



Exeter, East
& Mid Devon

ANNUAL REPORT 2025



Because childhood can't wait...

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Registered Company No: 5818942



A few words from the Chair...

I am once again pleased to introduce our Annual Report for 2024-5. We have continued to develop our service to families through home visiting and group work, reaching 147 families with 242 children .

Although face to face home visiting continues as the core of our work we have increased the number of groups we run, including working in partnership with Parental Minds to set up groups in Honiton. We have recruited a new group facilitator working additional hours.

Reasons for referral to our service continue to be around support for mental health, and isolation and loneliness, and domestic violence and debt also feature, with a number of families needing onward referrals to food banks, The Household Support Fund and Baby Banks. Requests for help for families where there are children and parents with a disability, including neurodiversity, remain high.

We are really grateful to have a committed, sensitive and resilient team of volunteers (still aiming for the magic number of 50!) who 'hang in there' with families when the going gets tough. I get to meet them regularly at coffee mornings where they can share their stories and successes over coffee and cake. Thank you to them all. Through ongoing recruitment we trained 10 new volunteers in 2024-5.

Parents continue to feed back what a difference we make to their lives - 98% of survey responses report improvements in how they feel at the end of support .

'I can't find enough words and ways to thank the Home-Start Coordinator that accompanied me, and my volunteer for being part of my recovery journey and the huge difference they made to it. I call my volunteer a life saver'.

Our staff team remains stable and work closely as a complementary team - directly with families and volunteers, running groups, managing day to day finance and 'the business', and securing funding to keep us afloat. Thank you to them all!

Thanks also to our committed group of trustees who support decision making and the direction of the scheme, and act as ambassadors to promote our work.

We have carried on raising our profile locally; we attended the West Country Business Show in July and were finalists in the Charity Category of the Exeter Living Awards.

Financially we continue to be secure and to grow, with a 17% increase in grant income thanks to our amazing Funding and Development Manager. In addition, we received a fantastic donation of £24,423 from a major fund-raising event held at Ladram Bay in February. Thanks to the team that made it happen! We have been really grateful for smaller donations from local businesses, organisations and local Councillors too. We need to remember that we are great value for money - it costs £1,100 for us to support a family for 6 months.

We have been engaging with our colleagues in Devon County Council as they develop their approach to the government requirements for Family Hubs and 'The Best Start in Life' programme which is of course what Home-Start is all about. We want to work towards having a Home-Start service across the whole of Devon - currently there are gaps and we would love to secure funding to achieve that aim.

There are exciting times ahead as we celebrate 40 years of Home-Start Exeter, East and Mid Devon in 2026 - look out for celebration opportunities!

We are positive and enthusiastic about the future and I want to thank all our volunteers, staff team, trustees and partners, for continuing to help Devon's children get the 'Best Start in Life'.

Maggie Carter

Chair of Trustees

Photo: Maggie braving the weather to join BBC Devon presenters and take on the Exmouth leg of the BBC Children in Need Three Legged Thousand Mile Challenge.





Supporting families in 2024-25



79 families received one to one home visiting volunteer support
3 families received one to one remote support
63 families attended a group
2 families received a combination of both

98% of families surveyed saw an improvement in their outcome scores at the end of their support with us

Where our families lived:
Exeter 63
East Devon 70
Mid Devon 13
Teignbridge 1

Volunteers gave over 5400 hours of their time

Referral circumstances (where we have data):

- 93% mental health**
- 30% lone parents**
- 23% debts or financial insecurity**
- 15% domestic abuse**
- 29% disability**
- 12% unsuitable housing**
- 7% young pregnancy**
- 7% child speech & language**

HOME START
Exeter, East & Mid Devon

Senior Coordinator Report

2024 – 2025 has been a productive year and very busy. We supported 147 families, many through support in the family home and an increase from previous years.

We have 5 groups running in various locations supporting parents and children, with a focus on positive mental health, social interaction and reducing isolation. Our groups in Honiton focus on supporting new parents and promoting positive parenting, we have held a group for the past two years supporting dads in parenting, we have continued our Mothers in Mind peri/postnatal group and an overall wellbeing group for families.

Our next volunteer training course will commence mid-way through November where we will train 4 new volunteers – this will bring our team of volunteers to 47. We run three prep courses annually and always welcome new applicants. Without our amazing team of volunteers, we could not support families the way we do.

Over the past year, we have seen a further increase in referrals for support for families with children who have additional needs. We regularly offer additional training to our volunteers, and most recently trained staff and a selection of volunteers through a program with SCIE (Social Care Institute for Excellence) which taught a baseline understanding and knowledge of implementing strategies when supporting families.

Hannah and Julia, our coordinators, and Amber, our group facilitator and I meet weekly to discuss referrals, families and volunteers to ensure we are offering the best support for the best outcomes. Our regular volunteer coffee mornings at Greendale farm/café gives us the opportunity to bring together the whole team, a chance for volunteers to meet each other as well as the staff and trustees, and is a great way to build team morale. We have our next coffee mornings planned for December.

The past year has seen us engaging with local Home-Start schemes as well as other organisations to raise awareness and work together to offer the most suitable and beneficial support to families in Devon. We have seen many positive changes, we have welcomed Amber, recruited and trained new volunteers, set up groups in Honiton and continued to support families across Exeter, East & mid Devon.

Without our team of volunteers, staff and trustees we wouldn't be able to support families the way we do when they need us most.

Nicola Dempster

A year with our charity...



December— Christmas 2024 saw an increase in the number of organisations and individuals who reached out to offer gifts for our families and we were overwhelmed by their generosity. For the second year running we were lucky enough to be chosen to present a Christmas Tree for Princesshay's charity tree display.

January— several referrals to the wonderful Baby Bank as families struggle with debts, often related to Christmas and winter heating bills. Our staff are now trained to make referrals to ECOE for families who want advice and help to keep warm over winter.

February - a team of volunteer fundraisers in our community, and Ladram Bay Holiday Park, arranged an evening of food, dancing and auctions to raise an incredible amount of funds for Home-Start and the RD&E Hospital Charity (children's ward).

March— 3 fabulous new volunteers completed their preparation course and were quickly matched with families in need of our help.

April— we said a very sad farewell to our Trustee, Jackie Evans, who had been on the Board since 2017.

May— we're now able to offer Home-Start's unique Big Hopes Big Future programme to work directly with parents and children and help them to build the skills they need to be ready for the first day of school; another tool in our volunteers' 'toolkit'. We've started rolling this out to those volunteers who want to use it.

June— after an approach from Parental Minds CIC, we took the reins of their established mother and baby group in Honiton. Their Hub is a great place to be and we have received a warm welcome, so much so that we extended the session to include older, mobile babies in the afternoon.

July— we were proud to be part of the Exeter Fundraisers Group representing local charities at the West Country Business Show at Westpoint - it was a good opportunity for charities to support each other and engage with South West businesses for mutual benefit.

August— as part of our Agreement with Home-Start UK, we are required to continuously assess our practises and procedures and we were delighted to share that we achieved an 'Excellent' outcome from the Home-Start UK Quality Team for our assessment exercise of the 'Operating a Home-Start' Standard. We wear our 'badge' with pride!

September— our new Group Facilitator joined the team. Amber comes with a wealth of experience in early years support and we're delighted to have her expertise and enthusiasm so that we can continue to build on our group offer. We re-established Mothers In Mind perinatal mental health support group in Exeter at Beacon Heath.



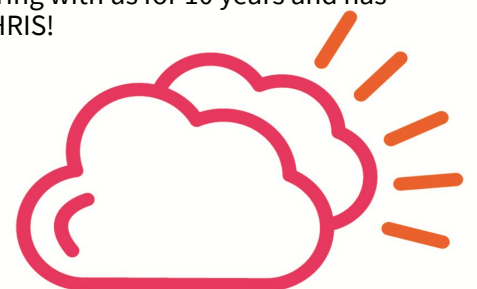
October— having reached the finalist stages of the Exeter Living Awards, our trustees, Maggie and Wendy, attended the awards ceremony along with the representatives of 8 other local charities. Whilst we did not win the Charity category, it was great to celebrate and recognise the work of all these organisations alongside our own.

November - Finally, this autumn we say goodbye to our longest standing volunteer, Chris, who had been volunteering with us for 10 years and has supported many families. THANK YOU CHRIS!



Photo: Our team receiving the cheque following the Ladram Bay event.

Photo: Nicola, Maggie and Jo at the Westcountry Business Show.





Financial overview

During the year, the charity received total income of £231,792 (2024: £180,048) and had total costs of £171,830 (2024: £163,142), giving a surplus of £59,962 (2024 surplus of £16,906).

Despite the tough economic climate, the charity has maintained an appropriate level of reserves to allow the charity's activities to continue. At the 31 March 2025, current reserves held were £135,270 (2024: £75,308), of which £40,236 are restricted funds and £95,034 are unrestricted.

The trustees have assessed the risks involved in the activities of the charity and have agreed the following Reserves Policy: retain a sufficient level of net current assets or other readily realisable fixed asset investments to provide a cushion equivalent to three months operating expenditure.

(Accountants: Griffin Chartered Accountants, Courtenay House, Pynes Hill, Exeter , EX2 5AZ)

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCORPORATING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Total funds
	2025	2025	2025	2024
	£	£	£	£
Income from:				
Donations and legacies	33,877	-	33,877	22,384
Charitable activities	28,000	169,230	197,230	157,082
Investments	685	-	685	582
Total income	62,562	169,230	231,792	180,048
Expenditure on:				
Charitable activities	2,677	169,153	171,830	163,142
Total expenditure	2,677	169,153	171,830	163,142
Net movement in funds	59,885	77	59,962	16,906
Reconciliation of funds:				
Total funds brought forward	35,149	40,159	75,308	58,402
Net movement in funds	59,885	77	59,962	16,906
Total funds carried forward	95,034	40,236	135,270	75,308

Funding and Development Manager Report

Over the past year, we have continued to have steady growth, both in our income and in the range and reach of the services we deliver. This growth reflects the shared commitment we all have to making a positive difference in families' lives.

Grants from charitable Trusts, Foundations, and the National Lottery continue to represent a vital cornerstone of our income. These longer-term grants give us the security to plan ahead, develop new projects, and respond to the changing needs of those we support.

In addition to these major grants, we have received invaluable contributions from a wide network of supporters — including other key trusts and foundations, local businesses, individual donors, community fundraisers, and our local Council.

This diverse mix of funding sources demonstrates the broad base of support for our mission and the shared belief in the importance of our work. Every contribution plays an important part in helping us continue to deliver our services. We extend our sincere gratitude to all our funders and partners for their continued support and trust.

Looking ahead, our focus remains on building a strong and sustainable future. We're actively pursuing new funding opportunities and creating fresh ways for people to get involved.

We're proud of what we've achieved together this year — and inspired by what lies ahead. Our heartfelt thanks go to everyone who has stood alongside us: our funders, partners, volunteers, staff, and community.

Jo Darke

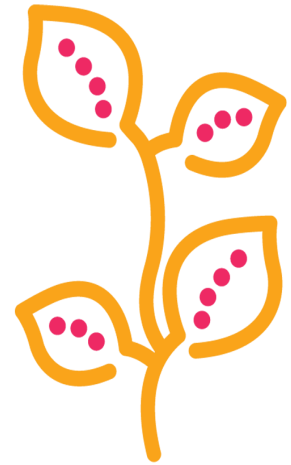


Thank you to everyone who helped us in 2024-25

Our funders, donors and supporters including:

Barrett Homes
BBC Children in Need
Bloss Family Foundation
BT Consumer Team, Exeter
CAF Bank Foundation
Chandos Delicatessen
Comic Relief
Cranbrook Town Council
David Gibbons Foundation
Devon Communities Together
Devon County Council
Exe Property Ball
Exeter Community Lottery supporters
Exeter Girl
Exeter Round Table
Exmouth Repair Cafe
Friends of HSEEMD
Garfield Weston Foundation
Hendy Foundation

HSUK Pears Grant
Jamieson Bystock Trust
John Lewis Partnership
Ladram Bay Holiday Park
Mama Meets
Mrs K Kelly
Neighbourly/Sainsburys
Postcode Community Trust
Rediscover Church
RNRMC Grants
Tesco
The Claire Milne Trust
The Co-Op, Haven Banks, Exeter
The Henry Smith Charity
The National Lottery Community Fund
Waitrose
Whimble Morris Dancers



Our team of volunteers...

Sarah, Helen, Juliet, Julie, Jo, Ali, Helen, Sue, Jill, Nicola, Rosie, Rebecca, Natalie, Mitzi, David, Fiona, Lyn, Eve, Jen, Fiona, Elaine, Lisa, Carla, Martha, Wendy, Amy, Jen, Sue, Jane, Wendy, Aukje, Jenny, Sarah, Megan, Rachel, Meghan, Deborah, Kat, Caroline, Robin, Sarah, Chris, Eileen, Trish, Shay, Jenna and Lizzie

Our trustees...

Maggie, Wendy, Claire, Peter, Debbie, Lindsay and Jackie

Our staff team...

Nic, Julia, Lea, Jo, Hannah, Amber and Vicki

And the last word... comes from a family telling us the difference our Home-Start Volunteer has made for them - *"She helped me with small decisions and big ones too and generally helped to lift the weight of the world on my shoulders. We are so pleased to have had her in our lives and that Home-Start exists."*

**For parents when
they need us most**

