



4 January 2013

Please find below the response to the Budget Consultation from Home-Start Schemes in Birmingham.

Please do not hesitate contact Julie Garbett should you require any further information or clarification.

Email: jgarbett@home-start.org.uk

Office number: 0121 783 0566

Questions to the Directorate regarding proposed budget cuts

- How are the directorate planning to manage the transition of de-commissioning of voluntary sector services? Many of the vulnerable families we work with are subject to child protection plans and Home-Start is part of the support package around the child. Should Home-Start be de-commissioned, is it assumed that we just stop the support to these families where there are children who are potentially at risk?
- What risk assessment has been carried out by the directorate to ensure the most vulnerable families and in particular children, will be kept safe?
- How does the directorate envisage being able to maintain contact with Children and Families who do not engage well with statutory services, many of whom would receive weekly contact from Home-Start?
- In the Business Plan and Budget Proposal 2013+ document, page 21 states; “ We believe that community and voluntary organisations, co-operatives and social enterprises can deliver the very best services” – why is it then that the Voluntary Sector funding is proposed to take the greatest reduction of 50% of its funding?

Potential for re-structuring of Home-Start to accommodate a reduction in funding

- Amalgamation of 8 Home-Start schemes into 4 quadrant areas of the city, with the intention to cover city-wide. This would reduce overheads and expand delivery of the service ensuring equality across the city.

Proposal for change of Family Support across the City.

The current service to families delivered through Children’s Centres could be re-structured to enhance strong partnership working to offer a strengthened quality service to families across the city. This could be achieved by the family support offered through the Children’s Centres being delivered by Home-Start in a more cost effective and adaptable way. For example; if Home-Start was based in Children’s Centres and took on the responsibility of family support, there would be immediate reduction in overheads and an increase in skill, experience and knowledge and participation of volunteers in the Children’s Centre and surrounding communities. Home-Start would need to consider its current service delivery to adapt and meet the needs of the service specification agreed for Children’s Centres.

Service Impact if de-commissioned

Number of families funded to support by CYPF & PCT – 537

Number of children supported from 537 families – 1611

Number of children supported with a Child Protection Plan – 160 per year

Number of hours of support per family, per year – 156 minimum
Equivalent to 83,772 hours of support across the city

Impact on staffing and organisation – 27 redundancies, closure of 8 organisations

Added Value loss to CYPF

Additional funding raised by Home-Start in Birmingham 2011/12 was £304,126

Families supported through additional funding sources - in excess of 250

Children supported through additional funding sources – in excess of 750

Impact on staffing – 12 additional redundancies

Cost Comparison

Home-Start receives £330,000 per annum, from CYPF. This is equivalent to £204 per child, per year or £3.93 per week.

Local authority costs for a child in foster care is £499 per week.

Local authority costs for a child in residential care is £2500 per week.

The long term cost impact of preventative care within Home-Start is immeasurable.

QUESTIONS TO REFERRERS

What impact would losing the Home-Start service on your work with families?

- Losing the home start service would be a massive loss to the families that I work with. Home start provides a non-judgemental and supportive service to some of the most vulnerable families in Birmingham. This would have a potentially devastating effect when trying to support families with young children and potentially increase their vulnerability. *(Health Visiting Team)*
- Home start is a valuable resource for families with young children that is seen by service users as “non- statutory” therefore it provides a proactive service that safeguards children, and informs core groups and core assessments, without seeming overly heavy handed to those it is helping. To lose such a service would head towards further polarisation between families and professionals and may leave children at risk of harm. *(Principle Officer for CP & Review, East Safeguarding Team)*
- Home-Start contribution to Core Groups and the support provided has been enormous; this would be lost as there is already a lack of support for families. *(Social Worker)*
- It would have a significant impact, particularly with the more vulnerable families and those families where the children are subject to CP plans. *(Children’s Centre Manager)*
- For the vulnerable families that find it difficult to engage with other professionals we would risk not having them engage at all without the unique approach that Home-Start has. *(Deputy Manager, Children’s Centre)*
- It would have a big impact because Home-Start support and observe families for a longer period of time and are able to observe day to day living. A health visitor does not have this perspective or relationship and would not otherwise have information on day to day living of families referred. *(Health Visitor)*
- In many cases this support prevents depression escalating, a minor crisis becoming a significant event or parenting problems developing into safeguarding issues. *(Health Visiting Team)*

What impact do you think it would have on the families?

- Families would feel less supported (*Health Visiting Team*)
- Those that currently fall into Home-Start remit would have no comparable service to assist them in their own homes. (*Principle Officer for CP & Review, East Safeguarding Team*)
- Families would be more isolated; lose valuable role models and mentors. (*Children's Centre Manager*)
- Home-Start would be irreplaceable. There is a lack of support service available for families and the strength of Home-Start is that it is more user friendly than the statutory agencies. (*Social Worker*)
- Leaving many more vulnerable families without a service, one service does not fit all. (*Deputy Manager, Children's Centre*)
- The impact of not having this service would see the IFST trying to fill that gap on cases that could be closed with the on-going support of Home-Start. (*IFST Manager*)
- I jointly work with a number of families with Home-Start and the supportive services that are in place for the families, I simply could not provide. There are no other services that provide this to the same standard that Home-Start do. (*Family Support Worker, Children's Centre*)

Are there other services that you would refer families to if Home-Start was no longer available? If so which ones.

- The children's centre however, services provided by these are often target driven and do not have as much flexibility for an individualised package of care. (*Health Visiting Team*)
- Children's centres, Family Action but none would be a like for like replacement. (*Principle Officer for CP & Review, East Safeguarding Team*)
- No other services offer a service even similar to Home-Start. (*Children's Centre Manager*)
- The IFST at Ladywood does not know of any other service of this nature that could support families and if we did we would use them too. However, in the current climate they too would be under threat. (*IFST Manager*)
- No, nothing to replace the unique Home-Start service. (*Health Visitor*)

What are the benefits for a family being supported by Home-Start in comparison to other services available. I.e; What does Home-Start give to families that they would not get elsewhere?

- Home-Start provides individualised packages of support. The service has a focus on supporting families at times of crisis and long term support. Home-Start volunteers provide longer time periods with the family. They also have a wide range of activities within the local community. Home-Start work in a collaborative manner

with all agencies. They are child focused and always ensure that the voice of the child is heard. *(Health Visiting Team)*

- For families who are not well motivated or suspicious, support in their own home from a volunteer seems to be seen as sometimes the only way in and such families may not engage with other services requiring more of them leading to potential risk of harm for children. *(Principle Officer for CP & Review, East Safeguarding Team)*
- They can embed good routines, advice etc. long after other agencies withdraw, they engage with families who are often 'hard to reach' and prevent re referral to statutory services. *(Manager, Children's Centre)*
- Going into the home, building relationships particularly if the parents have low self-esteem, isolated and not joining groups and therefore no socialising, which impacts on the children. The intimacy of the support, ie; 1 to 1 support is less threatening than a statutory service offers. *(Health Visitor)*
- I am not aware that many other services could adapt the user approach that Home-Start adopts, which is non-threatening and supportive. Its community approach and the ability to direct families to other resources is something that would be hard to replace. *(Social Worker)*
- If the service was to stop, I honestly do not know where I would refer to, it would require maybe two agencies to meet all the services and support, that Home-Start provide. *(Family Support Worker, Children's Centre)*

COMMENT FROM; Team Manager, Safeguarding Team - This is terrible news and will really impact on the children that we work with in the community. An example of this is the 'M' case which was a single mother with twin babies with no family support or friends to assist her. The support that Home-Start gave to 'M' and the children was of an excellent standard and without this support it is my opinion that the children would have been placed in foster care.

QUESTIONS TO FAMILIES

What difference has Home-Start made to your family, especially the children?

- Made me motivated to get out and about with my son, improving his well-being and socialisation. I became more confident with the support and having a volunteer coming to my house made a big difference and helped me get out. Receiving advice and support on a weekly basis. I am now working.
- I had no confidence and was isolated, my volunteer has been through everything with me, all the way through, has helped with boundaries and behaviour with the children and helped make things happen.

Is there anything different about the support you receive from Home-Start to services you receive from other agencies?

- Yes, more personal and hands on, coming to the house and not having to make an appointment to see someone. My volunteer offered emotional support and re-assurance that I was doing the right things with my son.
- Home-Start is the only agency that have actually done anything for me.

- There is more support at Home-Start, something that I have not experienced at other agencies I have used.

Do you use other services?

- No – I find the Children’s Centre ‘clicky’ and don’t like it.
- I have got an Integrated Family Support Worker but don’t fully understand her role and I don’t see her very often.
- I had attended a local Children’s Centre but did not enjoy the experience, I felt ignored and no-one took time to listen to me or make me feel welcome. Home-Start is the complete opposite to this experience.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Graham Allen MP and author of: Early Intervention: Good Parents, Great Kids, Better Citizens said:

“Home-Start provide an essential support service to vulnerable families and has been dedicated to improving the lives and well-being of children and their families for many years. A central component of the Home-Start service is to provide support early, before family problems or pressures evolve into deeper and more challenging forms of family crisis. This early intervention approach enables families to strengthen their own capabilities and gives them a vital source of sustained support. Given the difficult social and economic forces that are currently affecting families across the country, it is my hope that Home-Start will continue to steadfastly support vulnerable families.”

Home-Start UK is one of sixty organisations to be recognised with The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Volunteering Award 2012.

Nick Hurd, Minister for Civil Society, said:

“The list of recipients of The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Award for Volunteering 2012 reads like a Who’s Who of some of our most important charities and voluntary organisations. It is a testament to the enduring strength and immeasurable contribution of volunteers over the past sixty years.

Martyn Lewis CBE, Chairman, Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Volunteering Award 2012 Committee, said:

“The sixty organisations honoured today with The Queen’s Diamond Jubilee Award for Volunteering 2012 have built their success on the dedication and generosity of thousands of extraordinary people, each of whom has devoted their time and energy to the simple aim of making their communities – and their country – a better place.

New Year’s Honours

James Sainsbury, Chair of Trustees, Home-Start UK has been awarded and OBE in the New Year’s honours for services to Children and families.

Supporting Letter from Jack Dromey MP

Birmingham City Council

Our Ref: JD/MHS/HOME01001/01130005

Your Ref:

04 January 2013

Dear Birmingham City Council,

Re: Home Start proposed cuts

I understand that part of the budget consultation is proposing to remove the budget for the 8 Home Starts across the city.

One of these is in my own constituency, Stockland Green Home Start.

Whilst I completely understand the problems you face with the budget and that these are caused by Government cuts of unprecedented levels, I have firsthand experience of Home Start and feel it may be at best a false economy and at worst a total disaster to families to completely remove this service from Birmingham.

Home Start help hundreds of Families across Birmingham and are experts are early intervention work around safeguarding issues.

Home Start receives referrals from many agencies to work with families in danger of entering the social services system.

They work intensively with the whole family, from supporting mum to make better choices, counselling, play work with children who may have already suffered trauma to helping find education and employment opportunities.

If the local authority is to entirely remove this system within Birmingham the consequences will see more children and families appearing in the social work system and ultimately costing significantly more to the local authority not to mention the horrific impact this will have on families and young people.

I understand Home Starts funding across Birmingham is £330,000 per year. A significant amount of money I admit but also significantly cheaper than foster care, legal proceedings and sadly ultimately the children's homes some of these Families may end up in.

Birmingham is already in special measures for its safeguarding and spends more on adult care than children's care. I can't see how this action of closing Home Start whole scale with improve that situation.

The issue is essentially two fold, the significant impact this will have on safeguarding children in Birmingham and the negative financial impact this decision will have the city when the families currently supported by Home Start ended up needing crisis care.

I do understand the impact of Government cuts on BCC and the need to balance the budget but I ask you to reconsider this decision as I truly believe this will not only impact on vulnerable families but will also cost more in the long run.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jack Dromey". The signature is written in a cursive style with a long horizontal stroke extending from the end of the name.

Jack Dromey MP