



Support and friendship
for families

Home-Start
Cotswolds

Annual
Report
2007-2008





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Home-Start Cotswolds Annual Report from the Trustees

(Covering period April 2007 - March 2008)

How We Work

Home-Start Cotswolds is a Registered Charity, and a Charitable Company limited by guarantee. It is governed by the Memorandum and Articles of Association, as advised by Home-Start UK.

Our Charity Registration number is 1110632 and we became a Charity on 28th July 2005. Our Company Registration number is 5468592, and we were incorporated as a Company on 1st June 2005.

This is the third Annual Report of Home-Start Cotswolds.

What Do We Do?

Home-Start Cotswolds is a local charity that exists to provide support for families in the Cotswold District Council area with at least one child under the age of 5 years. To do this, we recruit volunteers who are parents themselves, and prepare them for this family support role with 40 hours of training. The volunteer is then matched to a family, and visits them in the family home for 2-3 hours once a week.

Families can refer themselves to us, as well as being referred by Health Visitors, GPs, Social Workers and other professionals. We will provide services to families who meet our criteria as long as we have an appropriate volunteer to help. Volunteers are supported via an ongoing system of training and back up.



Who are the Trustees & Directors?

A board of trustees was established in January 2005 to set up Home-Start Cotswolds, and official charity status was soon established. It is Home-Start policy that a trustee should only serve in any one post for a maximum of three years before being subject to an election. Trustees are unpaid volunteers from a variety of backgrounds.

The trustees are:

Clare Baker	Chair
Kim Hartshorne	Vice Chair
Antony Jones	Treasurer & Company Secretary
Carolyn Ford	Minutes Secretary
Hilary Morris	
Jackie Colburn	
Christine Hall	
Christopher Hall	
Alison Denham-Davis	

The trustees meet bi-monthly with additional specialist advisors, forming the Management Committee.

The advisors are:-

Mandy Fry	GP
Eileen Ind	Family Support Worker
Rosemary Lynn	Community, Health & Housing Manager.
Sarah Smithson	Health Visitor

Where Do We Work?

The principal activity of Home-Start takes place from our main office at:

33 Coxwell Street
Cirencester
GL7 2BT
T: 01285 885391.

These premises are provided free of charge by Cirencester Baptist Church – we are very grateful to them for their continued support of our work.

In autumn 2007 we also opened a North Cotswolds satellite office in Stow-on-the-Wold:

Stow-Youth Club
Fosseway
Stow-on-the-Wold
GL54 1DW
T: 01451 831781

Our Registered Office address at Companies House is:
203 Alexander Drive
Cirencester
GL7 1UH

Other Contact Information

We bank with Natwest Cirencester branch, Market Place, Cirencester.

Our Auditor is Mr Christopher Rowles
2, Keble Close
The Maples
Cirencester.

Where Does Our Money Come From?

Home-Start Cotswolds is funded by a mixture of grants from the public sector and charitable trusts, fundraising and donations from private individuals. We are a not-for-profit organisation and our Directors, Trustees and volunteers are unpaid, although expenses are reimbursed.

Currently we are in the third year of a three-year grant from The Big Lottery. Our other main source of income is a generous regular donation from a private individual. This money has helped enormously to fund our expansion into the North Cotswolds in September 2007.

We also benefited from grants from The Mercers Company, The Henry Smith Charity, Cirencester and Stow-on-the-Wold Town Councils, The Essex Trust, The Saintbury Trust, HDH Wills 1965 Charitable Trust and Bibury and Winson PCC.

We would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to all those who have made a financial contribution to Home-Start Cotswolds.

A copy of the audited Annual Accounts for 2007-2008 is attached to this Annual Report.

How Do We Make Decisions?

We make most of our decisions at our Management Committee Meetings which are attended by trustees, paid staff and specialist advisers. Discussion takes place freely between all parties at the meeting; major decisions are made by trustee vote on the basis of the information discussed.

The paid staff are responsible for running the day-to-day operation of the Scheme while the Trustees are responsible for financial and strategic planning.



Pictured: Home-Start Cotswolds staff

We have five members of paid staff who between them run our two offices. In Cirencester, two part-time Senior Co-ordinators, Sarah Mais and Katharine Campbell, operate a full-time job share between them; our part-time Administrator there is Kate Rhodes. Our part-time Co-ordinator in Stow-on-the-Wold is Lesley Thorn, who is supported by Brenda Dyson, part-time Administrator. The Trustees would like to honour and recognise the staff for all their hard work and enthusiasm this year when we have seen Home-Start Cotswolds expand and move forwards.

Summary of 2007 – 2008

“Home-Start made an amazing difference to me at a time when I was unbelievably low”

Mum experiencing Post Natal Depression

“I immensely positive feedback from families, [Home-Start] builds their confidence as a parent...

...Thank you for a wonderful service”.

Health Visitor

We have successfully recruited, trained and supported volunteers throughout the year as well as maintaining the majority of our initial volunteers. The volunteers have been matched with families who they visited on a weekly basis providing much needed support and encouragement. 48 families, including 120 children, have benefited from weekly volunteer support during the period April 2007 –March 2008. In addition to these visits we organised two Family Fun Days in the August holidays as well as a Coffee and Cake morning. All of these were well attended and much appreciated by families. The Cirencester Office has achieved capacity in the numbers of volunteers and families that the Co-ordinators are able to support and supervise. Support for each family is regularly reviewed with all parties, and during the year twenty two families ceased to be supported by their volunteer. All of these families, without exception, said that things had improved since Home-Start support began.

We were delighted to appoint a new Co-ordinator, Lesley Thorn, in September 2007 and then an Administrator, Brenda Dyson in January 2008 to support her. They have worked tirelessly and with great enthusiasm to establish our new satellite office in Stow-on-the-Wold. We are pleased to be sharing the premises of the newly refurbished Stow Youth Club and thank the trustees and staff for making us so welcome. The new office is open three days a week, Tuesday – Thursday. The first few months were spent setting up the office and making contacts in the community to raise our profile and recruit volunteers. The first volunteer preparation course began in January 2008 with seven volunteers. We

have received a warm welcome from local health visitors and primary schools who appreciate the benefit of what we do.

Throughout this year the Co-ordinators have focussed on networking and building links with other agencies in the Cotswolds to ensure the effectiveness of our service to families.

Two new Trustees were appointed during the year, Christopher Hall and Alison Denham-Davis. They both bring with them a wealth of experience, Christopher is a solicitor and Alison has many years experience in the voluntary sector. We are delighted to have them as part of our team.



Pictured left: families, volunteers and staff play games at one of the Home-Start Family Fun Days in St Michaels Park (Cirencester), in August 2007.

Volunteers

During 2007-2008 we had 36 trained volunteers. They supported 48 families during the year, including 120 children, of whom 75 were under the age of 5 years. At the end of March 2008 there were another 7 volunteers training on the first Preparation course in Stow-on-the-Wold.

Our volunteers come from every walk of life, and bring a wide range of experience to Home-Start. The length of time they are with a family varies – some are still with their initial family, while others move to support a new family in a shorter time, dependant on the need of the family.

Volunteers are supported through regular one to one supervision as well as receiving on going training at bi-monthly support groups. During the year these meetings have included speakers from Cruse and



First Aid training from St John Ambulance as part of Volunteer Support Group

Cirencester Memorial Centre; First Aid training from St John Ambulance; Christmas lunch and a workshop from Parentline Plus.

The Trustees would like to express our gratitude to all the volunteers who give up their time and energy each week to support families and do so much which is perhaps unseen. We really appreciate all you do.

"I have enjoyed the course so much and found it very interesting. Everybody [is] so friendly and welcoming."

New volunteer completing the Volunteer Preparation Course.

Looking Ahead

Staff and Trustees are working towards our Quality Assurance Review that will take place in November 2008. This will be conducted by two regional consultants from Home-Start UK.

We plan to run another Volunteer Preparation Course in Cirencester in October 2008 and two more in Stow-on-the-Wold in May and October 2008.

We are particularly looking forward to seeing the first volunteers in the North Cotswolds being matched to families and starting their visits. Referrals are already coming in and we look forward to being able to offer our service to families there, many of whom live in very isolated rural areas.

In June 2008 staff, trustees and advisors will come together for an Away Day to finalise work on our Strategic Business Plan.

We are planning various events during the year to raise funds and awareness for Home-Start Cotswolds.

Thanks

Thank you for taking the time to read the third Annual Report and Accounts. We appreciate all the support we have received in many forms during this year, and wish to thank all the volunteers, staff, advisers and funding partners for their belief in this charity, which is supporting many local families.

The Trustees
2008