

Home Start Case Vignette

There are 31 Home-Starts across Scotland. Each Home-Start is designed around the needs of their local communities, but all follow the same philosophy. At the heart of our service is building positive, trustful, and purposeful relationships with our families. We recognise that in line with 'The Promise' that it is the quality of these relationships that will determine the success of the support that we provide. Each family is unique, and our role is to provide flexible and responsive support that will enable the whole family to thrive. Responsive relationships help us to deal with stress, regulate our emotions and build hope for the future. We take a strengths-based, trauma-informed approach to ensure that we have a lasting, positive impact on the development of children and on the health and welfare of every family that we support.

Central to our service is the home visiting support provided by our volunteers. Positive infant mental health is created and supported by the development of caring, consistent, and sensitive interactions between babies and their primary care givers. Home-Start's support ensures that babies and children will be growing up in environments that are health promoting and supportive. Children and babies thrive when Home-Start helps to lighten the load on their parents.

The following case study shares the experience of one of our families who were referred to Home-Start pre-birth.

Mum's older children were in kinship care and her unborn baby was on the child protection register. It was uncertain if the baby would return home with mum after she was born. Home-Start played a central role in the support package that was co-created with this family. Time was spent pre-birth building up a relationship with mum. A strengths-based approach was taken to build her confidence and support her to find her voice. Once baby was born an intensive package of support was put in place with Home-Start providing three visits to the family at home each week. Home-Start provided a supportive listening ear, helping to reassure and build mum's confidence over the weeks. We supported her to understand her baby's cues and to read, sing and play together. Mum summed up this support by saying "Youse have been fantastic, youse have been great. I have liked the company and getting to know you. It's been really good. I have no been as stressed".

Mum engaged really well with our 1-1 home visiting service, and this gradually tapered down to one visit a week. Mum was still very isolated, so we encouraged her to take part in group activities through our weekly summer programme. This programme enabled our families to come together and enjoy a healthy lunch while exploring local green spaces. Families enjoyed a wide variety of activities which promoted the development of social capital and wellbeing for the whole family. Mum reported making new friends and much improved mental health. Mum found great comfort in being able to share her story with other families "I know how everyone feels and we can relate to one another. Now I know that

we are not the only family that is struggling, and this makes a massive difference.” This new confidence has meant that Mum has now been much more open and honest to the barriers that inhibit her from making some changes to her life. We are now able to support this family and mum more effectively and she now attends our supported play club for mums and pre-school children. “I am learning a better way to live at the moment. Coming to group makes a real difference to me”.