

Charity Number: 1107019

Company Number: 05282509



Annual Report 2021-2022



**Stroud and
Gloucester**

CHAIR'S REPORT

This has been a year of getting back to normal gradually after the pandemic. **Alex Corgier**, our Scheme Manager for many years left us to work at Home-Start UK head office as their new National Infant Perinatal Mental Health Lead. Fortunately, we found **Ri Ferrier**, who is also blessed with the commitment and drive that Alex led us with.

We said goodbye to **Malcolm Swait** and **Judith Munro-Faure** as trustees. Malcolm had been a trustee for many years and our thanks to both for their contributions.

We have welcomed two new trustees to the board, **Becki Clarke** and **Lemara Hibbert**.

There is an ever increasing demand for our services and moving into the Gloucester area is certainly challenging. Thanks to **Colin Pascoe** who acts as our Gloucester trustee.

The groups continue to be very popular and we are fortunate to have so many dedicated volunteers. The consortium is working well and hopefully cutting down on the duplication of administration between the three schemes which now cover the county whilst we retain our independence.

It's with great shame we have had to make the decision to cancel this year's Westonbirt Fair due to the increase in costs generally. We are reviewing plans to run this again in 2023. We did have a successful fundraising golf day which we are pleased to say raised more than £4,000 for the scheme. Special thanks to **Sheila Marsh** and **Shelley James** for their help and to **Minchinhampton Golf Club**. My thanks as ever to the wonderful staff team, fellow trustees and our amazing volunteers.

Elizabeth Ewart-James (Chair)



**For parents
when they
need us most**



Scheme Director

Ri Ferrier

It has been a privilege to take over as Scheme Director from Alex Corgier in October 2021. The legacy she left behind has made the job of stepping into her shoes so much easier than it could have been! This financial year has seen us beginning to come out of the pandemic – though the reverberations of Covid-19 will continue to impact our families for years to come. Social distancing and isolation have placed enormous strains on families; the practical and emotional demands of parenthood are challenging enough in normal times but the pandemic has added so many additional layers of anxiety, uncertainty and isolation.

We have seen a **45% increase in referrals** (from 2020 to 2021). In the last financial year we received **836 referrals** – with some referral reasons more than doubling over the previous year (coping with child's mental health, stress caused by conflict in the family). **65%** of the families that we are currently supporting have **mental health** issues with **19%** registered with mental health services. The level of complex needs has been challenging for us as a team but the level of heart and commitment of each and every team member, volunteer and trustee is outstanding, with everyone working together to meet this challenge.

Our group work has gone from strength to strength, with **parental wellbeing** improving by an average of **50%** as a result of attending one of our groups. Home-visiting support is a vital part of our offering, and our outcome measures show that we have the biggest impact on **confidence and self-esteem (38%), feeling less isolated (32%) and improved mental health (25%)**.

"You have seen me and my family in the best and worst of states and never judged."

"You do such an amazing job. I could not have done the first few years of my son's life without you."

We said goodbye to Lee Houghton but welcomed two new Dad Matter's Coordinators – **Nick Darrock-Fuller** and **Ryan Jones** who have many exciting ideas of how to develop the project to support dads across Gloucestershire. Watch this space! Within the last year we also welcomed **Emily Price** who is running Best-Start groups and **Amy Wright** who is a home-visiting family and volunteer coordinator to the team.

I want to thank all of our funders, both large and small, who help to support the vital work that we do.

I'd like to finish with a HUGE thank you to all the staff and volunteer team for their hard work, care and commitment to our charity.



ABOUT HOME-START

Home-Start Stroud and Gloucester is an established charity founded in 1999 to support families living under stress in the Stroud District of Gloucestershire. In 2020 we expanded our services into Gloucester City which has the highest levels of deprivation in the county. Our scheme covers a large area of rural communities, several market towns and a city.

We support over 600 families every year through a plethora of different services including home visiting by trained volunteers, ante and post-natal groups, a perinatal mental health peer support program and a Dad Matters project to specifically support dads to have the best relationships possible with their children.

OUR VISION

Our vision is to see every parent living in Gloucestershire getting the support that they need to give their children the best possible start in life.

We believe passionately in early intervention and a strengths-based approach to supporting families to overcome any challenges they face and for parents to be supported to be the best parents they can be.

OUR VALUES

- We strive to be a non-judgmental service that is professional and non-threatening in its approach.
- We aim to empower families with strategies that enable them to raise their children in a safe, positive and enjoyable way.
- We do this through being empathetic, supportive and honest in all of our interactions.
- We are committed to reducing inequality and promoting well-being in the communities that we serve.



WHAT WE OFFER

- **Home-Visiting** (weekly) to families in their own homes by highly trained volunteers who are supervised by our family coordinators.
- **Bump-Start** programme: These ante-natal groups are informal sessions for vulnerable families referred by midwives to provide extra support on new parents' pregnancy journeys. Sessions are activity based and cover a range of topics such as bonding with your bump, emotions during pregnancy and the baby's development in the womb.
- **Best-Start** programme: These post-natal groups for vulnerable parents with 0- to 6-month-old babies are structured programs led by our highly trained group staff. Sessions focus on up-to-date advice on topics such as teething, first aid, supporting early relationships, play, baby massage, routines, self-care and sleep.
- **Mothers in Mind:** This is a perinatal mental health program to support women affected by mental health issues in the first two years of their parenting journey. They are based on peer support, offering reassurance and support to women who are struggling to attend any other group.
- **Arkell Family Fun:** This is a term time only stay and play group for families based in a rurally isolated and deprived community in the Stroud District.
- **Dad Matters Gloucestershire:** A project to help dads have positive relationships with their families, supporting them with their own wellbeing and mental health. This is achieved by providing ante and post-natal groups for dads, offering 1-2-1 peer support, signposting and supporting dads to access services and information to help make sense of being a dad as well as by recruiting and training volunteers to provide peer support.



Michelle Smith

Senior Family and Volunteer Coordinator

We have seen a significant increase in referrals into our home -visiting team and I need to take this opportunity to thank our wonderful team of volunteers who have provided their support during a particularly difficult time. Navigating restrictions and keeping themselves and the families they support safe, has been challenging. Our staff and volunteers adapted ways of working to keep our support ongoing, showing their heart-warming resilience.

With four coordinators now covering Stroud and Gloucester with a Senior Coordinator in place, we are in a stronger position to be able to move forward with our support to Gloucester based families as planned.

Our recruitment and training of volunteers is ongoing, we hold two training events a year in the Spring and Autumn covering both localities. Our volunteers make the difference, here's what some of our families had to say:

Lauren says her volunteer is "the most wonderful woman she has ever met. She has been an absolute rock keeping in contact during Covid, being there for her, a listening ear, giving her encouragement and advice when needed and putting her in touch with other support networks."

Chantelle says that her volunteer "has been a huge support over the last few years. Supporting her eldest child to start school and being an emotional support for her. Chantelle says she did not have anyone else and that a phone call once a week meant the world to her, especially during Covid."



Rhiannon Byron

Groups Lead Coordinator

The Covid 19 pandemic continued to affect the support we were able to provide at the start of this year, although groups have gradually returned to face-to-face sessions, with less groups delivered online as the year went on. Delivering sessions for parents whilst wearing face masks was a new challenge we faced as facilitators but parents were crying out for more social contact for themselves and their babies. We did as much as we could, with the government guidelines in place at the time, and varied our support between telephone calls, online group sessions, in-person group sessions and wellbeing walks in the community to help people to feel supported and connected. Thanks to the continued dedication and flexibility of staff, we have been able to support more families than ever via our group sessions, whether they were delivered online or in-person.

Throughout the year, we saw an inevitable increase in families being referred to us, enabling them to access and benefit from the range of groups we provide, many more families were shared between our various services, accessing more than one form of support from Home-Start at once. This meant that demands on staff time increased and the year saw changes and additions to group facilitators due to increased provision:

- 1. Our MIM co-ordinator went on to a career in psychotherapy and was succeeded by the MIM peer support volunteer, Tracey Edwards.**
- 2. One of our home-visiting coordinators, Isla Rawson, now delivers our third MIM group (Matson/Tredworth).**
- 3. Emily Price joined the team as a Best-Start coordinator to work alongside myself and Amy Wright, has helped to deliver some of the extra Best-Start and Bump-Start groups needed.**
- 4. Our groups administrator has also taken on extra hours.**

As restrictions have eased, we have been able to reconnect in-person with more of our referrers and formed new partnerships. The Gloucester Continuity of Care midwifery team invited us to co-deliver some of their antenatal sessions this year and this has helped us to keep a consistent numbers of referrals to our services from that team. Gloucester City has been our main area of growth this year and we now regularly run Mothers in Mind and Best-Start groups in city locations and hope to expand into more new locations in the future.



Number of groups delivered in 2021/2022:

16 Best-Start, 10 Bump-Start, 14 Mothers in Mind

Areas in which groups were delivered:

Cashes Green, Quedgeley, Kingsway, Stonehouse, Sharpness, Tredworth, Podsmead, Linden, Dursley, Online Bump-Start sessions, plus walking groups

"After my labour I felt like I couldn't seek help with my baby but the group made me realise it's ok to feel how I do and it has also made me be able to spend more time and to bond with my baby & I do see a change in his behaviour."

"The group has been so positive and upbeat about being pregnant and has been completely non-judgemental. The women in the group were lovely and I made friends with one person in particular who is on a similar journey to me - I've found talking to Stef and the other lady has helped me so much to relax a bit so I can bond with my bump a bit more"



"Wednesdays are always calmer because of MiMs group. I know if I'm having a bad time I feel much better talking to mums who feel the same"

REFERRER QUOTE

When we asked referrers how their families have benefited from attending our groups, one said: *"I have found that women have enjoyed the groups, women who have had 1:1 support have needed less time/interventions from us as are being helped in practical ways that mean the most to them to help them which we often we don't have the capacity to do."*

Sue Smith

Family, Volunteer and Arkell Group Coordinator

A huge thank you to **Elena** for all her passion and enthusiasm and a thank you to the volunteers, **Brian, Anne, Juliet and Becky**, for supporting her to provide families with such an amazing group every Wednesday and Friday at The Arkell Centre, Forest Green.

We would like to give thanks to **Forest Green Rovers**, who helped support our Christmas 2021 party, **Morrisons (Nailsworth)** who provided Easter eggs for the families, and **Nailsworth Town Council**, who provide much needed funding to enable the group to run.

I think these photos and quotes from families say it all



When coming to the group you never feel alone, as everyone is so friendly and welcoming. The children and adults all become good friends

We have made life long friends by coming to the group

This wonderful Group has been just as beneficial to me as it has to my little one. To see them experiencing so many new things through sensory play is so magical. Lockdown had us feeling so lonely but this Group has remedied that. Eternally grateful

The IMPACT of our WORK

Groups Impact

- **100%** of Best-Start and Bump-Start parents reported a reduction in parental isolation after attending the groups, with **100%** of respondents at all groups confirming they had built social networks for ongoing support.
- **100%** of Bump-Start, **96%** of MIMs and **95%** of Best-Start parents reported improved mental health and wellbeing.
- **89%** of MIMs mums report feeling better able to cope with their child's practical & emotional needs following attendance at the group.
- **95%** of Best-Start attendees report an improved understanding of baby's behaviour and ability to respond to them more effectively.
- **100%** at Bump-Start, **98%** at Best-Start and **89%** at MIMs report an increase in parenting self-confidence.

Home Visiting Impact

- Families reported a **51.9%** increase in their confidence and self esteem
- Families reported a **40.5%** improvement in their feelings of isolation
- Home visiting has improved parent's mental health by **35.8%**
- Families reported a **22.4%** improvement in their ability to manage with children under the age of 5 years

Arkell Family Fun Impact

- **100%** stated that the group had a positive impact on their child
- **85%** stated that the group had an EXCELLENT impact on their own wellbeing
- **80%** experienced reduced stress
- **90%** felt less isolated
- **85%** have improved self esteem
- **80%** have reduced anxiety

Number of referrals received 2021-2022

Home-Visting referral: 198

Bump-Start referral: 142

Best-Start referral: 273

Mothers in Mind: 223

Total referrals 836



Expenditure

Staff salary costs: £229,608

Volunteer expenses: £10,175

Rent and Insurance: £12,704

Professional fees: £6,814

General costs: £32,772

Total: 292,073

Income

Statutory grant funding: £272,796

Non statutory grants: £221,350

Other income & donations: £16,721

Total: £510,867



Dad Matters Gloucestershire



Studies have shown that **1 in 10 dads** will suffer from postnatal depression, with this number believed to be higher. A peak time for this development is between 3-6 months after birth, but symptoms can come on anytime within the first few years of being a dad.

Although new to the post we have hit the ground running! Utilising the already great work that has been done by Dad matters UK and the home start consortium here in Gloucestershire. We have been able to reconnect with existing partners and connect with new ones, to ensure our service offering is shouted from the rooftops fair and wide. Social media is key to getting our message out to dads. We have reignited our social media presence with new up-to-date, and relevant content for dads of all ages in our local area.

A prime strategy for us is to connect with Dads in situations and environments where they are thinking about being a dad. For example, within antenatal, maternity, and postnatal settings. We will be carrying out drop-in sessions in Gloucester Royal hospital women's centre to engage with new dads and dads-to-be to give support, advice, and an ear to be listened to. Alongside this, we are running peer support groups such as Walk 'n' Talks in a neutral environment giving dads the chance to connect and talk openly with other dads.

Gloucestershire is a large county with a very diverse population and remote areas. At Dad Matters, we want to be able to reach these dads and families, so a key aim of ours is to ensure our service offering reaches these communities. We will do this by increasing our network of volunteers and utilising our partners' knowledge, skills, and facilities and work together to bring our **peer support groups, workshops, and signposting connections** to these areas that we have not been able to reach in the past.

During our time talking to dads and men of all ages a line that comes up a lot is **"I wish I would have heard about you guys earlier."** In Gloucestershire, we currently support dads with children up to 5 years. The aim though is to listen and ensure we see dads earlier and increase our reach by building solid relationships with as many maternity services in the county as possible and offering targeted support to these new dads and dads-to-be. As well as ensuring we continue to support dads with children in the older age range through our partners, other charity organisations and our self-referral system.

Nick Darrick Fuller and Ryan Jones
Dad Matters Gloucestershire Coordinators



A special thanks to our volunteers who are at the heart of everything we do



Sharon, Kim, Sarah B, Jane B, Beverley, Barbara, Jennifer, Amy C, Sondos, Anne, Sally-Ann, Gill, Susan C, Lucy, Hayley, Paul, Irene, Caroline, Juliet, Rebecca, Elizabeth, Margaret, Erica, Bobbi, Angela, Gwen, Martin, Emily H, Janette, Sally H, Tracy, Sarah H, Krystina, James, Alice, Rose, Rebekah, Aly, Jane J, Susan J, Joanne, Susan L, Sam, Lynne, Mary, Judith, Mary M, Kim M, Rhonwen, Susan M, Amy M, Linda, Daphne, Val, Nicola, Anne-Marie, Melanie, Catherine, Teresa, Jan, Melanie S, Jan S, Pamela, Andrea, Mandy, Ingrid, Janine, Gail, Harriet, Penny, Naomi, Christine, Barbara W, Joanne W, Lorriane, Nia, Virginia, Alison, Caroline, Martin G



"It makes me feel good to help people when there is no financial gain but just because I can."

"It is such a privilege to be welcomed into a family when they are struggling and to walk alongside them as they slowly learn to cope, sharing their highs and as well as their lows. To feel I may, in some small way, have helped a family get back on their feet is the biggest reward of all."

Thank you to our funders for their continued support

Peter Lang Trust, Gloucestershire County Council, Community Funding lottery, Gloucestershire Community Foundation, Gyde Trust, Barnwood Trust, Henry Smith, Stroud Town Council, Garfield Weston Foundation, Nailsworth Town Council, David Thomas Trust, Tudor Trust, Jack Lane Charity Trust, Home-Start UK, GCC - Thriving Communities, Sumerfield Charitable Trust, Masonic Trust



Thank you to our fundraisers and donors

Stonehouse Town Council, Ecclesiastical, Stroud Rotary, Nailsworth Rotary, Dursley Town Council, Dursley Lions, Waitrose Stroud, Tesco Stroud, Co-op Cainscross, The Foodbank Stroud, Westonbirt Charity, Sheila Marsh, Randwick Parish Council, Rodborough Parish Council, Uley Mums, Sal Craw, Maria Fisher, Alison Winkfield, Alison Weller, Saranta

