

Making a difference for children
and families in **Lorn and Mull**
Social Impact Report
01/04/2015 - 31/03/2016



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Why Home-Start is needed:



A child's parents are their first care giver and their first and most important teacher. There is now an overwhelming body of evidence that a nurturing, loving and stable family and home environment strongly influences a child's future life chances.

Introduction

Having a secure, loving bond with a parent and their encouragement and support to develop good social, emotional and cognitive skills gives children a secure base from which to explore, learn, relate to others, and flourish.

But being a parent isn't always easy. Children whose parents are struggling to cope with problems such as illness, disability, poor mental health, poverty, homelessness and domestic violence, can all too often miss out on the love, routine and support that are so vital for their future.

The families we support often have complex and long term needs which create multiple risk factors for the children's development.

Our Services

Home-Start Lorn offers support for families tailored to their individual needs and circumstances:

- Home visiting support from volunteers with parenting experience – usually on a weekly basis
- Emotional support to help parents find ways to manage and resolve problems
- Direct support to children, including playing, listening, having fun, establishing feeding routines, encouraging development and providing opportunities for outings and treats
- Practical help, perhaps with budgeting, nutrition and meal planning, cooking and making the home safe
- In Mull we deliver Book-Bug sessions in various locations on the island and a Bumps & Babies group in Tobermory.
- Information and links to other organisations including health and educational services

- Attendance at meetings and moral support, especially in relation to dealing with case conferences and dealing with solicitors and court cases

Home-Start can:

- change how parents think and feel about themselves
- help them cope with the challenges they are facing
- support them to provide good early parenting

We offer a universal service, to all families whatever their background and need. Often we provide support to families who would not normally access support services, but just need a little bit of help to put the fun back in to parenting as well as families who are socially and economically excluded.

Home-Start services are rigorously quality assured through a Charity Commission endorsed system.



How Home-Start UK supports our evaluation:

Home-Start is committed to providing real evidence of the difference we make for families.

Over the last few years, we have invested in a range of research and evaluation tools in order to better understand the effect of our services on children's and families' lives.

Three years ago, we introduced a new on line tool to help local Home-Starts measure change in every family they support. This has enabled us to capture a wide range of data on children and family needs, the collective nature of support local Home-Starts provide and on the journeys of change that families go on during the time they are supported by a Home-Start volunteer.

This monitoring tool focuses on four core areas critical to family health and well being:

- Parenting skills
- Parental well being
- Child well being
- Household management

It provides real evidence of the positive difference that family support from a Home-Start volunteer makes to parents and children, among families who have complex and long term needs. It also demonstrates the highly challenging family contexts within which volunteers are operating.



Does what we do make a difference for the better?

Yes: Home-Start helps parents build better lives for their children.

Independent research published in 2013 after three years studying families showed:

- Children whose parents have had the support of a Home-Start volunteer have a better start in life than those who don't.
- Children are still benefiting up to three years after their Home-Start volunteer has stopped visiting.

Separate research into how well each family is coping and how resilient they are tells us families supported by Home-Start are less isolated, more resilient, show improved mental and physical health, see improvements in children's behaviour and well-being and have less stress and conflict in the family.

- The proportion of parents rating themselves as coping 'most of the time' rises from 29% at Home-Start's first visit to 45% after our support.
- Home-Start's support increases families' capacity to cope with the issues they are facing. At the beginning of support, the average level of coping for a family was 2. At the end of support the majority were coping at level 4 or above.

More detail about families supported by Home-Start Lorn can be found in the following pages.

Families supported by Home-Start Lorn report they are less isolated, show improved mental and physical health, see improvements in children's behaviour and well-being and have less stress and conflict in the family

Case Study

I was referred to Home-Start in May 2014 when Tommy was just 5 months old. Honestly, I wasn't very happy about it. My first child was removed from me when he was just over one and I have not been able to see him since then.

I was convinced this was just another way of saying I couldn't cope.

The coordinator came to see me and explained how Home-Start could help, but I didn't really pay much attention because I wasn't going to let a stranger in to my house. Well, I was then introduced to a volunteer and we arranged to meet the following week. I just wasn't at home when she visited. She did send texts and phone and eventually I agreed another date, but I just didn't answer the door. Unfortunately Tommy made some noise and so Home-Start contacted the health visitor because they were worried that he was at home alone.

Because I suffered from depression and panic attacks and hardly left the house and everybody was worried about Tommy my health visitor organised a meeting with all the organisations who were involved with me and they invited Home-Start as well.

At the meeting the Health Visitor kept saying that she would like Home-Start to get involved, but I still wasn't sure. Then the coordinator said that she was willing to try matching another volunteer, but only if I was really willing to work with Home-start because it wasn't fair to expect a volunteer to keep coming to my house and just be ignored because no matter what she said to the volunteer,

they would still feel that it was somehow their fault. That was the first time I realised somebody else felt like I did all the time. I agreed I would try again.

In February 2015 I was introduced to Fay.

She would text on a Sunday night and ask if I felt up to seeing her on the Monday. Most weeks I said yes. When I said 'no' she would phone me and we would just chat. When Fay first started coming, I still wouldn't go out to any groups. Then she suggested we try the Toy Cupboard, but go early before anyone else was there and she promised we could leave anytime I wanted to. To be honest, I didn't believe her but I said 'OK'. After 15 minutes, I was feeling terrible but before I could say anything Fay asked if I'd had enough? I almost cried, that was the first time someone had asked if I was OK. She said we should go before I felt worse. We walked back home and I know we chatted but I can't remember any of it because I just kept thinking 'She might be OK'.

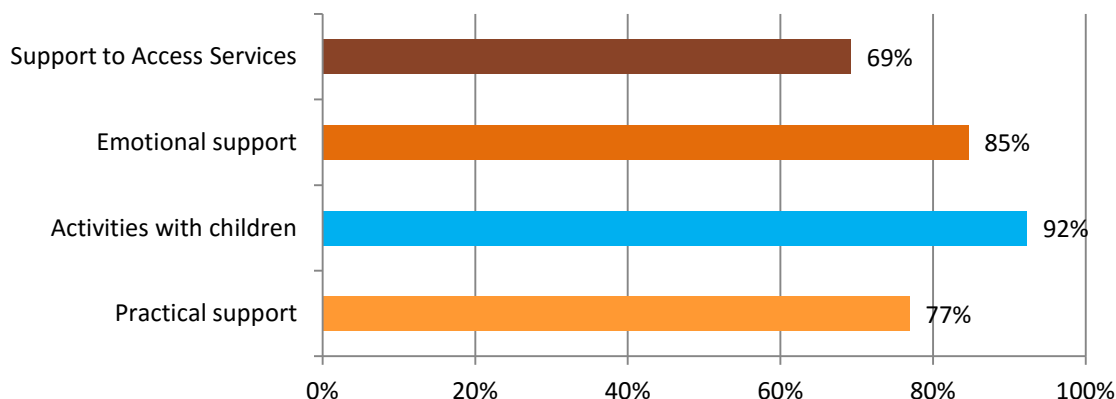
Most weeks we would go to the Toy Cupboard, Tommy loved it and I got used to it, but Fay would always spot when I was getting agitated and just come up to me and ask if it was time to go. She got me to do things which were uncomfortable for me, but I knew I could trust her, she's the first person who ever seemed to care about me. I don't have a volunteer anymore but I can now go to the Toy Cupboard and even Book-Bug on my own. Tommy & I are a happy family thanks to Home-Start and especially Fay. Thank You!

Our scheme

Home-Start Lorn is managed and funded locally. We are supported by the national organisation, Home-Start UK, which offers advice, training, information and guidance to the Home-Start network to ensure consistent and quality support for parents and children.

We tailor our support to each family and their specific needs, and we work with the whole family, providing a package of support, comprised of emotional and practical support, activities with children and help to access services.

How families have been supported



Last year we supported:

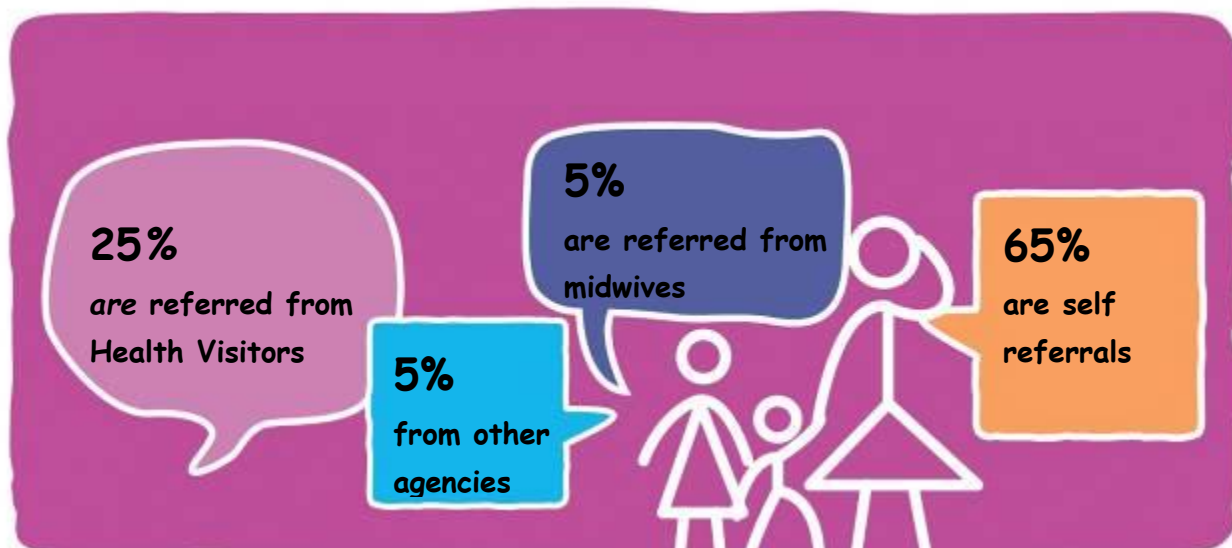
58
families



82
children

at a cost of £1200 per
family.





We have provided
33 volunteering
opportunities



The text is white on a dark purple background. Below the text is a white line-art icon of two stylized figures, one standing and one sitting, representing volunteering.



Working with families with multiple and complex needs

An analysis of over 58 families supported by Home-Start Lorn since March 2015 showed them to have a wide range of needs:

46%

of families
were

lonely and
isolated



35%

of families
had

Mental health
difficulties



25%

of families were
experiencing

Low self esteem



18%

of families
had

Poor physical
health



11%

were
experiencing

Domestic
abuse



20%

of children were
subject to

Child Planning
Meetings



14%

of families
needed help

Managing their
children's
behaviour



13%

of families
needed
support with
their

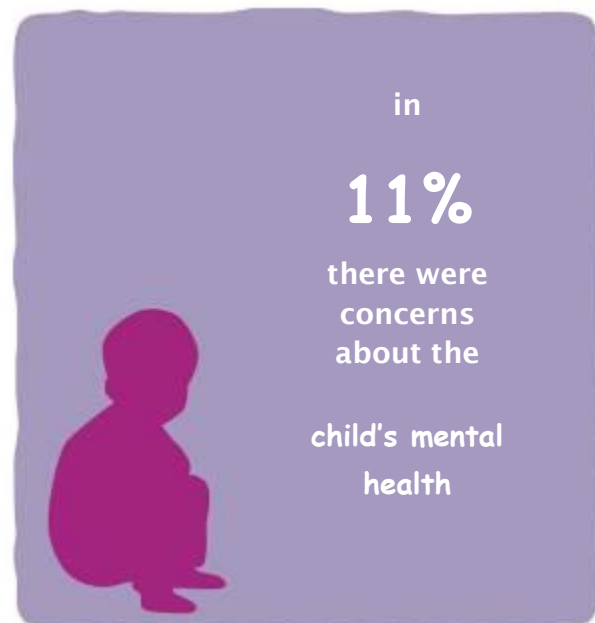
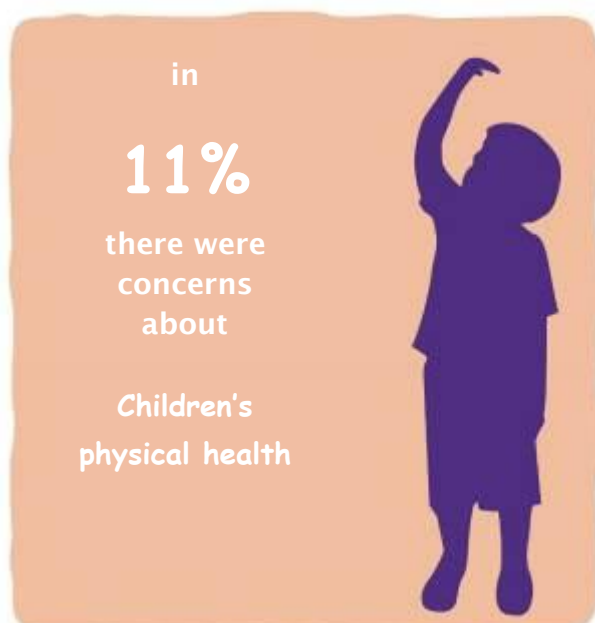
Children's
Development



11%

of families were looking after
a child/children with disabilities

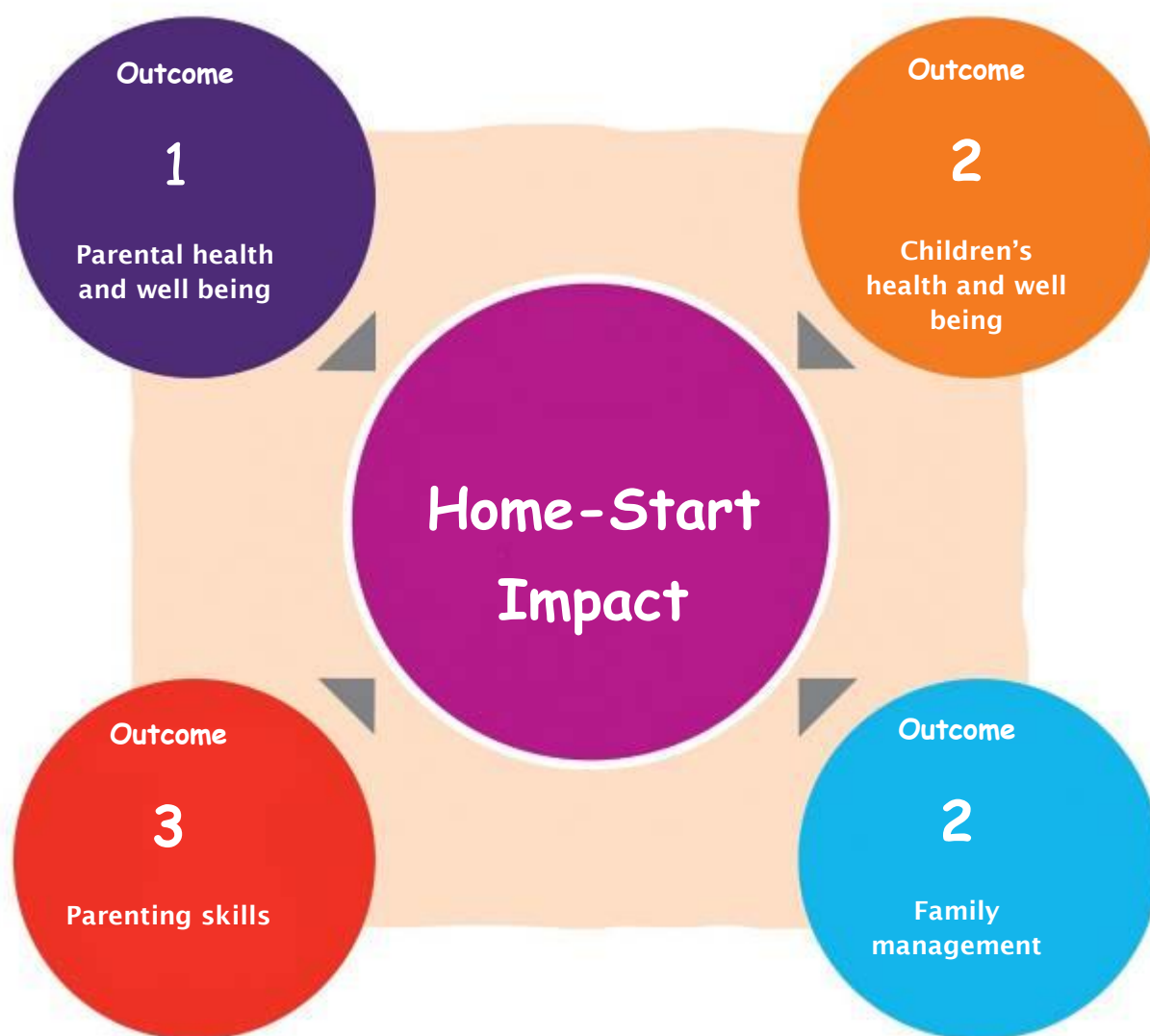




Better outcomes for children and families:

Key findings:

Families Home-Start Lorn supports made progress in all four areas of need: parental health and wellbeing, child health and well being, parenting skills and family management.



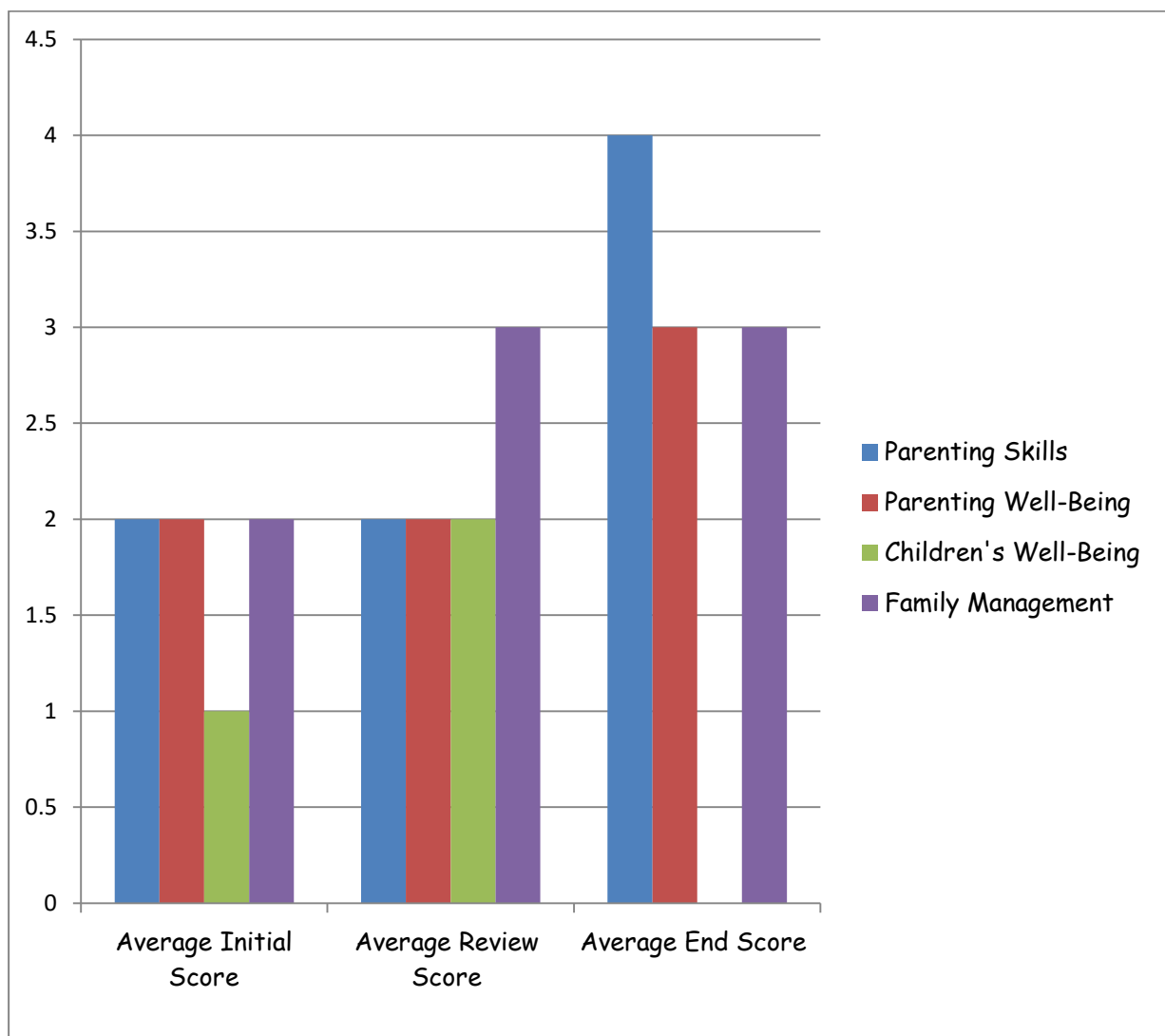
The impact of support

Home-Start has been working to develop a single impact measure that can capture the core goal or “essence” of our services. The measure developed is a parent coping scale from 0-5.

Every family’s needs were measured at the start, middle and end of support, and they scored themselves from 0 (not coping at all) to 5 (coping very well).

With support from Home-Start Lorn, families made progress in all four areas of need: Parenting skills, parental well-being, child well-being and family management. This chart shows the impact that support from Home-Start Lorn has had on these families.

Overall Progress Families Have Made



Note: All families who identified ‘Children’s Well-Being’ as a need are still being supported - therefore there is no average end score

Research Information

In 2013, newly published longitudinal research* showed that:



- children whose parents have had the support of a Home-Start volunteer have a better start in life than those who don't
- children are still benefitting up to three years after their Home-Start volunteer has stopped visiting

Researchers compared three groups of parents. In one, each family had a Home-Start volunteer. The two control groups had no volunteer support.

At the three year follow up, the Home-Start group showed more improvements than the two other control groups in the areas of:



- more responsive parenting
- children showing less temper and anger issues and less anxiety

The study showed that parents in the Home-Start group:



- had more positive changes in parental well-being, competence and behaviour
- parented more consistently
- there was less rejection of their children



*'Long-term changes in parenting and child behaviour after the Home-Start family support program', Jo M A Hermanns. Jessica J Ascher, Bonne J H Zijlstra, Peter J Hoffenaar, Majaa Dekovic, University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands, Utrecht University, The Netherlands

We are committed to improving the quality of our services so that every family we support has a powerful and positive experience with us. The process of evaluation will help us improve and develop our services.



If you would like to find out more about the work we do please contact

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Supported By: Argyll & Bute Council, The Big Lottery and The Robertson Trust