



Northampton



Home-Start Northampton
Because childhood can't wait

Our Strategic Priorities:2024 - 2027

OUR MISSION

To improve the early years of children across Northampton by empowering and enabling families in need with the skills, knowledge, and confidence they need to thrive, through non-judgemental and welcoming support services.

OUR VALUES

Listening & understanding

We listen to and amplify the voices of our families. We take time to understand their individual circumstances and focus our work on their needs. We act on what we hear and use our position to create lasting positive change both for and with them.

OUR VALUES

Accessible & inclusive

We treat each other as individuals and show kindness and respect in all we do. We acknowledge different beliefs and work alongside families in line with them, to remove structural and social barriers and help them achieve their full potential.

OUR VALUES

Welcoming & supportive

We support our teams and our families to take on challenges and celebrate success, together. We provide welcoming, safe spaces for families and offer reassuring, non-biased guidance to parents. We value the skills, knowledge and experience of our team members and encourage growth and development professionally, and for our families.

OUR BELIEFS

We believe the early years matter most and every child deserves a proper childhood.

OUR BELIEFS

We believe every family has the opportunity to access support how and when they need it, free from prejudice or judgement.

OUR BELIEFS

We believe parents should be heard and involved in taking control of their own circumstance to give their child the best start in life.

OUR BELIEFS

We believe in being different from other agencies and services, creating lasting, positive experiences for families in need in Northampton.

Our strategy development

Working as a team with our volunteers, employees, and trustees, we have agreed a new vision, values and beliefs, which set the basis for our future plans.

Our strategy is grounded in practice, informed by the children and families we work with.

- Every family is matched with a volunteer who is supported and reviewed by an employee member of our team.
- Every employee has a performance development plan which is regularly reviewed.

These processes inform our business planning which in turn informs our strategic planning.

A Board strategy review meeting took place in February 2024 with the executive leadership. This 2024-2027 document sets our strategic objectives and priorities.

Who are we?

Home-Start Northampton is an independent charity rooted in the community and has been operating for more than 40 years.

We are registered with the Charity Commission for England and Wales, (registration no: 1116665). We are also a company limited by guarantee, (no: 05836827), and a member of Home-Start UK Federation.

The operational team are made up of volunteers, a manager, Family Co-ordinators, who supervise the volunteers, Family Support Workers, who visit families, and an office administrator.

The board is made up of a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and eight diverse trustees with a range of expertise and experience. There are also four Advisors who have specialised experience that we need but do not have the full responsibilities of being a Trustee.

We have supported 136 families in 2023 – one of our most successful years.

What we do

Home-Start Northampton's unique volunteer-led service model has been proven to be efficient and effective over 40 years; it works.

Home-Start Northampton sees every family as special and we respond to each family's needs through a combination of tailored support and through family social events.

- We do this by recruiting and training volunteers, who usually have had or are presently experiencing being parents themselves.
- We offer informal, non-judgemental, confidential, and friendly support to vulnerable families in Northampton who have at least one child under five.
- Referrals usually come from professionals in related fields e.g. health visitors, midwives, teachers.
- Trained volunteers are matched with families and work with them to develop a plan of support.
- As the support continues and the trust grows, this plan is often revisited and amended.

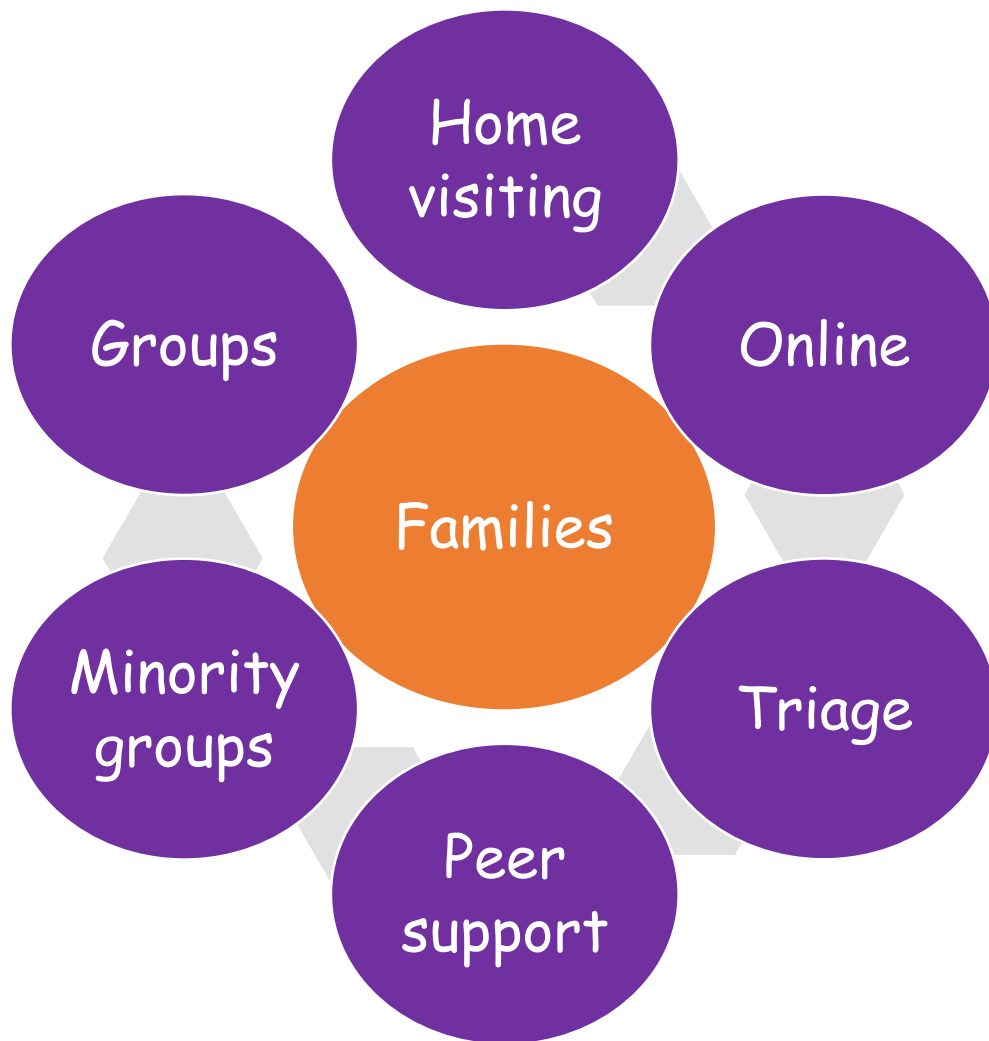
The economic consequence of Covid 19 meant families found themselves in challenging circumstances. It is very clear that there is a high degree of need within families in Northampton and that the situation has deteriorated as we see the aftereffects of the pandemic, and now the cost-of-living crisis causing hardship for many. The difficulty, both local and national, of recruiting and retaining volunteers gave us an exciting opportunity to research how we could further develop further innovative ways of providing help. New support services are in place, often collaborating with local partners – but we are a forward-thinking organisation and are always striving to see how we can have influence on more families with the resources we have.

The manager runs the day-to-day business of the scheme. In the future we aim to continue to recruit from more varied cultures to ensure diversity – for volunteers, employees, and Trustees.

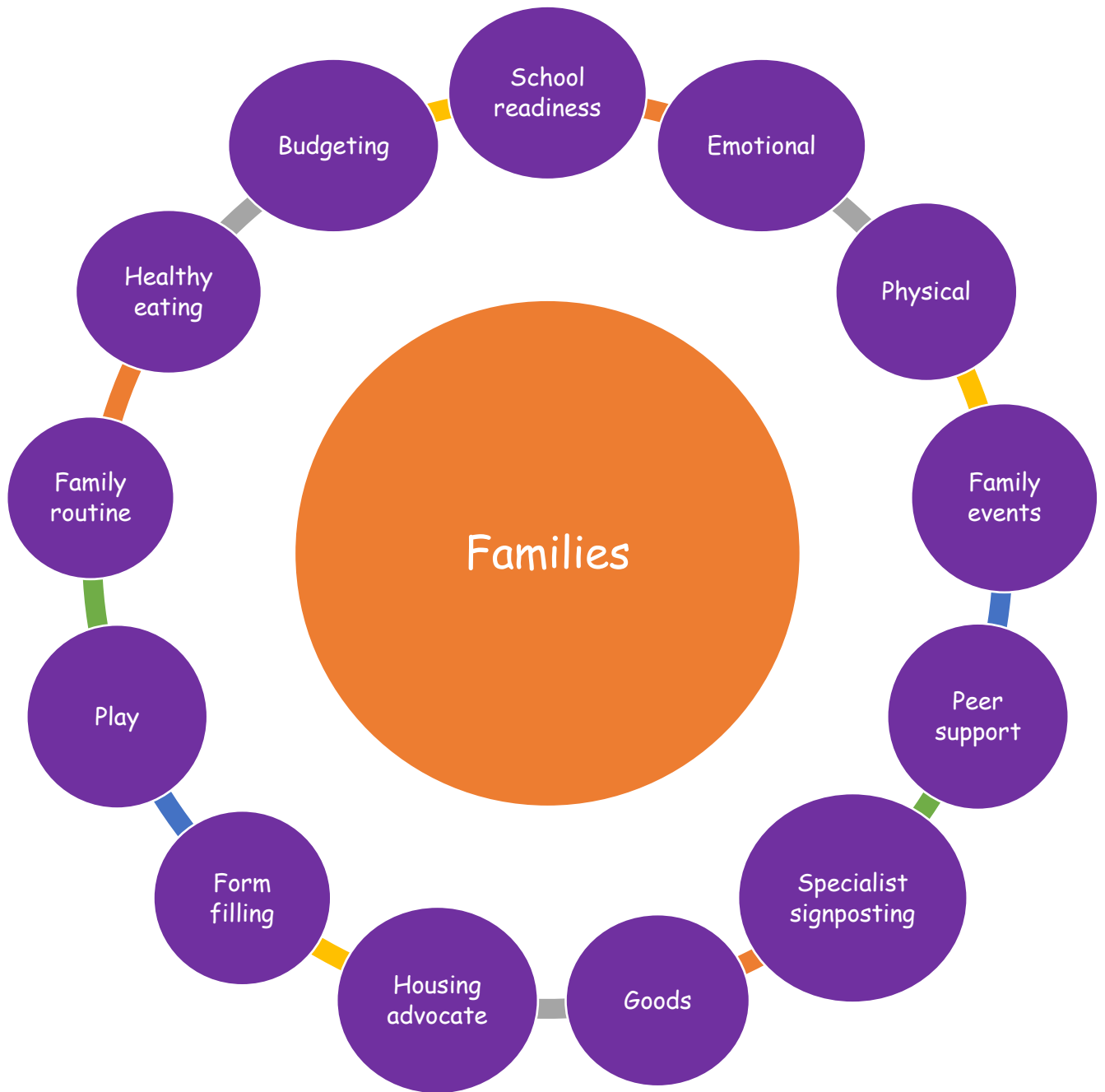
Our Board of Trustees bring a range of experience and skill to support the charity's activity:

- We are responsible for setting strategy and monitoring performance, ensuring that we meet all statutory and legal requirements to deliver our objectives. We use annual skills review to identify development requirements and any skills gaps. The board meets at least six times a year and has a range of specialist subgroups and advisors. The team is made up of volunteers, a manager, Family Co-ordinators who supervise the volunteers, and Family Support Workers who visit families and office admin. This is covered in who are we

What types of support do we offer



Some of the ways we help



Who are the families living in Northampton?

Like many similar towns, Northampton welcomes immigrants from Uganda, Bengal, Vietnam, Somalia, Kosovo, Poland, and Eastern Europe more generally. Each of these groups have brought their own traditions, language, and culture to the town. Northampton and the wider West Northamptonshire have participated in the Ukrainian and Afghan resettlement schemes more recently, which has involved welcoming families into host families and into temporary accommodation from their war-torn countries. Work is underway to source more permanent accommodation for people who were residing in bridging hotels following their evacuation from Afghanistan.

Community profile The latest information we have - **Census 2021** data - on the population of England and shows a significant rise of 13.5% across West Northamptonshire since 2011, representing 50,600 people. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%). The population is expected to keep growing with an estimated further increase of 11% by 2043. Following the formation of the Local Area Partnerships, the mental health of young people and adults has been identified as a key priority in all areas in Northampton due to the number of people who experience mental ill health.

24.1%

Within Northamptonshire, Northampton has the largest proportion of people living in the 20% most deprived areas



Largest town without city status in the UK



4,647 babies born in 2021



Population of Northampton postcodes

243,511



Percentage of residents by ethnic group

21%

of children live in absolute low income families

85.9%

white

4.9%

black

5.3%

Asian

2.8%

mixed heritage

1.1%

other



which is significantly higher than the national average

15,437

children 0-4 years living in Northampton in 2022

More mothers smoked at the time of birth than the national average



£33,340

full time

£13,232

part time

average wage



children living in relative low-income families

25.4%

which is significantly higher than the national average

Securing our future

Financial stability is vital to the future success of Home-Start Northampton services. We are aware of the need to generate sustainable funding outside conventional means, ensuring funders invest and are confident in our ability to create innovative, appropriate, and necessary services. Securing short and long-term funding is essential, therefore diversification of funding streams is imperative for sustainability for the future of the organisation. Health and wellbeing remain a priority and are at the heart of what we do. Our commitment to employees and volunteers through bespoke training and family friendly work policies assist in the retention of our dedicated and committed team. It is vital for families and communities that we remain a key player in family support across Northampton. As a team we are confident that we have the right knowledge, skills, and experience.

What we plan to do

Our eight strategic priorities

We have identified eight strategic priorities, which we will work on over two years, and will frame our response to the challenges faced by Northampton families with young children between 2024 and 2027. Across each of these strategic priorities we have identified several actions, which provide the focus for our cycle of business planning, delivery, and review. In working on these strategic priorities over two years, our overall aim is to grow the scheme to be able to support more vulnerable families in Northampton.

Strategic Priority 1 – People and families

We will work with families to ensure we are listening to their ideas/experience/feedback. We will actively explore ways of working with minority groups and more migrant families, and review if we are increasing how many families we are reaching. We will ensure diversity and inclusion of demographic is considered. This aligns to our values of listening and understanding, and accessible and inclusive

Actions

- Recruit to the Board a Trustees an advisor or champion with experience as a service user
- Work in partnership/alongside and listen to families, including children's voices
- Research the local need and understand whether our offer fits, and if our families are representative of the local population
- Actively target diverse and minority groups for volunteers and families.

Strategic Priority 2 - Service offering

Raise further awareness of the range of services the scheme currently offers with referrers, in addition to the traditional core volunteer home visiting. Review all services and work to make sure we are collaborating with all community groups. This aligns to our value of accessibility and inclusivity and our belief that every family has the opportunity to access support free from prejudice and judgement.

Actions

- Review all strands of family support currently offered and establish local need.
- Review and map pathway from beginning to end and relaunch to referrers to raise awareness
- Ensure our offering meets local needs and our families are representative of the local community

Strategic Priority 3 -Developing our capacity

We will invest in our organisation; living the values, developing behaviours, building a culture and environment to engage and retain the vibrant and diverse volunteers and staff we need to ensure the delivery of our strategic vision and mission. This aligns to our value of welcoming and supportive and our belief in being different from other agencies to create lasting positive experiences.

Actions

- To invest in the development of our volunteers, employees and Trustees to ensure they have the skills and resources they need to meet the challenges of their roles
- To continually evaluate and improve the operational systems and processes that make the best use of our people and available resources.

Strategic Priority 4 - Increase awareness

Increase awareness of our services among partners, stakeholders, referrers, and the community. This aligns to our value of accessible and inclusive

Objectives/Actions

- Develop a marketing strategy
- Further enhance scheme-specific website and relaunch it
- Maintain a constant feed of media-worthy content for social media, including family quotes and capture and promote powerful stories, case studies and share the impact we have made

Strategic Priority 5 - Partnerships

To increase our relationships and working with a range of partners in the community; particularly West Northants Council and The Children's Trust. This aligns to our value of welcoming and supportive.

Actions

- To develop our relationships with a range of key stakeholders and partners in the community
- Equity, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EEDI) focus on reaching out to minority groups in Northampton

Strategic Priority 6 - Trustees

To have sufficient Trustees or Advisors with relevant skills and time on the Board to fulfil our Strategic Objectives. This aligns to our values of accessible and inclusive, listening and understanding, and welcoming and supportive.

Actions

- Ensure all new Trustees are embedded in the scheme and are delivering against the strategic plan
- Look to recruit from minority groups with the right skills and competence

Strategic Priority 7 - Structure and Governance

Reflect and improving Board effectiveness where relevant. Ensure meeting discussions are at a strategic level and not drawn into operational detail. Ensure all Trustees are aware of their statutory obligations and duties. This aligns to all our values and beliefs as good governance ensures they are core to everything we do

Objectives /Actions

- Review the corporate structure of the scheme
- Key governance issues such as GDPR and safeguarding are routinely discussed at Trustee meetings
- Include our volunteer representative Board Trustee in new volunteer training course so volunteers are aware of where their voice can be heard

Strategic Priority 8 - Finance, funding and costs

To continue to have sufficient funds to keep the scheme going at its current level and ideally grow the scheme. Particularly with more long-term sustainable funding. To continually review costs and seek efficiencies where possible. Consider relocating to be more accessible for families, e.g.: with a partner, particularly if building becomes unfit for purpose or costly to maintain. This aligns to all our Values and beliefs as financial sustainability underpins Homes starts continued existence

Actions

- Focus on identifying and applying for one or more significant, multi-year grants
- Establish a robust process for the creation and maintenance of a rolling 18-month funding forecast and plan
- Using our referral information and the impact/difference we have made; the Business Development Trustee and manager proactively ask for money from large local organisations and stakeholders