



## Annual Review 2019-2020

### Our Mission Statement

Home-Start provides bespoke packages of support to parents with young children which is dependent on their individual needs. We deliver early intervention outreach and counselling support throughout Thanet, offering emotional, practical and educational interventions.

Home-Start offers a unique service, recruiting and training volunteers, who are usually parents themselves, to visit families at home who have at least one child under 11. We provide confidential, friendly and informal guidance to meet the diverse needs of each family, empowering parents and helping to give children the best start in life. Home-Start supports parents as they grow in confidence and resilience, strengthen their relationships with their children and widen their links with the local community. [www.homestartthanet.org.uk](http://www.homestartthanet.org.uk)

**Home-Start UK supports schemes throughout Great Britain**





Robert Hewer, Sylvia Tillmann, Linda Frampton and Kaye Draper some of our Trustee Board

## Board of Trustees Report

We started two new projects entitled The Embrace and The Butterfly Programmes at the end of 2018 and the staff have exceeded all expectations with the number of families they have helped. This has enabled us to send in outstanding reports to the funders, the Big Lottery and Children in Need.

We have commissioned a new database that assists in recording outcomes for the returns that have to be submitted. It allows for accurate recording.

The Executive Manager, Sharon Lewis, Sue Hunt and Karina Vogan, co-ordinators, are thanked by the board for this very hard work and dedication to helping families that need our service. We have appointed a new administrator who has been able to fully support the staff.

There have been some new appointments to the Trustee Board and others have left for personal reasons or work relocation. We continue to encourage people to join us, especially if they possess skills that are needed.

*Linda Frampton*

Chair

# Treasurer's Report

## 2019-2020

### Financial Report for the year ended 31st March 2020

The 19/20 financial year has been a reasonably successful year in that we have only had to utilize a small amount of our reserves. The charity is heavily reliant on the financial support received from The Big Lottery and Children In Need, with very little other funding being received.

Please note that the financial numbers reported here are based on the annual draft accounts, currently being finalised by Spurling Cannon.

Total income received in the year was £147,536 (compared to £141,231 for 2018/19). Expenditure was £148,111 resulting in a small deficit of £575. The main reason for the increase in expenditure over the previous year is payroll costs due to the changes in hours of the team in order to cover the two projects being run, and some additional pension payments to close off some previous arrangements.

Our main project in place at present is the Embrace programme which commenced in October 2018 for a period of four years, supported 100% by The Big Lottery. Alongside this project, the other one being run at present is the Butterfly Programme which commenced at the end of 2019, funded by Children in Need. Funding is covered for a period of three years.

Although standalone programmes, both complement each other, supporting parents and children under eleven with the aim to build emotional resilience and improve mental health in order to strengthen the family enabling them to cope with their particular issues.

Before the end of the financial year, the unexpected happened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The charity has continued to incur its larger costs, mainly employee costs and the cost of the office rental/ service charges, noting that the team have been working from home over the past six months. No reduction in property costs have been obtained over this period.



Treasurer

Funder	Project	Amount
The Big Lottery	Embrace Programme	£118,891
Children in Need	Butterfly Programme	£26,161
East Kent College	Training courses	£1,920
Other Donations	N/1	£354
Investment Income	N/A	£210



# Executive Managers Statement



Welcome to this year's review, as we find ourselves in the 33rd year of delivering family early help throughout Thanet. The last twelve months have seen positive changes, in terms of financial security and strategic development for our organisation, but more importantly evidenced positive outcomes for children and parents.

As a charity we continue to play a varied and focused role to local families in an area where deprivation impacts on the daily lives of our Home-Start families. Our service delivery has developed to meet local need and our main priority remains to ensure continued trusted support in a timely and responsive way. We remain the very face of easily accessible family support: working holistically and encompassing the whole family enables us to deliver effective interventions, promoting small but often significant changes to families' lives.

The first year of The Embrace Programme funded by the Lottery was well received and appreciated by professionals, parents and children. This programme allows us to offer prompt and effective interventions to improve the psychological wellbeing of parents and children.

Our own qualitative and quantitative analyses clearly identified parental mental health as one of the greatest barriers to consistent and positive parenting. This was reinforced by independent research undertaken by Steve Allman; whilst reviewing our previous health and wellbeing programme ~ Starting Right.

Our Embrace Counselling Programme has allowed me to offer ten initial counselling sessions to parents who are struggling emotionally and require focused support to overcome current and past psychological issues. The learning from this has been clear, there is a high demand for this counselling service and the complex psychological issues they bring to sessions is of a significantly concerning level. Whilst the majority of people I counsel come individually, I also offer couple/relationship counselling. This encourages couples to explore their relationships with each other plus the wider family unit. It offers a safe environment to talk through and identify barriers to communication leading to the development and understanding of each other's and their children's needs.

The Butterfly Programme was launched in December 2018, following

approval and funding from Children in Need. This programme focuses on the child, supporting both emotional and behavioural issues. We offer up to six months intensive weekly support either by a staff member or trained Mentor. During this initial period, we have witnessed an increase in children awaiting assessment for Spectrum Disorders. At one stage over 60% of children referred were under this category, resulting in stressed and anxious parents and children displaying and acting out either by their behaviour or presenting with anxiety or low mood.

We act as the voice for the family struggling to be heard, we are the listening ear to families' concerns, and we can show by example simple changes to improve family functioning and relationships.

As always I remain thankful and appreciative of the expertise and commitment of our small but strong staff team who have remained focused on maintaining high standards of service delivery to local families. The Board of Trustees have formed stronger bonds over this past year and further developed skills and awareness to serve them well in their governance roles and continued support.

Home-Start just would not be Home-Start without the wonderful input of our volunteer Mentors, as parents themselves they are key in building up trusting alliances with parents and children to offer much needed time, guidance and emotional support.

Over the forthcoming year we will continue to provide frontline services, enhancing our current programmes, expanding support and research on psychological health and develop a Home-Start Play Plus Programme to focus on child development and school readiness.

At Home-Start we understand the importance of family life, nurturing parenting builds resilient and confident children. The children we offer support to now will be the parents of tomorrow, so let's provide them with the correct tools today.



**Executive Manager/Embrace Counsellor**

*"I'm very thankful to Sharon as she has helped and supported me through one of the most difficult times I've experienced. Sharon always listened and shared her knowledge within our counselling sessions. Sharon is a lovely lady and I've had pleasure seeing her for my past 12 sessions*

*Thank you so much Sharon :)*

**Embrace Counselling client**

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*"Counselling has helped me massively! Sharon has listened to me talk and hasn't judged me.*

**Embrace Counselling client**

.....

*"Counselling helped me greatly and has given me and my partner a second chance and to be able to still be a family. I couldn't be more grateful.*

**Embrace Counselling Client**

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*"I have found counselling with Sharon so helpful I felt my page was full and felt overwhelmed but after a session, everything eased and I had a new page to start again.*

**Counselling Client**

.....

*"Home-Start have been invaluable in supporting Sarah [name has been changed] through a very difficult year in terms of her bereavements... this supported her emotionally and in terms of building her resilience and networks. Thank you for providing such a helpful service to those who need extra support*

**Kent Community Health NHS Trust**

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# ONE FAMILY'S STORY...

*A family referred to us with a little boy who is autistic – he was getting very angry, volatile and frustrated, but was also an incredibly bright boy. Home-Start worked with the family, helping to make the situation at home much better. His bad sleep problem was resolved and we also recommended some very good books for toddlers that help them to develop awareness of their anger and to relate to a boy or a girl in the story.*

*Our little boy particularly bonded with the book about Red Beast and a boy who struggled with it. He once asked his mum “Do you think I get angry because of my Red Beast?” and he pondered upon it. He also took it to the nursery so that the teacher would read it to other kids.*

## Here's what his mother has said:

*PROUD MUM ALERT!! My son went back to nursery today, we changed his session so he goes in the mornings now. He comes into work with me and I stay with him at breakfast club until I need to go and get my class. He had a great morning. Only 2 meltdowns and 1 little sulk. He kept his clothes on too (phew). He even did the whole session ! Because he coped so well today he is now going every day.*

*The teacher read the red beast story to the whole class. My son listened on and off, and then said “my red beast has died.”*





## Other comments from our families:

“Extremely helpful and knowledgeable”

.....

“My volunteer made me feel good about myself”

.....

“I am disabled and everyone was very supportive”

.....

“Home-Start have been invaluable. The support, care and kindness have meant so much and allowed me to gain back my confidence. Their practical help has helped me achieve things I may not have been strong enough to do at the time on my own. I feel so much stronger to go forward onto the new chapters in my life and thank Home-Start and Karina for keeping me smiling”

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“My volunteer is the best person I could possibly have had. She has changed me, my life.”

.....

“The experience was brilliant. My volunteer was always there when needed, and sending me information about things to do with my children. Great - thanks so much”

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“I enjoyed my volunteer coming over. It was really nice to just have another mum come over and sit and listen and offload onto”

## And a comment from one of our fathers:

“At first I was very worried about Home-Start support & someone coming into the house to “tell us what to do” but I found the experience very helpful & now have a better relationship with my son”



# The Embrace Programme

Our Embrace Programme focuses on delivering help to the parents going through aspects of psychological unease, primarily suffering from low mood, anxiety, low confidence, depression or psychological consequences from past trauma (i.e. past domestic abuse or traumatic birth).

After eighteen months into the programme, new findings and avenues of support and future expansion of our service have emerged. It became apparent how children who witness parents struggle with anxiety can be incredibly unsettled by their parent's lack of psychological resilience. Children learn from their parents how to interpret and manage difficult or unpleasant situations, how to be resilient when dealing with life's challenges.

It can be very difficult to communicate a sense of calm to a child when a parent is struggling to cope with their own anxiety. We offer, through the Embrace Programme, guidance and emotional support to parents, thus enabling them to grow in confidence in their own abilities to parent, to make decisions, and to cope with everyday stresses and strains effectively and positively. As parents learn to tolerate stress and deal with it calmly and constructively, they will in turn be teaching their child—who takes cues from the parent's behaviour—how to cope with situations of uncertainty or upset. Quite often, despite their best intentions, parents might find themselves transmitting their own stress to their child; if a parent is consistently anxious, tearful and feeling that life is out of control, the child will determine that he or she lives in an unsafe, threatening world.

Within the Embrace Programme support, I strive to explain to parents the importance of staying calm in front of their child, even if the parent is feeling anxious. I advise the parents to be aware of their facial expressions, the words they choose, and the intensity of the emotion they express, because children watch and pick up on everything. It is ok to feel upset, frustrated, anxious, or angry when one deals with difficult or unpleasant situations, but it is very important to give a good example of how one manages that feeling. Teaching our children psychological resilience and conflict resolution is one of the most important life-lessons we can offer them.

Although we have the Butterfly programme, designed to help children to deal with everyday anxiety, I feel that there is a huge potential for the programme designed specifically around helping parents to gain awareness around psychological resilience and the skill-set they need for bringing up emotionally intelligent children.

*Karina Vogan*

**Coordinator**



# The Butterfly Programme

Following the funding from Children in Need for behavioural support and children's mental health, we and our wonderful volunteers have been working to support families with the various behavioural issues they present with. Some of the behavioural issues are also tied up with the parent's anxiety, so often both need to be addressed at the same time. We have also noticed an increase of children, mainly those already in school, who are displaying high levels of anxiety which has affected their school attendance and their ability to separate from their parents.

The parents respond well to our individual and personalised needs-led support and generally say that the support we offer is helpful and they feel they have made progress. This can also be observed in seeing the improved interaction between parent and child, as well as often the parents reporting improved relationships in the whole family, as well as a calmer atmosphere. We also get reports of siblings' behaviour also improving as parents are able to give them more attention as well.

We are still getting a high level of children needing support whilst waiting for a diagnosis for spectrum disorders.

We recently had a family who were referred by the school due to anxiety of the eldest child leading to a poor school attendance and a refusal of the child to even get dressed for school. The child was playing computer games up to 8 hours a day and refusing to let his father into his bedroom.

Over several visits to the home the parents were supported in putting in boundaries and routines. At the close of our support both parents felt they had a happier home life: the child was coming down for meals and also going to school, although still reluctant to get dressed in the mornings; the school reported that his educational scores had gone up; he was interacting with other children in class and had made a good friend who had been round to play with him. His father was taking him to school and both were enjoying this. The mother reported that he was playing and interacting with his younger sibling, he was joining in with family life. The school reported that as attendance had improved they were no longer going to prosecute for non-attendance.

*Sue Hunt*

Coordinator



*"I was a bit lost and Sue gave us a lot of advice and support and now we are a very happy family again"*

**Alice & Tom, mother & child from Butterfly scheme [names changed]**

.....

*"I had a wonderful volunteer who made me feel I could tackle things on my own"*

**Mother using Embrace Scheme**

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*"This was a very beneficial, positive experience. A volunteer helped by visiting approx once a week enabling me to have an extra pair of hands & eyes when dealing with 2 young boys on my own which was particularly hard & I thought dangerous at times (accident waiting to happen). It also enabled us to go out to an outside toddler group at a community garden semi-regularly which was good for all"*

**Family using Butterfly and Embrace Schemes**

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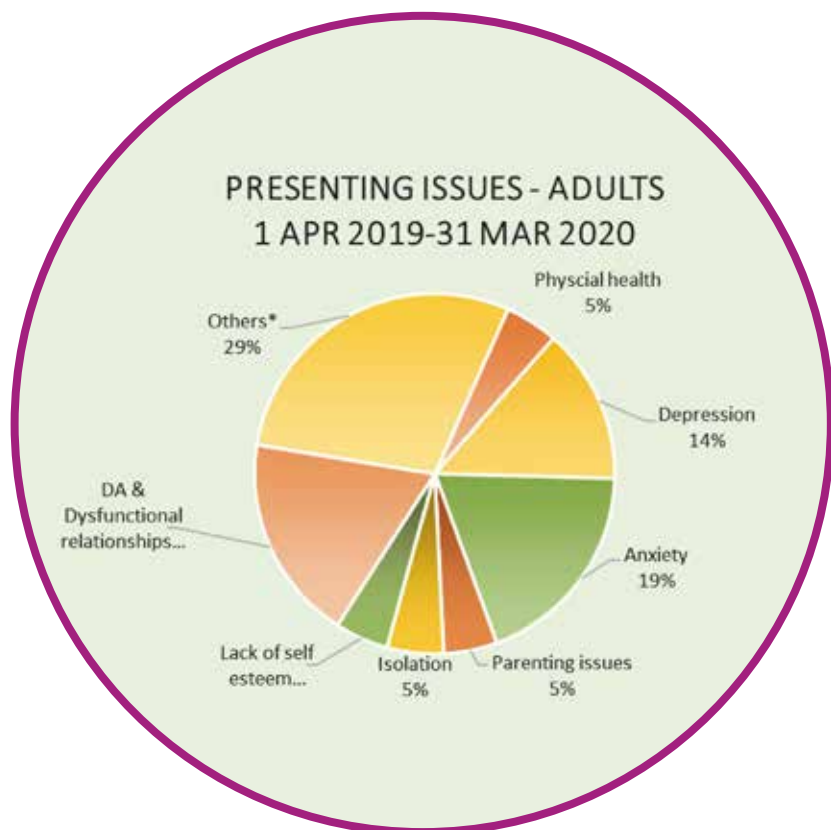


# Reflecting Back On The Past Year

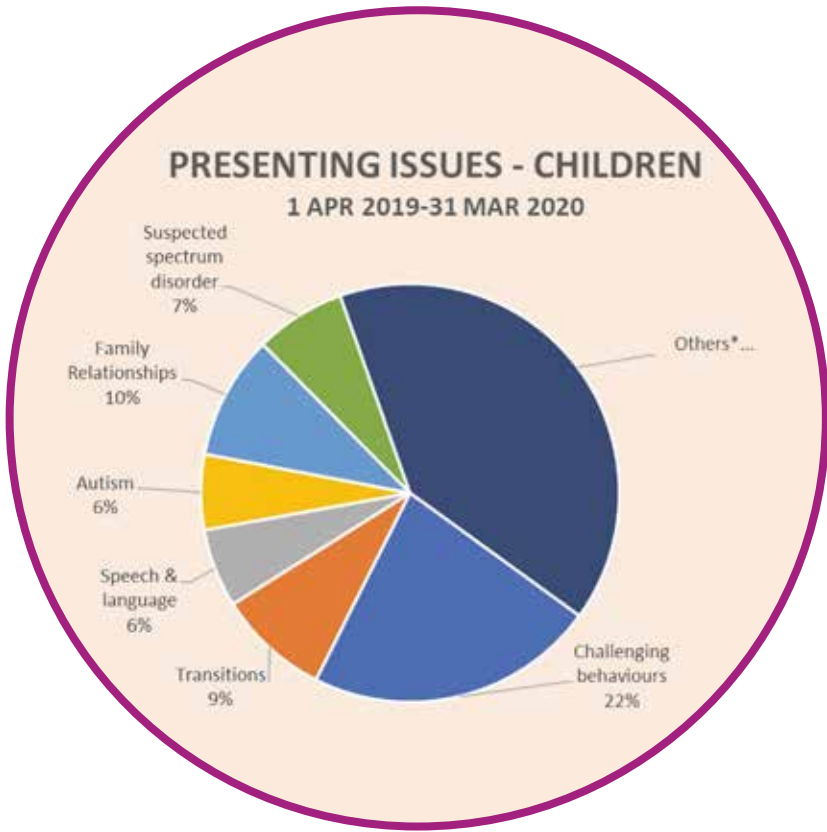
1 April 2019 – 31 March 2020

No of families supported by Home-Start Thanet	186
No of Children supported by Home-Start Thanet	388
No of families engaging with Butterfly Programme	39
No of families engaging with Embrace Programme	34
No of families engaging with both programmes	68
No of clients for Embrace Counselling	45

**Families present to us with a wide range of problems and need for support**

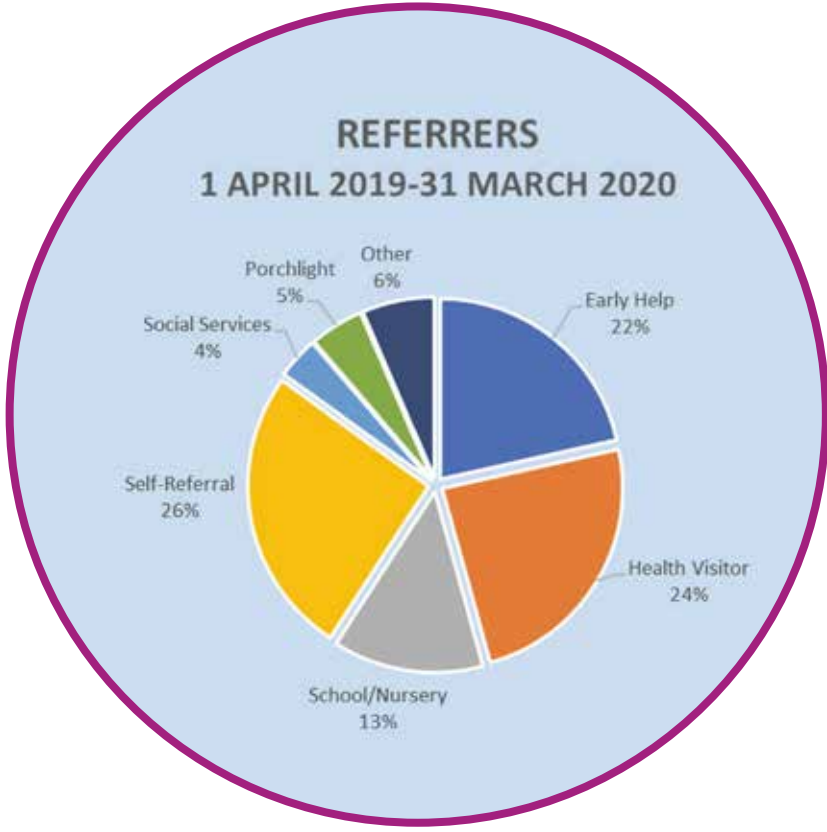


\*Other presenting issues including: Anger Issues; Post Traumatic Stress Disorder; Perinatal Depression; Self-Harming; Suicidal Thoughts; Other Abusive Relationships; Other Mental Health Problems



\*Other presenting issues including: School Phobias; Bedtime Routines; Sibling Rivalry; Lack of Social Skills; Separation Issues; Tantrums

### Our Referrals come from a range of sources:





**Volunteer Mentors, Trustees and staff following Mental Health Training**

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*“What you do at Home-Start is brilliant and is so inspirational”.*

**East Kent College**

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**Thinking of volunteering, have spare time?  
Your own children growing or grown up?  
Maybe thinking of a career change?  
Want to make a difference?**

You can make a real difference to a local family. By visiting them at home and providing informal practical, emotional and confidential support, you can help transform their everyday life. So, become a volunteer Mentor and bring something positive to someone in need. We offer free training to prepare you for your role.

**To find out more, email us on [admin@homestartthanet.org.uk](mailto:admin@homestartthanet.org.uk) or ring Sharon Lewis on 01843 609665/609663 for an informal chat.**

**Help change lives**