

**HOME
START**

Cymru

Impact Report

2023 - 24

Registered Charity: 1105577 Company Number: 5199118

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1. Introduction

As we release our Annual Impact Report, I am filled with such joy at the dedication and compassion that have exemplified the Home-Start Cymru journey throughout the past year. Our strapline, "Transforming lives in Wales, one family at a time," embodies the profound influence we have in our communities, resonating with our unwavering commitment to empower parents and children experiencing challenges in life.

Grounded in our vision that every parent in Wales will be equipped with the confidence, skills, and support to provide their children with the best start in life.

Our mission is to stand alongside children and their families, offering support, guidance, and hope and this has never been more pertinent in the current social landscape.

Statistics highlight the complexities that Welsh families continue to experience: poverty, mental health and loneliness with 31% of children in Wales affected by poverty's harsh realities.

Through the collective contributions of our dedicated staff, volunteers, Trustees and partners we have reached out to over 1,250 families and 2,000 children, witnessing firsthand the powerful transformations that occur when parents receive the right support.

We have continued to strengthen families, enhancing children's outcomes, and fostering community networks.

Yet, with a 25% increase in referrals and the external landscape in Wales, the need for our support has never been greater.

This report demonstrates our commitment to build on our impact and making the differences to lives of families and Children in our communities.

I extend my deepest gratitude to everyone who has supported our cause throughout the past year. Your contributions nurture the seeds of resilience in Welsh families, enabling us to continue transforming lives one family at a time.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jayne Drummond". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Jayne Drummond

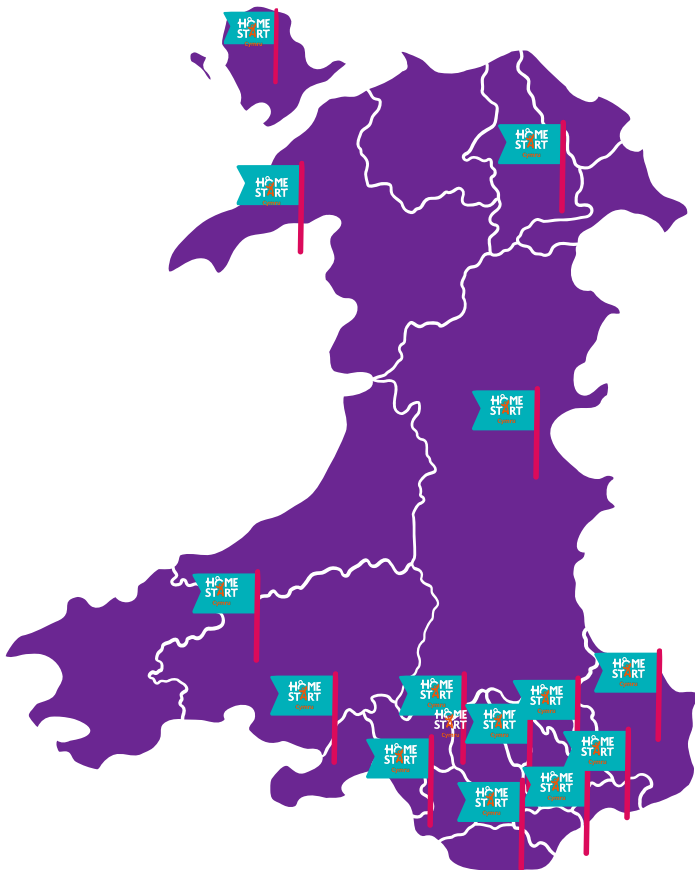
Chief Executive Officer
Home-Start Cymru

2. Vision

At Home-Start Cymru, we hold a vision anchored in the heart of every Welsh community: a future where all parents possess the confidence, skills, and support they need to **nurture their children's potential** from the earliest moments. We dedicate ourselves to supporting families emotionally, to **building resilience**, promoting healthy relationships, and empowering parents to secure a **happy and strong foundation** for their children's futures.

At Home-Start Cymru, our staff and volunteers come together to provide **flexible, compassionate, non judgemental, emotional, and confidential support**. We tailor our support to be as unique as the people we serve.

Our passion for empowering parents is delivered in a variety of ways:



- **Home Visiting:** Our core service, where the comfort of home becomes a foundation for growth.
- **Community Support:** Encouraging families to connect with and find strength in their local community.
- **Peer Support:** Facilitating connections between families sharing similar journeys.
- **Group Support:** Building circles of support where groups of families can grow together.
- **Targeted Support Programmes:** Expertly designed initiatives to meet specific family needs.

3. Mission

At the core of our mission lies several objectives that guide our every action:

- **Supporting Parents:** We offer personalised support in the family home, aiding parents in navigating the multiple challenges of parenthood and enhancing their skills and knowledge for the benefit of their children and family.
- **Strengthening Families:** Our support acts as a catalyst for confidence, resilience, and stress management, fostering environments where strong, healthy parent-child relationships can thrive.
- **Improving Children's Outcomes:** We champion the cause of every child, ensuring children grow up in environments that are not just safe but stimulating and nurturing.
- **Building Community Networks:** By connecting families with local resources, we improve the strength of the community and increase the sense of belonging, reinforcing the notion that no one has to face their challenges alone.

In every action, every programme, and every connection, Home-Start Cymru embodies a commitment to transforming lives by empowering families and communities across Wales.



4. Purpose

The Cost of Living and the increasing mental health and well-being crisis continue to highlight the detrimental effects of poverty across Wales. Nearly one in three children in Wales lives in poverty, and reports show a significant rise in mental health issues among both children and adults. Many families find themselves navigating a host of challenges, bringing uncertainty and hardship. The weight of worry that burdens even the youngest among us is heartbreaking. These aren't just numbers; they are the realities of lives within our reach, the **lived experience of families across Wales***. How we respond and provide support today shapes the landscape of tomorrow.

70%

increase in child mortality rates among the most deprived

*RCPCH. State of Child Health

25%

increase in referrals to our services over the past year

92%

of families reaching out for household budget management

45%

of children aged 7-11 said they worry about having enough to eat

*Children's Commissioner for Wales

12.5%

of children have a diagnosable mental health condition

*Children In Wales

10%

increase in the demand for mental health support

50%

of all mental health problems manifest by the age of 14

*Children In Wales

26%

of children in working households live in poverty

*Children's Commissioner for Wales

30%

of children in Wales are living in poverty

*Children's Commissioner for Wales

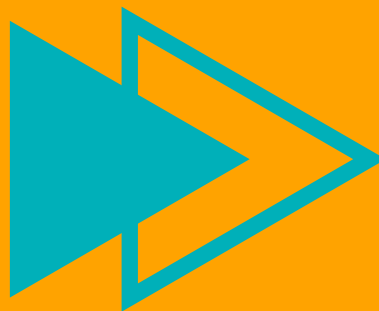
***All stats relate to Wales only**

5. Impact

Our data underscores the significant impact we've made together in transforming the lives of families and children across Wales. Through the unwavering dedication and warmth of our volunteers, the tireless efforts of our staff, and the generosity of our supporters, we've been able to bring a sense of hope and positive change to countless lives. The work we've done has not only touched individual families but also strengthened entire communities.

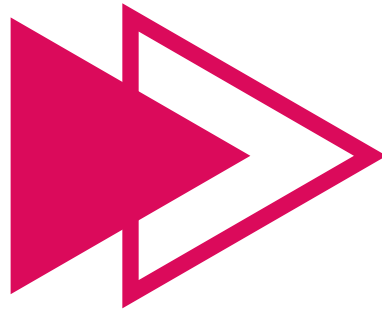
**1,250 Families and
2,000 Children
Supported**

**88% of children
showed
improvements in
learning and
development**



↑ 9%

76% of families reported improvements in household budget management



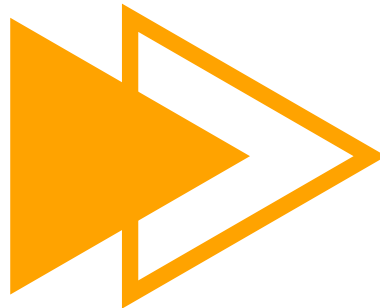
↑ 4%

79% of beneficiaries reported improvements with stress and resilience



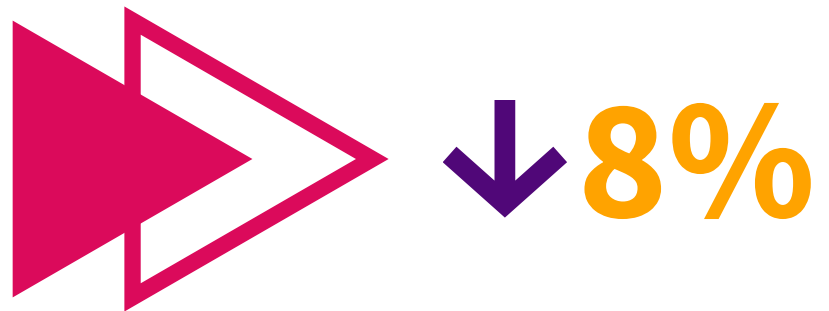
→ 0%

82% of supported parents reported enhanced parental wellbeing



↑ 5%

69% reported an improvement in children's mental health. Decrease from prior year illustrates complexities children are experiencing



Our Spend last year

Admin and Governance costs
8.8%



Total spend
£1,566,590

Charitable activities
91.2%

6. Case Studies

From Supported Mum to HSC Ambassador



The Challenges She Faced

Charlotte, a single mum, was thrust into an overwhelming world of challenges after the birth of her children. With no partner to share the weight, she found herself drowning in the relentless demands of parenthood. Each day was a battle against the feelings of isolation, the gnawing uncertainty about her ability to provide for her children, and the fear of failing them. The nights were the hardest, filled with sleepless hours spent worrying and wondering if she was truly strong enough to do this alone.

A Lifeline of Support from Home-Start Cymru

In the depths of her struggle, Charlotte discovered a glimmer of hope when she connected with Home-Start Cymru. It was in this moment that her life began to take a new direction. The Home-Start volunteer who visited her regularly became a beacon of light in the darkness, offering not just practical help, but also the emotional support Charlotte so desperately needed. With each visit, she felt a little less alone, a little more understood, and a lot more capable. The unwavering compassion of her volunteer helped her rediscover her own strength and confidence as a mother, empowering her to navigate the toughest times with newfound resilience.

A Journey to Becoming an Ambassador

Moved by the profound impact that Home-Start Cymru had on her life, Charlotte felt an undeniable calling to give back. Today, she stands proudly as an ambassador for Home-Start Cymru, driven by a deep desire to share her story and offer a lifeline to other parents who are struggling as she once did. She has spoken out about the harsh realities of poverty faced by families in Wales, contributing to an ITV report to raise awareness and advocate for much-needed support. Earlier this year, she walked alongside the Home-Start Cymru team in a wellbeing walk, embodying the hope and strength that once seemed so far out of reach. Charlotte's journey from a single mum who needed support to a confident ambassador is a testament to the transformative power of support and the resilience that lies within us all, waiting to be awakened.

A Fathers Journey of Resilience and Renewal



A Decade of Unhappiness

A family from Bridgend found themselves at a crossroads, grappling with challenges that threatened their emotional well-being and stability. For over a decade, the father had battled long-term mental health issues, which deeply affected not only him, but also his wife and their children. His mental health and wellbeing struggles had cast a shadow over their home, leaving the mother emotionally exhausted and deeply concerned for their children's welfare.

The Turning Point

Realising the family needed outside support, they were referred to the Dad Matters Project under Home-Start Cymru. The project immediately assigned a Coordinator to assess the family's unique circumstances. Through a video call, they carefully explored the family's strengths, challenges, and aspirations, crafting a tailored plan to connect them with community resources that could provide the help they needed.

A Brighter Future

The Coordinator dedicated themselves to the father's journey, meeting him weekly for six months, and maintaining ongoing contact through messaging. Slowly, the father began to open up. Reflecting on these early encounters, he shared, ***"The first meetings with the Coordinator were really helpful. We talked about how my mental health was affecting our kids and how I struggled to bond with our new baby. For the first time, I felt like someone really understood. The Coordinator wasn't just giving advice, they were supporting me emotionally."***

Over time, the transformation became palpable. As the father's mental health improved, he regained his confidence as both a father and a partner. ***"I feel better at home now,"*** he said. ***"I'm closer to our kids, and I'm spending more time with our baby. I'm stronger when dealing with problems, and for the first time in years, I feel ready to start working full-time again."*** His renewed sense of purpose was a testament to the power of timely, compassionate intervention.

7. Testimonials

In the voices of the families we serve, resonate the echoes of hope and transformation that Home-Start Cymru delivers across Wales. Each testimonial below is a testament to the small acts of life-altering support provided by our dedicated volunteers and members of staff. Our families often report that its the simple things that have the biggest impact on their day to day life as parents. Here are reflections from the families whose lives have been impacted by Home Start Cymru staff and volunteers:

One parent shared, "Being able to talk to someone with experience about school and children with additional needs and just someone to chill with and vent."

"I am gaining more confidence in being a mum and going out and about to more places with my children."

"Made me learn that I can do anything I put my mind to." and "Made me feel more confident in myself and to talk to someone if I need to chat instead of keeping it all in."

"Your member of staff has been like my guardian angel. Whenever I needed to turn to someone, it would be them." from a Father supported by HSC in Blackwood.



8. Volunteers

At the heart of Home-Start Cymru's mission lies our volunteers, each one a sign of hope and support for families across Wales. These dedicated individuals, through their compassion and commitment, are the reason we are able to provide the highest quality, non-judgmental peer support that resonates so deeply with the families we have the privilege of meeting.

Our foundational approach to support entails volunteers working hand-in-hand with families in the comfort of their own homes, offering one-to-one assistance that is both personal and powerful.

Flexibility is key in meeting the diverse needs of families across Wales. As such, we are continuously evolving our services, exploring and embracing innovative ways to extend our support. We are expanding our offerings to include more alternatives for those who may wish for support outside their homes. The future is bright with the prospect of micro-volunteering opportunities, ensuring we remain adaptable, progressive, and aligned with the changing times.

“I enjoy trying to help families giving support in anyway I can. I felt Home Start Cymru suited to the type of voluntary work I would like to do and it fits in well with my life. I enjoy the feeling I get when I’m helping families in a positive way. I also enjoy the training Home-Start Cymru gives, and I feel part of the team - a really nice group of people.”

Home-Start Cymru Volunteer

340

families were supported by our volunteers

77%

of these families cherished volunteer-led support

100

new volunteers recruited in the past year

9. Communications and Policy

Throughout the past year, Home-Start Cymru has reached further than ever before, thanks to our dedicated communications and policy efforts.

Media Relations

Together, with the platforms of **ITV Wales News**, **South Wales Guardian**, and **The Herald**, we've cast a spotlight on the pressing need for kind-hearted volunteers. Heartwarming tributes have celebrated our volunteers' selfless acts of kindness, while we've also illuminated the systemic challenges of poverty faced by many families.

Stats:

4200 new web visitors
270 new followers on socials
8200 visitors to facebook
We've reached **170,000** individuals
Google ranking position increased

Policy

We've spoken with a variety of **Welsh Government** and **Senedd officials** across the year to feed through the **voices of the families** we work with in Wales and to collaborate on furthering positive **national development**. We've:

- Hosted a number of meetings with key **Welsh Government** and **Senedd representatives**
- Piloted the **self-assessment tool** for the implementation of the **NEST/NYTH framework**
- Worked with **ACE Hub Wales** to co-produce Home-Start Cymru's **trauma-informed communities spotlight report**, featuring insights and experiences from a range of key stakeholders.

Our Partnerships Across the Sector: Collaboration with those working across the third sector to create collective calls on behalf of families in Wales has also helped us strengthen our **policy messaging**. This year, we've:

- Regularly participated in **third sector forums** to share insights on the ground and work together to echo shared calls, including submitting joint responses to Welsh Government and Senedd committee consultations
- Partnered with the **Maternal Mental Health Alliance** to develop and amplify campaign calls around **perinatal mental health awareness** and provision for women and families in Wales
- Collaborated with the **Bevan Foundation** to make the case for a **Welsh benefits system**, embedding the voices of families to evidence reports.

10. Equality, Diversity, Inclusion and Fairness

We are committed to delivering services that reflect the needs of families living in the communities we serve and have been working hard to develop our practices and culture in order to become a truly inclusive charity.

Our EDIF Working Group advises leadership on how to improve upon and celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion. With guidance and input from colleagues, we have undertaken the following as a part of our journey in this space.

- Accelerated work on the creation of a four-year EDIF Strategy, co-produced by staff and trustees and reflective of the views and insights of families.
- Carried out a demographics survey of all current staff and implemented EDIF Monitoring forms for all new starters entering the organisation, including volunteers. This will allow us to set benchmarks, taking into account standards across the sector against the demographics of communities we are present in to start building a more diverse, inclusive, equitable team.
- We have implemented a new Equity and Diversity Policy.

Tackling inequality is a long process, but we are committed to taking the steps each day, every year to pursue a better environment for the families we support. We look forward to sharing our continued progress.



11. Conclusion

As we reflect on the profound impact Home-Start Cymru has cultivated across Wales, I feel both pride and anticipation. Powering through with resilience and sustained impact, our collaboration has fostered a support system that impacts countless families across Wales.

Looking to the future, our strategy is clear. We are ready to widen our scope and deepen our influence, channeling our advocacy to significantly shape the policies that underpin societal welfare and improve the lives of the families we connect with.

It is our commitment to ensure that the voices of the families we champion are influential in the policymaking process, ensuring that their needs and aspirations drive legislative change.

As we celebrate our five-year anniversary, we reaffirm our commitment to every family that trusts Home-Start Cymru as their ally. Our promise remains robust—to be the consistent force that supports, and propels each family toward not merely surviving, but thriving.

Our collective vision is ambitious and achievable—to drive a future where families across Wales do more than merely manage—they thrive dynamically, supported by a network that values resilience and fosters connections.

At Home-Start Cymru, we are more than a support system; we are a charity dedicated to transformative care, one family at a time.



Jonathan Richards

Jonathan Richards

**Chairman
Home-Start Cymru**

12. Acknowledgements

We'd like to extend our deepest gratitude to our commissioners, philanthropic donors, supporters and fundraisers whose generous spirits have not only enriched Home-Start Cymru but also laid a foundation for our growth and future planning.

Charitable Trusts and Corporate Sponsors:

Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation
Asda
Children in Need
Community Foundation Wales
Dulverton Trust
Enterprise UK
Garfield Weston
Grace Trust
Gwynt Y Mor Wind Farm
Hartsheath Charitable Trust
Henry Smith Charitable Trust
Home-Start UK
Howell's School, Cardiff
Jenour Foundation
John Lewis
Marks and Spencer
Moondance Foundation
National Grid
National Lottery Community Fund
SEDA
Souter Charitable Trust
Tesco

Health Boards and Local Authorities:

Anglesey County Council
Caerphilly County Council
Cardiff & Vale University Health Board
Cardiff County Borough Council
Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board
Cwm Taf Regional Partnership Board
Merthyr County Council
Powys County Council
Rhondda Cynon Taf County Council
Rhyl Town Council
Swansea County Council

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