



Impact Report

2022/23

For parents, when they need us
most, because childhood can't wait

Introduction

At Home-Start Cymru, we're on an incredible journey dedicated to supporting and empowering families across Wales.

As a charity that resulted from the merger of smaller Welsh Home-Start in 2019, we're on a rapid journey of growth - building our staff, volunteers and experience, to be able to support and empower even more families across Wales.

As we reflect on our achievements and progress, we're absolutely thrilled to present our impact report, showcasing the positive changes we've made in communities throughout the year.

Our mission is simple but powerful: to strengthen families by providing emotional and practical support and guidance when they need it most.



Jayne Drummond, Chief Executive Officer

Johnathan Richards, Chair of the Board of Trustees.

As we deal with the repercussions of the Covid-19 pandemic and face the new challenges posed by the cost of living crisis, we have continued to see an increase in demand for our services, along with more complexity and challenges for the individuals and families we support.

We are experiencing increased demand for our support, as parents feel an increase in anxiety, depression and isolation related pressures.

We continued to be flexible and responsive to the changing rules around Covid-19 and are pleased that for another year we were able to continue delivering all of our services without interruption, moving to online support when needed. Changes to the way we train and support our volunteers have meant that we have been able to recruit volunteers regularly.

In this report, we'll dive deep into the heart of our mission, sharing the remarkable impact Home-Start Cymru has had on families in three key areas: promoting the well-being of parents and children, improving parental confidence and strengthening family relationships and resilience. We've achieved so much over the past year and we can't wait to share our successes with you.

As we continue to grow, we're focused on building upon our core organisational strengths and values across Home-Start Cymru. We're committed to addressing any areas that need improvement and ensuring that we provide the best possible support to families. We've made significant investments in our co-production work, equality, diversity, and inclusion, as well as the infrastructure that supports our amazing staff in delivering exceptional services. And this important work will continue at an exciting pace.

Recruiting volunteers to provide peer support remains an ongoing challenge, though we've developed a new volunteering strategy and are introducing a Volunteering in Wales award, to be able to improve our recruitment, reward and retention processes.

We want to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude for the incredible support we've received throughout the year. To our supported families, volunteers, their families, staff, friends, charitable trusts, foundations, and corporate partners, we extend a warm and sincere thank you. None of this would be possible without your unwavering support, and we are truly grateful for your commitment to our cause.

What we do and why

The Home-Start Federation was formed fifty years ago to ensure that all parents and families had somewhere to turn before they reached crisis point.

We work within Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Carmarthenshire, Denbighshire, Gwynedd, Isle of Anglesey, Merthyr Tydfil, Monmouthshire, Neath Port Talbot, Newport, Pembrokeshire, Powys, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Swansea, Torfaen, and Vale of Glamorgan.

Everyone at Home-Start Cymru knows that the right support at the right time makes all the difference. This has been made all the more vital as a result of the pandemic and the impact it has had on families.

We're here to support families, with whatever they're going through such as poor mental health, neurodivergent diagnosis, single parenting, multiple young children or financial pressure.

We believe all families should have access to emotional and practical support. We provide vital support to thousands of families every year through 1-1 home visiting support, and peer support groups and through our wide range of specialised support services in areas across 16 local authorities in Wales.



Our work focuses on five key areas underpinned by three themes

Strengthening our core

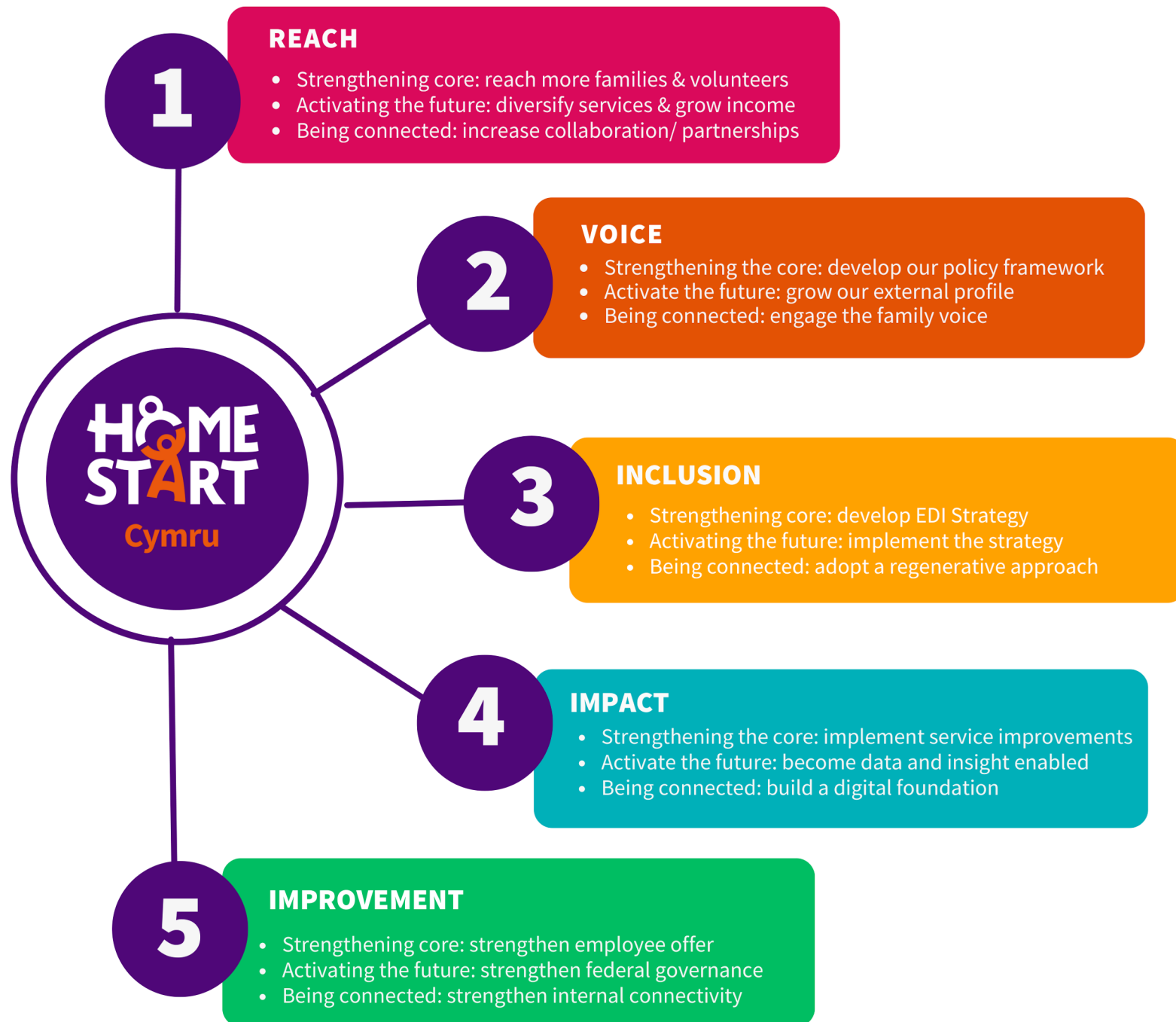
focusing on the here and now, maintain and building our core offer, whilst striving for excellence and continuous improvement in all that we do

Activating our future

building our next step, trying new things, in new ways we seek to be ready and able to unlock new opportunities locally, regionally and nationally

Being connected

we seek to find new ways to strengthen our connections internally and externally, partnering with families and organisations to campaign for better connected systems and communities.



Our Services across Wales



Home Visiting Support

Anglesey, Blaenau Gwent, Bridgend, Caerphilly, Cardiff, Denbighshire Gwynedd, Merthyr, Newport, Pembrokeshire, Powys, RCT and Swansea



Peer Group Support

Cardiff, Cardiff and Vale UHB, Denbighshire, RCT, Powys



Targeted Support

- **Anglesey** - Support for Dads
- **Caerphilly** - Supporting People – housing support & financial maximisation & CIN project– support for under 5's
- **Cardiff** - behaviour management
- **Cardiff and Vale UHB** – Neurodevelopment (ND) project: 1-1 & group support for families on the ND pathway
- **Cwm Taff Morgannwg UHB** – Dad Matters Cymru & Neurodevelopment project: 1-1 & group support for families on the ND pathway
- **Denbighshire** - Mental health (1-1 & group support)
- **Newport** - Seeking Sanctuary project – Supporting families seeking sanctuary (1-1)
- **Powys** – group support - ALN
- **RCT** –Behaviour Management



Our Services

Home-Start Cymru has 40 years' collective experience of providing emotional and practical support to families.

Our 'core' service and unique selling point as a charity is our personal approach to support. We visit families in the home to provide personalised, non-judgmental and confidential help tailored to each family's unique needs.

Our trained volunteers visit families in their homes, offering regular support, assistance and a compassionate ear. We help families access other relevant services and resources in their community. We act as a bridge between families and their local communities, providing information and guidance, and connecting families with support networks such as health services, schools, and local authorities. As such, signposting for families is an integral part of our role to ensure they are aware of all the relevant support they can access.

In addition to one-to-one contact and guidance in accessing wider support, we also facilitate group support sessions where families come together, share experiences, and build social connections. These groups address specific topics or challenges, allowing parents to learn from one another and provide mutual support.

We have developed a strong reputation for creating and running innovative models in response to the unique needs of local communities and specific service user cohort groups. Our services are delivered by a very experienced and skilful staff delivery team who are committed to making a difference to every person they engage with.



Families

We're standing alongside families through the cost-of-living crisis, and we want to make sure that no parent or family feels alone in raising children.

Despite the challenges we face in the economic climate, our bold ambition is to support more families than ever before.

5% Increase

in number of families referred into Home-Start Cymru for support since 2021-2022



32% Increase

in referrals into Home-Start Cymru specifically seeking help with managing household budget since 2021-2022



What we've done at Home-Start Cymru to support families

In 2022, we have continued to use outcome results to evidence the value of our service and advice more generally, as well as demonstrating the importance of collecting this type of insight for impact monitoring, understanding service delivery, and generating insight to campaign for change.

Our referral partnerships are vital in ensuring we can reach as many people as possible who need our help. In 2022, we saw a 40% increase in referrals across a range of sectors including community and mental health charities, helping us to reach more families when they need support. We also saw the number of self-referrals increase by 26% compared to previous years.

In 2022/23, we

- Piloted our Neurodevelopment support for families across Cwm Taff Morganwg to support parents navigate the neurodevelopment pathway.
- Launched our Dad Matters Cymru project in Cwm Taff Morgannwg
- Piloted Peer support group delivery in Monmouthshire targeting school readiness for children
- Launched our Seeking Sanctuary project in Gwent (primarily based in Newport) to provide support to families who are seeking refugee or asylum.

Continuation of emotional support for families across Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, Swansea, Cardiff, The Vale, Merthyr, RCT, Bridgend, Powys, Denbighshire, Ynys Mon, Caerphilly Borough, Blaenau Gwent

Partnerships

We built a number of new partnerships during the first year of the strategy:

- Book Trust: as part of their early years programme, distributing family resource packs and piloting 50 practitioner packs each containing books, activities, resources, and online support.
- Welsh Benefits research: partnering with Bevan Foundation, Oxfam, Barnardo's, Save the Children, Citizens Advice, WLGA and the TUC on joint research by Policy in Practice on a Welsh Benefits system. Gathering interest, we presented at the Cross-Party Group on Poverty, and met with Sioned Williams MS who used our insights in her proposal for a Take-Up of Benefits Bill in the Senedd. Report has now launched: A common approach to Welsh benefits: Feasibility study - Bevan Foundation
- Recovery Cymru: development of a shared campaign #NoteToSelf, launching on 7 th November for Stress Awareness Week, which aims to reduce the stigma around substance and alcohol use and raise awareness of the links with stress and poor mental health.
- Public Health Wales/ ACEs Hub: exploring piloting the Trauma Informed Framework

Volunteering

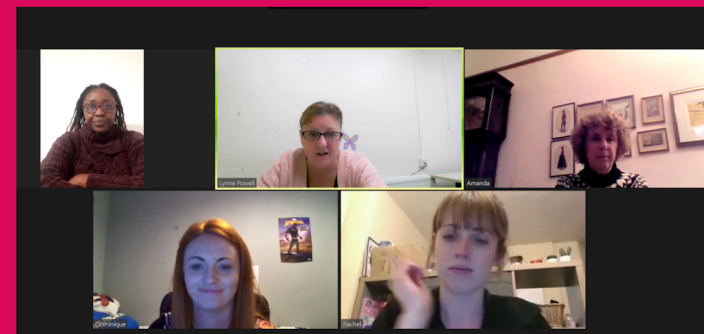
This year the team behind the volunteer programme have been innovative and creative in their approach to ensure that volunteering at Home-Start Cymru has remained accessible and fulfilling, creating a range of remote opportunities for both existing and new volunteers.

Recruiting and training our volunteers remotely has meant our opportunities have appealed to a wider audience and have increased a greater diversity in backgrounds, experience, skills and knowledge, all of which enhances our workforce and offer to service users.

We adopt a thorough recruitment process for bringing volunteers into the organisation, followed by a comprehensive training offer and support package. We have also applied for the 'Investing in Volunteers' accreditation.

During 2022/23, we:

- **recruited and trained 57 new volunteers.**
- **Our volunteers attended 684 hours of training which include induction and safeguarding.**



"I recently attended a training course and I must say that it was an absolutely fantastic experience. The trainers were highly knowledgeable and skilled, and they presented the material in a way that was engaging and easy to understand. The course was well-structured and covered a wide range of topics, giving me a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter.

The trainers were also very approachable and supportive, always willing to answer my questions and provide guidance when needed. I felt like they genuinely cared about my learning and development, which made the experience all the more enjoyable.

Overall, I highly recommend Home - Start Volunteers to anyone looking to expand their knowledge and skills whilst wanting to help others. The training given has been a valuable experience I will carry with me when working with families and also throughout my career. "

Home-Start Cymru Volunteer

Supporting Families, by becoming a volunteer like Pascale



To see more stories like Pascale's, please click [here](#).



**Claire Roberts,
Carmarthenshire**

Tell us why you volunteer for Home-Start Cymru?

"I've always wanted to be a volunteer but I didn't know who to volunteer for. I remember seeing a quote *"helping one person might not change the world but it might change the world for that one person"*.

I truly believe that.

I love being a volunteer. I like to give back and it's so nice to do something for someone else. Even if it's helping quick tidying up or just a chat and a cuppa."

**Learn more about volunteering at
homestartcymru.org.uk/volunteer**

Policy

During the past year, we've worked hard to amplify our collective voice in key spaces on issues such as the impact of the cost of living, being trauma-informed, the neurodivergence pathway and more.

Gathering insights first-hand from families and other stakeholders, and plugging into policy areas of interest, we have:

Gathered momentum behind the creation of a Welsh Benefits System alongside third sector organisations, with key achievements including :

- Presentation of evidence at Welsh Government's Cross-Party Group on Poverty
- HSC's direct citation and presentation of evidence by Senedd Member, Sioned Williams', for the 'Take-Up of Benefits' Member's Bill

Pursued engagement with key Government actors, achieving multiple online and in person strategic meetings with:

- Deputy Minister for Mental Health and Wellbeing, Lynne Neagle.
- Minister for Social Services, Julie Morgan, including guest speaker appearance at HSC's first 'Valuing our Volunteers' event.
- Minister for Social Justice, Jane Hutt.
- Member of the Senedd and representative for Cardiff Central, Jenny Rathbone
- UK Member of Parliament and representative for Pontypridd, Alex Davies-Jones.

Maintained membership in multiple key strategic forums including:

- NGO Children's Policy Officers group
- Anti-Poverty Coalition
- External Reference Group for the Revision of Welsh Government's Child Poverty Strategy
- WCVA Voluntary sector meetings
- Children in Wales Early Years Action Group and other key networks



Communication and Engagement

Our Communications and Marketing Team support our Hope at Home strategy to reach more families, volunteers, increase awareness of our work and income to support our services

This year was another busy year of supporting vital activities across the charity, helping raise awareness of our services, and supporting our policy work.

Our news stories and on-line coverage are a platform for the families we work with to have their voices heard. It is a way of sharing their success and celebrating the achievements of both them and our incredible staff and volunteers.

We continue to engage with media with clear messaging about our commitment to families and our passion to ensure that every parent in Wales has the support they need to give children the best start in life.

During 2022/23, we have produced the following:

- Our call-to-action strategy to visit our website has been highly effective, resulting in 8,239 users visiting the site and 20,480 page views.
- Our Festive Gift Appeal generated several pieces of media coverage on Heart FM, Capital FM and BBC Wales, BBC Radio One, BBC Asian network. This drew upon our case study called Charlotte and the appeal generated over 300 toy and food donations and monetary donations of the value of £18,000 from a variety of organisations such as OVO Energy, Mr X Appeal, Salvation Army, Sainsbury's in Pontypridd, Asda in Cardiff, Tesco in Llanelli, BT Openreach and White Stuff.
- Volunteer recruitment campaign #TogetherWeCan, supported by PR, stakeholder outreach, print and digital advertising and social media engagement. Leading to 116 requests of interest in volunteering to date.



Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)

We are committed to delivering services that reflect the needs of families living in the communities we serve.

A sense of belonging, having opportunities to be your true self and the ability to thrive to your potential, are crucial for the well-being of our supported families, our volunteers, staff and all connected with our mission. We seek to ensure equality in our approach as an organisation that flexes to the unique needs and circumstances of individuals to allow for all to thrive in this way and to ensure all who seek our support can access it easily.

We have been working hard to develop our practices and culture in order to become a truly inclusive charity. Our EDI Working Group advises leadership on how to improve upon and celebrate equality, diversity and inclusion. With guidance and input from colleagues, we have undertaken the following as part of our journey in this space:

- Accelerated work on the creation of a four-year EDI Strategy, co-produced by staff and trustees and reflective of the views and insights of families.
- Carried out a demographics survey of all current staff and implemented EDI Monitoring forms for all new starts entering the organisation, including volunteers. This will allow us to set benchmarks, taking into account standards across the sector against the demographics of communities we are present in to start building a more diverse, inclusive and equitable team.
- Implemented a new Equality and Diversity policy
- EDI working group established to support the development of the EDI strategy, explore social issues and discuss priorities for advocacy work/change.

Tackling inequality is a long process, but we are committed to taking the steps each day, every year to pursue a better environment for families. We look forward to sharing our continued progress.



Our Impact at a snapshot

944

families supported

2,010

children helped

160+

Volunteers

52

Staff

80%

families reported an
improved Parental
Wellbeing

83%

families reported an
improved Children's
Learning and
Development

78%

families reported an
improved
Children's mental
health

73%

families reported
that better able to
manage household
budget

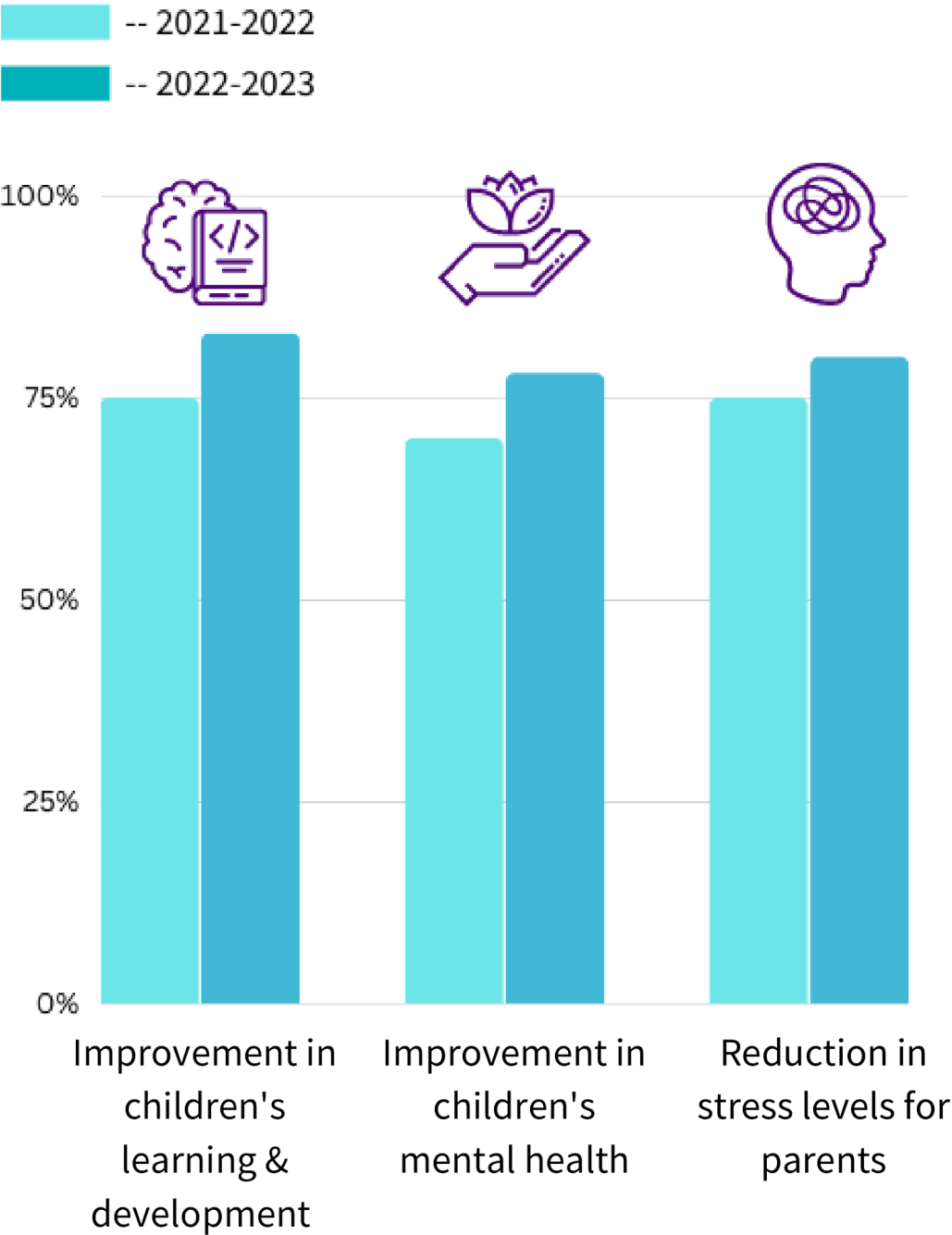
£5,000

distributed via cost crisis fund

80%

families reported a reduction of stress

How we've made a difference



By speaking to families who have reached the end of their support with Home-Start Cymru, we look back on their journey with us and the impact they feel this has had for them personally and for their family.

The vast majority of families supported by us report impactful and positive changes relating to both their own and their children's wellbeing, personal development and stress levels.

Compared to 2021/22 feedback statistics from families, this year we've seen:

- 11%** increase in improved learning and development amongst children supported by Home-Start Cymru
- 11%** increase in improved mental health amongst children supported by Home-Start Cymru
- 7%** reduction in stress levels amongst parents supported by Home-Start Cymru

Supporting families like Charlotte's

Charlotte Chapman is one of our supported parents who told us she skips meals to make ends meet. Charlotte lives with her five children, in Cardiff. Her children are unaware of the sacrifices their mum makes each day to keep them warm and fed.

"I've got just enough money to feed my children and pay my bills. I will eat the children's leftovers, I won't make myself a meal."

When Charlotte moved into her own rented house eight years ago, she was looking forward to creating a new life for herself. After being a carer for her mum as a child and then fleeing domestic abuse as an adult, Charlotte moved into her three-bedroom house, hopeful for her future. Now the cost of living crisis is taking its toll, and Charlotte is struggling to keep up with the expense of caring for a large family.

Home-Start Cymru helped Charlotte and her family. Charlotte's support worker, Kay, helped them with donations and emotional support.



**Charlotte,
Mum of four based in Cardiff**

"I don't want my kids to be sat in the freezing cold, and I can't afford luxuries like electric blankets to stay warm. The charity Home-Start Cymru just bought me extra quilts because I can't afford them.", says Charlotte.

Every day, we are committed to doing everything we can to ensure children get the best start in life. Unfortunately, so many families like Charlotte's are struggling to afford even the basics. That's why our support is vital for families during these challenging times.

Abbey's Story

For seven years, a mother of three Abbey suffered with low confidence and anxiety, struggling to leave her house and perform simple tasks like the school run or a food shop.

After receiving support from Home-Start Cymru, Abbey was able to do things she never thought possible, spend quality time with her children and pursue plans for her future career.

"I can honestly say that if it wasn't for Home-Start I wouldn't be the me I am now."

"All I wanted was to take my kids out, do the things that Mums do but I couldn't do it alone. Home-Start Cymru helped me get my confidence back, which has led me on a better path in life as I am waiting to start University."

"I can't thank Home-Start Cymru enough. I am becoming the best version of myself."



Artwork by Abbey

Income

As with most charities in this financial climate, we experienced another turbulent and challenging year in securing income to support our work. This means that we are even more grateful to all our donors and funders for their continued support.

We are committed to ensuring that our income is spent efficiently, effectively and responsibly, by making every pound count. Currently, over 80% of our costs fund direct support for families across 18 local authorities in Wales.

A large proportion (60%) of our income derives from charitable activities, including delivering family support contracts for Local Authorities in multiple markets. This is becoming increasingly more challenging and competitive as all charities are seeking to diversify their services, although we are pleased to have retained contracts in some areas for preventative family support funded via Families First, Supporting People and Children and Communities Funds, e.g. in Merthyr, Powys, RCT, Anglesey, Cardiff, Swansea and Caerphilly.

We are working hard to increase our income from voluntary sources and are pleased to have welcomed new donors throughout the year e.g. Dulverton Trust, Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation, Jenour Foundation, Anne Duchess of Westminster, Society of the Holy Child Jesus and the Waterloo Foundation, as well as continued support from existing supporters, such as Moondance Foundation, National Lottery Community Fund, Children in Need, Community Foundation Wales (Nation of Sanctuary), Garfield Weston Foundation, The Henry Smith Trust and Julian Hodge Foundation.

We are grateful to Home-Start UK for their support in passing on grants to the wider network, including via the Pears Foundation, Masonic Charitable Trust and company partnerships, such as White Stuff, John Lewis, Waitrose and BT. As restrictions related to COVID eased, we were delighted to see in-person fundraising events. We are grateful for the £3,000 raised via various community fundraising activities and the courageous runners at our first Cardiff Half marathon in October. We've been moved by the generosity of company employees who've offered their time, goods and services to support families in need. BT have generously donated wi-fi vouchers and laptops for us to distribute to digitally excluded families and volunteers.

Supermarkets such as ASDA Waitrose and Tesco have donated seasonal gifts, including Easter Eggs, presents and food, which we have been able to give on to families most in need. Our work with John Lewis and Waitrose helped 5 families have a 'magical' Christmas, providing them with the items they chose to make their festive celebrations special. We also coordinated our annual Festive Gift Appeal that collected over 1,800 gifts for our supported families and provided food and vouchers for our families.

Without this board combination of generous support, we would not have been able to meet the multiple and complex needs of nearly 1,000 families supported by us through out 2022/23. Sincere thanks to all and we hope to continue working with you over the coming years.



Looking ahead

As we look to the year ahead, we are united in our determination to be there for parents when they need us most, because childhood can't wait.

Many charities are feeling the strain of increased demand for their work as we emerge from the pandemic and dive straight into the cost-of-living crisis. This has left many families feeling the pressure, seeking out support from charities like ours to help them navigate through the challenges they face.

We have estimated that the demand for vital support will continue to increase which will apply pressure on our service delivery and volunteer recruitment teams. We have seen first-hand that volunteer recruitment has become extremely challenging and remains a high risk in the year ahead. In response, we have started developing a Volunteer Strategy with a focus on attracting, retaining, and recognising volunteers which we will then look to implement.

At Home-Start Cymru, we're continuing to put the lived experience of families at the heart of everything we do. We will continue to capture families' insight from focus groups and surveys to ensure our tailored support is streamlined for our supported families.

We know that we need to keep improving too as an organisation. That's why we have thought hard about how best to monitor the quality of our work to ensure that we are providing the best support for families.

We will continue to focus on the priority areas set out in our business plan. This includes:

Strategic Aim	Action	How we plan to do that
Reach	Strengthening our support	Source new funding to continue core services and expand delivery all 18 local authorities. We will also seek innovative funding opportunities to develop our support offerings based on the needs of our families and environmental challenges.
	Strengthening our volunteer offer	Our priority is to complete the volunteer strategy and roll out the volunteer plan over the next 12 months so that we can meet contractual obligations and sustain services.
	Strengthening relationships	Developing and expanding partnerships to become better connected with communities across Wales which will enable us to reach and support more families.
Voice	Communication	We will continue to collecting stories from Home-Start Cymru volunteers and families. We will launch our brand-new bilingual website which will be a significant milestone for the organisation.
	Policy/Influence	We will continue to work with partner organisations to promote the findings of the Welsh Benefits report, and seek to influence change to the current system to improve experience for families.
	Family Engagement	We will connect with different communities, stakeholders and forums to learn how our approach can and should flex to account for diverse and changing needs identified through surveys, focus groups and ranging feedback.
Inclusion	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI)	We will continue to consult with staff, trustees, volunteers and families to co-produce and launch a sophisticated EDI Strategy, with dedicated action plans and KPIs to follow to measure progress.

Strategic Aim	Action	How we plan to do that
Impact	Data Driven	We will refine our data collection by rolling out our Charity Log monitoring and evaluation system which will help us capture impactful statistics about our work and the difference we're making.
	Feedback Driven	Utilising feedback data to inform our future approach to maximise positive impact for families.
Improvement	People	<p>We will finalise recommendations to the board regarding rewards and recognition, including any changes to salary structures and a proposed pay policy.</p> <p>We will roll out a clear performance management framework with relevant training to staff.</p>
	Wellbeing	Our focus this year will be on staff wellbeing and embedding our values and developing our culture and a wellbeing strategy will be developed together with an implementation plan
	Improving Volunteer Retention	Our priority to complete the volunteer strategy and roll out the volunteer plan over the next 12 months so that we can meet contractual obligations and sustain services.

Thank you

We simply wouldn't be able to provide life-changing support without our supporters. There are so many incredible donors, partners, committees, volunteers and fundraisers that we cannot thank enough. They include those listed here.

Caerphilly County Borough Council	Swansea Council	Garfield Weston Foundation	Society of the Holy Child Jesus
Cardiff Council	Albert Gubay Charitable Foundation	Gwynt Y Mor	SEDA Ltd
Cardiff UHB	Anne Duchess of Westminster's Fund	Hartsheath Charitable Trust	The Henry Smith Charity
Carmarthenshire County Council	British Telecom (BT)	Jenour Foundation	The Julian Hodge Foundation
Cwm Taf Morgannwg UHB	Carmela and Ronnie Pignatelli Foundation	John Lewis/ Home-Start UK	The National Lottery Community Fund
Denbigh Town Council	City Energy Network	Moondance Foundation	The Pears Foundation/ Home-Start UK
Isle of Anglesey County Council	Children in Need	Newport City Council	Volunteering Futures/ Home-Start UK
Merthyr Tydfil County Council	Community Foundation Wales	Powys County Council	Waterloo Foundation
Rhyl Town Council	Dulverton Trust	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council	

Contact us.

**Write to us, visit us or
learn more about us at:**

**Home-Start Cymru
Rainbow House
1 Newent Road,
St. Mellons,
CF3 0BL**

**info@homestartcymru.org.uk
www.homestartcymru.org.uk**

Or say hello at:

**<https://twitter.com/hscymru>
<https://www.facebook.com/homestartcymru>**

Copyright © Home-Start Cymru 2023, registered charity in England and Wales (1105577)
A company limited by guarantee, registered in England and Wales company number 5199118
Registered Office: Rainbow House 1 Newent Road, St. Mellons, Saint Mellons CF3 0BL

