


# HOME START

East Sussex

## Impact Report 2022-23

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Registered Charity No: 1108855

# Helping to keep East Sussex families safe and well since 1996

Home-Start East Sussex provides one-to-one support and group work to encourage and develop safety, confidence and independence. The charity supports local families and survivors of domestic abuse to build stronger, more resilient relationships, encouraging them to make decisions, act for themselves and take back control of their lives.



## 2022-23 services



### **Lotus Domestic Abuse Recovery Programme**

For females who have been affected by domestic abuse, but who are now away from the relationship and feel safe. The group empowers clients to process their experiences, rebuild confidence and keep themselves and their family safe from abuse in the future.

#### **Lotus Blossom**

The programme trains those who have attended our Lotus programme to become peer supporters to help our groups in the next phase of their recovery.

### **Who's in Charge Programme**

For parents/carers of children whose behaviour is violent, abusive or seeming beyond control. The group helps parents/carers to reduce and overcome guilt and shame whilst rebuilding and strengthening relationships, and exploring options of meaningful consequences.

#### **One-to-one IDVA support**

Supplementary support for those affected by domestic abuse with the additional challenges they may be experiencing. Supporting victim-survivors to access any specialist support services they may need, create effective safety plans and support their children through their anxieties. In addition, we launched a new IDVA service to trans and non-binary victim/survivors

### **Being Family Programme**

For parents/carers of babies under one. The programme includes a six-week group which aims to improve their confidence in their role as a parent by providing a space to speak about the changes and challenges that becoming a parent can bring, whilst helping parents to build friendships with other parents of young babies. Clients that join the group have the opportunity to be matched with a local volunteer for 1:1 support.





**2022-23 was a year of change for us all. Three prime ministers, two monarchs, a cost-of-living crisis, and for Home-Start East Sussex, some significant staffing and service changes.**



2022-23 followed the second year of COVID and despite the risk of covid subsiding, we have learned that most of our clients primarily still want on-line or phone support rather than face-to-face in the community or at home. There has been some limited return to face-to-face support, but most of our services have remained online to meet client demand. **I thank the staff and volunteers who adapted to this client need so successfully.**

In September we wished Services Manager, Alex, farewell. She had been with us for ten years starting as a home-visiting volunteer and working her way up the ranks. She is now heading up another local charity and we wish her well. Clare replaced her in January and who has already made a valuable contribution.

**Being Family** continued to struggle. Funders made it clear that volunteer home-visiting was no longer an attractive prospect for them. We also faced dwindling referrals as other services expanded their local family support offer. Consequently, we had to make the very difficult decision to close this core Home-Start programme, meaning we had to say goodbye to our programme coordinator Danielle, as well as our dedicated team of volunteers. I want to thank our volunteers who have freely given their time and compassion over the last 26 years, and to the families we have supported from whom we have learned so much. We remain open to providing volunteer support to families in the future as it has routinely produced excellent outcomes.

Our new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Co-ordinator continued to ensure our services are welcoming and relevant to marginalised communities. We have invested in developing our understanding of the needs of the LGBTQ+ community, primarily through feedback from our LGBTQ+ clients and partnership with Brighton Switchboard. We are now pleased to offer 1-2-1 Independent Domestic Violence Adviser support to any trans and non-binary person that needs it.

**Lotus** continues to provide a safe and effective space for women recovering from domestic abuse and in 2022-23 we were able to run nine groups with wraparound IDVA support.

**Lotus Blossom** programme received its first year of funding. The coordinator focused on service development and we hope that the lived experience of our peer supporters will be the bedrock of this programme providing an opportunity for personal growth, to share valuable knowledge and to obtain transferable skills for their futures.

Our successful **Who's in Charge?** programme remains very much in demand. Securing more funding for this service is priority, to ensure that we can substantially reduce our three-year waiting list for this service.

### ***Moving forward***

As we enter 2023-24 we recognise that closing Being Family- which incorporated the core Home-Start volunteer home-visiting service- raises questions about the charity's identity. In quarter one of 2023-24 the trustees and staff team will focus on reviewing what the charity is for and where we want to go.

Kate Lawrence,  
Chief Executive Officer



“

**I honestly don't think words can describe how grateful I am for your support.**

**It still makes me emotional knowing I get so much support from you and the whole Home Start team. You make a huge difference, I need you to know this, and I do hope this re-assures you in the fact that what you do is life-changing. ”**



# Our Team



Kate Lawrence  
Chief Executive



Clare Rowland  
Service Manager



Jordan Hollis  
Senior IDVA



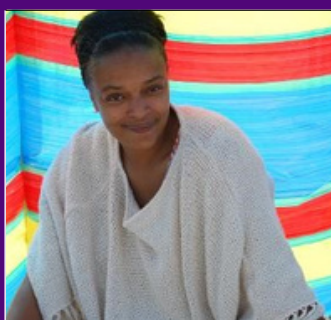
Emily Hall  
Communications and Fundraising  
Manager



Roisin Nellis  
Services Administrator



Oona Knapp  
Domestic Abuse Advisor



Jude Griffiths  
Whole family IDVA



Jo Beagley  
Whole family IDVA



Keira Smalley  
IDVA, EDI & projects coordinator

## Staff who sadly left HSES this year



Egle Kelpsaite  
Family Support & Volunteer  
Coordinator



Alex Salmon  
Client Safety and QA Manager



Danielle Brown  
Family Support & Volunteer  
Coordinator

## Our people



**10 employees**



**9 Trustees**



**16 Volunteers**

**1 mission**

Working towards the increased safety, confidence and independence of disadvantaged families living in the county. We support local families to build stronger, more resilient relationships through targeted services that encourage clients to make decisions, act for themselves and take back control of their lives





## Successes

Increased the number of Lotus programmes delivered from five to nine., thanks to extra funding from the Sussex Police Commissioner's Office.

Exceeded the target number of clients supported on both the Lotus and Who's in Charge? programmes.

Trained our first Peer Support Mentors for the new Lotus Blossom service.

We are proud of the positive outcomes and feedback from clients on their experience with our services. 98% of clients who completed an evaluation form said they felt their risk of harm had reduced as a result of engaging with HSES.

## Challenges

Had to plan for the closure of the Being Family Service, including the home-visiting volunteer support due to lack of demand leading to lack of funding.

Demand for Who's in Charge? programme increased by a staggering 110% over the year, leading to a three-year waiting list. Actively seeking more funding to meet demand.

Large increase in the number of Who's in Charge? clients assessed as high risk of being seriously hurt. Extra staff training was organised and a review of referral pathways was carried out.



# Thank you


We would like to dedicate this year's report to our wonderful Being Family home-visiting volunteers.

We have sadly said goodbye to them now with the closure of the Being Family service. The home-visiting service had been supporting families in the county since 1996.

Volunteers worked through incredibly difficult times when the pandemic hit, and we appreciate their dedication, flexibility and willingness to help struggling families.

We are sure the families who received their support will not forget how their Home-Start volunteer helped them.

We wish each and every one of them the best of luck. Our hope is that we are able to offer volunteer home-visiting support to families in the future as it has proved to make such a difference.







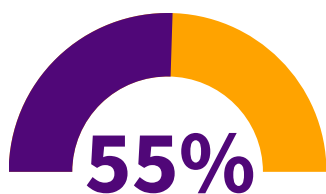
# Our reach in numbers

**205**  
individuals  
supported  
in total

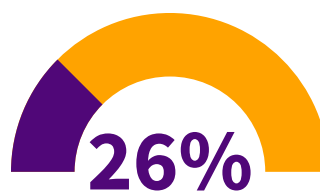
**182**  
parents supported

**366**  
children supported  
indirectly

Home-Start East Sussex uses a trauma-informed approach to all service provision and we support clients with a variety of additional needs. Of those supported this year



reported that they were living with a disability



lived in the lowest 20% deprivation deciles



were aged 25 or under



were from Black and minoritized communities



disclosed they were from the LGBT+ community

# Inclusivity

HSES ensures that equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) informs the range and breadth of our work via our EDI Coordinator who encourages staff, volunteers and trustees to be open and challenge assumptions, biases and prejudices to help develop deep, trusting, mutually beneficial relationships with minoritised communities.

This year we launched an IDVA service for trans and non binary victims of domestic abuse living in East Sussex and Brighton & Hove.

As a charity primarily supporting women subjected to gendered violence, EDI has been a complex and sometimes challenging journey for us. We aim to have a fair and inclusive charity culture that acknowledges :

- (i) our duty of care towards our Lotus and Lotus Blossom domestic abuse recovery group female beneficiaries, most of whom have been subjected to male violence and often have a continued fear of men/ maleness.
  - (ii) women from minoritised ethnic communities who, for cultural reasons can only attend single sex groups.
- Therefore we have a Single Sex Policy for Lotus and Lotus Blossom, recognising that full inclusivity for all services is not always the most equitable approach.

We continued to work with Brighton Switchboard which led to increased numbers of clients accessing our services from the LGBTQ+ community.



Home-Start East Sussex is a supporter of the Real Living Wage

Home-Start East Sussex is a Disability Confident employer. We believe that people with disabilities and long term health conditions should have equal opportunities to fulfil their potential and realise their aspirations.



This year Home-Start East Sussex pledged to follow The Halo Code, which protects the rights of our black employees and volunteers to wear their natural hairstyles in the workplace.

HSES staff attended neurodiversity training during Neurodiversity Celebration Week. In 2023-24 HSES plans to develop learning and improve systems around supporting clients with neurodiversity, physical disabilities, and complex mental health conditions.

We have been building relationships with Diversity Lewes, Across Rainbows, LOSRAS, and Seaford Hard of Hearing Club.

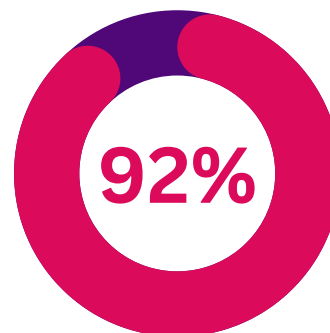




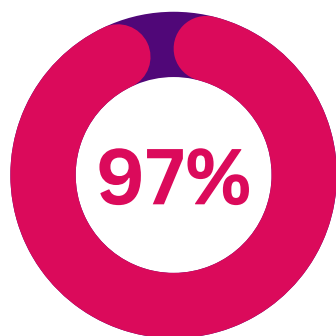
# Feedback from clients



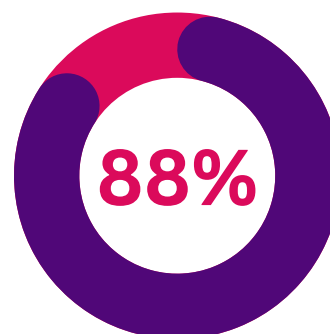
**felt their mental health and wellbeing had improved**



**reported that their social support had improved**



**felt their risk of harm had reduced**



**felt that the service had a positive impact on their children**



**reported that the service had a positive impact on their relationship with their partner**



**Overall positive outcomes**

*Across all of our five services.*

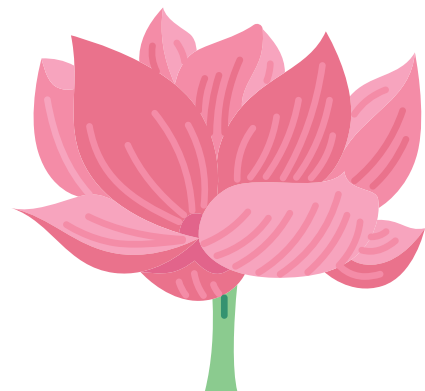
“

**I learned that there was more in my relationship that was wrong than I thought. I also learned ways of coping. Finally, I am no longer embarrassed and am open about what happened to me to raise the awareness.**

”







# Lotus Domestic Abuse Recovery Groups

This year the programme supported:

We developed our Lotus Domestic Abuse Recovery groups in line with SafeLives Leading Lights quality standards- the gold star in domestic abuse services.

The six-week group supports female victim/survivors in their recovery journey, with a focus on understanding experiences, gaining knowledge, and continuing to progress forward. The space also provides clients with tools to keep themselves and their children safe in future.

Sessions cover:

- Types of abuse and examples of behaviours
- Early warning signs/red flags from potential abusers
- Emotional abuse/gaslighting
- Co-parenting with an abusive partner
- Creating an action plan to minimise the ongoing impact of our experiences
- Assertive communication
- Looking after your wellbeing

The Lotus Programme was developed in 2019 and has supported a total of 342 victim/survivors of domestic abuse to date.



across 9 programmes.

Direct feedback from clients revealed that:

**100%** felt more confident to recognise different types of domestic abuse

**100%** felt more likely to have a future free from domestic abuse

**92%** felt their wellbeing had improved

**98%** the group had helped them to plan to make positive changes in their life

**99%** felt less isolated after meeting the other females in the group

“ I'm starting to take a bit of power back. I'm not so anxious any more. It feels really empowering to have boundaries in place. ”





“

**I know how to deal with them [my children] better, I learnt not to give in to them and be strong, I feel the children want to spend time with me now I'm less stressed** ”



# Who's in Charge? Groups

This year we supported:



Feedback revealed that:

**100%** felt **more confident** about their role as a parent

**94%** felt they were **more likely to be able to manage their child's behaviour** in the future.

**100%** felt they had a **better understanding** of the many **reasons behind their child's behaviour**

**83%** said their **relationship with their challenging child(ren)** was better.

**100%** felt **less isolated** after meeting parents in a similar situation.



Home-Start's Who's in Charge? Groups offers support and strategies to any parent/carer experiencing abusive or violent behaviour from their children and teens (aged 8-17). During the 9 week programme the programme works to reduce feelings of blame, isolation and shame common to parents experiencing abuse from their child/ren. The group also works to improve communication and to rebuild broken family dynamics.

Sessions cover:

- The multi-causal nature of abuse
- Entitlement and responsibility
- Introducing meaningful consequences for the child whose violent behaviour is likely to escalate when attempting to apply them
- Anger and common myths
- Communicating assertively
- Wellbeing, self-care and goal setting



“**Group leader and assistants were great - all were very suited to running a programme of this nature. Was nice to 'meet' other parents who are in a similar situation to myself**







“As a new parent I really struggled with the changes to my life but it has been so helpful to talk to someone that has had children and can normalise how I feel.”



# Being Family Programme



## We supported:

18

parents

with

18 babies

11% from the LGBTQ+ community

across 3 group programmes

Feedback revealed that:

93%

reported feeling **more confident about their role as a parent**

87%

felt **less isolated** after meeting other parents

93%

felt **their wellbeing had improved.**

100%

had a **better idea about how to support their young baby.**

Our Being Family programme consists of a six-week online group and 1:1 volunteer support for parents/carers of babies under 12 months old.

The programme supports parents/carers with the changes and challenges that the arrival of a new baby may bring.

The group element of the programme covers:

- Sharing stories of how the baby came into the family
- Identity changes associated with becoming a parent
- Wellbeing and adjusting to a new routine and family demands
- Bonding and attachment
- Co-parenting and other supportive relationships
- Learning and development activities for babies

“

**I've learned not to feel guilty about accepting support. In the past I have felt like a bad mother asking for help, but reaching out for support is really important.**

”



*Due to a lack of funding and ongoing low referral numbers, it was with a heavy heart that we announced the closure of our Being Family Service (including the core Home-Start home-visiting volunteer support) at the end of the year*

“

**The validation and understanding I've received from my IDVA is overwhelming. I feel so much more positive about the process of my recovery than I did initially.**

”



# One-to-one IDVA support



Alongside our group-based support programmes for victim/survivors of domestic abuse, Home-Start East Sussex continues to deliver one-to-one support. Staff prioritise reducing risk and clients lead in identifying goals and the order and pace that they would like to address them. Our one-to-one support is primarily intended to supplement our recovery groups as we recognise that sometimes clients might need more targeted support to assist with continued recovery.

One-to-one support is offered for 6 or 12-weeks and is accessed via phone call, video call, text or email.

We support clients with:

- Safety planning to minimise risk in the home
- Navigating the criminal justice system
- Understanding and preparing for family court processes
- Emotional support
- Parenting children who have experienced abuse
- Making professional referrals to other supportive services
- Maintaining relationships with external agencies (Children's Services/ housing/ solicitors etc.)

We are also able to advocate for clients with external agencies through: writing letters of support, attending meetings, supporting at hearings and contacting professionals on behalf of a client.



Feedback revealed that:

**97%** felt their **risk of harm had reduced**

**96%** felt their **mental health and wellbeing had improved**

**87%** reported that the service has had a **positive impact on their children**

**71%** reported that the service has had a **positive impact on their partner**

“

**It was so beneficial to get the direct support needed, and felt understood**

”



# Our Supporters

We'd like to say a huge thank you to each of our funders throughout the year. Your generosity has enabled vital services to continue to support families experiencing challenging times in East Sussex.



White Stuff donated a quarter of their sales to Home-Start East Sussex from the opening day of their Brighton store. The donation comes as part of a nationwide package of support to Home-Start UK, by White Stuff, which is designed to empower women to grow, thrive and feel equipped to determine their own future.



With generous donations from:  
M & J Construction & Roofing  
ND, DOC, JT and Volunteer Gift Aided expenses



# Thank you Natwest Circle Fund



In 2021, a partnership between SafeLives and Natwest was set up to provide financial support to victims of abuse, and to help survivors move forward and promote recovery and resilience. Since then, we have gratefully received two grants from this partnership, which has enabled us to provide valuable extra financial support to our clients.

Our specialist team of IDVA's were encouraged through their client work, to identify where these funds could provide additional support to meet the varying needs of our clients. The criteria within which these funds must be used, were outlined by SafeLives priorities; Crisis Intervention, Establishing Safety and promoting Recovery & Resilience. Enabled entirely by the provision of the fund, we were so pleased to be able to provide the following items to support our clients on their journey:

## Examples of what the fund provided to HSES clients:

- CCTV doorbell
- Door/window locks
- Replacement doors
- Personal alarms
- Moving costs
- Cost of running the International Women's Day coffee morning as an opportunity for ex clients to network with more survivors of DA as part on their recovery journey.
- Access to British Sign Language course level 1 to support eldest son who is partially deaf
- Taxi for child to get to SEMH school whilst waiting for other funding
- Laptop to enable client to go back to studying
- Camera equipment for client's small business in order to gain financial independence from ex-partner



“  
**Oh I will be so pleased to have a doorbell with a camera, I think I will feel so much more at ease!**”

“  
**Thank you so so much!! I am so happy I could cry. I had no idea how I would afford this but it will make such a big difference.**”

**Thank you**

Charlotte joined us from the University of Brighton on a four-week media placement. During her time with us, Charlotte focussed on our social media pages. She conducted research into similar sized charities' accounts, TikTok, and created content for our channels. The content was of an excellent standard and we were delighted when Charlotte agreed to stay on with us as a social media volunteer.



**“ Never forget the difference you make ”**




**Trustees**



We are lucky to have excellent trustees with a wealth of experience who give their time freely.

**Thank you for your hard work towards making sure Home-Start East Sussex continues to be able to support vulnerable families across the county.**





## Quiz Night

In November 2022, we ran a Quiz night at Lewes Rugby Club, the first in person event since the pandemic. From ticket sales and raffle tickets, we raised a grand total of £750.



The raffle was generously supported by local firms Harveys, White Stuff Brighton, Paradise Park, Plumpton Races, Sanah's Mixing Bowl, Montezuma chocolates and Estee Lauder. We are thankful to them all for their support and to Lewes Rugby Club for hosting the event. We would also like to thank Andy Salmon for taking on the role of quiz master, including writing the quiz himself.



## International Women's Day

8th March 2023



inspiration shared  
 unity power comfort  
 share strength equality peace  
 change hope empowered journey  
 celebrate love sisterhood joy women  
 support growth  
 self-care experiences



Keira and Emily hosted an event in Eastbourne for clients who had attended our Lotus programme. The event was an opportunity for the clients to connect with more people who have been through similar experiences to them. As part of our commitment to creating sustainable services, we continue to promote recovery opportunities after our six-week Lotus programme ends. It is for this reason we have created our [Lotus Blossom Peer Support group](#), details of which will be included within our 2023-2024 impact report.

# Our plans/aims for 2023-24

We will be reviewing our charity objectives and our strategic plan.

Retain our SafeLives Leading Lights quality standard- the gold star for domestic abuse services.

Launch the Lotus Blossom groups with our trained peer support mentors who are ex clients of Lotus.

Secure funding to increase the number of Lotus and Who's in Charge? groups in order to meet the demand.

Develop the Who's in Charge programme to meet the changing needs of clients being referred.

Develop more linked services.

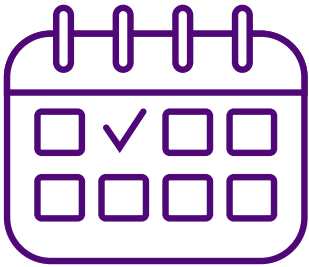




# Get Involved



You can support people to live in a safe and nurturing family and to enjoy a positive, fulfilling life in the following ways.



## Regular donations

Set up weekly, monthly, quarterly or yearly donations at no extra cost via our [TotalGiving page](#).

## Hold a fundraising event

A time-bound challenge, a talent show, a quiz night or a sponsored walk - whatever you love doing, do it for a good cause! Set up a fundraising page via our [TotalGiving page](#) to stay on track of donations and share your progress with supporters.



## Support while you shop

Sign up to [Easy Fundraising](#) to donate at no extra cost whilst shopping online.

## Leave a gift in your will

Under UK tax law, legacies to charities are exempt from inheritance tax. Supporting Home-Start East Sussex in your will is an amazing way for your generosity to last beyond your own lifetime.

