

# IMPACT REPORT 2024/25



**HOME  
START**

**Barnet, Brent  
& Harrow**

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# About Home-Start Barnet, Brent & Harrow

**Our vision is that all families are able to give their children the very best start in life.**

Home-Start Barnet, Brent and Harrow provides early-intervention support to families with young children who are facing complex challenges. Through our network of dedicated and highly trained volunteers, we offer emotional and practical help that strengthens family relationships, prevents crisis, and empowers parents to give their children the best start in life.

Our holistic, whole-family approach reaches families across Brent, Barnet and Harrow, offering tailored support through a range of programmes and activities. Our volunteers, with their own valuable experience of parenting, spend up to three hours every week in a family's home providing a range of support that is exceptionally broad and highly personalised. As well as a listening ear, this might include sourcing essential items such as cots; completing housing applications; visiting local Children's Centres; and accessing food banks. Parents might also be offered other services such as parenting courses, family outings and group sessions.

Through this work, we ensure that families feel supported, connected and equipped to create lasting positive change for their children.



*“Thank you to the staff and Home-Start for proving me a safety net during such a vulnerable time of my life, helping me meet my daughter’s needs. Home-Start has empowered me and I am now ready to start my new life in Harrow, confidently with my daughter. Thank you for the emotional support and for letting me know of my rights in this country. You have changed my life.” Home-Start mum*

*“Time with my volunteer was invaluable. She needs acknowledging for the help and work she provides. She's caring, kind, patient and generous. I gained quality time with my children. My wellbeing improved, I felt less alone, I got out and about more. I am connected to more services. My mental health would definitely have deteriorated if she wasn't in my life. She's a Godsend.” Home-Start mum*

# OUR FAMILIES

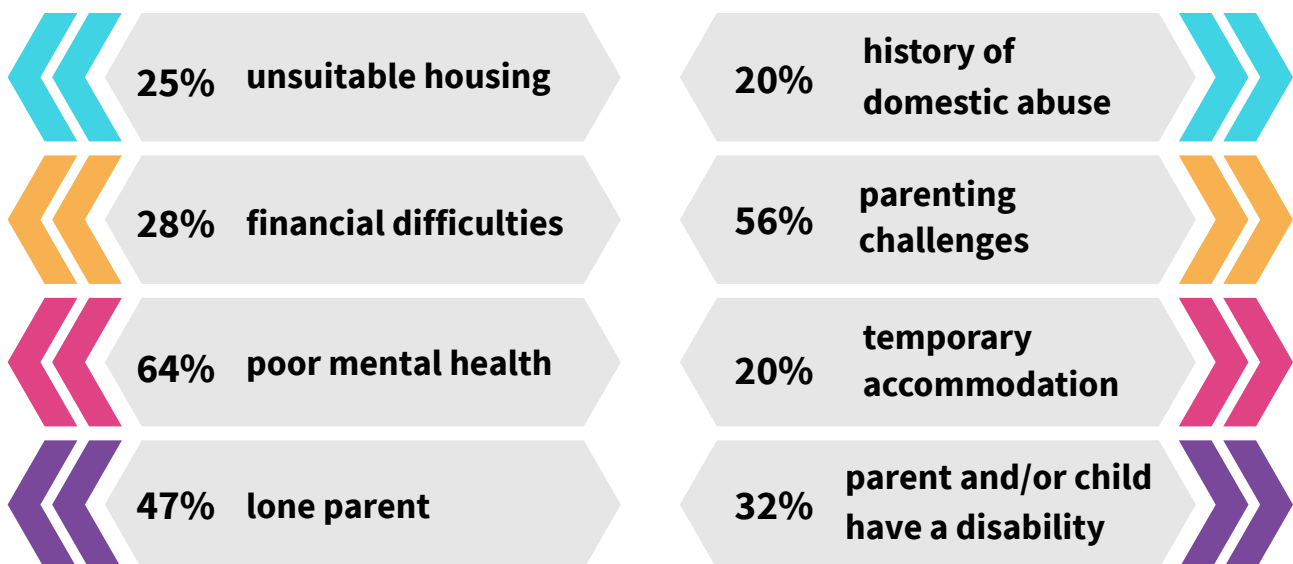


Last year, nearly **400 families** were referred to our core projects alone, highlighting the significant need for our support. We worked with vulnerable families with children aged 0–19 living in the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods of Barnet, Harrow, and Brent. These communities are rich in cultural and ethnic diversity, making them vibrant and dynamic places to live. However, this diversity also means that many families lack strong local support networks and face cultural and language barriers that make it difficult to access community services and facilities.

The majority of families sought help for emotional wellbeing, with many experiencing low mood, anxiety, or mild to moderate depression. Feelings of isolation were common, as parents often had limited awareness of local services and few people to turn to for support. Parenting challenges were also a recurring theme, with many families finding daily life difficult or overwhelming.

We've seen a clear increase in families who are neurodivergent, mainly ADHD and Autistic, in part due to greater awareness. In about one in five of the families we support, either a parent or a child is neurodivergent or waiting for an assessment. However, many told us that even after getting a diagnosis, they were left with little follow-up help or guidance. They often felt lost and alone, trying to find their way through a confusing system. Each new stage of life — like starting school or moving to a new service — brought fresh challenges and added to their sense of stress and helplessness.

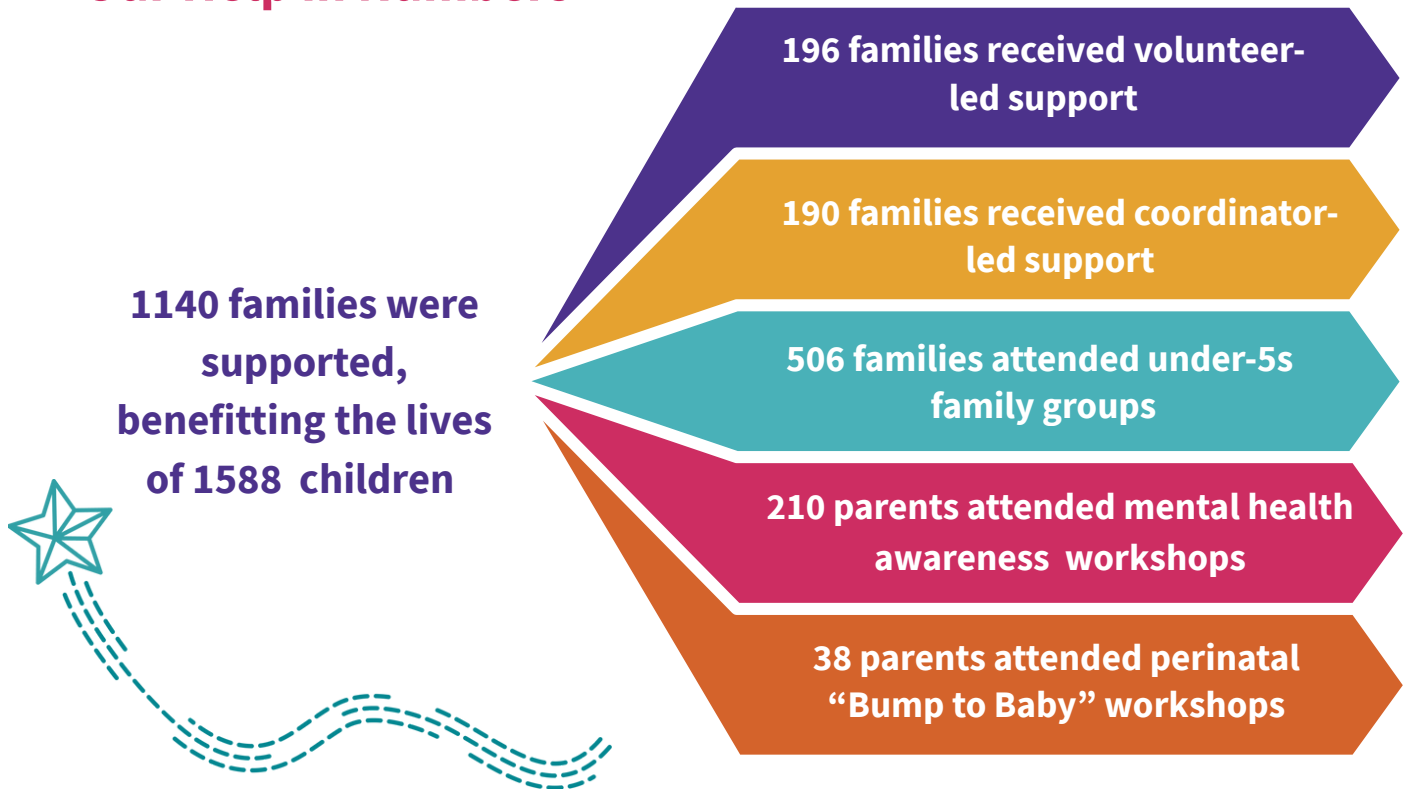
The main challenges experienced by families were:



*“It was so nice to have someone for me, someone to talk to and offload my worries and troubles to. I felt light after our chats. It was special time for me.”*

# What we did in 2024/2025

## Our Help in Numbers



## The difference we made

### How Families Benefited from Home-Start Support



*\*Some families accessed more than one service*

# VOLUNTEERS AT THE HEART



Volunteers play a vital role in the support we provide to local families. Their compassion, commitment and generosity of time makes a life-changing difference to parents and children every day. We are dedicated to ensuring that every volunteer has a rewarding and fulfilling experience with us, supported by high-quality training and ongoing guidance to help them make the greatest impact.

This year, we delivered two comprehensive volunteer preparation courses over five-week periods, welcoming 19 new volunteers into our Home-Start Barnet community. In addition, 24 social work students chose Home-Start Barnet to complete their 70-day placements, bringing fresh perspectives and energy to our work. Together, our volunteers and students continue to be an invaluable part of our mission to build stronger, more resilient families.

## LAST YEAR...

**74** volunteers offered:  
**2,023** hours of in-person support

**5** volunteers helped deliver:  
**195** under-5s family group sessions

**3** volunteers worked behind the scenes offering:  
**327** hours of data and administrative support

**9** trustees offered over:  
**140** hours of strategic support and guidance



*“Volunteering with Home-Start Barnet has been a truly incredible experience. I was drawn to Home-Start because your mission perfectly aligns with my values. I wanted to make a tangible difference in the lives of families within my community, and I knew that Home-Start was an organization that truly changes lives. Your dedication and professionalism are simply inspiring. My experience supporting families has been so incredibly rewarding. Every moment spent with them is a lesson in empathy, resilience, and the strength of the human spirit. It is so satisfying to witness the families I work with blossom and grow in confidence. I feel truly honoured to be a small part of their journey. Volunteering has had an amazing impact on my life. It has given me a fresh perspective and a profound sense of purpose. It has shown me the importance of being part of something so much bigger than myself. You are an incredible team, and I am so grateful to be part of this beautiful community. Thank you once again for everything you do. You are all true heroes!” Brenda’s\* story*

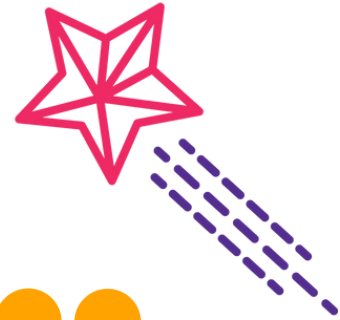
*\*Names have been changed to protect identities.*

## FAMILY VOICES

These are the voices of the families we worked with last year. Every family is unique and the support offered is individual to their needs and circumstances. With one-to-one volunteer support or by attending our family group sessions, parents report reduced isolation, an improvement in their self-esteem and their mental health. Our whole-family approach ensures that the parent-child relationship is strengthened and there are better outcomes for the children in the longer term.



*"It was nice to have a male role model for my son. He was able to speak out and be heard, he was confident to say what he wants and feels."*



*"The support I received from the beginning of my interaction with Home-Start has been wonderful. I was helped to access the right services to support me. The family wellbeing centres, classes, support. Mary\* would accompany me to them so it reduced my isolation and made me more confident about going out. I also received food from Church Lane and Preston Park which was great. I was also referred to Sebby's Corner and received lots of items which helped me as I was struggling financially. So all very good.*

*My baby has also benefited to going to centres, we also now go to Daniel's Den and it has helped us with getting out of the house and connecting with other services and activities. Mary was great. I felt very comfortable and supported by her."*  
**Home-Start mum**



*\*Names have been changed to protect identities.*

# FAMILY VOICES



Ciara\* is a mum to three-year-old twins—a boy and a girl. When she was first referred to us, she was struggling with severe anxiety and felt extremely isolated. Although she had a loving bond with her children, her lack of confidence meant she rarely left the house with them. This left her feeling trapped and guilty, as well as physically and emotionally exhausted from trying to keep her children entertained at home all day.

To support Ciara, we referred her to an external counselling service and matched her with a home-visiting volunteer for 12 weeks of tailored one-to-one support. Together, they began taking small, achievable steps—short walks to the park and visits to nearby shops. These gentle outings gave Ciara the reassurance and encouragement she needed to rebuild her confidence. Over time, she became more comfortable managing both children outdoors and started to enjoy these moments rather than fearing them.

A strong and trusting relationship developed between Ciara and her volunteer, built on honesty, respect, and clear boundaries. With the combined support of counselling and regular volunteer visits, Ciara began to experience a real shift in her wellbeing. Her anxiety lessened, her self-belief grew, and she started to rediscover the joy in parenting.

Today, Ciara's confidence has transformed. She now takes her twins on trips across London independently—a huge milestone that once felt impossible. She has noticed how this change has positively affected her children too: they are calmer, more settled at home, and sleep better. Encouraged by her progress, Ciara now feels ready to take the next step by joining one of our family group sessions—something she never felt confident enough to do before. Her journey reflects the power of consistent, compassionate support in helping parents find strength, independence, and hope for the future.

Ciara said, “From having a volunteer and Home-Start sorting out counselling for me has made a big difference to my confidence. My world has been opened up for my twins and I because of Home-Start.”



*"At first I was anxious about having the support. But I looked more into what services I could benefit from. Then I started having the 1:1 visits with the support worker. She always had a calm and non-judgemental approach to the tasks and made the day enjoyable and not a stressful experience. If you ever feeling overwhelmed and you have the opportunity to have Home-Start assist you then take on board their help. It helps towards positive changes for yourself and family." Home-Start mum*

*\*Names have been changed to protect identities.*

# FAMILY VOICES



Molly\* is mum to two young boys, aged 2 and 4. She has lived with anxiety for many years, but since becoming a parent, her worries have grown stronger. Losing her mother at just 12 years old, and then watching her father's mental health decline, meant that Molly had to take on the role of carer for her younger siblings far too soon. Those early experiences of fear and responsibility now show up in her daily life — especially in her worries about keeping her own children safe.

Parenting two energetic boys has been overwhelming. Both children constantly wanted her attention, and Molly often felt exhausted and on edge. Even simple routines, like getting the boys ready and out the door for the school run, became a huge source of stress. The boys would argue and refuse to follow instructions, which left Molly feeling frustrated and defeated before the day had even begun.

Through Home-Start, a volunteer began visiting Molly once a week. She would arrive an hour before the school run to help create a calm, steady start to the morning. Together, they worked on simple strategies to help the boys listen and cooperate, and the volunteer would accompany them on the walk to school, offering reassurance and practical support along the way. Over time, Molly felt more confident and in control. The extra support helped her see that she wasn't alone — and that with a little help and encouragement, mornings didn't have to feel so hard.

Molly said, "I received support from Home-Start when my two boys were 4 and 2. It was recommended by my son's Reception teacher after I mentioned I was struggling with anxiety and two very lively kids. From my first meeting the team were so kind and encouraging, able to empathise with the challenges of parenting. I felt a bit guilty about asking for help, thinking that others must be more in need but they reassured me about this. I was spending quite a lot of time on my own with the children and the volunteer immediately made me feel less lonely. She was endlessly patient with my 2 year old and my now 5 year old still talks about how much he misses her! I would highly recommend Home-Start to others. It's such an important charity in Barnet."



*"I felt more confident about going outside. I felt comfortable opening up. It helped me gain more self-esteem and I felt more confident. I am now able to leave the house, so all very beneficial to my child." Home-Start mum*



\*Names have been changed to protect identities.

# FAMILY VOICES



When Noelle\* was first introduced to Home-Start, she was feeling overwhelmed and unsure of herself as a new mum. Each day felt like a struggle — caring for her baby while trying to manage on a tight budget left her exhausted and anxious.

Her volunteer offered both a listening ear and a helping hand. Together, they worked on creating small daily routines that made life feel a little more predictable and calm. The volunteer gently encouraged Noelle to trust her instincts as a mother and to reach out for support in her community. With her help, Noelle was able to connect with local family activities and services, and was referred to Sebby's Corner for essential items and a nearby foodbank to ease some of the financial pressure she was facing.

As the weeks went by, Noelle began to feel less alone. Her confidence grew, and she started to believe in her ability to care for her baby and herself. What once felt overwhelming slowly became manageable — and with the right support around her, Noelle found her footing and began to look to the future with hope.

Noelle said: "I was referred to Home-Start as a new mum by my midwife and healthcare professional team. After being in touch with my coordinator, who is such a warm, loving, friendly lady and talking in depth about my family needs, she identified a fantastic volunteer and a great match for my little baby boy. My volunteer Ellie\* is such a lovely person. She supported me on a weekly basis with continuing help with my baby and connected really well with him over such a long time from emotional support, feeding him, giving him playful activities, exploring new baby groups to walking in the park and lots more while it gave me time to do more house chores too which was such a relief. She really is such a great help and you can tell she loves to help people. If Home-Start did not exist, it would be such a shame as the support given especially by my volunteer really makes such a difference to a family's life and especially to new mothers out there as the journey is so rewarding but also hard sometimes to juggle."



*"I have absolutely loved having K and P's support, it has really made a difference to my wellbeing and how I settled into motherhood. Smooth communication, no judgement, I've felt safe, supported, respected and uplifted! My daughter is only a few months old but I can say she will have definitely benefited from me being happier and more confident." Home-Start mum*

*\*Names have been changed to protect identities.*

# Building Strong Foundations for Childhood

Over the past year, we've been running group sessions in Barnet and Harrow. Through lots of fun activities, we've seen children grow in confidence and develop important early skills – from movement and coordination to communication, turn-taking, and self-care. It's been lovely to see their curiosity come alive, and by giving them space to lead their own play, we've watched their confidence and self-esteem really blossom. A Family Support Coordinator also joins these sessions to chat with parents, especially those who might be feeling isolated or need a bit of extra support.



*"I joined this group for several reasons, primarily to enhance Yusuf's\* social intelligence and give him the opportunity to meet new friends. It also allows him to interact with children his age, as at home he only has older siblings. Additionally, I wanted to develop his communication skills and help him acquire new vocabulary.*

*This group has provided an excellent environment for Yusuf to achieve these goals. The space is well-suited for this as a variety of games and activities are available. The garden area with physical activities like bikes, balls, and building blocks has especially spiked Yusuf's interest, allowing him to create and enjoy things in a way he hadn't before.*

*Another positive change I've noticed is his improved behaviour, particularly his commitment to routines and organisation. For example, he has become better at transitioning from playtime to tidying up the toys, and then moving on to mealtimes smoothly. Even at home, he is starting to apply this routine in his daily activities. Yusuf has greatly benefited from these sessions, and I have also seen a positive progression. Visits to specialists like speech therapists or dentists have been impactful. I hope there will be more visits from other specialists in different fields, such as a nutritionist or psychologist.*

*Thank you for providing such a positive and nurturing environment for Yusuf. I look forward to seeing even more progress." Irma's\* story*



*\*Names have been changed to protect identities.*

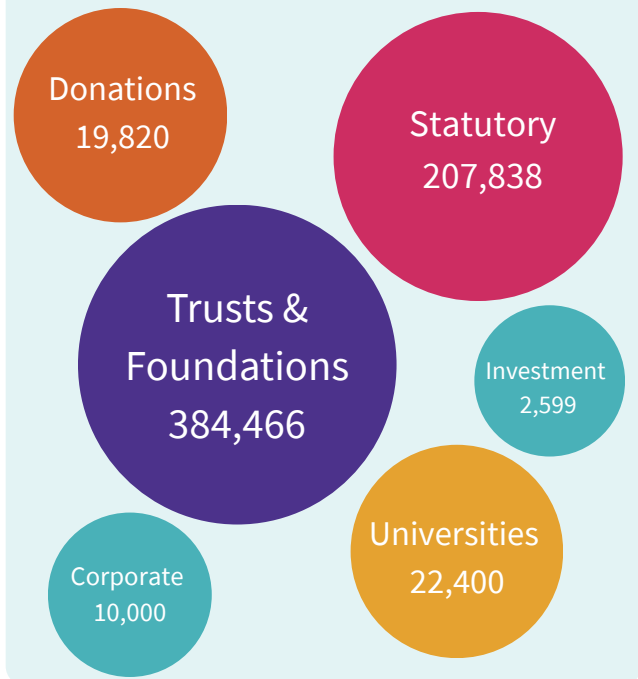
# Stronger Families, Brighter Futures: Powered by Our Community

We would like to thank our local and national partners who continue to help us be the support our families need. Each partner and supporter has allowed us to give these families hope. We would also like to acknowledge all the individual donations we have received during the year from supporters in our communities. Your contributions really DO make a difference.

- All Aboard Charity Shops
- Arts Depot
- Awards for All
- BBC CIN Small Grant
- Cadent Centres for Warmth
- Christ Church Southgate
- City Bridge Foundation
- HiB Bathrooms
- Jewish Community Secondary School
- John Lewis, Brent Cross
- John Lyon's Charity
- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Healthy Harrow Engagement
- Harrow Giving
- Henry Smith Charity
- London Borough of Barnet
- London Borough of Brent
- LUSH
- Madani Ismailov (builders)
- Public Health Barnet
- RAF Museum
- The Charles Wolfson Charity
- Greek Women's Philanthropic Association
- The Hadley Trust
- West Hendon Community Trust



## Our fundraising income



We would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to all our volunteers, in every capacity, for their incredible dedication and compassion. Their unwavering commitment to supporting families and meeting their needs lies at the heart of everything we do.

Our sincere thanks also go to our Trustees, whose guidance, wisdom and support have been invaluable to both staff and volunteers throughout the year.

We are especially grateful to our Patron, Martin Russell, for his continued advocacy and enthusiasm. His steadfast support and role as an ambassador for Home-Start inspire confidence in our work and help raise the profile of the families and communities we serve.

We want to say a heartfelt thank you to our amazing staff team for everything they've done for our families this year. Their dedication, kindness, and positivity have shone through, even during challenging times, and we're so grateful for their unwavering support and care.

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## GET IN TOUCH

To find out more about the work that we do and for volunteering opportunities:

**T:** 020 8371 0674

**E:** [admin@homestartbarnet.org](mailto:admin@homestartbarnet.org)

**W:** [www.homestartbarnet.org](http://www.homestartbarnet.org)



Follow us on social media:



## Make a difference - VOLUNTEER TODAY!



Barnet, Brent  
& Harrow