



# Annual Report

Celebrating 35 years of supporting local families



14<sup>th</sup> Annual Report which covers the period:

**1<sup>st</sup> April 2018 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2019**  
[www.home-start-reading.org.uk](http://www.home-start-reading.org.uk)



# Co-Chairs' Report

We are very proud of the achievements of the staff and trustees over the year since we took up the chair of Home-Start Reading, and everyone has risen to the challenge as the management of the scheme is constantly developing.

Following a series of meetings with trustees and staff we published our Strategic Plan for 2019-22, which aims to build on our previous achievements whilst taking a realistic approach to the challenges ahead. We continue to review how to make the best use of our skills and resources on a limited budget and aim to support as many referred families as possible with targeted programmes and activities that complement our home visiting offer.

Alongside the Strategic Plan we have developed our fund-raising strategy and the team are now working on the communications strategy - all looking forward with the aim of raising awareness of our service and raising much needed funds.

**AIM:** To see a society in which every parent has the support they need to give their children the best possible start in life.

**MISSION:** To offer support, friendship and practical help to parents with young children in Reading. We offer a unique service by recruiting and training volunteers to visit families at home, who have at least one child under 5, to offer informal, friendly and confidential support.

**BELIEF:** That children need a happy and secure childhood and that parents play the key role in giving their children a good start in life and helping them achieve their full potential.

The staff team have worked tirelessly over the year to accommodate the changes, and we would like to thank all of them including those who have left and our latest recruits who are already making a positive impact.

The trustees continue to support the work of the charity and we thank them too, for their time and commitment. Dave Parker and Jean Hobson have now resigned, so we would like to extend our gratitude to them for their input and contribution over the years.

Finally, we would like to thank all the volunteers who generously give their time to the families they support. Our service relies on their continued commitment, and we are extremely grateful for everything that they do.

We've had some great success over the year, especially with the Reading Half Marathon (thank you to amazing runners and volunteers on the day!), the joint Big Lottery bid with two other Home-Start schemes in Berkshire, and most importantly with the wonderful feedback from families and funders. We hope to achieve much more in the coming year!

Sue Biggs and Catherine Troup



# Service Update

**Home-Visiting** by volunteers remains the backbone of our work. We have seen no let-up in this year's demand for our service. We continue to work hard to build our team of amazing volunteers, who each donate up to three hours per week supporting a local family and building their confidence and their independence.

**Family Groups** had a boost this year when BBC South Today filmed us, which helped promote the annual fundraiser for BBC Children in Need. The family groups have worked alongside the University of Reading to help build the confidence of the mums. We have continued to focus on and support families living in the most deprived areas of Reading.

To continue with our **Mums in Mind** courses, Berkshire Community Foundation donated £15,000. The results of the first fourteen participants have shown that they now have a better understanding of their feelings and that they also have strategies and techniques to cope better. The programme of courses continues into 2019-20. To see the results, please refer to page 6.

**Building Family Bridges** continues to work with parents who have a desire to improve their situation, by entering training or employment. Adele has helped 18 participants fulfil their potential over this year.

We continued to run Home-Start UK's solution focused school readiness programme **Big Hopes Big Future**, but as the target audience is very specific and time critical it can be difficult to generate referrals and co-ordinate these with volunteer availability.

## Staff

This year we said a sad “goodbye” to Lucille who, with Linda, made up our administration dream team for, between them, over thirty years.

We had a brief “hello” and then “goodbye” to Amy, who was a short-lived but positive addition to the Whitley Family group. Soon after we said an excited “hello and welcome” to Zarrish who has now taken on this role, but will continue to work in our Mums in Mind crèche too.

## IT Investment

Our IT systems have been re-vamped; this includes the commissioning of a professional company to design and manage our website and also our very old laptops have been replaced. We will be using iPads when working away from the office, to encourage smarter working with less repetition, to free up staff time.



*Without your service, I believe there would be even more isolated parents and children who are just not able to access the community resources, leading to higher levels of possible depression and children who are under stimulated as they are not getting out of their homes. There is such limited access to Children Centres now, making your service even more valuable. Health-Visitor.*



# This year's numbers

**1576**

Co-ordinator appointments

**1551**

Volunteer hours donated

**38**

Active volunteers

**285**

Children supported

**97**

Families supported

**10**

New volunteers trained

**879**

Volunteer visits

**60**

Families told us that they felt isolated.

**97%**

of our closed families said that we helped make a significant and long-lasting difference to their lives.

**18**

families were impacted by domestic abuse.



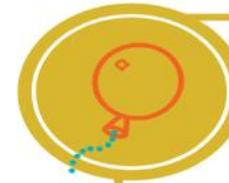
**100% of parents**

told us that they could manage their children's behaviour better and listened more to what they were saying.



**100% of parents**

told us that they had a better understanding of and were more involved in their children's development and socialisation.



**100% of parents**

told us that they were accessing or felt more confident to access local services.



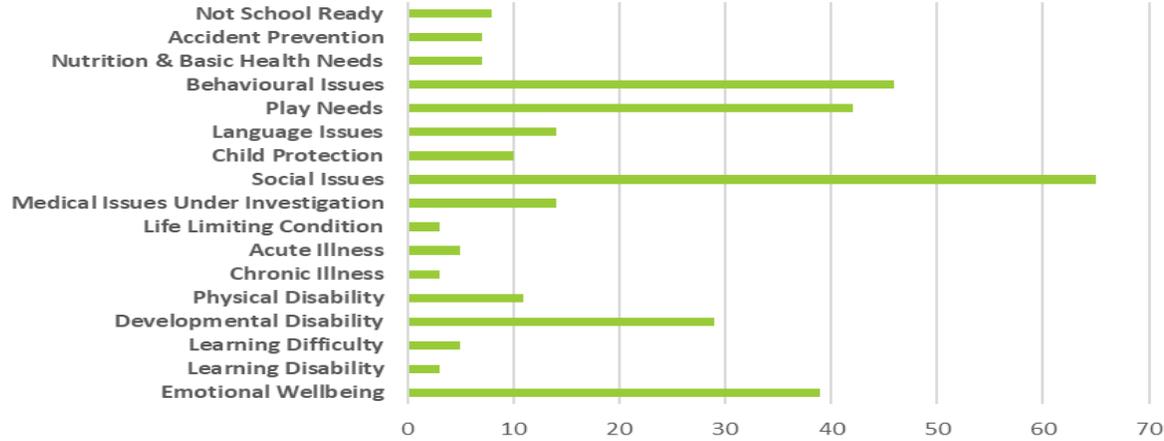
**78%**  
of mums were coping with mental ill-health.

**49%**  
Of families were impacted with a physical disability, a chronic or life-limiting illness.

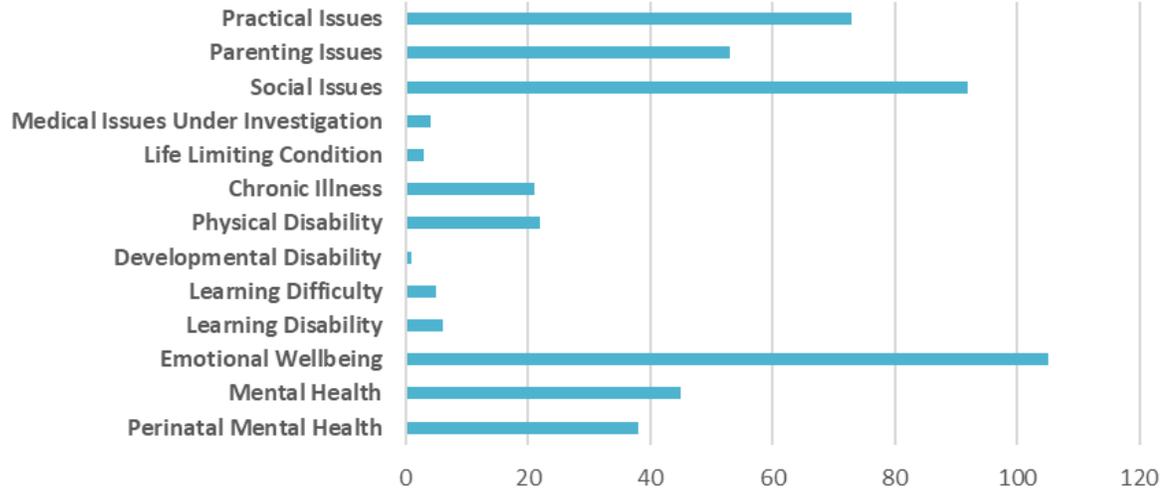
**50%**  
of parents lacked or needed support with parenting techniques.

# Our Service Users

Main Need of the Children



Main Need of the Adults



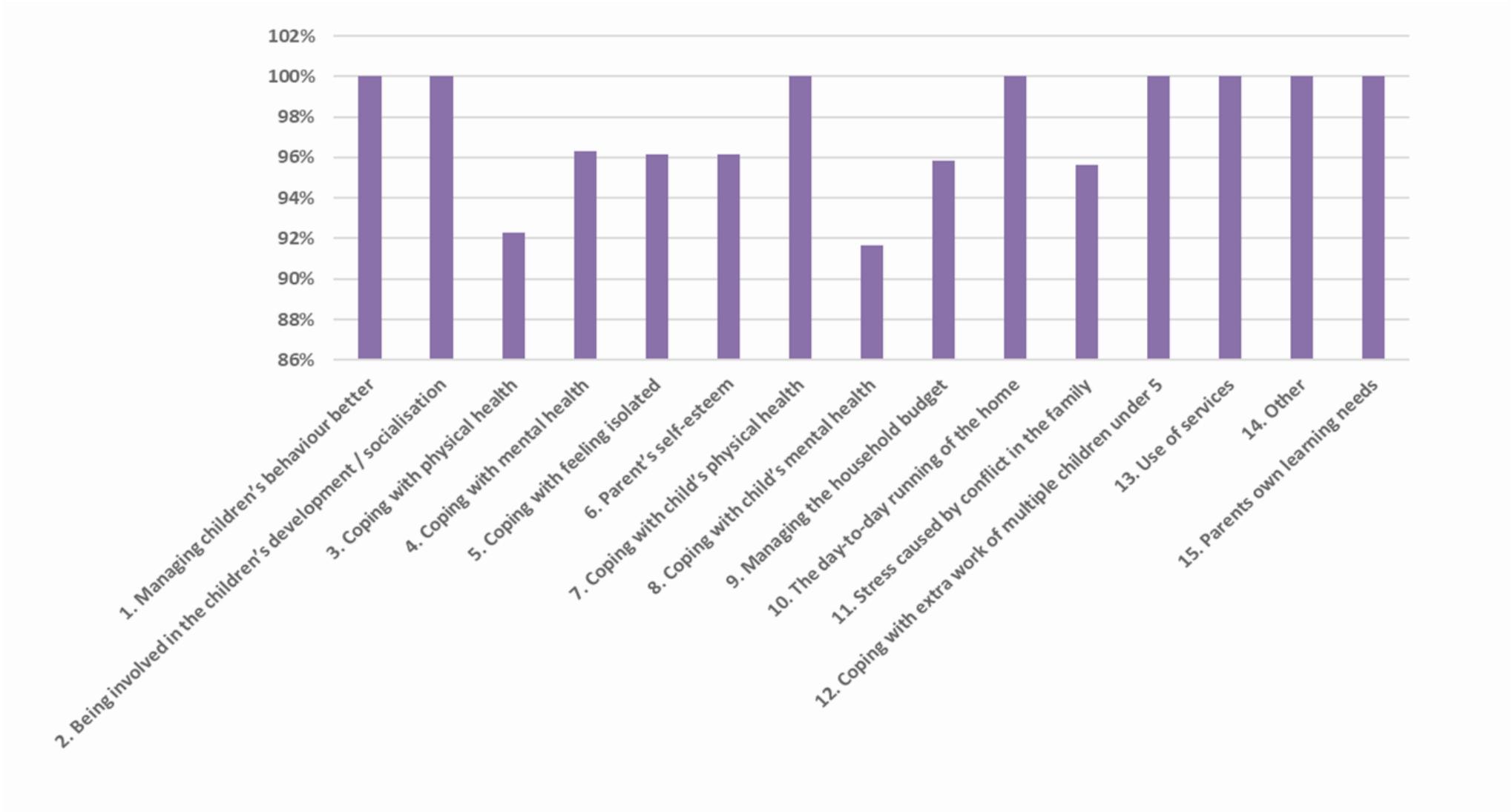
- Health Visiting Team
- Staff Nurse
- GPs
- Midwife/Poppy Team
- Portage
- Education
- Social Workers
- Family Workers
- Children Centres
- Perinatal Mental Health Team
- Talking Therapies
- Internal Referral
- GPs
- Voluntary Organisation
- Self Referral
- Other





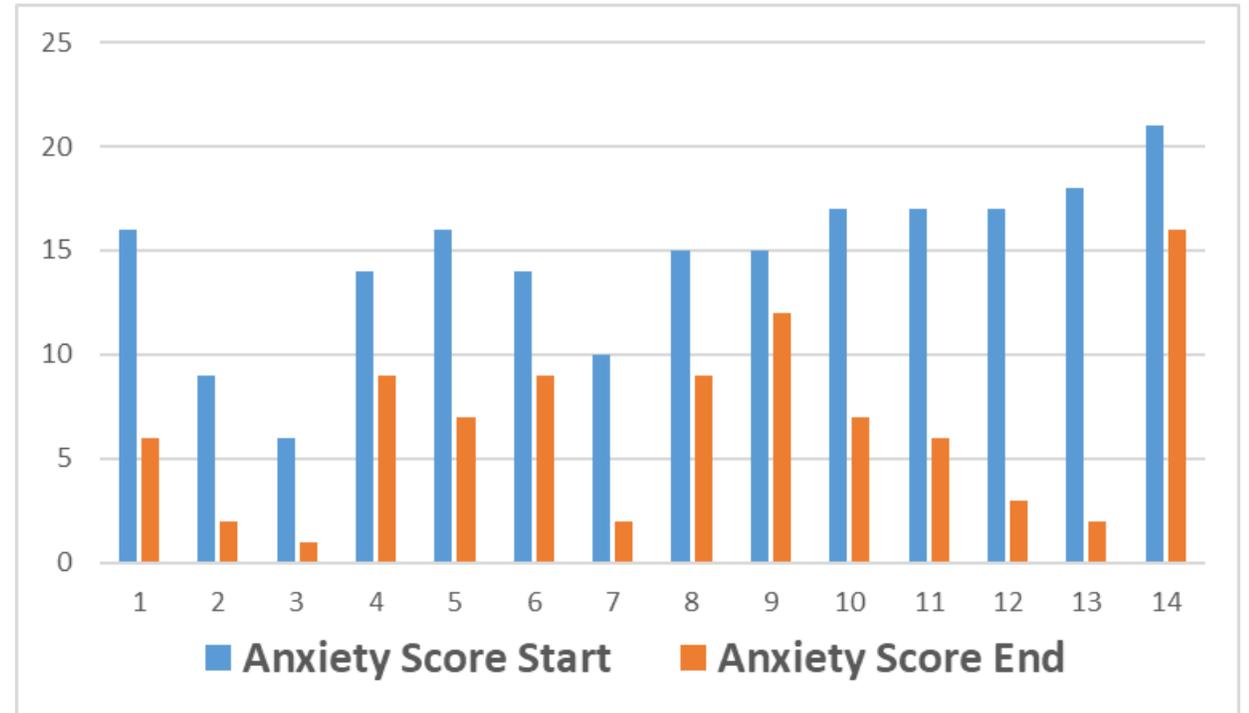
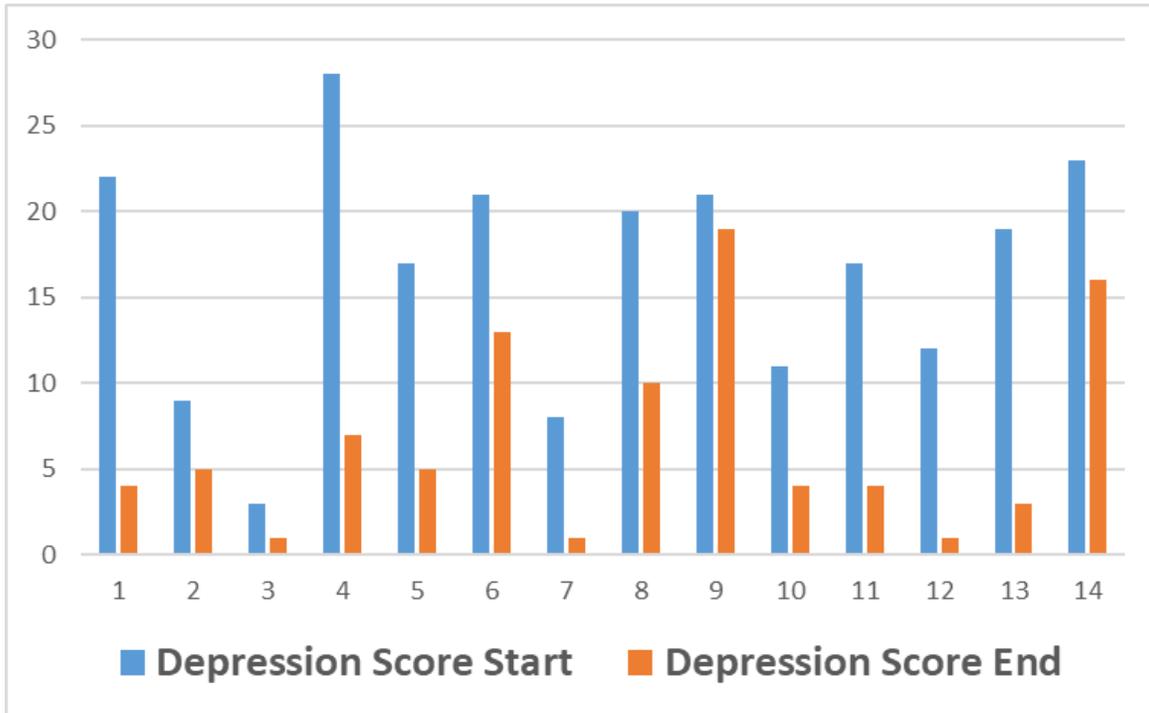
# Our Impact

The 30 families who left our service this year told us that they are now ....



# Our Impact

The 14 mums who attended Mums in Mind completed PHQ9 (depression) and GAD7 (anxiety) score sheets at the beginning and end of the courses. The results are:



Please note that the lower the scores the better they are feeling.

# What the families said this year

“Before [my volunteer] visited I never left the flat without my husband as I didn’t think that I would be able to manage the twins. Now I attend three different groups each week and have made lots of new friends. [My volunteer] helped improve my confidence and self-esteem.”

“The course has been great for me. I have met some lovely mums and I can now leave my child with trusted others and relax a little. I will take away from the course the ability to understand and manage my feelings, especially the anger. I feel so much more confident and happy.”

“My boys are a force to be reckoned with, but the staff take it all in their stride and allow me to be confident coming to a group where I am not judged and I feel confident that my boys can release some energy and learn things that will help them start nursery.”

“I found the support given by Adele very helpful. It was on a more personal level; she did not treat me as another case number like the job centre do. I am better informed now than I was a few months ago. With Adele’s help I have managed to get everything back on track.”

# Thank you

## Trustees/Directors:

**Susan Biggs**

(Co-chair)

**Catherine Troup**

(Co-chair)

**Jan Gavin**

**Sylvia Geeves**

(Treasurer)

**Christopher Guy**

(QA & IT)

**Jean Hobson**

(Policies & Strategy)

**Jill Lake**

(Fundraising)

**David Parker**

(Health & Safety &

Data Protection)

**Jo Rado**

## Staff:

**Sarah Smith**

(Manager)

**Claire Abery**

(Co-ordinator)

**Adele Barnett-Ward**

(Building family Bridges)

**Jackie Curtis**

(Play leader)

**Julie Hitchcock**

(Co-ordinator)

**Marion Mortimer**

(Co-ordinator)

**Linda Oke**

(Administrator)

**Lucille Perkins**

(Administrator)

**Zarrish Noman**

(Play leader)

## To our major Funders:

**BBC Children in Need**

**Berkshire Community  
Foundation**

**Big Lottery**

**European Social Fund**

**The Henry Smith Charity**



BERKSHIRE  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

## To those who made donations of money, items or services:

**Barry "the Doc" Perkins**

**Boots the Chemist**

**BT Openreach**

**Elizabeth Jane Foundation**

**Explorer Tots**

**First Days**

**Home Electrics**

**Pennington Manches LLP**

**Reading's Living Advent Calendar**

**Randall Communications**

**Reading Family Aid**

**Reading Rotary**

**Reading St Lawrence's Church**

**Redlands WI**

**South Chiltern Choral Society**

**St Barnabas Church**

**St Giles' Church**

**St Matthew's Church**

**Taylor Wimpey**

**Thames Valley Rotary**

**The many kind individual  
donations**

**Trussell Trust**

**Twinkl**

**Union of Catholic Mothers**

**VISA**

**To everyone who helped  
with Reading Half  
2019 – a huge  
fundraising success!**

**First and foremost "thank  
you" to the amazing  
runners who went the extra  
13.1 miles as part of team  
Home-Start Reading.**

**A huge thanks to all of the  
volunteers on the day (and  
to RVA for helping us find so  
many!)**

**And our thanks to everyone  
who donated so generously  
with sponsorship.**



**HOME  
START**

Reading

# Support Us

Everything you have read is only possible with funding and staff capacity, so please help us by:

**RUNNING FOR US:** Be “team Home-Start Reading” at the 2020 Reading half marathon.

**SHOPPING FOR US:** [www.smile.amazon.co.uk](http://www.smile.amazon.co.uk)  
[www.easyfundraising.org.uk](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk)

**VOLUNTEERING FOR US:** Our next preparation course starts in September 2019, or bring your unique skills and experiences to our Trustees’ Board.

**BEING SOCIAL WITH US:** Find us @HomeStartRDG



**CONSIDERING US:** When raising money by cake sales or when nominating a charity for your birthday, or if a company you know of are looking to adopt a local Charity.

