

As one of Greater Manchester's leading family support charities, we listened with interest to the Summer budget.

Whilst we fully support the need to reduce the cost of the welfare state on the British tax payer, we are keenly aware of how this will affect many families across Greater Manchester who are currently receiving benefits.

To cap benefits at £20,000 per annum for local families, means in real terms a loss of £100 per week. We know this will have a hugely emotional impact on the parents we support; as they cope with the stress of trying to replace this shortfall, the potential risk of homelessness and possibly a rise in poor mental health.

At Home-Start we can foresee a future where more and more local families will turn to us for emotional and practical support as they navigate through these radical income changes. What we did welcome from the Summer budget was the commitment to offer 30 free hours of childcare for working parents with 3/4 year olds.

Home-Start has seen over many years the barriers that parents, wanting to return to work, face-they simply cannot afford to. Many parents tell us they are caught in a trap of wanting to contribute back into society, but cannot overcome the financial hurdles placed on them with nursery fees. Having this increase in free childcare will, for many parents, make all the difference in choosing a job over staying at home. We were also pleased to see a reduction in the rent for social housing as this will have a positive impact on the majority of families Home-Start supports right across Greater Manchester.

For Home-Start we see this latest budget as a real mixed bag for the many families we support across all social and financial divides. What we can assure is that regardless of situation, Home-Start is there to support any local young family who need us.