

HOME START

Lorn

Home-Start Lorn Scheme Newsletter April 2025

Home is where we start from
across Oban, Lorn & the islands.



Since January this year we have supported.....

34

Families
supported via
1-2-1 support

48

Children
supported via
1-2-1 support

412

Parents
supported via
group activities

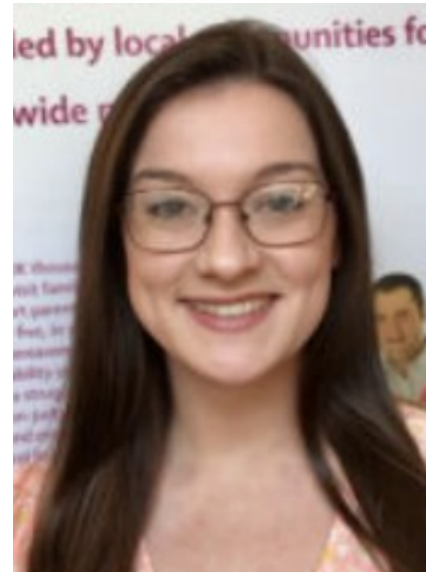


Spring News 2025....



Manager's Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of our quarterly newsletter for 2025! We've had another bustling quarter filled with thrilling updates, events, and announcements! Highlights include the *Grand Opening of our Family Centre*, our chairperson's nomination for *Trustee of the Year* with Home-Start UK, the acquisition of new funding, and much more!



Additionally, four new volunteers have successfully completed their training and joined our team. Among them, two will serve as group-specific volunteers, while the other two have been matched with their own supported families and are eager to build connections in the coming weeks.

Throughout this past quarter, our main priorities revolved around spreading Easter joy in our groups, planning for success among our staff and volunteers, securing funding, and settling into our new family centre.

Addition to the team...

Congratulations to our Funding and Development Coordinator Rachel and her family on the arrival of their beautiful daughter Sylvia!

Welcome to the Home-Start Lorn family, little one!

We're excited for you both to join our groups and share in those delightful baby cuddles!



While Rachel is on maternity leave, we request that all funding information and or requests be sent to manager@homestartlorn.org.uk

Family Centre Grand Opening

On Wednesday, February 19th, we celebrated the grand opening of our new *Family Centre*. The event was a fantastic success, bringing together our wonderful community and local families who could explore the new space and discuss ideas for its future with our staff.

Among our special guests were Brendan O'Hara MP, Peter Grigg (Chief Executive at Home-Start UK), Peter Watson (National Lottery), Andrew Taylor (Moors Kitchen), Robert MacInnes Photography, Ken Greenshield (Link Group), and some of our colleagues from health and social care. Our team guided everyone through the new facility and set up informative stands showcasing our services, including one-on-one support, group support, the family centre project, and opportunities for participation and engagement. Guests also enjoyed a delightful selection of food from *Cromka Bake & Dine*, which was a huge hit. Additionally, we unveiled a



remarkable gift during the launch— a three-part painting of a woodland scene, created and presented by one of our incredible supported families, Liza Thompson.

We are immensely proud to have led this project and to have seen it evolve from its initial concept to its grand opening. This achievement is the culmination of two years of relentless dedication, commitment, and hard work from our team at Home-Start Lorn, and we couldn't be happier with the outcome. The project entailed a complete overhaul and redesign of two vacant shop fronts, transforming them into a new office space for our team and a family centre for local families.

Our vision for this area is to establish a safe and enjoyable environment where families can connect with one another to strengthen their support networks. It will also serve as a neutral setting for professionals to meet with families, along with a quiet space for one-on-one support and access to staff whenever needed. We plan to host weekly groups in this space, evolving them into workshops and classes that empower parents with skills in areas of interest, such as writing housing applications, cooking, crafting job applications, applying for college, trauma training, infant mental health, first aid, child development, and more. Importantly, all support will remain completely free for families, which is a vital aspect of the assistance we provide.

This project would not have been possible without our incredible partner agencies, who helped to fund the project, this included B&Q Foundation, The National Lottery, The Inner Wheel, and Dawsons Estate Agents, Drax, Oban Common Good, Stafford Trust, Suez Foundation and the CLLD Fund Administered through Argyll and Bute council.



Find out more about **Cromka Bake & Dine**:





Mulling over Mull!

Mull Easter Day

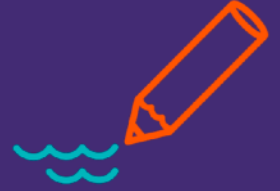
On 2nd April we had our first ever joint Oban and Mull Event in Craignure. Around 19 families made the ferry journey over to Mull with around 20 Mull families meeting together. The weather was shining down on us and it was a wonderful day from start to finish. A scavenger hunt lead the families along to the play park in Craignure where they were met with snacks, refreshments and a very special guest! Thanks to Salen Spar, Maggie Maclean, Laura MacKay and Tesco's in Oban for supplying donations of food, snacks, easter chocolates, wool and the bunny suit to make the day more special. We hope this will be an annual event going forward!



Splash and Swim

We have just started our new monthly group 'Splash and Swim'. Once a month we will hire a section of the Isle of Mull and Iona Community Pool to facilitate a free space for families to come and have a splash and swim. We had our first session on 15th April which was well attended and everyone had lots of fun!

Other news...



Volunteer update

This month Home-Start Lorn Co-ordinators Kelly and Saskia hosted a successful volunteer meeting at our new Family Centre. It was a great turnout with almost all of our Oban volunteers in attendance, this also included three brand new volunteers who have recently completed the training course.



The meeting involved a wholesome lunch, followed by a lovely catch up in the new Family Centre where we discussed plans for what the role of a new *Family Centre Volunteer* would be as well as how the current roles of our *Home Visiting Volunteers* was progressing.

Watch this space for some exciting updates! If you'd like to know more about the various volunteering roles with homestart please contact saskia@homestartlorn.org.uk or find out more on our website by going to the following link (or QR code):
<https://homestartlorn.org.uk/volunteering>



Facebook reinstatement

We recently had our Home-Start Lorn Facebook page reinstated after a 6 week period of wrongful suspension.

We were unfortunate enough to be caught up in a recent spate of Facebook page suspensions, that have so far affected more than twenty official Home-Start Facebook accounts who all had their page suspended (permanently deleted on some occasions) for allegedly "impersonating another brand".

This was due to a "Facebook AI bot" which scanned the branding and page names of business/charity pages and decided they were in breach of copyright (of Home-Start UK). It took approximately 6 weeks to finally be allocated a human contact at Facebook who was kindly able to reinstate the page, following our submission of proof showing that we were not in breach of any copyright but were in fact a branch of the Home-Start UK brand.



Other Home-start UK pages are continuing to argue their page suspensions and have enlisted the help of a local MP (in the Kirklees area) who will attempt to gain access to be able to ask questions to someone higher up in the Facebook hierarchy in order to get to a resolution to the situation.

If you'd like to follow us on Facebook we can be found at:
<https://www.facebook.com/homestartlorn/>



The life of a Trustee...

I first heard about Home-Start Lorn in spring, 2022. The work that the team of staff and volunteers undertake resonated strongly with my own childhood experiences, so I was immediately keen to become involved. Fortunately, my interview that summer went well, and I was able to become a trustee. Since then, I have continued to be impressed with the enormous dedication of staff and volunteers to helping families across our local communities. From the testimonials I have heard, these efforts are having a wide range of positive impacts: allowing breathing spaces for busy parents, connecting isolated people through fun activities and groups, referrals to other support agencies, and so much more.



As I write, we are eagerly preparing for the official opening of our latest bold development: 'The Home-Start Lorn Family Centre'. Co-located with the office on Stevenson Street, this new facility opens further opportunities to consolidate and diversify the support that we are able to offer to local families. It has been a huge task for the staff – on top of their extremely busy day jobs - but I am sure that everyone involved will be able to take great pride in this development.

I feel privileged to be associated with this wonderful enterprise and encourage anyone with a little time to consider becoming a volunteer or fellow trustee.

Axel Miller

If you'd like to find out more about volunteering as a trustee contact us today on admin@homestartlorn.org.uk or visit our website to find out more via the link or QR code: <https://homestartlorn.org.uk/>



Student Placement

We have been delighted to welcome Anita Goldie to the team who is a third-year social work student and has been welcomed into the team on placement for six months. Her previous roles have involved working with adults experiencing homelessness as well as being a wedding coordinator!

When asked about her placement, Anita said:

"I am loving being part of the team and very lucky to be joining at a very exciting time for the opening of the new Family Centre. I'm very excited to get to know some of the families Home-Start Lorn support and am pleased just being part of an amazing service for people."



Funding News



Funding Update

We are thrilled to announce that we have successfully secured funding from several generous sources:

- The Garfield Weston Foundation for our core service costs.
- The Argyll and Bute Early Years Fund, specifically for core service costs for children aged 0-3 years.
- Happy Healthy Homes, along with John Lewis vouchers, to acquire equipment that encourages play, healthy eating, and sleep.

We are immensely grateful for the support from our funders, as their contributions make our work possible. If you or someone you know is interested in learning more about donating towards our services or project costs, please feel free to get in touch.



And Finally....



Home-Start UK Trustee of The Year WINNER!

After being nominated by the team behind him at Home-Start Lorn, our chairperson, Mark and Manager Hannah travelled to London for this year's Home-Start UK Volunteer awards.

Home-Start UK created the following press release for the day that detailed what went on...

Oban Resident Wins National Trustee Award for Outstanding Dedication

Mark Feinmann, whose dedication to Home-Start Lorn has earned him Home-Start UK's Trustee Award. Far exceeding the traditional role of a trustee, Mark has taken on multiple key positions, from Treasurer and Interim Manager to Development Officer, ensuring the charity's survival and growth.

In the past few years, he has played a huge part in the formation of sister scheme Home-Start Lomond, seeing it through from its beginnings to its establishment as a full, independent Service.

The Home-Start UK Volunteer Awards, on Thursday, 27th March, honoured volunteers whose remarkable efforts have transformed family lives. Held at the prestigious RAC Club in London and hosted by TV personality and long-standing Home-Start ambassador Kirstie Allsopp, the awards celebrated powerful examples of Home-Start's support for families in communities across the UK.

After hosting the event, TV presenter Kirstie Allsop said: "It's been an absolute joy to come together and celebrate the incredible work of Home-Start's volunteers. They are the lifeblood of this wonderful charity, bringing warmth, empathy, and unwavering support to families when they need it most."

Following an incredible number of nominations, an expert panel of judges selected winners across eight categories, recognising volunteers for their compassion, commitment, and impact. Winners received a cash prize from the Marsh Charitable Trust, alongside a trophy and certificate.

Vivien Waterfield, Interim Chief Executive for Home-Start UK, said: "With over 9,000 Home-Start volunteers giving their time to support families across the UK, this event is a wonderful opportunity to celebrate their dedication. We are delighted to honour just some of these incredible individuals through our Volunteer Awards."

