

## ANNUAL REPORT

APRIL 2024 - MARCH 2025



### Welcome to our 2025 Annual Report

I want to begin by thanking all involved with Home-Start Nottingham over the past year. Our aim is to support as many families in need as we can, and we could not do that without the incredible time and commitment given by our staff, our family volunteers and our trustees. Equally none of this would be possible without the donations we receive, both large and small and we are very grateful for them.

I think the past year can best be summarised as one of significant change and transition. Despite our best efforts we were unable to secure sufficient funding for our Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC) project based at Aspley to continue in its entirety. We are immensely proud of the great work that was done by that team and are delighted that, thanks primarily to funding from the local health authority, we can continue to offer a smaller but similar Family Mentor Service now based in Arnold with the rest of our wonderful staff team.

There has also been considerable change in our staff. We were very sad to say goodbye to Jo Hallam, our Scheme Manager, who left us in early April 2025 to take up a new Chief Executive role at Home-Start Erewash. I want to thank her for all her hard work and dedication. We are very pleased to welcome Jamie Wakefield as Jo's replacement. He has a strong and varied background in national and local charities, and we are very fortunate to have him. We also welcome all the new members of staff and volunteers who have joined us over the past year, they all strengthen our service.

We now have two co-chairs of trustees leading a very active trustee board generally. We also want to thank Bob Paton who has recently stepped back from his role as trustee treasurer. His work has been invaluable in maximising our returns and in streamlining our financial processes.

Our focus now is on the future. We are prioritising securing funding to enable us to continue to deliver all our services as the loss of the SSBC funding is significant, despite us being in the fortunate position of having considerable reserves. Equally we are also prioritising increasing our volunteer numbers and enhancing our volunteer offering. Our successful bid to The Pears Fund has enabled us to recruit a dedicated volunteer coordinator for the first time which puts us in a strong position to deliver on this aim.

There are many challenges ahead, but we believe we are in the best position to continue to offer a service to those who need it most, our families.

**Clare Howling**  
Co-Chair of Trustees

#### Feedback from a referrer

"Excellent service, support to families is amazing.

Children benefit as well as parents.

Support to prevent isolation and improve parents mental health, prevent isolation/access groups which parents otherwise would not and improving outcomes for children.

Staff and volunteer always so friendly, helpful and supportive."

### Scheme Manager

This year has been a significantly important year for Home-Start Nottingham as it has been a period of notable change in all areas of the scheme.

Focus has been on developing our core offer to families and volunteers across Nottingham and Nottinghamshire, with a focus on improvements and enhancements to our support to families and volunteers—recruitment, training, development, and retention.

We have introduced an enhanced offer to families, introducing a variety of support services in addition to our core volunteer led home visiting. These include... friendship cafés to reduce parents' isolation, nursery and school readiness support to families, baby and infant massage, one-to-one support for parents to help them to better manage their children's behaviour, outdoor family fun sessions in the school holidays.

Following a more focused and dedicated approach to volunteer recruitment over the last couple of years, I am pleased to report we have seen an increase in the number of volunteer enquiries we received, volunteers we have recruited and trained and the number of volunteers who have remained with the scheme. We have committed additional capacity to develop our offer to current and future volunteers; improving and enhancing our approach to recruitment, diversifying our volunteer training, and expanding the number of volunteering opportunities we offer. We will continue improving our support to volunteers over the coming years, providing an enhanced volunteer experience.

This year we entered the final year of the groundbreaking Small Steps Big Changes (SSBC) 10-year programme, and as a delivery partner for the family mentor service, this was the final year of delivering the Small Steps at Home manual to families in Aspley. We are immensely proud of our contribution to giving thousands of children in Aspley a better start to life. Having a peer family mentor to support parents in their home, has proven to make a positive and lasting difference to countless children's lives. We are delighted that the Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Integrated Care Board and Nottingham City Care have recognised the outstanding impact of the service and have committed their support through the Health Inequalities and Innovation Fund, expanding the service across all wards of the city for the next two years.

As the SSBC programme came to its natural conclusion, we were unfortunately unable to maintain the level of service of the previous 10 years. Whilst we are delighted some of our existing team are continuing in their role, we had to say goodbye to many of our colleagues in the family mentor team. Some have moved into alternative employment and others affected by redundancy. We thank them all for their years of dedicated support to families in Aspley and Home-Start Nottingham and we wish them well for their bright future.

The Home-Start Nottingham workforce has seen important and positive changes with the integration of the family mentor team into the family support team at Home-Start Nottingham, and we are delighted to welcome our existing and new family mentors to our Arnold office. We have also welcomed colleagues from Framework who join our family mentor team to deliver the service across the city.

I will be leaving Home-Start Nottingham at the end of this report year, but fortunately I will be moving on to another opportunity within the Home-Start Network. I know that I leave the scheme in a really good place, with new and exciting projects and ambitions on the horizon. I would like to thank our truly wonderful skilled board of trustees for their leadership and unwavering support, guidance, and encouragement over the last year and throughout my time at the scheme.

I would also take this opportunity to thank our amazing volunteers who support families in their home, week after week, months after month, offering our unique and bespoke emotional and practical support to parents and children. Thanks also go to the amazing volunteers who have supported the family mentors over many years, helping to deliver the many groups across Aspley, and in the office.

My final sincere gratitude is for our incredible, outstanding staff teams at Arnold and Aspley, who through what at times have been incredibly difficult and challenging, have remained as committed and dedicated as ever to supporting families, children, volunteers, the organisation, and each other. I am incredibly fortunate and blessed to have been able to work alongside such talented, supportive, empowering colleagues over the years, who will always have a huge place in my heart, and I know that I leave the scheme in their very capable hands.

**Jo Hallam**  
Scheme Manager

## Support in numbers

**471 families supported by Home-Start Nottingham core team and the family mentor team**

**560 children were given a brighter future**

**93 volunteers supported families**

**12,300 hours by volunteers in supporting families**

**45 families attended other services inc. Ready for Nursery, Friendship Cafes and Forest Fun events**

## Katie's story

Katie has five children with one child who has autism and one who, following a very difficult pregnancy, was born with serious ongoing health difficulties. She felt that she had been abandoned by the fathers of her children and her family, who live locally, did not provide any support. She clearly found this upsetting. She was suffering from mental health difficulties, including PTSD and anxiety. Her confidence and self esteem were at a very low ebb and, as a result, found herself unable to leave her house.

Katie was referred to Home-Start Nottingham through one of the other agencies that support her.

Gail introduced her to her volunteer, Suzie. Katie describes Suzie as "an amazing woman". She feels that the match was ideal and that she "clicked" with her straight away. Over the year of support Suzie became like a really good friend and someone that she could rely on.

Visits were varied: Katie felt that Suzie was a really good listener, so some visits were simply spent chatting about her problems. One thing that Suzie was particularly good at was helping Katrina look at her issues in a different way. So, over the year Katie's confidence and self esteem began to build. Suzie also supported Katie on visits out of her house - walking or going for coffee or something to eat.

When it was time for the visits to end Katie states that she was devastated. However, Suzie was leaving her in a much better place. She describes herself now as feeling "human" again. She is now able to leave her home albeit with the support of a friend. Her anxiety and PTSD issues have decreased significantly.

She would definitely recommend Home-Start Nottingham to others. She is very happy with the service that she received from Home-Start Nottingham and describes both Gail and Suzie as very supportive.

Katie is still in touch with Suzie.

## Home-Start Nottingham core work

The offer to Home Start families in Nottingham continued to grow throughout 2024/2025. We supported 85 families across Ashfield, City, Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe.

We were able to offer families experiences above and beyond the core work of Home-Start Nottingham thanks to continued support from partners. This included Circus Star tickets for families to enjoy an afternoon out together. 50 Matinee tickets to the Jack and the Beanstalk pantomime at the playhouse and a Christmas outing offered in each of our 5 patch areas.

We were fortunate to be a charity partner for Dunelm's Christmas campaign receiving hundreds of donated gifts from their customers, we also received gifts from Primark and Baby Sparks.



We trialled Friendship Cafes in all areas, where families could come together for a drink and to meet others. Feedback was positive from the small number of families attending but their involvement often relied on being supported by their volunteer to attend which highlights how important the home visiting connection is to our families!

Big Hopes Big Futures training was rolled out to volunteers and families were able to refer for support. The Ready for Nursery pilot was offered to 4 primary schools across Nottingham, with fantastic reception from teaching staff and parents. This also offered opportunities for volunteer recruitment and helped to grow our partnership working with early years practitioners.

We continue to develop strong relationships with our partners at Family Hubs as the launches of these are now well underway in all our patches and we are regularly attending their partnership meetings and development days.

New volunteer Preparation courses were offered in patch areas, as well as hybrid and 1-2-1 courses for new volunteers. It is wonderful to see the volunteer team grow, thank you to all the volunteers that joined us this year and to all our long standing volunteers for all their commitment and great work they do with supporting families.



## Fundraising

Our fundraising team arranged a pamper event on 1<sup>st</sup> June which took place in Sherwood.

We had stalls from people in the local community as well as a raffle and refreshments. We offered mini treatments including nails, Indian head massage, reflexology, shoulder/neck massage, tarot card readings as well as sessions including chair yoga, sound bath and a talk from Tropic skincare.



Feedback included .... "Lovely atmosphere and well organised"

"Everyone welcoming", "Brilliant event in aid of a brilliant organisation, something for everyone", "Really nice day, busy and lively".

If you would like to be involved in our fundraising team, please get in contact with us, we would love to hear from anyone who is interested.

Special thanks to Nicola, Kerry, Amy, and Marilyn for all of your hard work as well as to all of the therapists for offering their free time.

## Events for families and volunteers

We had three Forest Fun session for families this year at Forest

Recreation, Bulwell Hall Park and Bridford Park where we made tea light lanterns, nature exploration tray, free colouring & went on a rainbow walk. We also made miniature gardens, free colouring, bubbles & pond dipping.

We had our usual volunteers annual present wrap so a big thank you to all the volunteers that came along, a great time was had by all!



A little break from the wrapping gave us all chance to play a few games such as the chocolate game, snowflake splat, hook an antler, pin the nose on the reindeer and a raffle! Such Fun!

A big thank you to The Renewal Trust for the offer of Nottingham Panthers tickets for our volunteers and also thank you to Nottingham Playhouse for the Christmas pantomime tickets for our families.

This year, rather than having a main Christmas Party at one venue we offered free soft play sessions for our supported families in all the areas we cover, using venues such as Tumble Town, Hocus Pocus & Pirates in Sherwood to name a few.

Our charity was put forward by a volunteer, in a competition and luckily we were chosen so thank you to Woodborough Green Garden Centre, Epperstone who donated a reindeer. All supported families names were put into a draw and a winner was drawn!!!



Feedback from families in relation to Forest Fun events "Some lovely activities organised by Home-Start Nottingham this morning. They all loved making a little garden and had fun pond dipping even if they didn't manage to catch anything!"

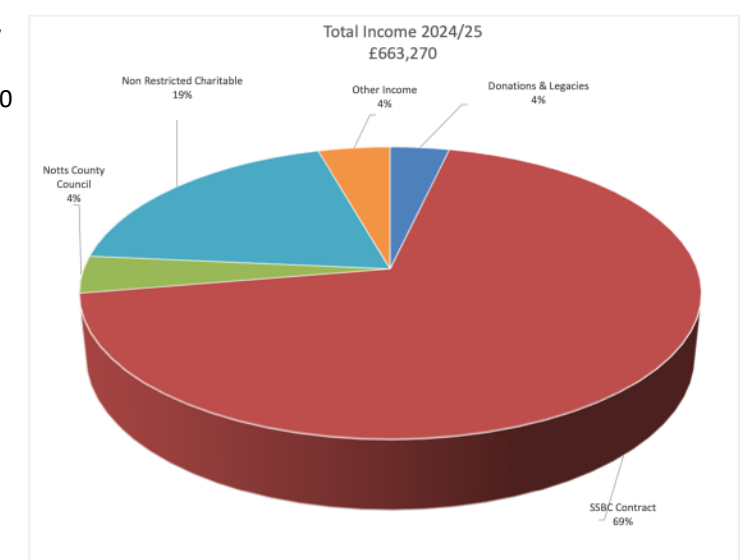
"I thought it was so good for the children and loved getting involved myself! It was nice to do something free that the kids really enjoyed, the ladies were lovely and very welcoming, we had a great time & thanks again!"

## Financial review

Despite the tough economic environment, in the financial year ended March 31, 2025, Home-Start Nottingham experienced yet another excellent financial performance. Total income received for the year 2024-25 was £663,270 (2023: £659,424). This was a slight increase of 0.6%, this increase was achieved notwithstanding the Charity entering the final year of its 10-year commissioned services contract with SSBC and the provision of services, which started to run down in the previous year, continued their run down to the ultimate cessation date March 31, 2025. This run down of SSBC services revenue however was more than offset by the increase in unrestricted charitable income, primarily due to the receipt of £70,000 from the Postcode Lottery in June 2024. The total revenue comprised £455,854 of restricted income (2024: £546,803) and £207,416 of unrestricted income (2024: £112,621). Expenditure totaled £563,836 (2024: £635,361). The decrease in expenditure despite a slight increase in total income is a result of the Charity continuing to take decisive action wherever it can to control its cost base without jeopardising the essential services that families depend on us to provide.

The net income of £99,434 (2024: £24,063) was significantly up on the previous year and was a result of both the tight control of costs and a one-off donation from SSBC of £20,000 for 'exemplary delivery' of the 10-year contract.

As already noted, the 10-year commissioned services SSBC contract ceased at the end of March 2025. Although, the Charity has been successful, in winning funding from the Health Inequalities and Innovation Fund for the next two years to March 2027, at present the level of funding has been reduced to approximately a fifth of what it was over the previous 10 years. It can be seen above that the SSBC contract makes up a significant proportion of Home-Start Nottingham's revenue and as such the loss of revenue on this scale is likely to have a major impact on the operations of Home-Start Nottingham for the next few years.



## Reserves Policy

The excellent financial performance that generated the significant increase in net income detailed above resulted in year-end total reserves increasing to £751,603 (2024: £652,169).

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 contracts. This amounts to approximately £88,000 as of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

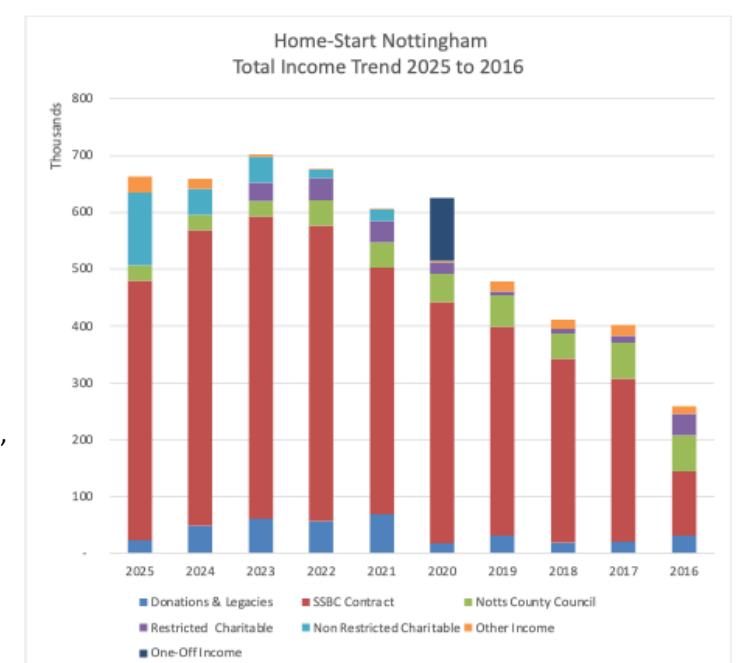
The Charity's cash flow position in the year remained strong, with a small outflow of £7330 which decreased the balance at the bank at the year-end to a very healthy £784,411.

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

- The uncertain future funding landscape including the ending of the Small Steps Big Changes project in March 2025 eluded to above.
- The continuing cuts imposed by Government on local services
- The impact of the continuing cost of living difficulties being experienced by local families,

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

**Bob Paton**  
Trustee Treasurer



### Aspley Family Mentor Service

Our final year as the SSBC/Home-Start Family Mentors, we continued to support the families on our caseloads delivering the Small Steps at Home program which ended in the SSBC wards in December 2024. Graduations were completed with the children and their parents with lots of hard goodbyes and 'Thank You's! The Family Mentors made sure that the service ended well and information was provided for future support the families may need.

The Family Mentors have continued to complete the Ages and Stages Questionnaires with parents, helping the parents to understand and help with their child's development.



As the home visits with the SSBC families came to an end so did the groups we were providing for the families. The year ended with a Christmas event with a visit from Santa.

The family mentors were able to give out Christmas gifts after Hucknall Slimming World group raised money over the year and brought £900 worth of toys for the children we were supporting.



The Family Mentor Service ended with two awards AIM Awards - Bespoke Accreditation Centre/Employer of the Year Award Winner and Health Service Journal Award - Early Intervention and Prevention for Children, Young People and Families award this was an amazing achievement. Well done to the Family Mentors!!

The Family Mentor team started to become smaller as the staff moved on to new jobs, jobs which they thought they would not have been able to do without the knowledge which they learned from being a family mentor and we wished them all the luck in the world in their new roles!

Although the main SSBC programme came to an end we've been lucky enough to receive funding from the **SSBC Legacy Fund** which means we will be able to continue running our family groups for **another year**. This is fantastic news for our families, our volunteers, and the wider community. It gives us the chance to keep that support going, keep the connections strong, and keep making a positive impact.

The remaining staff supported the local groups in the areas to help our SSBC family's transition from our groups into new groups, lots of our families attended the new groups and have settled in well and continue to go, making new friendships for them and their children.

Story and Rhyme time groups are continuing to run across three areas of Nottingham—Strelley, Hyson Green, Clifton and St Anns, these are being delivered by Bola, our new group leader alongside volunteers. Home-Start family mentors are continuing to support our families on the HIIF funding across the Nottingham City. The Home start family mentor team are Emma, Anne, Sally and Hattie and our new family mentor team leader is Rachel!

#### Anna's story

Anna is a single mother with one young son who has behavioural issues. She was feeling very isolated as she has no family support. Life was becoming a struggle. She was receiving help from her Children's Centre support worker who suggested that she might benefit from the support of one of Home-Start Nottingham's volunteers.

Home-Start Nottingham was contacted and Cesca brought Jill around to see her. Jill's weekly visits started soon afterwards. Anna described Jill as "great" and "brilliant" whom she felt was there to support both her and her son. She became a friend. Visits were varied. Because Anna was feeling isolated at home a lot of the visits involved outings: the park, farm visits, walks. Jill was very good with her son and in Anna's own words "created activities for him".

Anna particularly valued the friendship of Jill and was able to talk about the issues that she was facing in her personal life. Jill was a good listener and whilst she did not tell her what to do she was able to help her see matters from a different perspective. Visits ceased because Anna's son received a nursery place.

Anna would recommend Home-Start Nottingham to anyone in her position. The support she received from Home-Start Nottingham could not be bettered – it was there for her when she desperately needed a support system.

### Volunteer Co-ordinator—Aspley Family Mentor Team

As the SSBC (Small Steps Big Changes) programme ends after an incredible 10 years, I wanted to reflect on the amazing journey we've had, especially the part played by our dedicated volunteers in the Family Mentor service in Aspley.

With over 20 years of experience supporting volunteers, and five of those working alongside them here, I continue to be inspired by their generosity, commitment, and belief in building stronger communities.

Our volunteers come from all walks of life, each bringing something unique. Despite their diverse backgrounds, they share a common purpose: to support families and make a real difference. Over the years, they have offered their time with compassion and dedication. Supporting family groups, helping to run events, taking on administrative roles in the hub, and accompanying Family Mentors on home visits. No job has ever been too big or too small.

Families who attended our groups benefited tremendously from the supportive and inclusive environment our volunteers helped to create. Parents often tell us how much they appreciate having someone to talk to, someone who listens and understands. And for children, having regular group sessions filled with fun, play, and friendly faces has been a great way to grow, build confidence, and make early memories. The presence of trusted, consistent volunteers helped families feel more connected and less isolated, creating a sense of belonging and community.

It's not just the families who've benefited, our volunteers have too. Volunteers have said how much being involved has helped boost their confidence and given them a real sense of purpose. Some have used the experience to move on into jobs or further training, and others have simply enjoyed being part of something positive and meaningful. They've told us they've made friends, learned new skills, and most of all, felt like they were doing something that really matters.



Time and again, volunteers have said how much they enjoyed being involved—especially the chance to connect with children and families, be part of a close-knit team, and witness the difference their support made.

I just want to say a big, heartfelt thank you. To every volunteer who's given their time, shared their kindness, and helped us support families you've made a lasting impact. It's been a privilege to work alongside you, and I hope you're as proud as I am of everything we've achieved.

Thank you for being part of something truly special.

#### Feedback from a referrer

"Excellent service that supports the needs of the whole family"

Thank you to all the organisations and individuals who have made donations to us this year and helped us make a huge difference to families lives in Ashfield, Broxtowe, Gedling, Rushcliffe and Nottingham City.





## Volunteers Needed

With just a little of your time, you can make a world of difference to a family when they need it most

Volunteer in a way that works for you – flexible roles to fit around your life

- ♥ Home visiting
- ♥ Events and promotion
- ♥ Admin
- ♥ Interpreters
- ♥ Children groups
- ♥ Fundraising
- ♥ Social media
- ♥ Trustees

Contact us

☎ 0115 962 4262

✉ [info@hsn.org.uk](mailto:info@hsn.org.uk)

**CONTACT DETAILS**

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BECOME A HOME-START VOLUNTEER OR IF  
YOU WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS OUR WORK PLEASE CONTACT US**

Home-Start Nottingham,  
Suite 9, Arnold Business Centre,  
Brookfield Gardens, Arnold, Nottingham, NG5 7ER

Telephone: 0115 962 4262  
Email: [info@hsn.org.uk](mailto:info@hsn.org.uk)

Registered Charity Number 1097005  
Company Limited by Guarantee Number 04698694

