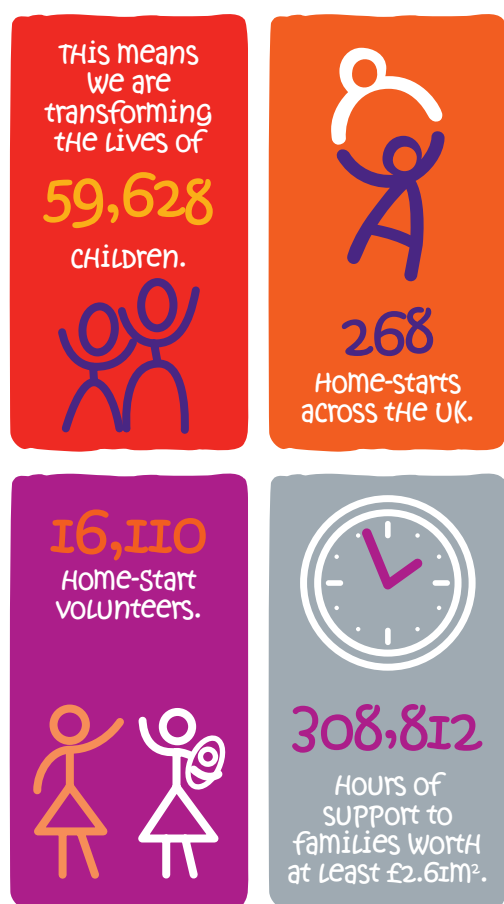
<sup>1</sup>Hermanns et al (2013) Long-term changes in parenting and child behavior after the Home-Start family support program, <https://www.home-start.org.uk/Handlers/Download.ashx?IDMF=b40e3080-5de3-4841-8648-b4129b26e92d>

# Home-Start across the UK

In the past year local Home-Starts have supported 28,926 families with 59,628 children.

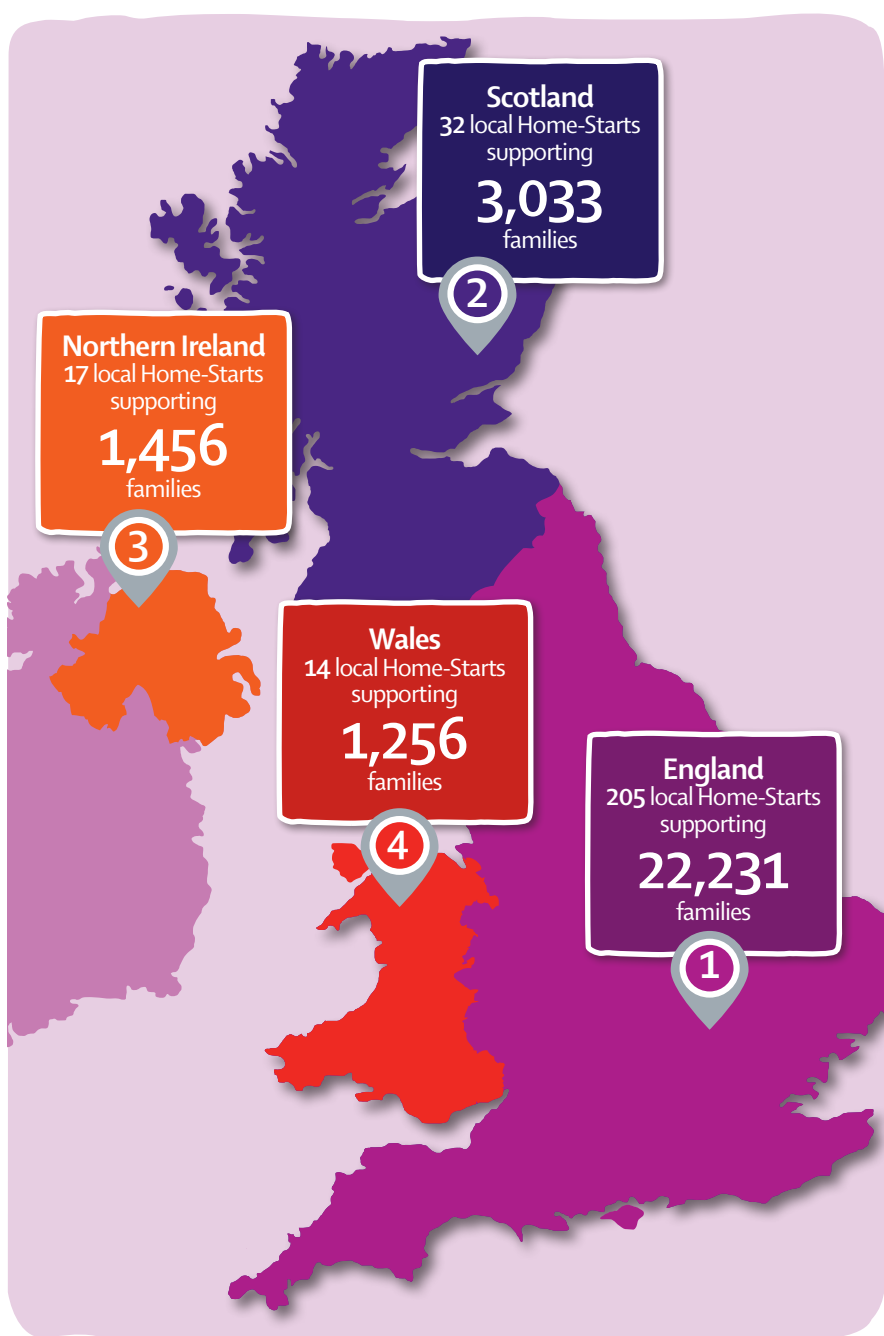
At the heart of Home-Start are teams of highly trained, creative, and compassionate volunteers. Last year 16,110 people volunteered for Home-Start including as home-visitors, group workers, trustees and

fundraisers. Incredibly, our volunteers gave over 308,812 hours of their time to support the aims of Home-Start.



By focusing on individual needs, home-start helps families identify their own strengths, increasing their potential to make changes that will improve their lives. Home-Start is committed to supporting families that most need help and works hard to engage families who feel excluded within their community.

With the support of a volunteer, families develop skills needed to access services, counter isolation, build confidence and learn to cope.

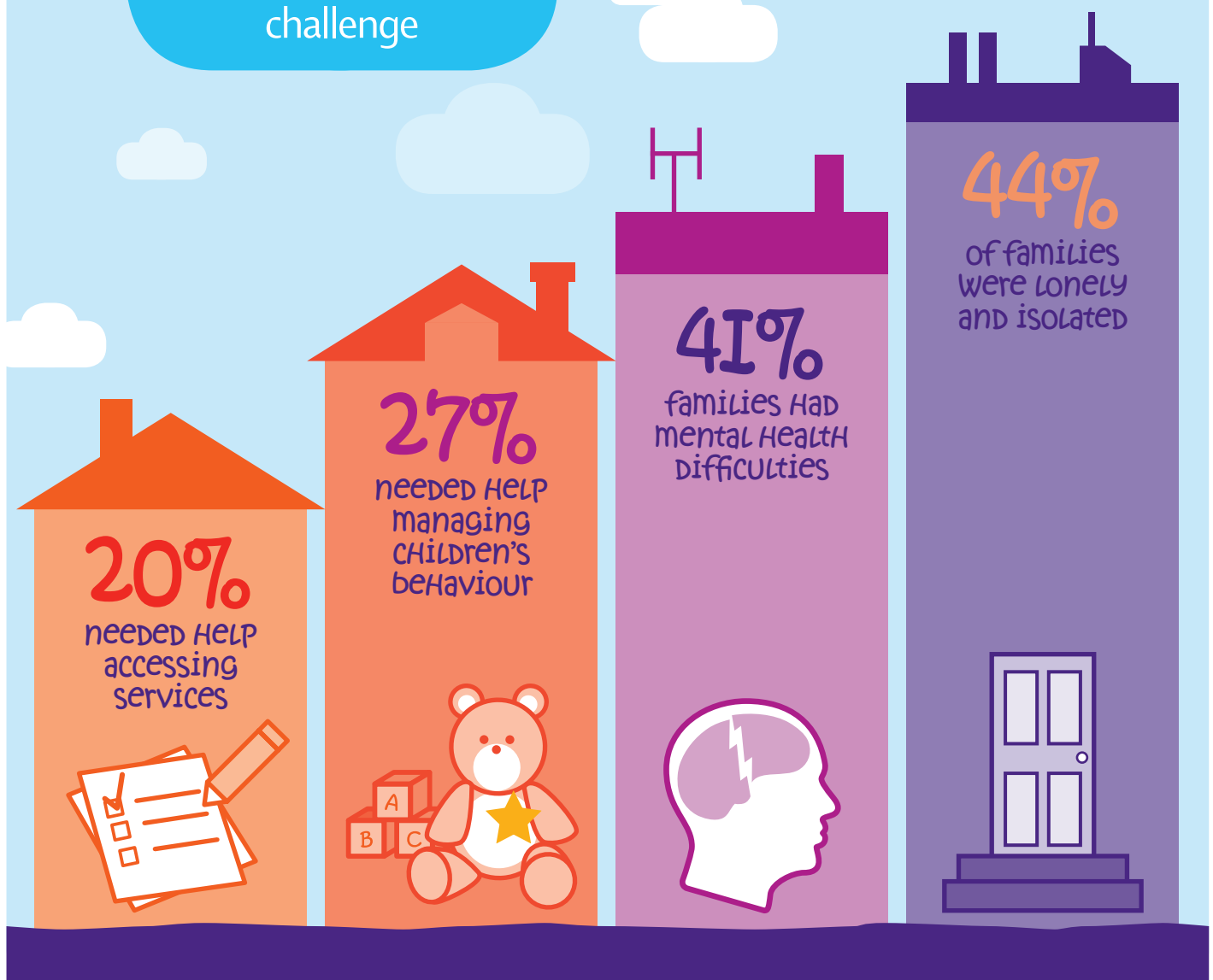


<sup>2</sup>Based on the Living Wage Foundation suggested living wage of £8.45 per hour (<http://www.livingwage.org.uk>)

# The needs of families and the impact of our support

Families are referred to Home-Start for support with a range of needs, and lots face several challenges. Many Home-Starts report seeing an increase in the complexity of needs faced by the families in recent years.

Many families face more than one challenge



Of the families that came to the end of their support last year

94%

stated that they felt less isolated



94%

reported improved parental self-esteem



96%

reported improved children's emotional health and wellbeing



91%

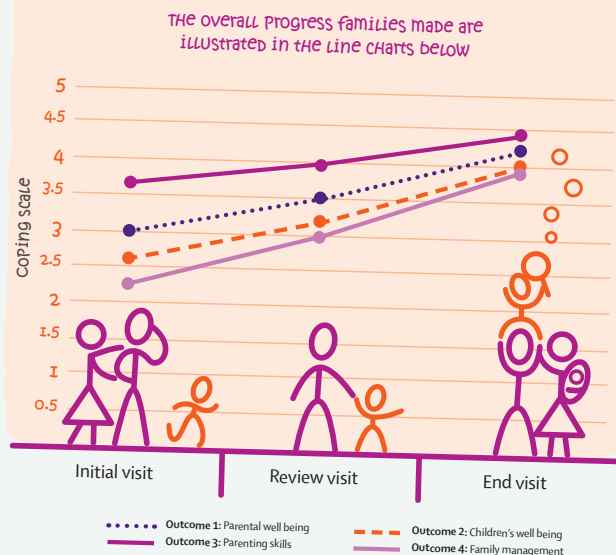
reported improved parental emotional health and wellbeing



Families can be referred to Home-Start by health workers, doctors, schools, social services, as well as referring themselves for support. Working with Home-Start is entirely voluntary for both the family and the volunteer, which means that a special level of trust and understanding often develops between them, and many families engage with Home-Start when they struggle to engage with other services.

Home-Start puts the needs of the family at the heart of its support. This means the way we work with families is as diverse as the needs of the families themselves and each volunteer adapts their support to the needs of the family.

## Impact: Summary Chart



This report builds on the impact featured in the independent research published in 2013 and in Home-Starts 2015 impact report.

The 2013 research, carried out by Jo Hermanns from the University of Amsterdam, showed that children whose parents have had the support of a Home-Start volunteer have a better start in life than those who don't, and that children are still benefiting up to three years after their Home-Start volunteer has stopped visiting.

Our 2015 impact report showed that in all four outcome areas – parental well-being, parenting skills, children's well-being, and family management – families see an increase in how well they are able to cope during their support by Home-Start.

You can find all our impact reports, and all the research into Home-Start's work at [www.home-start.org.uk/research-and-evaluation](http://www.home-start.org.uk/research-and-evaluation)

"Norma is just brilliant. I respect her as my mum. She is always giving me that bit of confidence and she is always going the extra mile for me. It goes to show that regardless of age, race and culture, friendship has no boundaries."

Rahela, a mum supported by Home-Start Oldham, Stockport and Tameside



# Big Hopes Big Future

Each year around 600,000 five-year-olds start school for the first time, yet studies estimate that almost half will not be ready for education and do not have basic skills such as being able to hold a pencil, recognising their name when it's written down, or being toilet trained.<sup>3</sup>

Having identified this as a need with many of the families Home-Start support, we developed the Big Hopes Big Future school readiness programme, which uses specially trained volunteers to help parents prepare their children, and themselves, for the first day of school.

Children involved in Big Hopes Big Future made between 25% and 33% improvement in their readiness for school in language and cognition, behavioural adjustment, daily living skills and family support.<sup>4</sup>

Importantly, improvements in language and cognition were particularly evident for children from the most complex families - those who were eligible for free school meals, from families with mental health issues and for those with multiple signs of deprivation.

Home-Start have used the Brief Early Skills and Support Index to measure children's readiness for school and assess the impact of the

programme. The measure was developed by the Centre for Family Research at the University of Cambridge. BESSI has been used at the beginning and end of support with families allowing us to see the progress children have made.

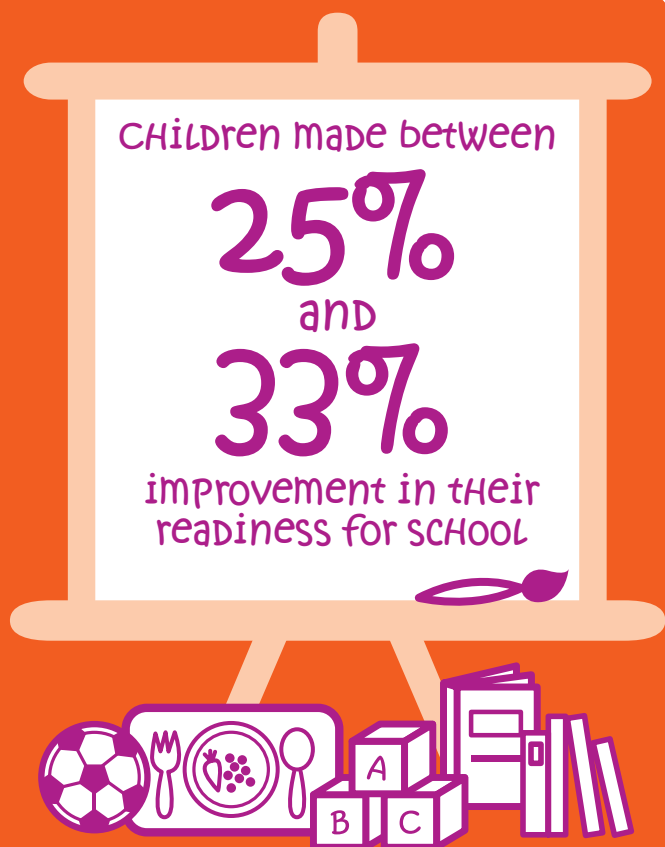
Big Hopes Big Future is now available in more than 94 local Home-Starts across England, and in its first year 831 children received support from specially trained volunteers.

Home-Starts in Scotland have now received funding from STV which will allow the programme to expand to support families across Scotland. Home-Start UK is looking at ways to further expand the programme to families in Northern Ireland and Wales.

Big Hopes Big Future is just one way that Home-Starts are developing programmes to meet the needs of their local communities.

"A lot of things have changed. Even on her own my daughter, Haiya, is now discovering things around her and pointing them out to me. We have an alphabet chart and she loves telling me all her letters. I now know what to do with her little sister and Haiya is going to be a big help I can see."

Anau, a mum supported by Big Hopes Big Future



<sup>3</sup> Marmot Review Team, (London, 2010) Fair Society, healthy lives: strategic review of health inequalities in England post-2010., ([www.instituteofhealthequity.org](http://www.instituteofhealthequity.org)),

<sup>4</sup> Home-Start (August 2015) Big Hopes Big Future: Evaluation Report England pilot study

# The power of volunteering

**It is not only families who benefit from the support of a Home-Start volunteer. We now have evidence that our volunteers are benefiting as well as families.**

Volunteers are at the heart of Home-Start's support to families. Volunteering helps build cohesive communities, while building the skills and evidence of those selflessly giving their time to families struggling in their local area.



Volunteering has enabled the people who give their time with Home-Start to build skills and confidence so that they are better able to relate within their community, enter the workforce, and improve their health and wellbeing.

Our report "The Impact of Volunteering on Volunteers" found that there was improvement in volunteers' personal development, skills development, health and well-being, inclusion in social networks community, and engagement with the labour market.

The biggest improvement was in the volunteers' self-confidence. There was found to be a significant change over time in the volunteers' sense of usefulness, awareness of others, confidence in their own identity, and 'looking forward' in life.

Home-Start also found that there was a statistically significant change in volunteers' ability to communicate with others, job related skills, and problem solving.

Home-Start's recent report into volunteering in Scotland further illustrates the changing model of local volunteerism. It is now less an exclusively altruistic act, yet volunteering has positive impacts for families, volunteers and local communities.

"When volunteers and families come from different background, they do get more insight. The volunteer is learning when they support a family, and the family is learning from the volunteer. When it comes down to it, they all have the same issues and problems and they're no different regardless of background. Culture doesn't seem to matter as much because they have a bigger issue."

Moahar, from Home-Start Calderdale

<sup>5</sup>Home-Start (June 2016) New volunteerism in Scotland with Home-Start: Co-producing positive impacts for families, volunteers and local communities

**Home-Start is a leading family support charity, providing support to families when they need it most. Working across the four nations, local Home-Starts are known for their flexibility in providing services that are needs-based, working with families and volunteers to build upon their strengths.**

Since 1973 Home-Start has been supporting families to identify their unique needs and assist them in developing the skills and confidence necessary to build better lives for themselves and their children. Over the last four decades, Home-Start has supported more than 1 million children.

Home-Start is:

- Community-based and led by local need
- Based on a relationship of trust built between volunteer and family, with evidence showing that both parties benefit
- Outcomes focused, with a focus on empowering families and volunteers

Our values:

- We offer families choice.
- We work in partnership - with each other, with families and with other agencies.
- We work in a spirit of openness, encouragement and enjoyment.
- We are flexible and responsive to the needs of families.

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