



HOME START

Nottingham

2021-2022 Annual Report

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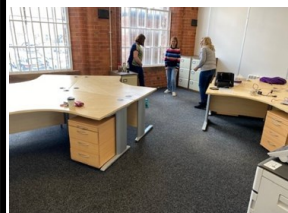
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Welcome from Jo Hallam, Scheme Manager

This year we said goodbye to our base for over 20 years and moved to pastures new. Our new 'home' are serviced offices about 4 miles from our previous offices. Moving home is never easy, but with all hands on deck, it went smoothly on the day. With a donation of new desks our new headquarters were up and running the very next day.



The restoration of our core service and the family mentor service continued as Covid restrictions steadily eased throughout the year. Staff and volunteers initially met families and delivered groups outdoor. Home-visits resumed in May, and the Clifton family group resumed indoors in June. Staff returned to office working on a phased return at first, slowly building up to pre-covid working over the year.

We have been overwhelmed by the number of referral enquiries we have received. In October we implemented a new process which we hope will enable us to respond to the demand for our service more effectively, be realistic around timescales and manage the expectations of our referring partners and families.

We always have more families wanting support than available volunteers to support them. This year we delivered four preparation courses with 22 volunteers completing the courses. Volunteer recruitment has been a constant challenge not only for us but many other voluntary organisations. We are looking at ways to attract new volunteers, including social media campaigns, delivering talks and presentations, and attending events to raising the profile of Home-Start.

In response to the increase in demand for our home visiting support, we have increased our capacity by expanding our family support team. We appointed a new co-ordinator Charlotte, who joined us in September. Charlotte is one of our home visiting volunteers and has used her knowledge and skills to transition to the role of co-ordinator. She has been the perfect addition to our growing and developing team. In addition, in order to develop our support offer to families, we looked to recruit a Family Support Worker. In February, our co-ordinator Colleen accepted the new role to start later in the year.

We also saw growth in our SSBC Family Mentor team as 6 new family mentors and a new team leader joined the team during the year, and an existing family mentor was promoted to the team leader position.

After many, many years of using Home-Start's own monitoring system, MESH was finally switched off at the end of April 2021, and we moved to using Charity Log. The transition of the new system was a major change this year. The implementation of a new system, the training of staff and the transferring of all existing data was challenging at times and extremely time consuming. However, we all had a shared vision of working more efficiently, effectively and becoming more sustainable. We are now completely paperless and 3 filing cabinets lighter! Our team have much more flexibility to work remotely, with improved accessibility to data when and where needed.



We maintained our valuable existing partnership with John Lewis and collaborated with them on their 'Magical Christmas' campaign, where five families received a wish list of items and food. Each family was allocated £450 to spend on anything in John Lewis. The family's volunteer captured their thoughts and we supported them to work alongside James at John Lewis to choose items on their wish list.



"I just want to say thank you so much for everything. While I was at John Lewis it was like a dream. I still cant believe what's happened today, its like not real. Its absolutely amazing, that I have you guys, your angels. Thank you a million of times. Xxx love you so much xxx"

Volunteers comment who accompanied parent "it was magical and mum was weeping with joy, it warmed the heart".

Home-Start UK asked us to deliver a workshop to the network highlighting the work of our Family Mentor Service. Marie and I delivered the workshop to 18 schemes, alongside two of our family mentors, who talked about their experiences.

We have reviewed our strategic plan this year and are excited to develop some new innovative and diverse ways to support families which were identified by staff and trustees. These include extending our group provision to increase engagement with families from BAME communities collaborating with fathers, baby massage, parenting programmes and parent-infant relationship support. We will also be working with Home-Start UK as they launch the new Home-Start Agreement and Strategic Framework.

I would like to thank our amazing trustees and volunteers as their commitment to the scheme has been truly heart-warming. The pandemic seems to have galvanised many to do more and offer additional time, on top of the support they already give. We are so grateful for everything you do to support, not only our families, but our staff team and the scheme as a whole.

Finally, I'd like to thank our fabulous staff teams who are just incredible! They have continued to offer the highest quality service throughout another very challenging year, and again their determination to continue to help families has never waned and has been demonstrated in everything they do. I am so very proud and grateful to work alongside the best of colleagues, who support me and each other as wonderfully as they do their volunteers and families.

Sara's 20 years

In March, one of our team reached a very special milestone. We celebrated with our Office Manager Sara, who has been with the scheme for 20 years. Sara joined us as an admin assistant in 2002, and soon became the cog that keeps the scheme running smoothly. She is the 'go to' person for everything; technical support, cuppa and a chat and when we can't find something – she knows where everything is! Thank you Sara for all you have done for us all over the years, and we look forward to celebrating more wonderful years with you



"Wow 20 years—it doesn't feel like 20 years at all, where has that time gone? I would like to say a huge thank you to the current staff team—Jo, Gail, Marie, Colleen, Charlotte and Catherine for all being amazing and making it a pleasure to come to work!! I would also thank you our Trustees, the staff team at the Aspley and all the other staff and Trustees I have worked with over years —you have all been fantastic"! I have seen so many changes throughout the years but the one thing which stays the same is everyone has the same vision—to help families.

About Home-Start Nottingham

Home-Start Nottingham offers confidential support: friendship and practical help to families with at least one child under eight, who are going through a difficult time. The area covered by the scheme includes: Nottingham city and the County Boroughs of: Ashfield, Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe.

We recruit and train volunteers who have parenting experience to visit families at home, who choose to use the service. We will help families to grow in confidence, enjoy to the full their relationship with their children and encourage them to widen their links within the local community.

We are committed to ensuring that resources and management are sustainable and of the highest quality in order to provide our services to families and support to our volunteers.

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Our vision

Our vision is *a society where every parent has the support they need to give their children the best possible start in life*. We provide support, friendship and practical help to vulnerable parents with one or more children under eight. Most of the parents we work with have poor mental health or wellbeing and are socially isolated with no-one to turn to for support.

Our aims:

- To improve the health and wellbeing of the most vulnerable young children
- To support parents to build strong, happy families
- To help families connect with their local community
- To enable parents and children to access, and benefit from, care and support from local services

Welcome from Mike Scott, Chair of Trustees

Welcome to our 2022 Annual Report!

Once again, I'd like to begin by thanking everyone involved with Home-Start Nottingham – staff, front-line volunteers and Trustees - for their work and commitment as we've moved out of the Covid emergency stage.

Of course, the virus is still very much with us, but fortunately the current variant seems less severe than earlier versions, so it's been possible to resume home visiting and live meetings in most cases.

During the past year, we've been able to strengthen our teams by appointing some excellent new staff and Trustees, who have settled in quickly and already begun to contribute their experience and expertise to our work. So, a formal welcome to them!

The County Council has revised its funding criteria since our last Annual Report and we were relieved that our application for the next three years was accepted, though at a lower rate than previously. Fortunately, we have recently benefitted from some generous donations and continue to make applications for the core funding necessary to keep the show on the road.

We're very much aware that the Small Steps Big Changes project in Aspley is due to end in 2025 and have already begun planning for a legacy project that will enable us to continue the work of our Family Mentors there. We're not yet clear what funding (if any) may be available at that point so we want as much time as possible to explore possible options. Hopefully, there will be more clarity for both staff and families by this time next year.

As we're slowly emerging from the long tunnel of the pandemic, it's becoming clear that families in Nottingham and Nottinghamshire will face big challenges in the next few years. The successive cuts imposed on Council services by the government have now reached crisis proportions and we are currently awaiting final decisions on which longstanding services used by our families will be axed in the next few months.

Home-Start Nottingham will continue to reach as many families in need of support as is possible, but we cannot and will not attempt to replace public sector services. Our role is to work alongside local government and the NHS and we look forward to continuing this long-term relationship.

While we've faced a range of difficulties in the past year, we're very much aware that other charities – including some Home-Starts – have been affected a lot more seriously. In these times of austerity, no charity can be confident about long-term funding, but our current financial state is relatively healthy and we're working hard to keep it that way!



Facts and figures

Total number
of
referrals
119

Families
supported
116

Children
Supported
253

Staff &
volunteer
hours
10788

Staff and
volunteer visits
2816

No of volunteers
supporting
families
69

Family Group in Clifton

Our funding from Children In Need ended in February 2022 but we are so pleased we are able to fund the group ourselves and carry on running the group for the foreseeable future. This year 34 families with 45 children attended the group.

In December 2021 some of our families joined us to visit White post Farm as well as attended the pantomime. It was lovely seeing the children's faces, meeting the animals and going down the slides. Think the parents enjoyed themselves too!

In January 2022 some of our families left us as the children started nursery which was sad but I am sure they are thriving and having a great time.

Due to the Children In Need funding ending we reviewed the group and its objectives and outcomes.

Our group aims to support parents that may feel isolated and lack self-esteem and confidence. Our staff and volunteers offer a listening ear, and play activities.

Our focus is to encourage positive interaction between parent/child as well as parents gaining peer support and develop social networks.

We have recently had feedback from families about their experiences of the group and how we can develop it.

Parents have commented that....

"Staff are friendly/welcoming and always there to offer advice if needed"

"A lovely selection of snacks provided"

"It is fun and relaxed and the group my child feels most comfortable to go too"

We have had new families access the group via word of mouth and we are looking forward to getting to know everyone.

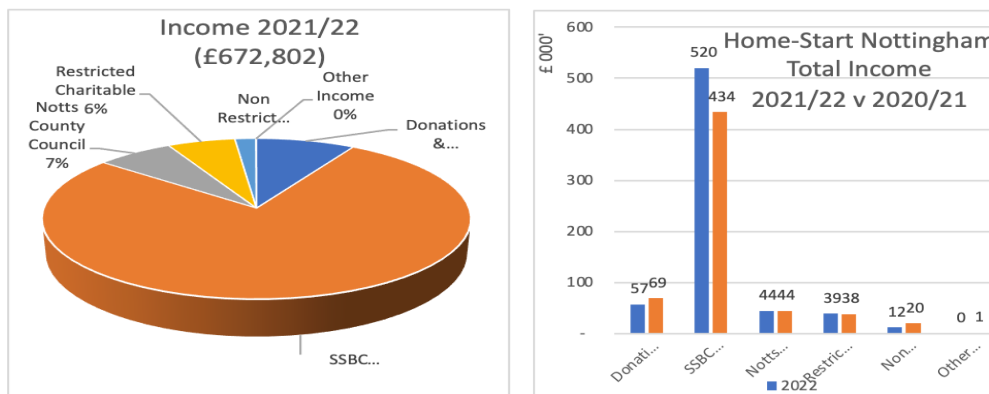
A big thank you to our wonderful volunteers who support us to deliver the group, you are amazing! If you would like more information about the group please get in touch with Gail Tilley at the Home-Start Nottingham office.



Treasurers Report from Bob Paton, Treasurer

The Financial Review

The financial year ended March 31, 2022 saw another strong financial performance from Home-Start Nottingham despite the continuing impact of the Covid pandemic. Total income received for the year 2021-22 was £672,802 (2021: £606,163), a healthy increase on the previous year of 11%. The total revenue comprised £615,611 of restricted income (2021: £536,166) and £57,191 of unrestricted income (2021: £89,997). Expenditure totalled £534,043 (2021: £528,581).



Throughout the financial year the Charity continued to take decisive action wherever it could to reduce its cost base without jeopardising the essential services that families depend on us to provide. This action has resulted in the cost base increasing by only 1% compared to the income increase of 11%. This resulted in a net income of £138,759 (2020: £77,582).

Reserves Policy

The strong financial performance detailed above resulted in year-end total reserves increasing to £543,365.

The Trustees confirm and review annually the policy in respect of reserves held by Home-Start Nottingham, considering the risk, activity and commitments of the charity. Trustees have agreed to retain a level of free (unrestricted) reserves amounting to three months running costs, excluding costs incurred and consequently covered by the commissioned services contract with SSBC. This amounts to approximately £42,000 as of 31st March 2022.

The Charity's cash flow in the year was also strong, generating an inflow of £139,713 (2021: £127,687) which increased the balance at the bank at the year-end to £642,923.

The strong year end cash and reserve balances provide the trustees with confidence that despite the following uncertainties:

- The ongoing Covid pandemic and the possibility of further variants arising
- The uncertain future funding landscape including the ending of the Small Steps Big Changes project in 2025
- The continuing cuts imposed by Government on local services
- The impact of increasing inflation in the UK and resultant cost of living difficulties being experienced by local families,

Home-Start Nottingham will be able to continue its activities and provide ongoing support to families for the foreseeable future.

Thank you to our funders ...

- The Henry Smith Charity
- Nottinghamshire County Council - Local Improvement Scheme
- Children in Need
- Small Steps Big Changes
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Boots

And also to all those other organisations and individuals who have made donations to us this year and helped us make a huge difference to families lives.

I've just felt so alone all the time but it has helped loads have you lot to talk to

Home-Start provided support and guidance when no one else was available

"The support I received made me feel like I wasn't alone"

"Fantastic agency—families would be lost without your support"

"The support offered to this family has been a huge benefit and enabled the family's life to improve drastically"

Events

This year we provided a Christmas trip to White Post Farm for our families. This was the first time we had been able to provide something for our families to attend in person since 2019 so we were delighted so many families enjoyed it.

Following this, we provided 6 soft play sessions over 6 months, in each of the boroughs and the city. These sessions helped us to provide a safe space for children to play and the opportunity for families to make connections with others in their locality. These sessions were open to all supported families and those on our waiting list.

We have provided training for our staff and volunteers throughout the year, including a refresher training course for volunteers who have been resting for a while, paediatric first aid, speech and language workshops, data protection training, PIMH (Parent Infant Mental Health) Training, Reducing Parental Conflict and the Annual Safeguarding update.

One of our talented volunteers delivered flower arranging workshops to other volunteers, staff, and trustees, and we held “Coffee and Cake” sessions to celebrate Volunteer’s week.



Volunteer experiences with Home-Start Nottingham

Meet Kerry, Volunteer

I came to a point in my life a few years ago now, where I just had so much love to give and a lot of compassion but didn't know what I could do. I was given the Home-Start number and an explanation of what they were about by a therapist I was seeing at the time. I loved the thought of being able to help people in need and I really enjoyed learning about the different people we could be helping and the ways in which we could help.



The last family I supported was a young lady with 2 girls, I spoke on the phone for the first few months (due to Covid) and we chatted for 40–55 minutes most weeks, she was very unsure of the girls nutritional or activity needs and quite unsure if she was doing right by them. After we met in person I reassured her more of what a grand job she was doing bringing up 2 girls near enough on her own. I made sure we did something fun with the girls on most visits which they loved. After I'd been visiting for some time I would visit Mum whilst the girls were at school which was great as I could help Mum or point her in the direction of help (or just chat) and then we'd fetch the girls together and I spent time with them.

After a good few months Mum started really enjoying the activities and mucked in, she still carries this on now which gives me great pride. I look back to my first visits and then to where she is now - she is much more confident and happier, she doesn't question herself as much either. Even though I'm no longer with the family, I still visit every few weeks and on one of these visits we went to Clip & Climb in which we all had a fantastic time! We are now firm friends and I'm always here if she needs me.

This is why I volunteer – to help change people's lives for the better and it gives me so much satisfaction.

Meet Danielle, Volunteer

When I supported this family I supported Mum mentally and physically. I would help with her shopping e.g. push the trolley/basket or pushchair, load and unload the shopping to and from her car and occasionally help put it away. I would help with housework like folding clothes and take them upstairs or play with the daughter while Mum is tidying. I supported Mum with emotional help by listening to her concerns about her daughter and her eating/talking/behaviour and her own problems like her anxiety and pulling out her own eyelashes and brows. I would give her tips and things that I did when my children were young. I've signposted and gone to appointments with Mum.

I've loved every minute of it and felt useful like my support and tips has helped Mum, and this is why I volunteer. I know how hard it can be, being a parent and having a bit of help can make so much difference. I just like to help people and see children grow. It also helps me like I said above it makes me feel useful that I can help and that my skills also help.

Volunteer experiences with Home-Start Nottingham

Meet Stef, Volunteer

Why be a volunteer? Why volunteer with Home-Start? What is Home-Start? These are questions I have been asked many times in the last 10 years. My answer always starts with because I have enjoyed being a Mum and I want other people to enjoy it also. My next comment will be that sadly being a parent isn't always like that for some people. I hope my being a volunteer with Home-Start has enabled me to make parenthood more enjoyable for a number of Mums. I say Mums because with Home-Start Nottingham I have worked with Mums with children under 5 although the focus is always on the whole family unit; happy Mum and everyone benefits!



Why the picture I've added? That is one of my favourite pictures of me, taken New Year 2020 at a wedding in South Africa. My elder son was best man and this is during his speech. He was discussing being 4 weeks older than the groom and what a stirring effort I had achieved in giving birth to him as he had a rather large head (still does!). I was in tears of happiness. Being a parent to me has always been fun and it continues to be even now they are grown up.

I have met many wonderful people over the last 10 years who have needed support in one way or another. I've supported some families for a whole year and others for only a few weeks and months. The decision to stop visiting has been made in conjunction with the co-ordinator and the family. I've visited families large and small, with and without transport, I've attended hospital appointments – one family I met for the first time at Out Patients. Taking a young child for a hospital appointment is difficult enough as it is but when you have other children and no-one to look after them an extra pair of hands comes in handy. I've developed quite a list of indoor play centres over the years, sadly one of my favourites – Lanky Bill's in Langley Mill – closed during lockdown. I've pushed little ones on swings and played in the sand pit. I took my foot-pump to one Mum as the older children's bikes had flat tyres and she didn't have a pump! We also dismantled a set of bunk beds which wouldn't be allowed nowadays! Many Mums have just wanted someone to talk to and to share a cup of coffee. Life can be very lonely with little children and next to no-one to speak to other than the till operator in Tesco. The important thing is to be friendly, non-critical, and able to listen and sometimes to share experiences. I've always felt happy to share with a family that I have two sons – both now grown-up and married with children. That is part of who I am and what gives me the experience to offer help and guidance to others.

On arriving at one house, Mum answered the door with her youngest in her arms, he was about 8 months old; as she opened the door and he saw me, he held out his arms for me to take him. She commented he had never done that for anyone before. Things like that leave me with a warm and contented feeling which is why I'm still here after 10 years.

Volunteer experiences with Home-Start Nottingham

Lots of different experiences come to mind. Getting very wet walking home from a playground with a lovely Mum who was very uncertain about going out and about on her own. Another is sitting on the floor in the Reception of a very smart solicitors' office in Nottingham playing trains with two lovely little boys while Mum had a meeting with her solicitor. I remember attending nursery photo day and the Supervisor commenting as I held the younger child 'You can see the likeness can't you' The presumption being I was Granny. I did ask Mum if she put the person right later but she just laughed and said it didn't matter! I've discussed portion sizes and different meal types for children of different ages and purchased locks for cupboard doors to keep household cleaning materials out of reach of prying eyes and little fingers.

Long may the work of Home-Start make life a bit easier for families.

Families experiences with Home-Start Nottingham

Katie and her children were attending the playgroup organised by Home-Start Nottingham. Whilst interacting with the playgroup organisers it was identified that Katie would certainly benefit from the one-to-one support offered by HSN. Following the birth of her second child she was suffering from post-natal depression, along with other mental health issues. She had no family support.



Gail visited Katie at home to identify Katie's needs and brought Natalie with her. Katie feels that Gail matched her with someone entirely suitable. Initial support was by telephone, as the country was in lockdown. When restrictions were lifted, she met Natalie at a playpark with her children until Katie felt comfortable about having people in her home [the fear of catching Covid

had made her very nervous] and then some visits took place at home.

During the visits Katie was able to outline the issues that she was having to deal with – a miscarriage and family problems. Natalie was able to identify with these as she had experienced similar issues herself. She was able to outline the steps that she had taken to resolve these, and this helped Katie enormously.

Families experiences with Home-Start Nottingham

Katie describes the family as having no other adult in their lives. Her children built up a close relationship with Natalie over time too. As well as being a friend to Katie she was a friend to them as well. When Katie was at a particularly low ebb Natalie would bring the time of her visits forward to ensure that Katie received the support at a time when it was most needed.

The visits inevitably had to end but Katie is still finding it hard to come to terms with this. The impact of Natalie not being there for her, and her children, has had a significant impact and her children miss being able to share their news with Natalie. On a positive note, Katie's mental health has improved although she still has her "down" days.

Katie would whole heartedly recommend the service offered by Home-Start. She says that when she thought that thought that there was no one to listen to her, Home-Start and Natalie came along and proved that there was.

Susan After the birth of her second child Susan suffered from postnatal psychosis of such severity that she had to be hospitalised for three months. When she was released from hospital her Health Visitor suggested that she would benefit from the services of a Home-Start volunteer.



Susan was matched with Angela, Susan feels that the match was absolutely perfect in every way. Whilst she was nervous about meeting Angela for the first time, Angela rapidly became like a mother and grandmother figure to Susan and her children. Each week she and her children really looked forward to her visit and were sorry when it had to end. Although Susan does have family quite close they were finding it difficult to understand her illness.

Amy would help with the school run, go to the park with the family and read to and play with the children. Susan states that the children adored her. Angela's visits helped in several ways. Whilst she occupied the children Susan was able to get on with household chores. Angela was also very reassuring – Susan was still far from well with small issues becoming major worries and Angela was able to help Susan get matters in perspective. Angela was also incredibly amusing and Susan was able to laugh again.

The visits came to an end just before the Covid-19 lockdown was put in place. Both Susan and her children were devastated that the visits had to end. Susan has found lockdown very hard to deal with but is pleased that she has come through it. When situations were difficult she found herself thinking "What would Angela suggest I do?" and this helped her to cope.

Susan would and has recommended Home-Start to others. She describes the support that she received from Home-Start as an absolute salvation.

FEEDBACK



From Families

"I would definitely recommend Home-Start and describes the support given as amazing".

"I would and has recommended Home-Start to others. She describes the support that she received from Home-Start as an absolute salvation".

"She would absolutely recommend Home-Start – she now has far more confidence to cope with her two youngest children – she is even intending going to the baths as a family "

"The support that she was given helped her to become a better mother".

"I would whole heartedly recommend the service offered by Home-Start. She says that when she thought that there was no one to listen to her, Home-Start and my volunteer came along and proved that there was".

"They kept me alive! Twelve months ago I was in a horrific situation and my volunteer helped to drag me away from the dark place that I was in and I am so grateful".

From Referrers

"Thank you for all the support you offer to the families we work with"

"I feel this family have benefitted from having a volunteer supporter in many areas, "thank you!"

Very supportive team—amazing support offered to parents. Families really benefit from Home-Start support".

"This family have benefitted from the emotional and practical support to enable mum to care effectively for her children".

"Big thank you to Home-Start services, without your help our roles could not be manageable to have you to signpost for that extra support".

From Volunteers

"The work that Home-Start does is extremely valuable and if I had been aware of the scheme when my first child was a baby I feel that I would have benefited from the support of a volunteer. Home-Start Nottingham is very supportive".

"The work of Home-Start is "marvellous" and having observed the difference it makes to families lives and situations cannot recommend it highly enough".

"Invaluable resource that deserves greater recognition".

"The work that Home-Start does is really important, particularly when there have been so many cuts to health and social services. The charity deserves to be better known".

News from Aspley Family Mentor Service



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We've had a year to remember. We have successfully navigated all the challenges presented to us by the Covid-19 pandemic and are now just about back to normal delivering Small Steps at Home support in families' homes and running our full programme of Community Groups. Despite periods of time where we have to suspend visits and our

community groups due to Covid-19 restrictions, we've managed to provide a remarkable level of support to families in Aspley. We've made over 3,000 support calls to families, half of which have been Face To Face. On top, we have run just short of 200 community groups, including our popular Story and Rhyme Time and Active Play sessions, and our new Bump to Baby and Outdoor Adventure sessions. As with last year, we've delivered a Christmas present for every child support by a Family Mentor thanks to Gems Mission Christmas appeal. Seeing the delight on children's faces when they receive their gift is such a wonderful experience.



We have surpassed last year's ASQ (Ages and Stages Questionnaire) record completion rate with a new high of 94%. 146 out of 155 ASQs being completed on time - helping us, and other agencies, to target additional support where it is most needed. We have also worked hard to increase the reach and visibility of our service during the year. We've done lots of activities in each of our three distinct local geographical "patches" and continue to promote our excellent service at every opportunity. As a result we've succeeded in slightly increasing the number of 0-1 year old Aspley children we support and hope to build on this in the coming months so that we can support ever more families.



SSBC Aspley Family Mentor Team Volunteer Co-ordinator

There have been many challenges this past year with the pandemic still being at the forefront of everyone's mind. However by the summer of 2021, things were looking a little brighter, as we started the transition back towards our pre covid service, in a safe and measured way. The first face to face volunteer training was delivered back in May 2021, which was absolutely fantastic to actually meet the new volunteers in person and the feedback and positivity was phenomenal.

The summer of 2021 saw some of the groups open back up to parents and children and this gave the green light for volunteers to support the groups and do what they really wanted to do, support parents and children. The year still gave us many challenges in an ever-changing year but the volunteers continued to do an amazing job to support the groups when they could, even though they were going through challenges in their own lives.



It's been so inspiring to see how the volunteers have worked with the Family mentor team to support with various activities and has continued to support our services to families.



It's always a great pleasure to work with volunteers and I am looking forward to the year ahead.

"What I love most about volunteering is I am always learning new skills and it has helped build up my confidence" Dash

I enjoy it so much, it's just so different and love watching the children play and interact with each other" Katie

"I feel so much more confident it's the best thing I have ever done" Ian



Volunteers have supported Community groups, Events, Leaflet drop

Volunteers have contributed 431.5 Hours

10
Volunteers recruited

Volunteer experience with Aspley Family Mentor Service

Meet Haley, Volunteer

Before I started volunteering for SSBC I had been going through a really tough time. I lost my job during the Covid 19 'lockdown', and this affected my mental health. I was having panic attacks and didn't want to leave the house. I lost all my confidence and I had low self esteem. When I saw the advert about volunteering I was looking for something that would help me get out of the house and meet new people, as well as improve my mental health.



I really enjoyed the training. I was feeling a little anxious at the beginning, but I learned so much about the role, what to expect and the support I would receive. I also met other new volunteers.

Since then, I feel that I have learned so much, especially listening and communicating with people. I enjoy sharing parenting experiences, offering a listening ear, and making parents feel welcome and not alone. I enjoy playing with the children in the group and seeing them develop and socialise. It's fantastic to see parents and children enjoy themselves.

I've been a volunteer now for just over a year now. I volunteer at the groups in Aspley, mainly Story and Rhyme Time which I really enjoy and I help the Family Mentors get the activities and equipment ready. I also chat to parents - it's great to share our experiences and make them feel welcome. I'm really enjoying meeting new people and interacting with different families. I feel more confident around people again. It has helped my mental health and given me a purpose too - I feel part of a team.

I always wanted to get back into work, and I feel that volunteering for SSBC helped me look for a new job. I now work as a support worker and really enjoy it.





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