

ANNUAL REPORT

April 2022-March 2023



About Home-Start Omagh District

Home-Start Omagh District is a volunteer-based family support charity working with families, with at least one child under the age of 5, across the Omagh District area.

We provide home-visiting volunteer support to families, through a team of trained volunteers. Our focus is on the early years because that is where children reap the biggest benefit from parents who are healthy and happy. A better start in life can change a child's future.

We work alongside parents to ensure that the stable foundations children need to thrive as adults are there. Our non-judgmental, compassionate, and confidential help and support is as individual as the families we work with. By providing that lighter touch, and non-statutory service, we aim to get families to a place where they are able to use services in their local community.



Our Mission: To empower parents with the skills, knowledge, and emotional resilience to enable their children to flourish.

Our Vision: A society in which every parent / carer has the support they need to give their children the best possible start in life

Our Values: Available to all
Non-judgmental
Preventative

Home-Start Omagh Trustees

2022-2023



Our Trustees give extensive time, sharing their knowledge and experience, to direct and oversee the work of the scheme.

Chairperson – Carol Moore

Vice chairperson – Emma Owens (retired January 2023)

Treasurer – Eithne Connolly

Trustee – Dr. Maureen Halliday

Trustee Susan McDermott

Trustee – Ann Gormley (Joined January 2023)

Trustee – Aisling McLaren (Joined January 2023)



Staff

Allison Spriggs
Coordinator



Leanne McCain
Administrator





THANK YOU EMMA

After 20 years, our vice chairperson Emma Owen has retired from our board of trustees. We want to wish Emma all the best and thank her for her wit, wisdom, and commitment to Home-Start Omagh District.



Chairperson's Report

Chairperson's Report 2022/2023

This is the Chairperson's Report for the year 2022/2023 for Home Start Omagh District.



Looking back on our minutes of meetings during April 2022 – March 2023 I note that our first meeting of this financial year, held on 26th April 2022, was partially held by Zoom. It is hard to believe that we went through so much change during Covid and thankfully now can meet normally.

With the departure of our Administrator, Bernie, a recruitment process was held for her replacement and in July 2022 we were delighted to welcome Leanne to the scheme. She has settled in well and is providing much needed support to Allison. One of the many things Leanne does is to keep us all updated about local information via the Volunteer Newsletter and Facebook page and remind us about upcoming meetings. I am indebted to Allison for agreeing to work extra hours during the interim to keep the administration up to date.

During this period Emma Owens, long standing Trustee of Home Start Omagh District, resigned after nearly 2 decades with us. Her presence at our meetings will be sadly missed and I wish to record my gratitude for all she did for this scheme over her many years of volunteering on the committee.

I would also like to wish Susan McDermott all the best as she stands down from the management committee. Thank you for all your support over the years.

We welcomed Aisling McLaren and Ann Gormley to the Trustees committee meetings. I want to wish them every success in their time with Home Start.

In February we held our strategic review day facilitated by Jayne Murray. We are grateful to Jayne for her skills in guiding us through this process. We hope to use the information for future funding applications and inform our core funders of our mission statement and plans for the future.

The Omagh Multiples Group continued to be a great success although funding and capacity issues mean that we have to suspend group activities in 2023-2024.



I am grateful to our new Lidl store in Omagh for their kind donation of vouchers worth £1,000 which were distributed to our Home Start families.

We are indebted to all the funders who contributed, and their details can be found in the treasurer's report and the Annual Financial Report. I would like to thank the Western Health and Social Care Trust for their continued funding for the

scheme. I would like to thank Allison for her tireless work sourcing funding and grants available and completing application forms.

I would like to thank all the volunteers past and present for their time and talents in providing help to families in need. They are the most important part of Home Start and their contribution to giving families much needed support should never be underestimated or taken for granted.

My thanks are due to the trustees of Home Start who attend our meetings regularly and give of their time and talents to discuss how best we can support staff and volunteers of the scheme.

This concludes my chairperson's report.



Carol Moore
Chairperson

Treasurer's Report



Welcome everyone to Home-Start Annual General Meeting 2022-2023. This has been another busy year as our small charity continues to meet the needs of parents in the Omagh area. I now wish to acknowledge the many people who have supported and helped Home-Start Omagh district over the last financial year.

Firstly, I would like to thank the Western Health and Social Care Trust, who in recognition of our continuing work within the Omagh area, are the principal source of Home Start Omagh District's funding. I would also like to thank:

- Fermanagh & Omagh District Council
- Halifax Foundation
- John Moore Foundation
- Awards for All
- Belfast Cathedral Sitout
- Asda Foundation
- Enkalon Foundation
- Home-Start UK
- Pear's Foundation
- Arnold Clarke
- Neighbourly Fund



for providing us with grants that allowed us to meet our funding needs to provide necessary requirements for families and training for our volunteers, during the 2022-2023 financial year.

A special thanks to Lidl Ireland for donating £1,000 worth of food vouchers for Home-Start Omagh to distribute directly to our families to mark the opening of the refurbished store in our town. Their generosity ensured that many families struggling in the run up to Christmas were able to manage their food bills.

I would also like to thank those people who took the time to fundraise on our behalf or help in our fundraising efforts. These include Carly McMahon, the new Community Champion at Asda Omagh, local mums Mary Arundall and Leona Carson for taking on a sponsored walk in Gortin, Susanne Donnelly and Paeder Conroy for their contribution to our volunteer get together and all at Osborne & Co. in Enniskillen for raising money for us and our neighbouring scheme Home-Start Lakeland through their annual charity Christmas bauble sales.

I would like to thank our amazing Home-visiting Volunteers who are the backbone of our inspiring organisation. Not only are you kind and dedicated, but you bring a wealth of experience and talents to share with families.

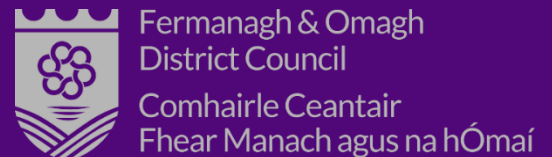
I also owe particular thanks to my fellow Trustees for all their support over the last year. It is wonderful to be part of a team that are committed to helping families in the Omagh District area.

I wish to take this opportunity to acknowledge all the great work that Allison, our Coordinator, does for Home-Start Omagh. She implements and attains so much for the benefit of families who are being supported by Home-Start Omagh. I also wish to acknowledge the significant contribution that our administrator Leanne makes to the running of our charity. She carries out her duties with great professionalism and dedication,

We also send Susan McDermott, who joined our committee quite recently, our best wishes as she steps down from our board. Thank you for being an advocate for our charity.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the significant contribution of our long serving trustee Emma Owens, who shared the roles of chair and vice-chair on many occasions and who has resigned from our committee in January 2023. We will all miss Emma for her leadership skills, professional expertise and her friendship. We wish her well and thank her for her very valuable contribution during her 20 years serving on the Home-Start Omagh committee.

Eithne Connolly, Treasurer



Coordinator Report and events of 2022-2023

Although 2022-2023 marked a return to pre-pandemic life, the reality for many local families is that life has not returned to normal.

Here at Home-Start Omagh District, we are already witnessing the disproportionate effect that Covid had on those who were already struggling before the pandemic. What we hadn't fully grasped was the negative impact on those families who would not have previously needed support, and who were now struggling to cope with family life.

As health and social services struggled to meet the post pandemic demand from families requiring support, Home-Start Omagh District has seen a significant increase in referrals, particularly self-referrals. These parents have told us that they are struggling with their own mental health, loneliness, low self-esteem, and concerns for their child's social, emotional and developmental needs.

At Home-Start Omagh District, we know that parenting is a challenge that cannot be mitigated alone. We responded to the needs of families and continued to adapt our services whilst also returning to our tried and trusted home-visiting model of home-visiting volunteer support.

In 2022-2023, we supported 39 families through home-visiting volunteer support thanks to an outstanding team of home-visiting volunteers. It has been wonderful to have our old volunteers, and some new volunteers, return to home-visits to families, and they have managed the ups and downs of post-Covid visits with grace and goodwill.

The cost-of-living crisis has hit many families in the Omagh District and thanks to a partnership with Save the Children, we were able to secure much needed funding for 10 families worth £3,300 in total.



We were also lucky enough to be chosen by Lidl as their chosen charity to mark the refurbishment of their Omagh store and their donation of £1,000 worth of food vouchers meant that 18 families were able to buy food for their families in the run up to Christmas.

And working with the REACH food bank meant that we were able to deliver 18 Christmas hampers to Home-Start families.



Thanks to a donation from Asda Omagh, we were also able to deliver nappies to 10 families, so thank you Carley McMahon from Asda Omagh.

The biggest development was that we were able to start the OMG! (Omagh Multiples Group) thanks to funding from the Pears Foundation, we had 12 families register with the group and attend sessions between February and June 2022. This monthly group could only have been possible with the help of home-visiting volunteer Lynda McNamee, so thank you Lynda for all your support with the OMG! Group.

This funding also meant we were able to bring in facilitators to run a Messy Play session, a Teddy Bear picnic storytelling session, a Mummy & Me yoga session and an outdoor Adventure session at An Cregan. These facilitated sessions were open to all families with young children under the age of 5 in the Omagh District area. They were incredibly popular, with a waiting list for some. Alas, funding has run out for these groups but we are continuing to apply for funding so we can run these again as we know that many families still need the social interaction that family groups allow.

Thanks to part funding from Fermanagh & Omagh District Council, we embarked on a strategic review in January 2023, facilitated by Jayne Murray from JMPR Consulting. From this we have developed a 5-year strategic plan that we will use to grow and develop our services to local families.

Sadly, this year our vice chairperson Emma Owens has retired from our trustee board. I want to personally thank her for her support to me and Home-Start Omagh District. I will miss her wicked sense of humour and her honesty. I wish you well and hope that our paths will cross again soon.

In 2022-2023 we have been able to reach more families than ever, and for this I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to all our funders, and to our administrator Leanne and to our trustees- I can't thank you all enough for your support this year.

Finally, a huge thank you to our utterly inspiring home-visiting volunteers, you are the heart of our service, you are a lifeline to the families you support, and we can't thank you enough for your time, commitment and passion for helping others.

Volunteer feedback



"I had been a stay-at-home mum raising our two daughters for 20 years and felt that the time had come for me to find a new direction in my life. Volunteering felt like the best fit for me.

I have a caring and nurturing personality, and felt that I had gained a wealth of knowledge and understanding of the demands and needs of being a parent, so knew that my skills would be put to the best use in a role involving families with young children. When I heard about Home Start and the work they do, I knew I had found the perfect match.

Arriving at the home of 'my families' to see excited, happy, smiling children waiting for me, greeting me with hugs, was the best feeling in the world! Spending the next few hours engaging with the children, reading, interacting and playing with them, while mum/dad got 'a breather' was very rewarding, and having felt quite isolated and unsure as a young mum myself, I was able to give advice and guidance, and most importantly, reassurance, to the parents, that they were doing a great job.

I know that these families really appreciated me giving my time and friendship, and benefitted greatly from having me in their lives, because they told me so frequently! Knowing that I had made such a difference to these young family's lives has enriched my life beyond words.



Barbara Rankin



Our volunteers 2022-2023

Ann P, Barbara, Bróna, Eilish, Eithne, Hannah, Helen, Josephine, Karen, Lynda, Marie, Maureen, Sinead, Valerie

Family No. 1

“The support I received from Home-Start Omagh came at a time when we really needed it. Our volunteer was wonderful, and my two young boys loved spending time with her each week. Being a lone parent to two boys who were 1 and 3 at the time was very hard work and I often felt like I couldn’t give each of them as much undivided attention as I would have wanted to. Having a Home-Start volunteer round each week made such a big difference as it took some pressure off plus it was wonderful to have some adult company. Our volunteer had older children herself and the reassurance and encouragement she gave me through her own experiences was invaluable and made me feel like I was maybe doing a better job than I thought.”

Family stories



Family No. 2

“Home Start is an amazing organisation, myself and my children had such valuable time with our volunteers and looked forward to our weekly visit! Alison who organised this service for me was so friendly, understanding of my needs and Disability and just incredible at everything and help me access other facilities available to my family! Just a wonderful service and we are such a lucky family who had the experience of using this beneficial organisation!”

Family No. 3

“We had a lovely volunteer when I had my third little child. The children absolutely loved to see her come and asked about her all week. I had a chance to spend some time alone with the baby and then get dinner prepared for later. We also all sat down for tea, and I was able to have an adult conversation and get some reassurance from another mummy. It broke up my week and was lovely.

Now, one year later and another baby, Home-Start Omagh have matched us a new volunteer and she is brilliant with the children. They love to see her coming and she knows exactly how to keep them all entertained. It has been great to get a minute with the baby or get a few things done in the house without feeling bad about not playing with them all. The children love it, and I am very grateful for the volunteers we have been matched with.”



Family No. 4

“Home-Start has been an amazing support for our family, the service is invaluable, and we would be lost without the help. After I had twins, I struggled with my mental health. I found the whole experience extremely difficult, adjusting to the change and loss of identity. We don’t have much family support, so when our volunteer came to help, we were blown away, with the love and care we received. I felt very reassured when we first met, the girls loved her presence and interactive fun. She brought so much joy and happiness to us all. She listened to my worries with no judgment, just full respect and support. She was extremely understanding and empathetic. I have so much gratitude for all that she has done for our family, and she will be a lifelong friend.”

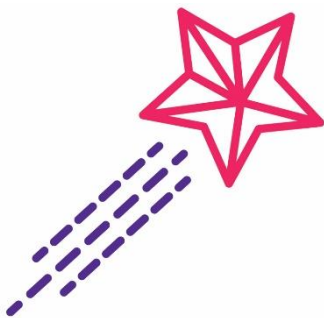


Three months after Home-Start support came to an end, I noticed my mood and anxiety dipped substantially and I lost that me time that I enjoyed so much. That time gave me a chance to recharge and feel like myself again.

When another volunteer was matched with us, we were extremely thankful and blessed to have more support. Our new Home-Start volunteer is a ray of sunshine, she has a lovely calm and loving presence. The girls warmed to her almost immediately. She made me feel so reassured and at ease. She has a wonderful way with the girls, she reads books and sings to them, this brings me so much joy. “

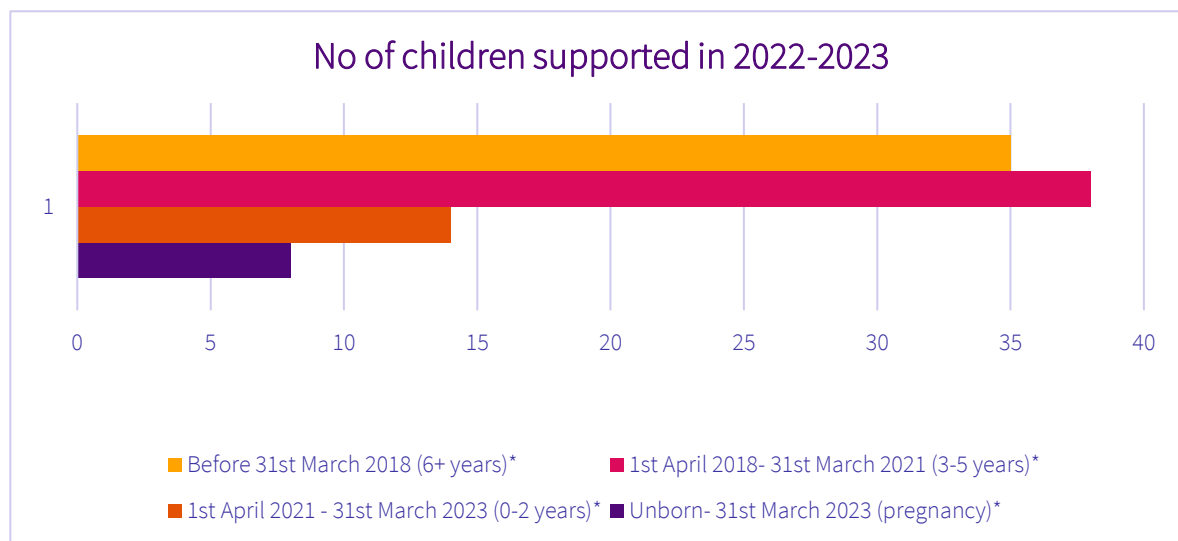
“Our volunteers have been kind, loving and they really feel like a part of our family, thank you.”

Dad of supported family no. 4

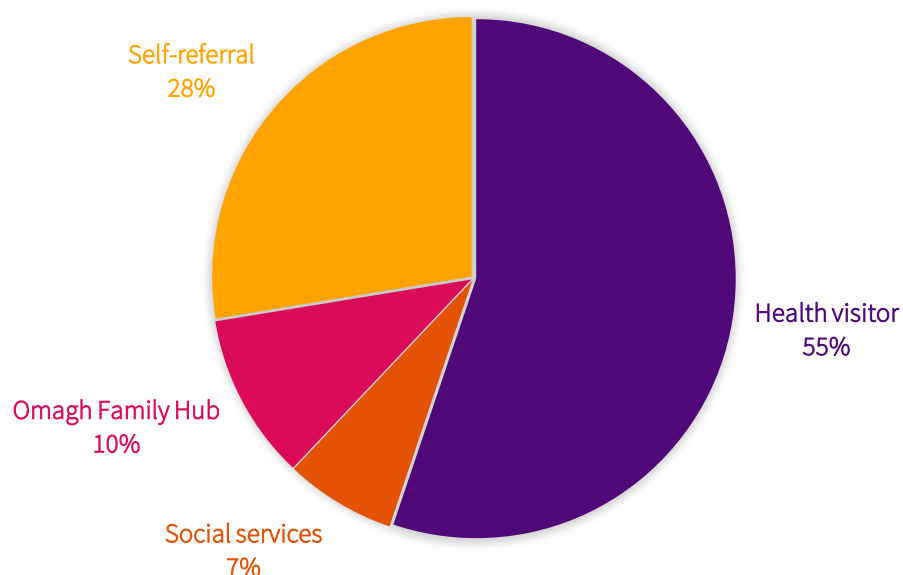


Families Supported 2020-2021

Unborn- 31st March 2023 (pregnancy)	8
1st April 2021 - 31st March 2023 (0-2 years)	14
1st April 2018- 31st March 2021 (3-5 years)	38
Before 31st March 2018 (6+ years)	35
Total number of children supported in 22-23	95



SOURCE OF REFERRALS 2022-2023



This Year in Numbers

2022-2023



39 families
with 95 children
supported by
home-visiting volunteers

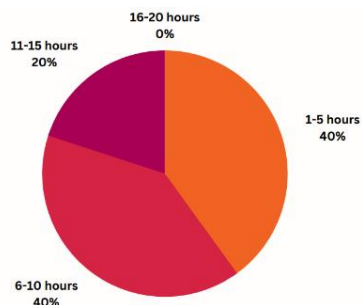
Family group activities in 2022-2023





Findings from our strategic review

Volunteers



In terms of hours volunteered:

- 4 in every 5 volunteers provide between 1 and 10 hours of support each month
- 1 in 5 provide between 11-15 hours.



Families



About Home-Start Omagh

(mostly open questions)

How is Home-Start different from other charities?

- Being able to come into the home.
- Helping empower the parent to help the child.
- Great support - always there.

When asked what have been the best things about the home visiting support:

- Nearly 95% stated being listened to.
- Over three quarters (76.4%) stated having mental and emotional support.
- Over three quarters (76.4%) stated it was the volunteer playing with the children.

Comment: 'Helped me feel myself again.'



Befriending volunteers Needed

Do you have 2-3 hours per week to support a family with young children?

Call Allison on 028 8224 0902
or 078 4374 9852 or email

Home-Start Omagh welcomes parents, or those with parenting experience, of all ages and backgrounds



www.home-start.org.uk



info@homestartomaghdistrict.org.uk



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078 4374 9852



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