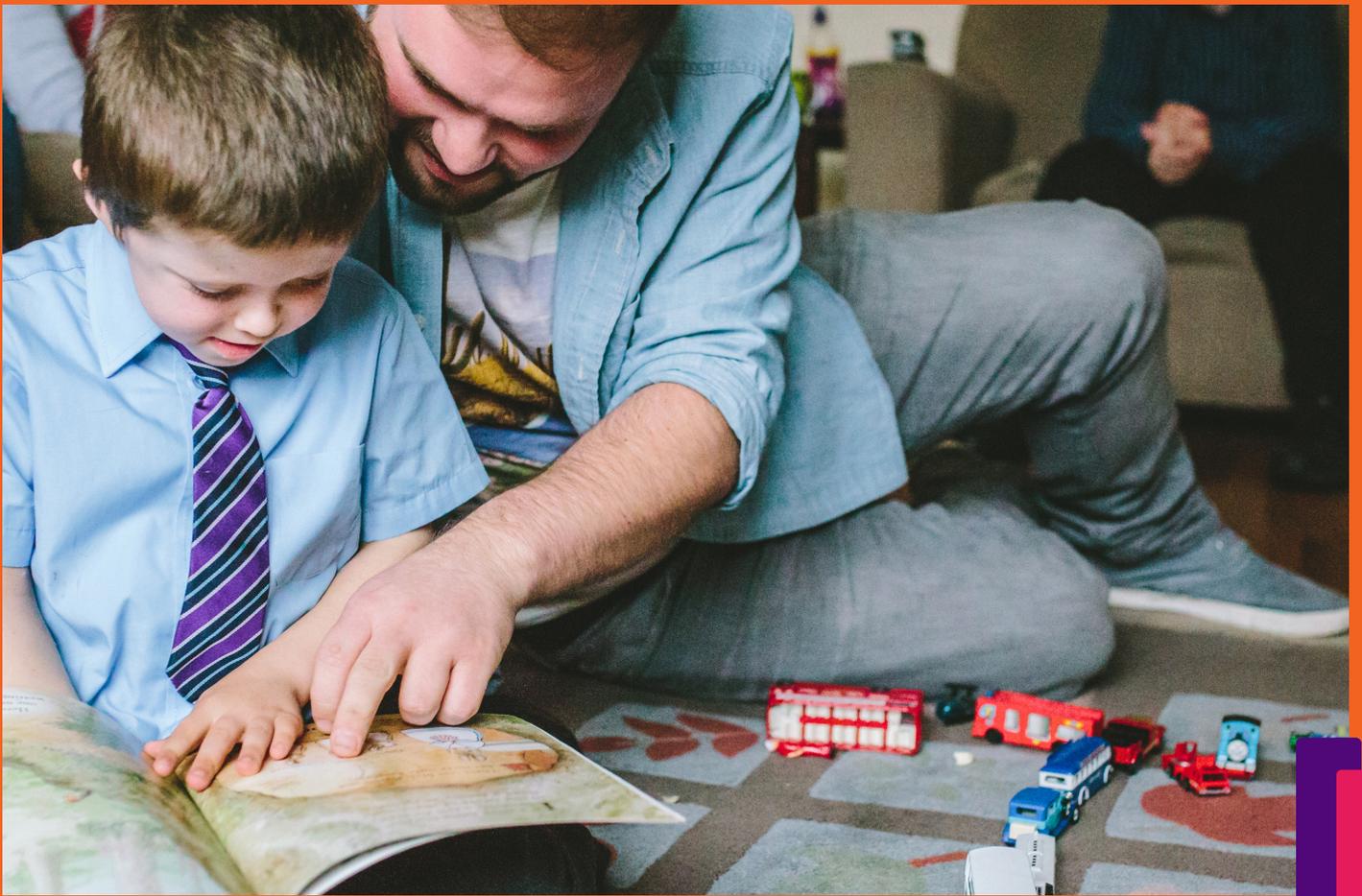




**HOME-START IN GREATER MANCHESTER**

**MANIFESTO  
OF  
FAMILY SUPPORT**

**JANUARY 2020**



“Home-Start is the reason my children are no longer on Child Protection Plans, Home-Start is the reason I smile again”

Home-Start supported dad.



Over 4,000 families are receiving help from one of Greater Manchester’s leading family support charities and their army of volunteers

**#volunteerarmy**





## Home-Start in Greater Manchester Mission Statement

Across Greater Manchester children are struggling; they are growing up in households with a lower life expectancy than the national average, they are more likely to live in poverty and experience neglect than in many other parts of the UK. More children in Greater Manchester are growing up in care than ever before. This needs to stop.

Every child deserves the right to a real childhood. A childhood free from struggle; be that poverty, inadequate housing, lack of educational opportunities or poor mental health, (theirs or a parent's).

The child of today is the adult of the future. Without a strong investment in those early years, intergenerational problems will not end. The child who experiences poverty will often experience poverty as an adult. The child who witnessed emotional stress and trauma will often struggle to form meaningful relationships as an adult. Adverse childhood experiences often take away the opportunity for children to become the adults that they should become.

There is a direct correlation between fractured humans and fractured society. Home-Start's strength is finding ways, (through emotional and practical support), to build stronger and more resilient parents; because parents who can cope better, have the emotional and physical strength to be better parents for their children.

The cycle of failed childhoods needs to end. Home-Start support helps break this cycle. Through volunteer-led frontline intervention, Home-Start sets parents and children on the path for a flourishing future.

No child deserves to have their childhood taken away from them...

Below are a series of key Greater Manchester priorities for children, young people and families, and our response to them. This is our Manifesto of support for families.



## School Readiness- Home-Start's position statement

1 in 3 children in Greater Manchester are not 'School Ready' and that equates to almost 12,000 children starting school not ready to learn.

The reality of this statement is that these children are starting their school journey without the basics of being able to cope in a school environment; they cannot sit at a table and eat with a knife and fork, they are not toilet trained, they cannot socialise with their peers or listen and react to basic instructions.

There are many reasons for this- lack of routine and boundaries at home, inadequate diets, a parent coping with poor mental health, poverty and disability... Regardless of the reasons, the direct impact this has on children at the earliest stage of their learning life is so negative and has such a dire impact on their future.

Young people who face barriers to education, such as poor literacy and language skills, or low self-esteem can often come from backgrounds where their abilities are not acknowledged or nurtured- making it harder for them to take risks, to aspire and to reach for more. What this causes is a cycle of intergenerational negative learning experiences, where families feel trapped and struggle to find a way out.

Many children in Greater Manchester are living in poverty. Not just financial poverty, but the poverty of aspiration. Through no fault of their own, these children fail at school and are failed in equal measure, the impact of this can last a lifetime.

It is a proven fact that the social mobility gap is widening across many communities, more and more children from disadvantaged backgrounds are being let down by the system, whereas their peers from more affluent backgrounds are thriving. This must stop, because every child has the right to a positive and meaningful future.

The five Home-Start charities across Greater Manchester see early education at the heart of improving a child's life-chances. Home-Start recognises that many parents themselves have been failed by the school system. Through nurture, encouragement and increasing a parent's confidence, they, in turn, will help facilitate their child's early years education; this is crucial because parents are their children's first educators.



## School Readiness- Home-Start's response

Home-Start is not a single- cause charity, it is a frontline, service delivery charity, which puts us in a prime position to be able to offer bespoke and tailor-made support, at a local level, to parents who are committed to helping their children achieve well at school.

Home-Starts across Greater Manchester, with their army of home-visiting volunteers, are committed to improving the early education experiences of young children. Volunteers offer non-judgemental support to parents, which in turn, empowers parents to make positive change. When a parent does not feel judged or ridiculed, they are more accepting of advice and will action change.

Volunteer-led support can be offered in a variety of ways, tailored-made to meet the exact needs of a family. It can be support in forming routines and boundaries, cooking healthy and nutritional meals on a budget, early learning activities such as reading, counting and messy play.

Many of our volunteers have themselves worked in the Education and Health Sectors, or are parents themselves, who have been on the journey of encouraging a child's early learning experiences. Support inside the home is the bedrock of Home-Start's service to families, but our five Home-Starts across Greater Manchester offer a range of specialist projects:

We work with the Dolly Parton Imagination Library- where each child under the age of five receives a new book each month until they begin school.

We work with the LENA Foundation- where trained volunteers support parents to expand the frequency and range of conversations they have with their young children.

Across Greater Manchester, Home-Start offers a holistic approach in supporting families who are concerned about their child's ability to cope and do well at school.

We, as a collective of Home-Start charities, learn from each other and utilise our varied knowledge base. For instance, some of our Home-Starts specialise in supporting families where there has been a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder, other Home-Starts specialise in PIMHs, (Parent Infant Mental Health), others work directly with families where there may be a language or cultural barrier.

What this means is, collectively, there is a Home-Start in Greater Manchester who can facilitate an insight into specialist support that may be needed to enhance a child's early education, setting them on the right track for a positive and fulfilling school life.

**In the last year almost 250 families were referred to a Greater Manchester Home-Start needing support with their child's early learning, socialisation and development. To date, 88% of these families say their needs have been met by Home-Start.**

**In addition, over 250 families cited managing their child's behaviour as a reason for needing Home-Start support. To date 88% of these families say their needs have been met by Home-Start.**

# Perinatal Mental Health- Home-Start's position statement

In Greater Manchester 1 in 10 mothers suffer from postnatal illness, this equates to almost 4,000 new mums per year. Poor mental health can have a devastating impact on an entire family, none more so, than when a baby is born.

The relationship between a mother and her new-born child is crucial; it paves the way for a safe, secure future, through the formative years of a child's life. But when a mother suffers from poor mental health, the bond between her and her child can diminish, through no fault of her own.

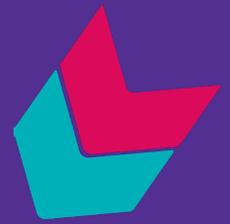
Emotional neglect can be a direct consequence of a parent's poor mental health. Emotional neglect in childhood can lead to a range of difficulties in adulthood, from struggling to build meaningful relationships, through to low self-esteem and confidence. Evidence also suggests that emotional neglect can impact on a person's physical health too.

Poor mental health still receives social stigma and parents can find it extremely difficult to reach out for support and to admit that help is needed. So why does Home-Start in Greater Manchester have such a proven track record of being able to support mums on their journey to recovery and improvement?

It's because of Home-Start's unique approach, and that approach is to apply localist support across our communities, inside a family's own home. Many mums who experience poor mental health will suffer anxiety, isolation and fear of being judged. The thought of leaving their home to access support can be terrifying, which often results in a mum suffering in silence. Home-Start support is non-judgemental and confidential, it gives an opportunity for a new mum to express her concerns in a comfortable and secure environment- that of her own home.

Poor Mental Health has a direct correlation to loneliness and isolation. We support many families who have fled domestic abuse and are living in communities where they know no one. We support families who have fled persecution and have arrived in Greater Manchester to huge cultural and language barriers with no support network around them.





## Perinatal Mental Health- Home-Start's response

Not only do we provide an army of experienced volunteers to support families inside their own homes, we also offer a range of crucial, evidence-based projects:

We offer Parent-Infant Mental Health Support (PIMHS), to parents of children under the age of two, where the parent has mild to moderate mental health needs. This sits within a framework of specialist support where we partner with Health Visitors and Clinical Psychologists, so we can address a parent's concerns with the right team around them. Our home-visiting volunteers are highly trained, so that they gain a real understanding of the importance of early attachment and bonding with baby.

We run a 'Dads Matter' project, supporting dads to actively engage with family life and to take care of their own mental health needs too, so that the whole family unit can become strong.

We are working with expectant mums, so that we can offer support on their pregnancy journey, addressing fears and concerns before the baby arrives.

We match our volunteers to the right family at the right time- often placing volunteers with a similar lived experience to that of the family they are supporting. Breaking down barriers and forging meaningful, supportive and trusting relationships; which is imperative for families who can be wary of statutory services.

**In the last year almost 300 parents were referred to a Greater Manchester Home-Start needing support with their mental health. To date, 82% of these families say their needs have been met by Home-Start.**

**Almost 250 parents were also referred to Home-Start as they were not coping with feelings of isolation. To date, 85% of parents say their needs have been met by a Home-Start in Greater Manchester.**

**A further 253 parents said they needed help with their own self-esteem. To date 83% of these parents have said their needs have been met by Home-Start.**





## Early Years and Early Intervention- Home-Start's position statement

When parents can't cope, children suffer. The impact of which can last a lifetime.

A happy and secure childhood is fundamental if a young person is to develop into a fulfilled happy and healthy adult.

For decades Home-Start has seen the value and positive impact that intervening early with a family who is struggling, can have. Home-Start's approach in early intervention means a halt in families reaching crisis point, where more costly statutory intervention is needed.

The cycle of intergenerational poverty, neglect, lack of aspiration and family stress can be broken when a family reaches out for help. They will only do this if they believe a support service will not judge or ridicule them. This is the unique and proven success of Home-Start's intervention. Our volunteers offer weekly support inside the home, empowering parents to make change, at their own pace for the benefit of themselves and their children. Support is tailored to meet the very specific needs of each individual family. Parents will engage with Home-Start and their home visiting volunteer because in their own words, parents say 'their volunteer is there because they want to be, and not because they have to be.' It's this trusted and ongoing relationship that allows for significant change in the family home. It's an approach that has a 40-year track record of success, not only across Greater Manchester, but across the UK.

Our approach meets the Greater Manchester Population Health Plan aim to improve early years support for parents to give their children the best start in life.



## **Early Years and Early Intervention- Home-Start's response**

Home-Start works closely with Health Visiting teams across Greater Manchester and we now have strong professional relationships with Midwifery teams, so that we can engage with parents right at the start of their pregnancy, which in turn has a positive impact- both physically and mentally for the new mum.

Our Post-natal and Pregnancy Pal service matches pregnant women at risk of isolation with volunteers who receive additional training from the University of Salford's School of Midwifery: Our volunteers offer consistent support throughout the pregnancy and early weeks of parenthood, so parents don't have to cope alone.

Home-Start support is volunteer-led, making it one of the most cost-effective family support services on offer. Home-Starts across Greater Manchester work with many families who having children on Child Protection Plans, evidence shows that with Home-Start support, many children are either removed from such plans, or reduced to lower levels of need over time, thus saving children from entering the Looked After Care System, at a great cost to the public purse.

As one of Greater Manchester's leading volunteer-led organisations, we save public money. Each year our volunteers provide approximately 30,000 hours of direct family support, this equates to £250,000 of paid support.

**In the last year, almost 150 families were referred to Home-Start due to stress caused by conflict in the family home. To date 72% of families said their needs have been met.**

**Across Greater Manchester, the cost of accommodating children in care is at a record high, (2018). This, combined with an increase of children being removed from their families across many of the boroughs, is putting a huge pressure on the local authorities, who are already dealing with central government cuts.**

**It costs less than £1,600 per year for Home-Start to support a family. This in comparison to £41,000 per year for a child to be Looked After by the local authority in foster care and £165,000 per year for a child to be placed in a residential home.**

**This makes Home-Start's Early Intervention the most cost- effective approach in family support and keeping families together.**

# Infant Mortality - Home-Start's position statement

Manchester has one of the highest rates of infant mortality in England, sadly this, after a period of reduction, is now increasing.

One of the most common causes is linked to deprivation, and this remains a year on year trend. It is no surprise that infant mortality rates are high in Manchester, as the city has some of the highest levels of child poverty and deprivation in England.

Aside from deprivation, there are many other factors to take into consideration- maternal and household smoking, maternal obesity, unsafe sleeping practices, substance misuse, abusive relationships, lack of engagement with antenatal services and home living environments.

We know the causes are complex and often interlinked, we know that there are many risk factors.

High levels of consistent stress in pregnancy can cause both premature births and low birth weight babies. Most infant deaths occur in the first 28 days, and the majority of these infants are born prematurely or extremely prematurely with a low birth weight. Therefore, the health and wellbeing of expectant and new mothers needs to become a priority.

There are several core groups of expected mothers who are most vulnerable to the risk factors, they include- those living in poor-quality or unsuitable accommodation, refugees and asylum seekers, those with no recourse to public funds, and teenage parents.





## Infant Mortality - Home-Start's response

Home-Start's unique approach of tailor-made support for each family means that we can address concerns as they arise and deal with them alongside the family, before they lead to serious problems.

We have a proven track record of working with some of the society's most vulnerable parents- those where English is not their first language, parents experiencing high levels of isolation and loneliness and parents dealing with stress, anxiety and other mental health issues.

When taking into consideration the risk factors of experiencing infant mortality within a family, Home-Start can offer help, guidance and advocacy in a variety of ways, such as-

Raising awareness and knowledge of how to keep a baby safe, (with a focus on parents where English is not their first language and therefore may not be able to read the literature on offer).

Supporting teenage parents and young parents, empowering them to make positive and healthy choices for themselves and their baby.

Accessing safe baby equipment for families who are struggling financially.

Focusing on the 1001 Critical Days theory with new parents, (encouraging nurture, emotional and physical attachment and bonding with a new baby), putting the new baby at the heart of the family and focusing on their needs.

With specialist Parent Infant Mental Health volunteers, families are encouraged to address and discuss their concerns around poor mental health, coping with anxiety, low self esteem and feelings of helplessness, in turn reducing their levels of stress over time.

Some Home-Starts in Greater Manchester offer Home-Start volunteers to expectant mothers, walking alongside them during their pregnancy journey, addressing their concerns along the way and empowering them to make positive and healthy choices for themselves and their newborn.

More than anything, Home-Start's non-judgemental approach means that many families will accept and address concerns that have been raised with a sense of equality and empowerment, especially important when considering risk factors around health such as smoking and obesity.



# The impact of Home-Start support for local families across Greater Manchester

# 4k

In the last year over 4,000 families have been helped by five Home-Starts either through direct home-visiting support or through specialist Home-Start projects.

## Families Needs



Over 180 families needed help with managing a household budget



Almost 150 families needed help with stress caused by conflict in the home



Over 250 families needed help with parental self-esteem.



Nearly 300 families needed help with coping with their mental health



Almost 180 families needed help with coping with physical needs



Almost 250 families needed help with feelings of isolation



## Children's Needs



Over 250 parents needed help with managing a child's behaviour



Nearly 250 parents needed help with their child's early learning



Almost 140 parents needed help with coping with a child's physical health



Over 150 parents needed help with coping with a child's mental health

**3/4**

of families have said in the last year that their needs have been met by Home-Start across Greater Manchester

“Because of Home-Start I no longer feel worthless. I no longer feel like I am at the bottom of the pile.”

Home-Start supported mum





The Five Home-Starts across Greater Manchester are :-

**Home-Start Bolton**

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**Home-Start Manchester**

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**Home-Start Trafford, Salford & Wigan**

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