



# Your Impact Report 2019

# Our purpose

We deliver high quality, volunteer led services to support families in Hertfordshire through challenging times. By getting in early we help parents build confidence and establish support networks so they can be the parent they want to be and give their child the best start in life.



## Message from a Volunteer Manager

I've worked for Home-Start for 6 years now; I was previously a volunteer Family Mentor. Home-Start works with families in the local community. Volunteer Mentors provide 1:1 support in the family home and also run family groups across the county.

This year I have seen a real difference in the levels of need; families now have more complex and time-consuming issues than in previous years.

This is a real challenge, with a limited number of Mentors and staff working hours, we aren't able to offer support as quickly as we'd like. We now also provide more specialist training for the Mentors so they are able to support the families safely. We always try our best to offer support in any way we can, we know we are often the only service available to the family so the need for us to be there is so much greater. On behalf of our families, thank you for caring. Your support helps us be here.

**Zoe Hopkinson, Volunteer Manager**

## ***You've been there for families... facing domestic abuse***

***Molly lived with her two children under 3 and her husband.***

When Molly was referred to Home-Start by her health visitor, she had very little confidence, was anxious and worried about how she was managing the children.

This is where you come in; Thanks to your support, a Mentor, Helen, was matched with the family and started visiting them at home each week.

Several weeks in to the support. Molly started to open up to Helen about her relationship with her husband Dan. He constantly criticized her, questioned where she went, and withheld money from her. Molly was scared and wanted to leave. Helen accompanied her to the

Women's Resource Centre so she could wait with the children whilst Molly went in to talk to a solicitor.

Whilst Molly was waiting for a place at the refuge, the visits continued, focusing on helping Molly to prepare emotionally and support the children though the changes and how to keep herself and the children safe.

A place became available in another area. Helen helped Molly with the necessary arrangements and said her goodbyes to Molly and the children. A referral was made to the Home-Start in the area they'd moved to and the family continued to receive support to help them settle in to their new home and rebuild their lives.

## ***You've been there for families... facing desperate times***

***Julie is full time carer to her husband who has a serious illness. They also have two young daughters. They received free tickets to the Meraki Festival (which is a long term supporter of Home Start):***

"What a lovely, fantastic, amazing day we had at the festival. The girls were dancing, jumping, playing, singing – it was magical! Marcel was so happy! I can't tell you when was the last time I saw him so relaxed, calm and 'worry free'. THANK YOU for these moments that were only possible because of you! I saw Abi and Jemma having fun and being real kids, doing what happy children do. I saw my husband happy and enjoying every minute out in the sun with our daughters and nothing is going to erase these moments."



## *You've been there for families...* **facing loneliness and mental health problems**

***Mum, Sam, lived on her own with her boys aged 1 and 3 and had a history of severe mental health issues.***

"I really wasn't in a good place. I was struggling with my depression and anxiety, and was isolating myself from the outside world. The children were miserable and playing up because I didn't have the energy to do anything with them.

I felt anxious about meeting Lucy, my Mentor, but she made me feel at ease. She didn't rush me into doing anything I didn't want to do. During the first few visits, we stayed at home and she helped me by entertaining the little one so I could have some one on one time with my other son, which he really needed.

Lucy then suggested that we take the boys out, around the block. I was so anxious but Lucy was there, encouraging me, she had belief in me that I could do it. She said she was proud of me; this really meant a lot and made me feel good about myself, something I hadn't felt for a while. We

progressed to trips to the park, and set a goal to take the boys into the town centre. Unfortunately, my mental health went downhill and I was admitted to Thumbswood Mother and Baby mental health unit where I stayed for nearly 4 months. Lucy still visited each week, we chatted and she would give me a hug, which at times was all I needed.

When I came home from hospital, her support continued and we worked again on getting out of the house with the boys. I've gained a bit more confidence, Lucy has introduced me to the Home-Start weekly family group. At first, she came and picked us up, as I was anxious about going to a new place where I didn't know anyone. After a few visits, I was confident enough to take the boys there myself, which was a huge achievement and we still go most weeks.

**Lucy has been like a breath of fresh air. Home-Start has not only helped me through one of my hardest times but you've also helped me to start believing that I can be a good mum and can keep growing in confidence and battling with my anxieties."**





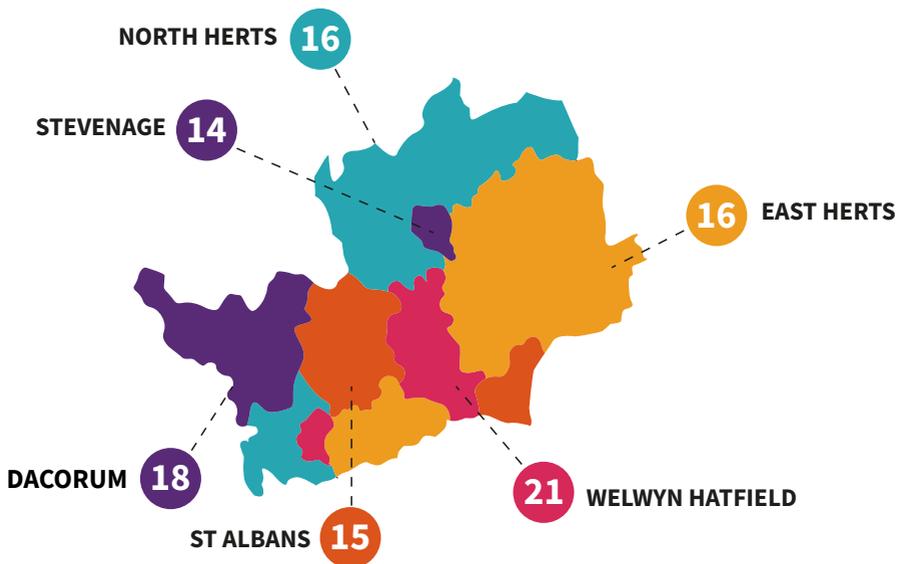
**We reached 1,338 people  
in the community**

**Volunteer mentors gave  
17,000hrs of support**

**269 families & 707  
children received support**

**83p of every £ goes  
directly to support families**

## Families waiting for support





# Thank you



We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone who has raised money for us, made a donation, sponsored or bought a ticket for an event, donated their time and skills, funded us, and supported us through our social media.

**But more families are in need of support and more money is needed**

**You raised £275,184 to help parents in Hertfordshire get the support they need to give their child the best start in life.**



**Full accounts are available on request**

**94%**

**felt their mental health had improved**

**94%**

**Felt less isolated and more confident to integrate into the community**

**97%**

**Felt they had learned useful parenting skills and were more able to manage their children's behaviour**



Despite some amazing results in the year just gone, there are still so many families who need our help. Next year, we want this report to be full of even more life changing stories from families you've helped us reach.

We want to work even harder on the areas that we know need to be stronger.

### ***We will:***

- Develop a five year business plan to increase our resources, support more families and expand our services.
- Build stronger partnerships with businesses and major donors.
- Reduce the time families spend waiting for support.
- Utilise our new systems to build stronger relationships with our donors and supporters.

# We still need your help to support this vital work...

**Fundraise!**

**Become a corporate partner!**

**Volunteer!**



Contact Suzy Moody:

[suzy@home-startherts.org.uk](mailto:suzy@home-startherts.org.uk)

or visit our website:

[www.home-startherts.org.uk](http://www.home-startherts.org.uk)

**HOME  
START**  
Hertfordshire