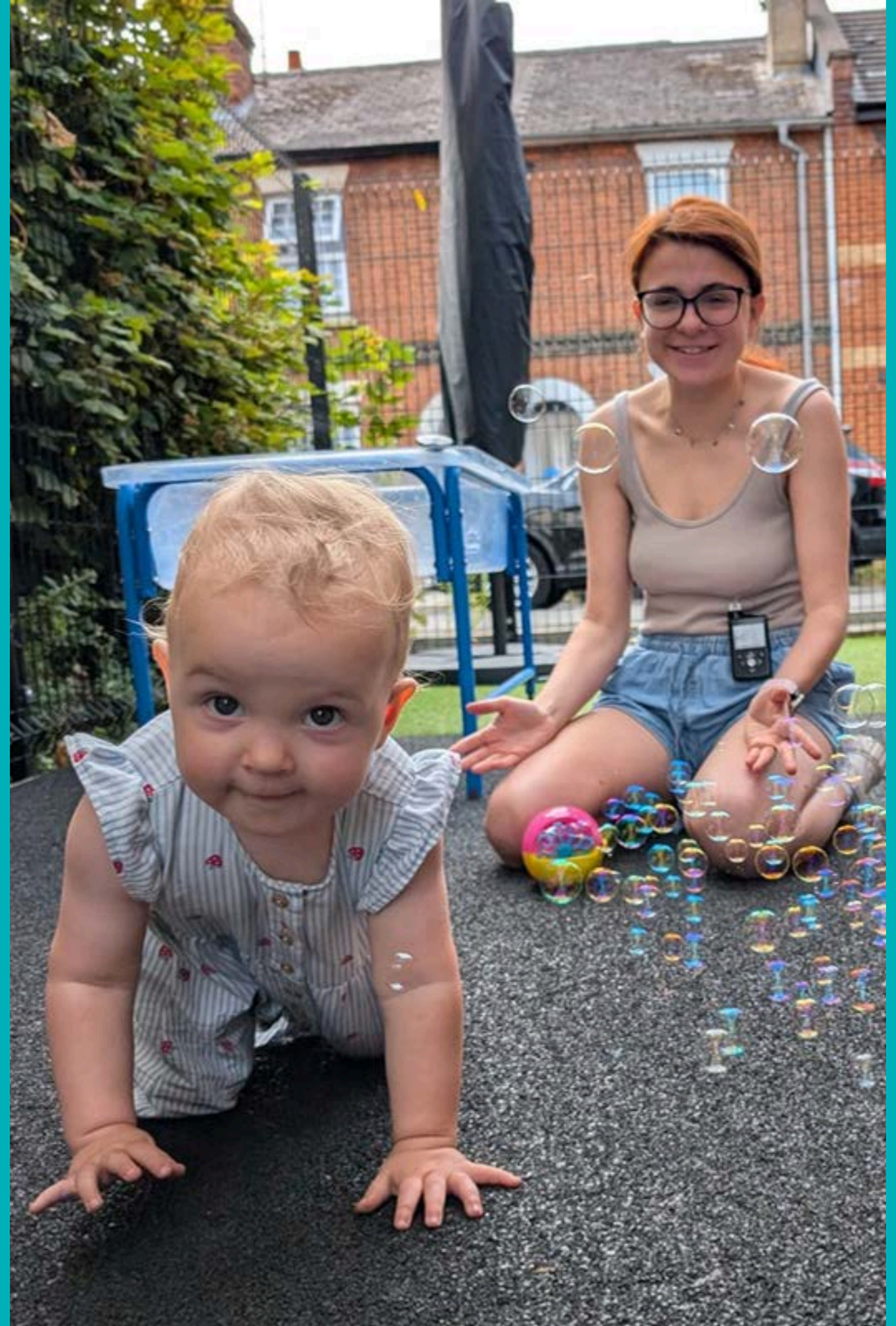
HOME START Reading

Annual Report 2025 - 2026



CHAIR'S REPORT

It is a privilege to write this report as the new Chair of Home-Start Reading, having taken up the role on 1 April 2026. Although the year covered by this report preceded my appointment, it provides an important opportunity to reflect on what we achieved during 2025/26 and to recognise the leadership, commitment and hard work that have brought the charity to this point.

Throughout the year, Home Start Reading continued to provide vital support to local families facing a wide range of challenges. At the heart of that work is a simple but powerful principle: that parents should not have to face difficult times alone. Through the commitment of our staff and volunteers, families received practical, compassionate and consistent support when they needed it most.

More than four decades of supporting families across Reading is a considerable achievement and reflects the contribution of generations of volunteers, staff, trustees, funders and supporters. It also demonstrates the strength of the Home Start model and the continuing need for locally rooted, relationship based family support.

Financial sustainability remained an important priority. New core funding from BBC Children in Need commenced in April 2025 providing valuable stability for our Home-Visiting service, and we remain extremely grateful for this support. However, like many small charities, we continue to operate in an increasingly difficult and uncertain financial environment. Competition for funding is considerable, costs continue to place pressure on our resources, and the longer term funding landscape remains uncertain at a time when the need for our services remains significant and increasing.

Against this backdrop, securing a sustainable financial future for Home-Start Reading is a key priority. The charity continues to work hard to diversify its income, secure grants and develop stronger partnerships with funders and organisations across Reading. The Board is maintaining close oversight of our financial position and, as we look ahead, we will need to be both ambitious in seeking new opportunities and disciplined in ensuring that our resources are directed where they can make the greatest difference to families.

Good governance has been equally important. During the year, we welcomed Carrie Grainger and Rebecca Eden to our Board of Trustees and looked forward to Kevin Boyle joining the Board. We also said a fond farewell to Sally Moore and Jacqueline Burrage thanking them for their valued service and contribution.

CHAIR'S REPORT

The year also marked an important period of leadership transition. Following Sue Biggs' resignation as Co Chair in April 2025, Catherine Troup continued as Chair through the remainder of 2025/26, ensuring continuity while succession arrangements were put in place. Catherine has led the Board with dedication and tenacity over many years, and I would like to formally record our thanks for her considerable contribution to Home-Start Reading. I am particularly grateful for the care she took to ensure an orderly handover and smooth transition.

As I take on the role of Chair, I inherit an organisation with a proud history, committed people and a very clear purpose. My priority will be to work with my fellow trustees, our staff team and volunteers to build on those foundations: maintaining strong governance, strengthening our long term sustainability and ensuring that we continue to adapt to the needs of families in our community.

Finally, I want to recognise everyone who made the work of Home-Start Reading possible during 2025/26. Our staff, volunteers, trustees, funders, partners and supporters each play a different part, but collectively they enable the charity to be there for families at times when that support can make a profound difference. I look forward to working with them as we take Home-Start Reading into its next chapter.

Liz Stead

Our board of trustees

Liz Stead
Chair
and Safeguarding

Anna Vorster
Vice Chair

Mark Lewthwaite
Treasurer

Rebecca Eden

Andy Degiorgio

Dannii Hinds

Carrie Grainger

Kevin Boyle

current as at 1st September 2026

WHAT WE DO

Key numbers

300 mums, dads, carers and children supported

90	152	129	34	17
families supported	children supported	children under 5 supported	active volunteers	volunteers recruited

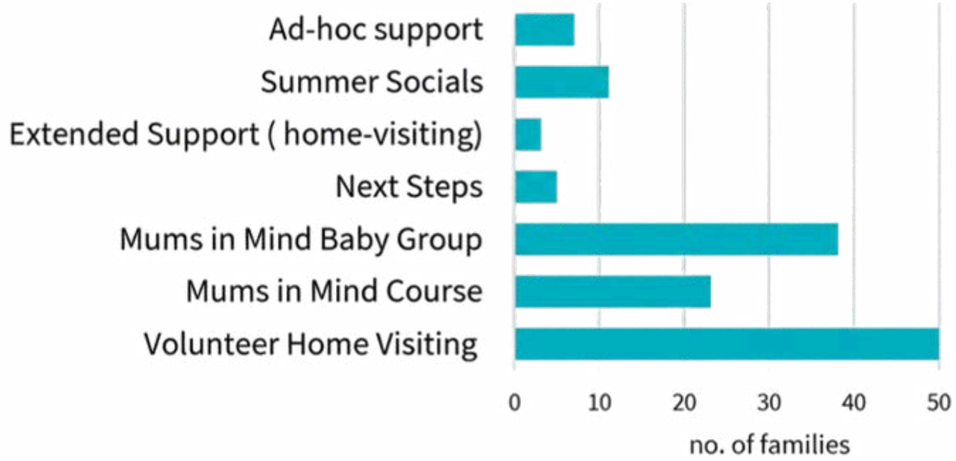
Home Visiting remains at the heart of our work.

We are proud to have sustained this core service because it is what sets us apart within Reading's wider network of support. The difference our volunteers make by supporting families in their own homes continues to be invaluable.

Other services include Mums in Mind and the Mums in Mind Baby Group, which provide gentle support focused on reducing isolation and encouraging peer support and friendship. These groups help parents explore emotions and relationships within their family and encourages them to connect to the wider community. With families having increasingly complex needs, we have continued to offer additional support where we can (see Ad-hoc and Extended support).

We supported 90 unique families and provided 137 services overall.

Services provided



Ad-hoc support

We sometimes provide support for families who have not come to us through our formal referral route. These include families who we can help through signposting, access to food, clothing, toys etc, or who would benefit from a short period of support.

Extended support

Some families need help with the transition at the end of visits or other specific input from our team after volunteer support comes to an end.

WHO WE HELP

46%

families living as a single parent household

43%

families identified as being in debt and struggling financially

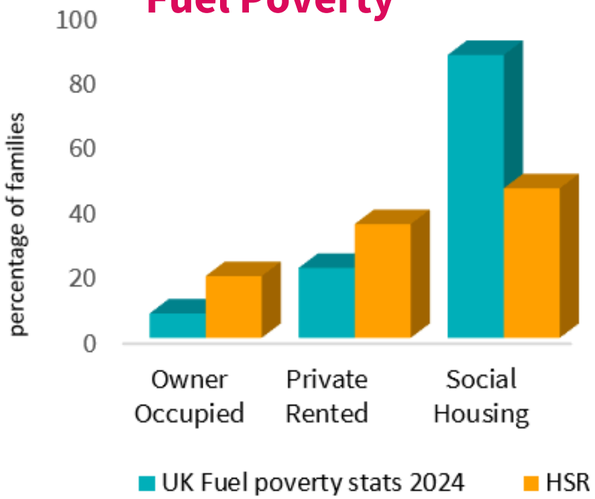
13

families in emergency and/or temporary accommodation

over 1/3

families supported to access food, essential goods, emergency support

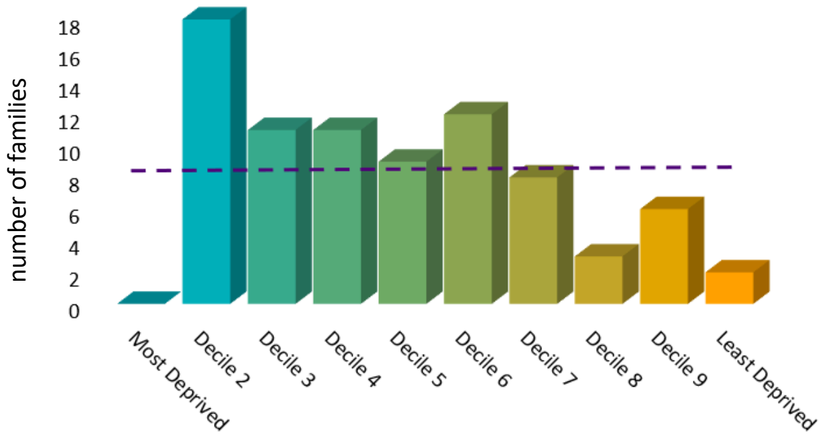
Fuel Poverty



According to the Department of Energy, 89% of households living in social housing will be 'Fuel Poor' as opposed to 7.5% of those in owner-occupied homes. Of the families we supported less than 20% were owner-occupied with more than half in social housing.

Measures of deprivation

Around a quarter of the families we supported live in areas among the UK's 20% most deprived, while over one third (36%) live in areas among the UK's 30% most deprived.



We measure our reach by postcode and Lower Super Output Area (LSOA), using each area's ranking in the national Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD). The IMD draws on seven indicators — Income; Employment; Health Deprivation and Disability; Education, Skills and Training; Crime; Barriers to Housing and Services; and Living Environment — to show patterns of deprivation across Reading.

Recent index updates mean Reading no longer has any areas in the UK's 10% most deprived. However, despite sitting around the national average overall, it still has 11 neighbourhoods in the UK's 20% most deprived. These pockets of inequality bring specific challenges: hardship can be hidden in areas seen as wealthy, leaving people isolated and their needs masked by headline prosperity.

Reflecting this, over half of the families we supported live in wards containing LSOAs within the UK's 20% most deprived, and 82% live in wards containing areas within the UK's 30% most deprived.

WHY WE DO IT

We regularly review family needs to track individual progress.
It also helps us identify wider patterns across the community. This insight allows us to shape the way we develop and deliver our services.

The below chart presents the eight main areas of need. We have further highlighted the fourmost common themes which, perhaps unsurprisingly, remains unchanged over the past few years. To the right, we unpick these four main areas (mental health, emotional difficulties, practical support needs and social issues) to look at what this actually looks like and gain a fuller understanding of the challenges faced by families every day.



MENTAL HEALTH
Anxiety
Stress
Depression
Exhaustion

EMOTIONAL ISSUES
Confidence
Domestic Abuse
Relationship breakdown
Bonding/Attachment

PRACTICAL
Time out for wellbeing
Timeout for chores
Signposting
Attending appointments

SOCIAL ISSUES
Isolation
Child Development
Poverty/Debt
Housing

8
families seeking refuge / asylum

11
mother were teenage / under 25

4
children were subject to a current Child Protection or Child in Need Plan*

*13 families had been subject to a plan prior to our involvment

These needs affect the whole family. Among children, 56 needed appropriate play, including access to toddler groups, parks, toys and books, or parents needing support to understand how to play and why it matters. Parents of 52 children were concerned about their child's emotional wellbeing, while parents of 42 recognised they needed help managing behaviour. Other common issues included emerging ASD and ADHD, nutrition and basic health needs, speech and language, physical disability and safeguarding. Beyond these, we also supported children with serious or life-limiting conditions, developmental and learning disabilities, chronic and acute illnesses, and hearing or visual impairments.

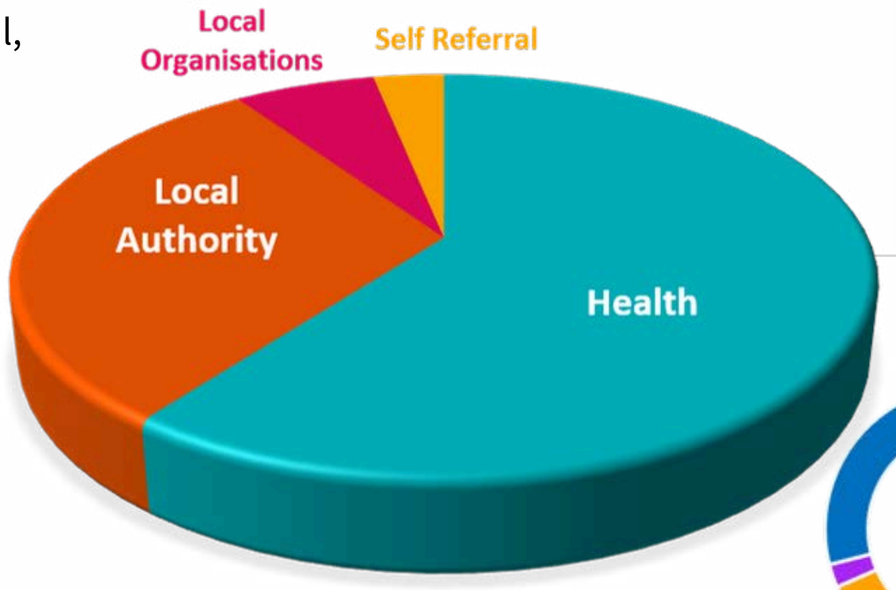
WHO REFERS TO US

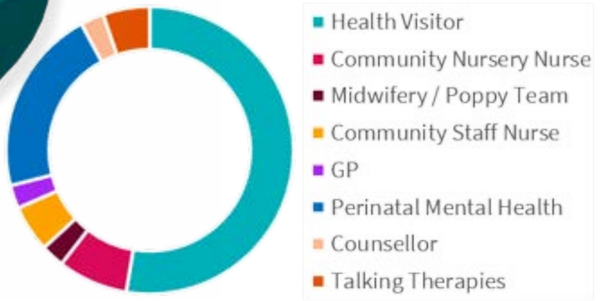
During the year, we took the considered decision to pause the referral pathway for twelve weeks.
This decision was not taken lightly, given the reliance of families and partner agencies on our services. At times, referral demand exceeds our available capacity, resulting in a waiting list that can become unsustainable. A temporary suspension enables us to reduce the waiting list and maintain the quality of support provided. During this period, all other organisational activities continue as usual, with coordinators recruiting and training volunteers and matching them with families awaiting support.

Every contact, whether by phone or email, has always been so helpful. We have been able to work collaboratively together and you have gone the extra mile to provide support in very difficult circumstances. I'm very grateful to all of the wonderful team members that do such great work and care so much for the families they support.

Local Authority included
Family Workers
Social Workers
Portage
Targeted Youth Worker
Edge of Care

Local Organisations included
PACT
Red Cross
Social Prescriber
Other Home-Start





As expected, health services accounted for most referrals, particularly those made by the Health Visiting team. (broken down by service in the smaller pie) Local authority services also provided a substantial number of referrals, mainly through Early Help Family Workers and Social Workers. Other referrals came directly from families or via other organisations within the local community.

IMPACT IN NUMBERS

90%	Managing children's behaviour	77%	Parents' self-esteem
90%	Involvement in children's learning	66%	Managing household budget
74%	Living with physical health issues	72%	Running the home
82%	Living with mental health issues	89%	Stress caused by conflict in the family
74%	Managing child's physical health	80%	Managing a large family / multiple births
77%	Managing child's mental health	83%	Using services
78%	Feeling isolated	100%	Parents' own learning needs

Understanding Family Progress

In line with Home-Start UK's national data requirements, we collect information across 14 broad areas of family life by encouraging parents to reflect on the areas they are finding difficult, as well as the strengths they can build on. Before support begins, families are invited to score how well they feel they are coping. These areas are then revisited during support and again at the end of their time with us, helping families to recognise progress and identify where further support may be helpful.

Interpreting the Scores

Family life can change quickly, and new challenges may arise during the support period. For this reason, scores can fluctuate, and end-to-support results should be understood as a snapshot in time. Even so, families overwhelmingly report improvements in their day-to-day lives following our involvement. The figures on the left show the percentage of families who said they felt better able to cope or engage in each area.

Reported Improvements

All home-visited families who completed their end review identified at least one area of improvement, with many reporting progress across several areas*.

***based on the reviews of up to 45 families**

IMPACT IN WORDS

What our families say adds depth and meaning to the impact statistics we provide. Real words. Real Impact.

She (volunteer) is the best thing that has ever happened to me! Dec 25

I was even brave enough to go to the Summer Socials at Forbury and me and both the children really loved it. I chatted to mums that I hadn't met before. I'm coming again this week. Aug 25

The volunteer coming in and playing with F meant I could do things I couldn't have done otherwise, like make important phone calls. I'm sure it helped with A starting nursery as she had already got used to bonding with a new person. Oct 25

Having the volunteer to talk to who was separate from the actual situation was so helpful. Talking to her helped me understand my feelings, which made me feel so much better. She also gave me practical support - I wanted to ring the gas company and she knew who to ring and helped me on the call. I'm coping so much better with the 2 children since being supported by you. Aug 25

The volunteer was so caring and helpful. At times when I felt embarrassed about C's behaviour, she was very reassuring and maintained a positivity to encourage me. She made me feel I was doing a great job. It was lovely to know that someone cared about me and my family. May 2025

A loved (Volunteer), she had such a calm nature. She is very relaxed around A and he really enjoys playing with her. She gets down on the floor and plays with him and he likes it. Since the beginning he's been happy with her - he often cries with other adults but not (Volunteer). I like seeing A happy and I feel like we've got a better bond because of the her. Before, I was in a bad place, but now I feel better. I enjoy seeing them happy playing. May 25

I enjoyed meeting friendly mums and staff. I felt welcomed and safe talking about my feelings and worries. I am feeling more focused and happier. I am taking steps to be better. Meeting new people has helped a lot. I feel a bit more like me again Oct 25

I've made some friends and I feel so much more confident out in the world now Jun 25

VOLUNTEERS

We ran three Volunteer Preparation courses this year recruiting 16 volunteers.

We continue to offer hybrid training, combining online learning with in-person sessions. This gives attendees flexibility to learn at their own pace while still meeting face to face to build relationships, discuss issues openly and feel part of the organisation. It also helps set clear expectations and assess suitability, giving attendees a fuller understanding of their role and where it sits within the wider organisation.

I have to attend quite a lot of work based workshops on a range of diverse subjects and I can honestly say the way presented her topic was one of the most memorable and thought provoking I've attended.

Additional Training

In the autumn, we held a successful Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse event for 21 volunteers, trustees and staff. We were encouraged to explore the impact of domestic abuse from different perspectives using creative and challenging approaches. Even those with significant experience or training said they learned a great deal and found the training very powerful.

HELLO AND WELCOME

Shruti R	Jo G
Susan K	Sam W
Anne W	Sue B
Sandra W	Raybeka S
Maggie S	Rachel D
Mawish Q	Azza A
Megan L	Emily W
Sarah T	Suzanne W

I really enjoyed the course and It was good to have the chance the start online then end with training in the office - was good to meet other members of the team. I feel nervous but more confident now and ready to help!



GOODBYE AND THANK YOU

Kate A	Elizabeth C
Camilla S	Sam W
Julia H	Jacqueline B
Daphne M	Fiona C

Thank you for this opportunity. I have loved every minute of it and am proud to say I volunteered with you.

HOME VISITING

We are proud of our Home Visiting support. It delivers positive, far-reaching outcomes, as this report's quantitative and qualitative data demonstrates.

Behind-the-scenes work is vital to our success. Family Support Coordinators manage the volunteer journey from initial interest through selection, training, matching and supervision.

They also assess needs and risks from referrals. Friendly, sensitive communication builds trust with families well before support begins.

Balancing referrals with volunteer availability remains challenging. Referrals are increasingly complex, often where statutory support is unavailable, placing greater pressure on our service. Our relaxed, sustained support helps families build trusting relationships and make meaningful changes.

Understanding volunteers' interests and circumstances lets us vary support type and duration, remain flexible, manage expectations and reduce the waiting list. We continue to learn and refine our provision.

Next Steps

We offer our Next Steps project to parents who would like support with their children's development. This may be because a child is due to start or is struggling at nursery or pre-school, or just because they want to learn more about using play to help children reach their developmental milestones.

We recognise that parents are their children's 'first teacher' and that the home environment is key to getting children's learning and growing off to the best start. We work alongside parents to help them identify areas of strength and where more encouragement and support is needed.

Together, we work to help children gain the social, emotional, cognitive and physical skills they need to cope and thrive in a nursery or pre-school setting. Our volunteers are trained to help parents create and follow a plan that is appropriate to the age and developmental stage of each child and tailored to the individual needs of each family and child

Home visiting Resources

Our Volunteers utilise our 'activity bags'. These are collections of age and stage appropriate books, toys and games that help children to learn through play and exploration. We can tailor these bags to meet particular needs (eg, sensory items that help children who process information differently). Its a simple yet effective way for our Volunteers to connect with the children as well as the parents when they visit.

GROUPS AND COURSES

We ran two Mums in Mind courses this year with a combined total of 14 attendees and 20 children cared for in the crèche.

The course combines simple cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) and Mellow Parenting techniques, and is packaged to meet the specific challenges of mental health and being a new mum. Our approach is gentle and individualised, and the work starts before the course begins; we contact all potential attendees beforehand and spend time informally getting to know them before running through questions around their anxiety and depression. No group is the same and the pace and depth of topics are very much determined by it's participants.

We encourage the mums to think about any differences in a variety of areas that they may have noticed after attending the course, meeting others and the experience as a whole. The chart to the right illustrates the collective responses from the mums who completed the course.



I have just spoken to a mum I am working with and she told me she had started attending your current Mums In Mind course. She said that you both were absolutely amazing and she was really enjoying it. I really do think this course is a stepping stone for many mums. This particular mum would not engage with any other service or group. I'm so pleased she is enjoying your group. Thank you so much. Health Visitor

Participants' feedback consistently described the group as a warm, friendly and welcoming space where mums felt listened to, understood and safe discussing their feelings and worries. Many valued meeting other mums, sharing relatable conversations, laughing together and gaining useful information and strategies, while the sense of community created by the staff and crèche volunteers helped reduce loneliness and anxiety. The crèche was also appreciated for giving children opportunities to socialise and, for some, helping them gradually feel comfortable away from their parent. Overall, the different opinions suggest that the supportive atmosphere, peer connections and practical help enabled participants to feel less alone and more positive.

GROUPS AND COURSES

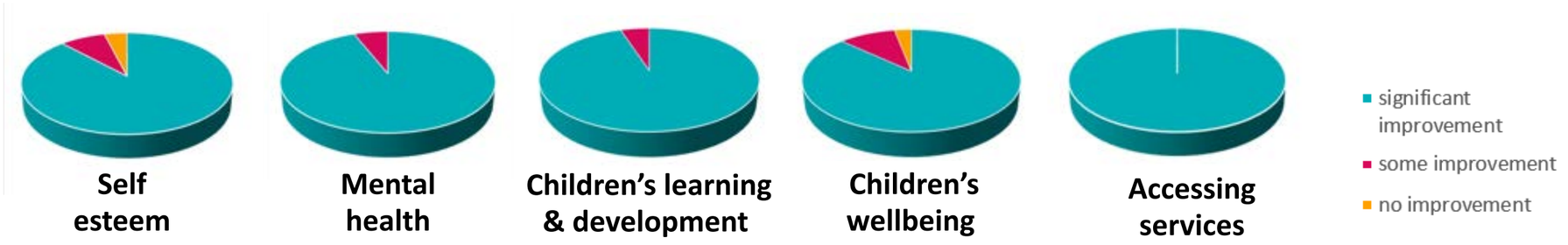
We ran two Mums in Mind Baby Group this year.

We have continued developing our Baby Groups, recognising that offering a natural and familiar progression from the formal Mums in Mind course, meets a need for the majority of attendees. As mothers begin to form trusting relationships, ending support after seven weeks risks losing that progress and extending our provision reduces this risk.

We also invite mums waiting for the course to join the group prior to starting which is also the case for some families awaiting a home visiting volunteer. We invite additional families carefully and draw on the help of the established members of the group to welcome newcomers. This has worked very well and we have found that has a positive impact on the self esteem of the whole group.

As with Mums in Mind, we find each cohort of families to differ greatly and the needs, strengths and overall dynamic of the groups are never the same. What does remain consistent however is the clear need for mums to feel safe, for them to feel secure and confident that they will be welcomed by a familiar and trusted person and that our support extends past the session itself.

We asked parents whether they felt their confidence and/or skills had improved after attending regularly at our Baby Group. We particularly focused on five areas that parents tell us they struggle with.



We also observe positive outcomes for the children. Mums and staff share delightful observations when children overcome obstacles and reach milestones.

Although staffing levels are reduced once the crèche merges with the group, consistency is maintained as at least one familiar face is always present, and the sessions take place in the same room.

Because the children are familiar with their surroundings and each other, they have formed strong bonds with the staff who cared for them during the seven-week course. Interestingly, we have seen this success work in reverse as well: children who attend the group first feel safe and confident transitioning to the crèche independently.

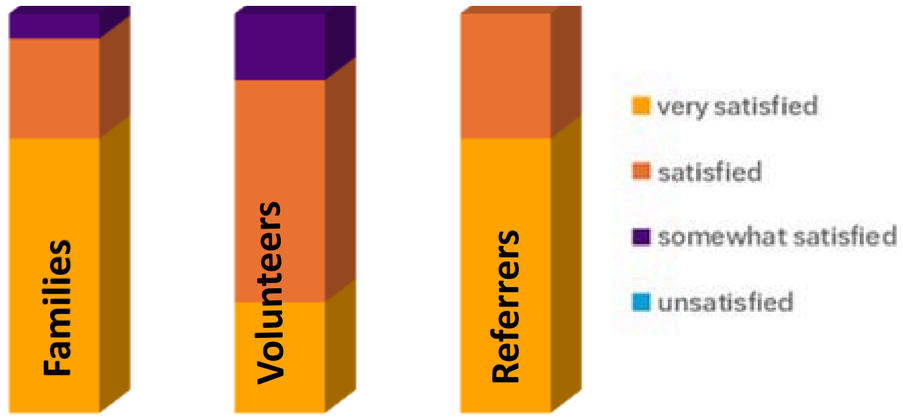
SURVEYS

We invited families, volunteers and referrers that we worked with over the year to share their views through surveys focusing on a number of key themes. This helped us understand experiences on similar areas but with three very different perspectives.

We received 58 responses in total. These provide valuable insight into what is working well and where we can continue to improve. A summary of the key findings is included below, with a fuller report available setting out our responses and action plan.

Isolation

I started getting out more of the house and going to places with the kids which I never did before because of how alone and isolated I was.



How satisfied are you with ...

... how well we supported you to reduce isolation and loneliness and to help you connect with your local community?

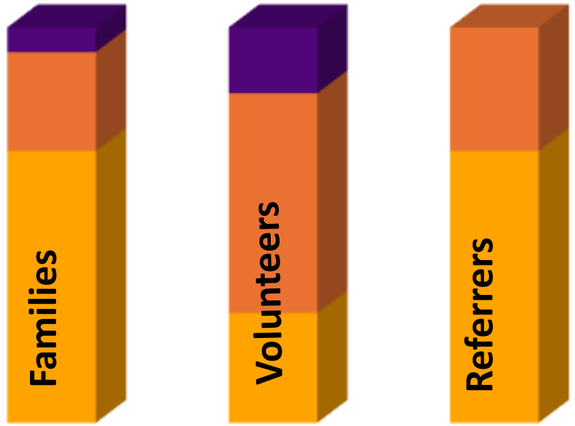
... how well you think your work supports families to reduce isolation and loneliness and helps them connect with their local community?

... the effectiveness of HSR in reducing isolation and loneliness and helping families connect with their local community

Practical Support and Resources

You offer a range of support for the local families and have supplies for us to use with families as well.

Without the service, many families would struggle to access the practical help they need, potentially leading to increased stress, poorer outcomes for children, and a greater risk of families reaching crisis point.



How satisfied are you with ...

... how well we provided practical support and resources to help you provide a safe and comfortable home for your children?

... how well HSR (incl yourself) offers practical support and resources to help families provide a safe and comfortable home for their children?

...the effectiveness of HSR in providing practical support and resources to help parents/carers provide a safe and comfortable home for their children?

SURVEYS

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion



I feel confident that ...

...my family was treated with respect, regardless of my identity, culture or background.

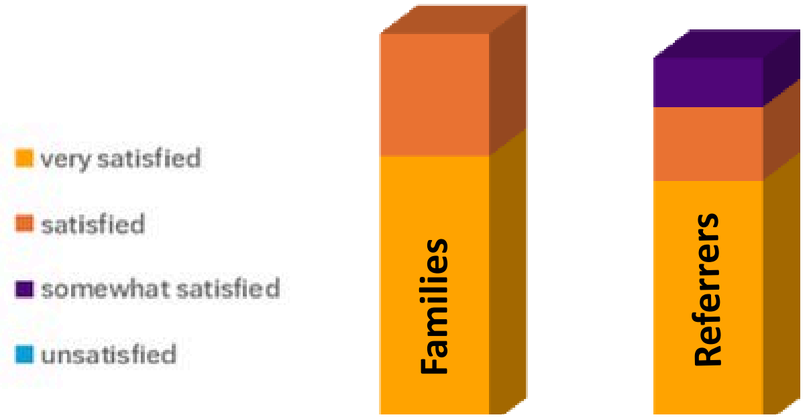
... as a volunteer, I have been treated with respect, regardless of my identity, culture or background.

... families I refer will be treated with equal respect, regardless of their identity, culture, or demographics.

The volunteer always respected my home, lifestyle and and my kids were treated in a kind way by staff and volunteers.

My experience of the service has consistently demonstrated a commitment to inclusivity, compassion, and non-judgemental support, ensuring that every family feels welcomed, valued, and respected.

Mental Health



My volunteer was amazing, I can't thank her enough. Mums in Mind was brilliant in giving coping mechanisms for situations.

How satisfied are you with ...

... how well we supported you with mental health issues?

... our effectiveness in supporting mental health issues, including ante-and post-natal mental health?

An important source of support for my client, utilised as part of our phased approach to interventions and to ensure wider support to prevent relapse of mental health

SURVEYS

Safeguarding

How well do you agree with the following statement?
I trust that Home-Start Reading places high importance on the safeguarding and protecting vulnerable families throughout their service.

My Coordinator was highly effective in a potential safeguarding situation and communicated with me, social workers and the family in a professional, kind and caring way.

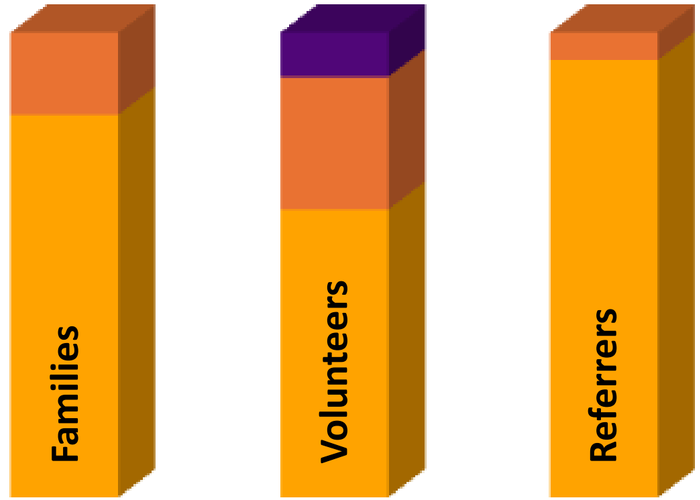


The volunteer made sure before she did something new with us, she had to get an agreement which sat so well with me as she was a new person coming into my family. Safeguarding was her priority as she understood anything could happen and she needed that agreement in place which put me and her and the kids in reassurance.

In the past they have been able to contribute to observations about the family that have given a more rounded overview as they are the ones seeing the family in thier own home every week.

Recommendation

I already have!



How likely are you to ...

... recommend our services to another family?

... recommend volunteering with us to someone else?

... refer another family to us?

Absolutely - Every one should have a bit of you in their lives!

Their contribution to supporting safe and comfortable homes for children is invaluable and deeply appreciated.

SURVEYS

We also asked supported families, volunteers and referrers to our service what improvements they would like to see.
We consider all suggestions and, where appropriate and feasible, we plan and make changes accordingly...

Families

The overall opinion was that there was nothing they would have liked to be different. One family suggested a gentler, more supported ending to the service, with continued contact where appropriate. They also felt longer volunteer support would have helped, There was one suggestion of more staff for outings, another for opportunities to stay in touch with volunteers and more group meet-ups.

Volunteers

Most volunteers were happy with their experience and suggested no improvements. The main suggestions were simpler diary reporting, greater flexibility in crises situations, specific tasks during some visits, and addressing repeated family cancellations that can leave volunteers feeling discouraged.

Referrers

The common and frequent theme is the recruitment of more volunteers to reduce waiting times and support families sooner. Other suggestions include simplifying the referral form, providing referrers with more progress updates, and strengthening awareness and collaboration with NHS services

The last word

Thank you-you are truly a fantastic team and always at the end of the phone for support, advice, or to chat something through. Thank you for all your hard work for HS volunteers. It is very much appreciated.

Home visits really help transform my life in a positive way. I left feeling very secure with my life. It had a positive impact on me.

I have had only positive experiences with Home-Start Reading. Every contact, whether by phone or email, has always been so helpful. We have been able to work collaboratively together and you have gone the extra mile to provide support in very difficult circumstances. I'm very grateful to all of the wonderful team members that do such great work and care so much for the families they support.

OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR



Odds Farm Trip April 2025

Busy Bunnies sorting Easter Eggs



This has been another busy, productive and successful year for the small but dedicated Home-Start Reading team. Throughout the year, we have continued to strengthen our services, develop valued partnerships and provide vital support to families across the local community.

The year began with the first of three Volunteer Preparation Courses, enabling us to welcome and equip new volunteers to support families in Reading. We were once again very grateful to Reading Family Aid, who kindly offered places on their Easter trip to Odds Farm. Families from our Mums in Mind Baby group were delighted to take part. We also welcomed generous Easter egg donations from Skipton Building Society and Barclay's Reading which were warmly received by the families we support.

In April, we welcomed Ana, who joined us through an internship arrangement in partnership with the University of Reading. We were also pleased to welcome the Captains from Springs Golf Club, following their decision to select Home-Start Reading as their Charity of the Year.

May was a particularly active month for the organisation. We hosted a stall at the University of Reading Community Festival, and supported fundraising activities at Springs Golf Club. We were also honoured to attend the Nagar Kirtan parade, where we were proud to be chosen as the event's Charity of the Year!



Captains' Day at Springs Golf Club

Nagir Kirtan Parade



OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR 2



Volunteer Thank You Day

We celebrated Volunteer Week in June with Afternoon Tea (Home-Start Reading style) We provided scones, cupcakes and fruit and plenty of tea and presented each volunteer and trustee with a rose and card. It was such a lovely and celebratory occasion with a chance for the trustee board members and home visiting volunteers to meet each other.

In July, we completed safeguarding training focusing on the impact of domestic abuse on children. The session was powerful and reinforced our commitment to maintaining the highest standards of safety and care for children, families, volunteers and staff. We had staff and volunteers as well as Trustee representation in attendance.

Summer Socials at Forbury Gardens



Over the summer, families benefited from two further trips kindly provided by Reading Family Aid, visiting Bournemouth and Beale Park. We also introduced our Summer Socials in Forbury Gardens, creating an informal and welcoming space for families to come together during the school holidays. These sessions were open to all supported families and included older siblings who would usually be at school during term time. We were joined by some of our volunteers too as an added bonus.

During the same period, we attended Springs Golf Club's Charity Auction and were pleased to take part in Reading Pride for the first time.



Fundraising Charity Auction

Reading Pride August 2025



OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR 3



Reading University

Christmas Mingle



The autumn term saw the launch of a new Mums in Mind course, alongside our second Volunteer Preparation Course of the year. We said a fond farewell to our intern, Anna, and were delighted that Home-Start Reading was shortlisted for Employer of the Year thanks to Anna's nomination.

In December, we were once again supported by the hugely talented Reading Bach Choir and South Chiltern Choral Society, who performed at Reading Station under the excellent direction of Patrick Sharman. Reading Festival Chorus also raised funds by performing carols at Wesley Methodist Church. Barclays, Reading invited Green Park School to sing carols and support fundraising activity again. We were extremely grateful to Reading Family Aid, Primark and Connect Reading, who kindly organised gifts for the families we support during the festive period. We held a Christmas Mingle to thank our volunteers, trustees and staff for another hardworking year.

Due to continued interest, we made the decision to run a third Volunteer Preparation Course in the new year. We also spent a valuable day with our Trustee team, taking part in a workshop to review our service and agree an initial draft for our new Strategic Plan. In addition, we launched a new Mums in Mind course at our newly secured venue, East & North Reading Family Hub, and attended the launch of Reading's new Family Hubs in March.



Carol singing at Reading Station

The Family Hubs Launch March 2026



OVERVIEW OF THE YEAR 4



Safe and Sound Certification

We owe a great deal of thanks to Herjeet and Reading Voluntary Action who supported us to renew our Safe and Sound governance certification. Catherine Troup our chair, worked steadily with us on processes and procedures in order to fulfil the requirements; recieving the certificate was a fitting way for Catherine to end her time with us. Thank you Catherine.

Overall, this has been a year of growth, collaboration and continued commitment to families in Reading. We are deeply grateful to our volunteers, trustees, partners, funders and supporters, whose generosity and dedication enable Home-Start Reading to continue making a meaningful difference to family life.

Looking Ahead

Before her departure, Catherine was also fundamental in securing our new chair and we were incredibly lucky to welcome Liz Stead in taking the helm. Liz brings great experience and skills to the role and is very well placed to lead us through the next stages of our journey.

Looking ahead, we are determined to face the continued financial challenges with resilience and optimism. Our service is highly valued; reaching more families will require us to expand our team of staff and volunteers. Our new strategy (2026 to 2031) will underpin all we do as we work towards its five key objectives. Throughout this work, we will prioritise quality, sustainability and impact: ensuring families receive consistent, relationship-based support while strengthening the long-term resilience of the charity.

Our staff team

Kelly Dadd
Manager

Katerina Vlcek-Lambert
Administrator

Kathryn McCann
Communications & Engagement Coordinator

Marion Mortimer
Julie Hitchcock
Family Support Coodinators

Karen Brown
Assistant Family Support Coordinator

current as at 1st September 2026

FINANCES

Financial Summary

Key figures 2025-2026

Income **£145,944**

Expenditure **£132,666**

The small surplus will be carried forward to cover expenditure in 2026 - 2027

Our full report and statement of accounts is published on the Charity Commission website

Grants

Continued from previous year

Four Barrows
National Lottery
Pears
Garfield Western
National Lottery Community Fund
BBC Children in Need
Scottish Gas Network

Successfully secured during the year

The Albert Hunt Trust
Quakers / Gloucester Road
Grocer's Charity
Heart of England/ Wesleyan Trust
Berkshire Community Fund
Greenham Trust / Peter Baker
CO-OP Grp Local Community Fund

Fundraising and Noteable Donations

The Springs Golf Club
Sri Guru Singh Sabha Gurdwara
Reading Station Carols
Barclays / Green Park Village Primary Academy Carol Singing
Reading Festival Chorus Carols at Wesley Methodist Church
MST Mapledurham 10.5 k Run

Drive UK Consulting
Donations in Memory of Adrian Holt
St Laurence Church Charities
Twyford Round Table

The Four Barrows Foundation
Supporting Opportunities for Young Children

Pears Foundation

heart of england COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

THE ALBERT HUNT TRUST

co op

THE GROCERS' CHARITY

Greenham Trust

THANK YOUS

Alison Black
Alison Margaret Laurie
Barclays, Reading
Berkshire Nurses and Relief in Sickness Trust
Chris Dobby
Circus Starr
Connect Reading
Cross Country
Donations in memory of Adrian Holt
Doris Field Charitable Trust
Drive UK Consulting (Anna Vorster)
Earley Charity
Easy Fundraising
Elizabeth Brown
Evans RC
FC Reading
First Days
Free Cakes for Kids
F Scudds
Grace Barnfather
Gus T Brothers
Hazel Dillon
Hexham Road Community Centre
Home-Start UK
Ingrid Campbell
Jackie Vaney
Janet Barlow
Jill Lake
Josephine Rado
Kindermusik with Sarah
Leslie Wilson
Mark Lewthwaite and Sue Biggs
Neil Humphries
Nicola Evans
The Oracle, Reading
Patricia Saunders
Primark
Project Linus
Race Nation Mapledurham run
Rachel Paton
Reading Borough Council
Reading Community Lottery
Reading Depot
Reading Dispensary Fund
Reading Family Aid
Reading Station and Network Rail
Reading Voluntary Action
Readiophonics
RM James
Saint Laurence Church Charities
Sally Moore
Skipton Building Society
Sky Retail
Sports in Mind
Springs Golf Club
The Cowshed
The Parish of Saint Giles
The Reading Labour Party
The Salvation Army
Tiny and Tall theatre
Twyford & District Round Table
University of Reading
VISA
Waitrose & John Lewis

BERKSHIRE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

SUPPORTED BY BBC CHILDREN IN NEED

COMMUNITY FUND

SGN

Garfield Weston FOUNDATION

Reading Borough Council
Working better with you

PLEASE SUPPORT US

DONATE
localgiving.org/charity/hsreading

GENERATE DONATIONS AT NO EXTRA COST WHILE YOU SHOP
easyfundraising.org.uk

PLAY THE LOCAL LOTTERY - 50% OF WHAT YOU PAY COMES TO US
readingcommunitylottery.co.uk

GET YOUR ORGANISATION INVOLVED
home-start-reading.org.uk/business-support

Registered charity 1110638

CONTACT US

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Follow us at @HomeStartRDG

