

Home-Start Bradford District (HSBD)

Home-Start Bradford District is an independent charity committed to promoting the welfare of families with young children in Bradford, through providing volunteer-led support in families' own homes. We know how hard it can sometimes be to raise a family: there are good times and there are not so good times, and we can all need a helping hand from time to time. Our support is free, confidential, and non-judgmental.

We train and coordinate volunteers to provide weekly visits to families who need a little extra help with parenting skills, with their or their children's wellbeing, or with practical household skills. Our volunteers visit their family each week, working with them to bring about the changes they want to see in their lives.

Our service covers the whole of the Bradford District.

History

Home-Start Bradford North launched in February 1999 following a comprehensive local needs assessment involving Social Services, Health Services, the Local Authority, local community centres and members of the community. Initially sponsored by The Thornbury Centre (where our main offices remain) with a single worker, we became an independent charitable company in 2001, and in 2004 changed our name to Home-Start Bradford. In 2010 we merged with Home-Start Shipley and changed our name to Home-Start Bradford District, and in 2020 we converted to a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

From 2015 to 2020 we operated a second office in Keighley to run our Keighley Building Family Resilience project, before bringing staff back to our main office. In 2016 we were part of the consortium who put together the Better Start Bradford project, supporting families in Bradford Moor, Bowling & Barkerend and Little Horton, where we will run Home-Start Better Start until 2024. From 2017 to 2022 we were part of the Stronger Families partnership, providing parenting support to people returning to training or work.

Our work

We support families with children up to the age of five, from across the Bradford District, thanks to funding from the Henry Smith Charity, BBC Children in Need and the Garfield Weston Foundation. We have also just launched the Dad Matters Bradford project supporting male and secondary carers with funding from Family Hubs Start for Life.

Our team

There are currently nine staff members, most of whom work part time. Our two senior staff (Operations Manager and Systems Manager) look after three Family & Volunteer Coordinators and two Dad Matters Coordinators, who are supported by an Admin & Data Officer and a Communication support worker.

The charity is overseen by a board of six Trustees, led by the Chair, Susan Milner.

Our volunteers

During the year to March 2024, 48 volunteers had been with the scheme, 21 of them joining during the year and 36 still active at the end of the year.

Our volunteers put in 850 hours of volunteering, supporting 93 families over the year, with a total of 200 children benefiting from this support.

Family support

Family progress against the goals they've identified for themselves is measured by a 'journey of change', where families score how well they are coping from 1 to 5 in each goal (from a choice of goals in 15 areas). These scores are given at the family's initial visit, at 12-weekly review visits and at an end visit when support is ending. The average length of support is currently a little over 4 months. The most-needed area parents wanted support with were their own mental health (71%), coping with isolation (69%) and support to access other services (55%).

Last year our families were 40% Asian Pakistani, 36% White British, and 24% other ethnicities.

Home-Start UK (HSUK)

Home-Start UK is the national organisation supporting the federation of over 180 local Home-Starts throughout the UK. There are now also Home-Starts in 22 countries around the world.

The first Home-Start was established in Leicester in 1973 by Margaret Harrison, a health visitor, who believed that supporting a family was best done in their home where it can be shaped to the needs of the family. She realised that if parents get support and friendship from another parent, they will be better equipped to learn to cope with the many difficulties life can bring and will be able to give their children the best possible start to their own lives. While this idea remains at the heart of our work, across the network we have added new ways of helping parents and their children to meet the changing needs of families.

Core Belief

Home-Start believes that children need a happy and secure childhood and that parents play the key role in giving their children a good start in life and helping them achieve their full potential.

Mission Statement and Values

Home-Start offers support, friendship and practical help to parents with young children, in local communities throughout the UK.

In all external and internal dealings, local Home-Starts and Home-Start UK work within and demonstrate the essential ethos of choice, partnership, openness, encouragement, flexibility, responsiveness, and enjoyment! All relationships are based on good communication, respect and trust.

Approach

The special Home-Start ethos and approach have been valued by local Home-Starts, families and volunteers alike over the years. Their consistent application has ensured that all involved in Home-Start can be assured of and benefit from the quality and standards enshrined in the ethos and approach.

The voluntary ethic permeates the whole organisation:

- each community chooses to develop a local Home-Start
- volunteers choose to work for Home-Start
- families choose to have Home-Start support.

To Home-Start every family is special and we respond to each family's needs through a combination of home-visiting support, group work and social events.

Local Home-Starts are rooted in the communities they serve – managed locally but supported by the national organisation which offers services, direction, training, information and guidance to ensure consistent and quality support for parents and children wherever they are. Home-Start has a proven, lasting, positive impact on the development of children and on the health and welfare of the family.

Aims

Each Home-Start is an independent voluntary organisation which works towards the increased confidence and independence of the family by:

- offering support, friendship and practical assistance
- visiting families in their own homes, where the dignity and identity of each individual can be respected and protected
- reassuring parents that difficulties in bringing up children are not unusual and encouraging enjoyment in family life
- developing a relationship with the family in which time can be shared and understanding can be developed; the approach is flexible to take account of different needs
- encouraging parents' strengths and emotional well-being for the ultimate benefit of their own children
- encouraging families to widen their network of relationships and to use effectively the support and services available within the community.