

Reaching out to isolated parents

Home-Start supports local parents and their children for a whole range of reasons. But one issue that has been an over-arching struggle for the parents who have turned to Home-Start for over forty years, is isolation.

More than 60 percent of families say they need support with isolation. It's something that can be attributed to many factors, like moving away from family support networks, having a partner who works away, or living in a rural community with little or no access to services. Society and parenting has changed dramatically since Home-Start was set up in 1973, but the fact that parents still struggle with isolation shows that services like it will always be vital to provide a link for families in their local communities.

One mum supported by Home-Start said: "My own parents live in Australia, and whilst my little girl loves to skype them, it's hardly the same. And I miss them terribly, not being able to jump in my car and see them, or organise trips out at the weekend is so hard. I would see other mums with their parents and just feel heart broken. My husband is very supportive, but at the end of the day he leaves for work at 8am, and returns at 6pm, meaning everyday it's just me and my daughter.

Isolation is a terrible thing, it made me feel so low. I knew my feelings were rubbing off on my daughter and I felt that I was just a terrible parent.

I found out about Home-Start through a friend. At first the thought of having a stranger in my house terrified me, but as the months went on, I cherished those precious few hours when my volunteer came. Just to know that for one afternoon a week I would get the company of another adult was priceless. We started to go out to the park, to play groups, just for walks. My volunteer understood exactly where I was coming from, as when she was a young mum she'd moved away from her parents, and instinctively knew how I felt. Home-Start is like a warm hug.

Anyone out there whose suffering in silence, please, please get in touch with Home-Start. They will change your life, they did mine."

If you can spare just a couple of hours each week to support an isolated parent, please visit www.gmhomestarts.org.uk