

# Home-Start Better Start

Delivered by **Home-Start Bradford District** from **January 2017 – June 2024**

**Home-Start Better Start is a peer support intervention, providing emotional and practical support to families with 0-3 year olds who are finding parenting challenging.**

**Non-judgmental, compassionate and confidential support is provided in the home by volunteer peer supporters who have lived-experience as parents/carers, and really care about helping other families live happier lives.**

## How it was delivered

Families were assessed by a Family and Volunteer Coordinator and matched with an appropriate trained volunteer. Families received weekly visits from their volunteer peer supporter to provide extra help around parenting, their own or their children's wellbeing, and practical household skills.

Volunteers were carefully selected for their parenting experience, friendliness, practical approach and understanding, and brought a flexible offer of support to families enabling them to bring about the changes they wanted to see in their lives. The volunteers also connected families with other services.

The project was deliberately flexible and non-prescriptive, both in the nature of the support offered and the length of engagement with each family.

**191**

families had their own volunteer to support them for an average of 22 weeks



**94%**

of anticipated families were supported by the project



**131**

onward referrals were made for families to other organisations for further support



An amazing **85** volunteers provided 1537 visits to families

**33%** of volunteers leaving went on to education or employment

## Why this project was developed

Families in the Better Start Bradford area are more likely to be living in challenging socio-economic situations which can cause multiple social issues and health risk factors for adults and children.

Home-Start Better Start provided home-based social support around child development and parental wellbeing to intervene early and help parents provide a stable, healthy home environment for young children.

## The project aimed to

- Improve parents'/carers' ability to cope with stressors in family life, providing the foundations for better parenting skills and confidence, leading to improved child development and wellbeing in the long-term.
- Enable parents in difficult circumstances to provide a healthier home environment for their young children.
- Link parents into wider community support to reduce isolation and improve their social support networks.

## Impact and findings\*

- On average, families were supported for 6 months, which suggests they valued the support given. Most families were assessed as having needs related to parental wellbeing, and coping scores supported this finding as the most acute need.
- The project maintained a consistently high number of volunteers over the contracting period, even during and after the pandemic.
- It is important to make sure that volunteers represent as wide a Bradford population as possible to meet the family's needs.
- Start for Life and Dads Matters funding has enabled Home-Start Bradford District to deliver a dads and male carers element district-wide until March 2025.
- A mum who was supported by a Home-Start Better Start volunteer in 2020, when her twins were born prematurely, has now got a part-time job as a Home-Start Family Co-ordinator. Thanks to the experience she'd had, she wanted to help support others once her children started nursery.

\*This section includes information from both the evaluation report/s and project

