

# Quality Assurance System Review Report

## Home-Start Banbury & Chipping Norton



**Date 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

## About Home- Start

### Our Vision

Home-Start believes that children need a happy and secure childhood and that parents play the key role in giving their children a good start in life and helping them achieve their full potential. Home-Start wants to see a society in which every parent has the support they need to give their children the best possible start in life.

### Our approach

Home-Start offers support, friendship and practical help to parents with young children, in local communities throughout the UK and with British Forces in Germany and Cyprus. To Home-Start every family is special and we respond to each family's needs through a combination of home-visiting support by volunteers - who are often parents themselves, group work and social events

### Our structure

Home-Start schemes are independent charities which support families in local communities. They are bound to one another and Home-Start UK by an Agreement which determines their Quality Standards.

## Quality Assurance in Home- Start

The Quality Assurance system, developed in conjunction with Charities Evaluation Services, was introduced during 2005.

Home-Start schemes and Home-Start UK regularly conduct self assessments against 16 standards to measure their own progress. Every three years there is a full Review to externally validate their findings. The focus of the Review is determined using information such as self assessments, reports on action plans and evidence gathered in advance and at a document review preceding the full Review. Scheme Reviews are led by Home-Start UK staff and include interviews with families, volunteers, staff and trustees.

### The quality areas

The standards fall into the following 16 Quality Areas:

- |                                     |                                   |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Governance                        | 9 Learning and development        |
| 2 Planning for Quality              | 10 Quality and Scheme Development |
| 3 Promoting children's welfare      | 11 Managing Money and Resources   |
| 4 Equal opportunities and diversity | 12 Health and Safety              |
| 5 Confidentiality                   | 13 Monitoring and Evaluation      |
| 6 Managing Home-Start               | 14 Supporting Families            |
| 7 Managing staff                    | 15 Working with other agencies    |
| 8 Managing volunteers               | 16 Working in the wider context   |

## Introduction

**Overview of the scheme:** Home-Start Banbury & Chipping Norton is based at Britannia Road Children's Centre, Grove Street, Banbury, Oxfordshire and was first established in 1987. In 2005 the scheme expanded into the area of Chipping Norton though coverage has been greatly reduced in the past year as a result of the ending of the grant from the Big Lottery and the withdrawal of funding from the PCT in 2006. Some of the schemes work is with families in 3 areas designated as within the top 10% most disadvantaged wards in the county. Transport, rural isolation and associated social exclusion are major issues for many families supported. Funding is from Oxfordshire County Council Social Services, occasional grants from the Big Lottery and Cherwell District Council, with donations from local organisations, companies and individuals. In 2007 the scheme received the Queens award for voluntary service.

In the year leading up to the review, the scheme supported 57 families through home-visiting with a total of 166 children.

Home-Start Banbury & Chipping Norton is a registered charity number 1114860, business number 5659531 incorporated on 20/12/2005.

### **Scheme structure:**

Governance of the scheme is the responsibility of the Management Committee comprising Trustees and Advisors. The senior member of staff reports to the trustees and is line managed and supervised by the Chair. The Committee comprises of 11 trustees, including volunteer representatives and 5 advisors from local partner agencies. There are 3 sub committees.

The Senior Organiser currently works for 27 hours and the administrator 16 hours whereas in 2007, 75 Organiser hours had been available to the scheme.

### **Overview of the review process:**

Stakeholders involved in the quality assurance review process were as follows:

- \*\* 5 trustees
- \*\* 2 staff members
- \*\* 5 home-visiting volunteers
- \*\* 3 referrers
- \*\* 3 families

The information gathered from these interviews and the document review which preceded it forms the basis of this report.

## Review Findings Summary

**In this review:** Home-Start Banbury & Chipping Norton fully met 13 of the 16 quality assurance standards that were reviewed. In total, 227 of the 232 essential indicators were met plus many extended practice indicators. This is a significant achievement by all those involved with Home-Start Banbury &

Chipping Norton particularly bearing in mind the recent staff reductions within the scheme. The findings illustrate the commitment and professionalism of the volunteers, the paid staff, trustee board members and advisors.

The reviewers found that a high quality service is being delivered to families through home-visiting. The Senior Organiser is aware of the needs of the volunteers and ensures they are well prepared and supported in their voluntary role. Referrers to the scheme hold the staff in high regard and believe the families they refer receive a highly professional and caring service with clear benefits and outcomes for parents and children.

The scheme has already implemented many of the suggested amendments that have come to light as a result of their self assessment and those criteria that require action have already been recognised. Those few remaining indicators that are unmet relate primarily to building on the current strengths of the trustee board to ensure it takes a pro active strategic approach to fundraising and governance and further develops planning processes to ensure targets are set and regularly reviewed.

The scheme recognises the need to review its supervision processes and this has already been started.

### Detail of the Review and Action Points

1. Governance
<p><b>Home- Start governs itself effectively and responsibly ensuring that its legal and financial obligations are met. Trustees work in partnership with staff and volunteers to support families and to give children the best start in life. Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and Trustees have the necessary qualities, skills and knowledge.</b></p>
<p><b>Comments:</b></p> <p>The scheme met all 16 essential indicators for this standard. The reviewers recognise a strong commitment by the Management Committee as well as a clear understanding of individual and collective roles though trustees have felt demoralised by current funding concerns. There is excellent leadership by the Chair. The Committee performs a strategic role and the senior staff member is supported well by the Chair with regular supervision, communication and consultation taking place. Flow of information between the senior worker and the trustees is good with Trustees feeling well informed about the work of the scheme and having high regard for the paid staff delivering the service to families. Sub committees have terms of reference and policies are regularly reviewed. There is general agreement that the board needs to further develop and increase its effectiveness and a skills audit has identified gaps such as PR and fundraising. The reviewers found that although there was a strong commitment to Home-Start lack of time and energy meant that most tasks were being carried out by a few trustees and discussions at trustee meetings were said not to be always followed through. There is however a move to allocate tasks amongst a wider group.</p>

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Unmet</b>
a) Trustees ensure that the scheme works within the Home-Start model governing documents and meets its legal and financial obligations.	✓	
b) Trustees are clear about their individual and collective roles and responsibilities and have the skills and knowledge to govern and lead the scheme effectively.	✓	
c) There is an effective working relationship between Trustees and the staff team, through the senior staff member.	✓	
d) Trustees are accountable to the scheme's members, to Home-Start funders, to the families it works with, and to its other stakeholders and, through the Agreement, to Home-Start UK and to other Home-Start schemes.	✓	
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>	✓	
<b>Action Points required to meet Standard</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	
none		
<b><i>Action recommended to improve practice</i></b>		
<i>Create register of trustees with appointment and due retirement date</i>		

## 2. Planning for Quality

Home- Start's stated mission and broad aims are clear and express Home- Start's purpose and core business. Plans are based on the needs of families and on the Home- Start approach and ethos. Clear priorities and targets are set, reviewed and regularly updated.

### Comments:

All stakeholders interviewed demonstrated a clear understanding of the mission and aims of the scheme. A range of methods are used to obtain feedback from stakeholders to aid planning e.g. volunteer exit reviews and use of questionnaires. The staff and trustees have a good understanding of developments in the local and county context though links to local priorities are not made clear in the strategic plan. Local needs are considered when planning developments e.g. the family support group was formed and then disbanded as a result of a good understanding of current needs.

The documented strategic plan was developed in 2007 with input from trustees and staff. It is a well thought out document but has not been actively used, reviewed and monitored within the scheme. The 2007 operational/business plan is currently awaiting update. The Management Committee needs to engage more actively in strategic planning to ensure the day to day work of the scheme is linked to the plan and to a more strategic approach to fundraising.

Criteria	Met	Unmet
a) The scheme's mission, broad aims and values are clear to Trustees, staff, volunteers, families and other stakeholders and are in line with the scheme's governing documents and charitable status and Home-Start's purpose and core business.	✓	
b) Plans are systematically developed, reviewed and regularly updated and address sustainability.		✓
c) The scheme plans its work according to known needs and resources and within the framework of the Home-Start approach and ethos.		✓
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>		✓
Action Points required to meet Standard	Criteria	
Developed and updated plans to acknowledge and link to local planning priorities and services such as Children and Young Peoples plan and prevention strategies	2c.1	
Update current operational/business plan and use this along with the reviewed and updated strategic plan to guide practice and development.	2b.1	
<b>Action recommended to improve practice</b>		

<i>Develop funding strategy as part of planning process to ensure more pro active strategic approach to seeking funds</i>	
---	--

### 3. Promoting children's welfare

**The welfare and rights of children are central to all Home- Start support to families. Family needs for support are carefully assessed and activities with children are carried out in a safe, suitable and welcoming environment. All regulatory requirements are met.**

**Comments:**

All those interviewed were clear about their role in promoting children's well being and demonstrated an excellent awareness of the needs of families and children. Interviews with Parents demonstrated the great care given to ensuring they are supported to develop parenting skills in subtle but effective ways. Families support needs are regularly reviewed. All volunteers are given training on safeguarding and if the session is missed they cover the session with the Organiser. A refresher course is also provided. Staff and trustees have safeguarding incorporated into their induction and all interviewed were clear about reporting procedures. Volunteers have an up to date list of contacts. Trustees staff and volunteers have signed the code of conduct and the scheme works closely with other agencies to promote children's safety. There is a named Child Protection specialist on the Management Committee. The scheme have developed some listening to children materials to encourage awareness of Children's needs.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Unmet</b>
a) The welfare and rights of children are central to all support to families.	✓	
b) Parents are supported to develop their confidence and parenting skills and to care for and nurture their children	✓	
c) The scheme has an effective, up-to-date Child Protection Policy and procedures, conforming to the Home-Start ethos and local authority procedures.	✓	
d) All activities with children are carried out safely. Home-Start premises are welcoming, suitable for the activity and provide a safe environment.	✓	
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>	✓	
<b>Action Points required to meet Standard</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	
none		

#### 4. Equal Opportunities and diversity

Home- Start is committed to the promotion and development of equal opportunities for all. Trustees, staff and volunteers recognise, respect and promote diversity. Steps are taken to ensure that Home- Start services, premises and procedures do not discriminate unfairly against people.

**Comments:**

The scheme is seeking to increase its profile amongst all groups within the area. Staff and trustees are aware of local needs and are making inroads into, and actively improving links with, different ethnic groups e.g. the Organiser has given talks to members of the Asian Community. Premises and the service are accessible to all. One volunteer talked warmly about her experiences with a family with no English where she had used an interpreter where appropriate and language had not been an insurmountable barrier. Trustees and staff have previously Identified gaps in provision such as in Chipping Norton then targeted the work of the scheme into that area. Available data is used to inform scheme activities such as recruitment of volunteers. Trustees are currently updating and reviewing the Equal Opportunities policy and the scheme could benefit from a greater diversity of volunteers and trustees. There is some awareness of this issue in the business plan and any review of plans should provide an opportunity to fully consider the community and its needs.

Criteria	Met	Unmet
a) The scheme's policies, procedures and practices do not discriminate unfairly.	✓	
b) Premises, facilities and services are accessible to all sections of the community in line with current legislation.	✓	
c) The scheme recognises the diversity of families in all its work, respecting the cultural, racial and religious traditions that make them distinct.	✓	
d) The scheme monitors and reviews its equal opportunities and diversity practice.	✓	
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>	✓	
<b>Action Points required to meet Standard</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	
None		
<b><i>Action recommended to improve practice</i></b>		
<i>Further develop ideas on recruitment of volunteers to reflect the diversity of the local community.</i>		

## 5. Confidentiality

**Home- Start respects confidentiality principles in all aspects of its work. Relationships with families are built on the understanding that staff and volunteers work within clear confidentiality guidelines. Systems are in place to protect the confidentiality of families, volunteers and staff.**

**Comments:**

Systems and records conform with confidentiality and data protection guidance and information is managed accordingly e.g. the computer is password protected and confidential minutes are kept in a locked file. Families sign consent to relevant information being shared with other agencies and for use of photos. Written information tells families they can access their records. The Confidentiality statement is signed by staff, volunteers and trustees. Stakeholders interviewed were clear regarding the scheme's position on confidentiality. The scheme is currently writing a media policy.

Criteria	Met	Unmet
a) The scheme has a confidentiality policy and procedures that respect the confidentiality, dignity and identity of each individual. The scheme's systems are used in ways that conform to data protection legislation.	✓	
b) Relationships with families are developed and maintained by building trust and treating all personal information about parents and families as confidential within Home-Start guidelines.	✓	
c) The scheme follows its confidentiality policy and procedures in its external relations.	✓	
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>	✓	
<b>Action Points required to meet Standard</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	
none		

## 6. Managing Home- Start

Home- Start proactively publicises its mission and services to all. Managers carefully plan how to get things done and ensure effective communication. Information is recorded and used effectively. Systems are in place to manage the work of Home- Start and are regularly reviewed.

### Comments:

There are clear lines of reporting and accountability within the scheme with evidence that systems for managing the scheme are reviewed as and when appropriate. Trustees receive regular clear feedback at meetings through Organiser reports and through the Chair who has frequent contact with the Senior staff member. The relationship between staff and trustees particularly the Chair is a very positive one. Staff arrange regular team meetings and have made a recent decision to record these fully to support effective communication within the scheme. The scheme has begun to increase its backing up of IT information. A system is in place for ensuring confidential minutes have restricted circulation. Procedures are regularly reviewed.

Criteria	Met	Unmet
a) The scheme publicises its mission, its services and activities, promoting volunteering.	✓	
b) There is effective communication throughout the scheme and information is managed effectively and appropriately	✓	
c) The senior member of staff shows leadership by supporting and encouraging others, providing constructive feedback, and showing respect for the views of others.	✓	
d) The scheme is clear about how services and activities are carried out and regularly reviews and improves how things are done.	✓	
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>	✓	
<b>Action Points required to meet Standard</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	
none		

## 7. Managing Staff

**Home- Start recruits and supports the right people to achieve its mission. There are adequate numbers of staff to carry out the work of Home-Start. Staff have the appropriate skills, know who they are accountable to and understand their role. All legal and regulatory requirements covering staff are met.**

### Comments:

Both staff members receive regular structured and documented supervision and an annual appraisal. Non managerial support is currently being set up for the senior worker. Practical and emotional support is available where Child Protection issues are concerned. There is a clear recruitment process for new staff and Staff felt the Induction programme was good with good introduction to all necessary policies and procedures. Trustees discuss staffing needs of the scheme primarily through the personnel sub committee and carry out good practice in employment. The system for ensuring all CRB checks are updated is being reviewed in line with national guidance. Staffing is appropriate for the activity carried out though the Senior staff member is probably currently working above the threshold and has a heavy workload. Reduction in Organiser hours has led to great pressure on the Senior Organiser with all essentials are being done but any further development work not being currently practical.

Criteria	Met	Unmet
a) The recruitment process is clear and follows equal opportunities and diversity requirements.	✓	
b) All legal requirements covering staff are met and personnel policies and procedures are well documented.	✓	
c) There are adequate numbers of staff with relevant skills appropriate to deliver services and activities safely and to a high standard.	✓	
d) Staff have clearly defined roles and understand what is expected of them.	✓	
e) There are appropriate levels of pay and benefits and staff are fully supported in carrying out their work.	✓	
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>	✓	
<b>Action Points required to meet Standard</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	
none		
<b><i>Action recommended to improve practice</i></b>		
<i>Consider developing staff handbook. HSUK to issue model</i>		

## 8. Managing Volunteers

**Home- Start works with its volunteers for the benefit of families and the volunteers themselves. Suitable volunteers are recruited, selected and appropriately matched according to their skills and experience. Volunteers understand their responsibilities, are valued and well supported, and legal obligations are met.**

### Comments:

The reviewers were particularly impressed with the quality of the support given to volunteers and their high regard for the Organiser. Volunteers reported having regular phone and face to face contact every 4/6 weeks and said they could phone the Organiser at any time and be sure of excellent support. The current aim is for Volunteers to have an annual review though staff reduction has led to some delays with this. There is currently no formal supervision framework and In discussion volunteers said they would value more structured supervision if it was offered. Group support meetings are regularly arranged. The Preparation course was said by volunteers to be excellent with a very professional approach. Volunteers said that it fully prepared them for their role and one volunteer said it was better than any other training she had received in her professional life. All appropriate safeguards and legal requirements are in place and Volunteers demonstrated a clear understanding of their role and boundaries with a family. Volunteers interviewed felt the scheme provided excellent ongoing training and support opportunities and felt their contribution was very highly valued. One volunteer had been with the scheme 22 years. The Management committee has volunteer representatives. Volunteers, families and referrers all felt that the scheme took great care with the matching process.

Criteria	Met	Unmet
a) The scheme is clear about how best to involve volunteers for the benefit of Home-Start, families and the volunteers themselves.	✓	
b) A sufficient number of competent volunteers are recruited, carefully selected, and retained by the scheme.	✓	
c) All legal requirements covering volunteers are met.	✓	
d) Volunteers are well prepared and well matched to their role, understand their role and responsibilities and know what they can expect from Home-Start.	✓	
e) The scheme values the contribution made by volunteers. They receive expenses, information, support and training to fulfil their roles effectively.		✓
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>		✓

Action Points required to meet Standard	Criteria
Scheme to move towards a more structured approach to volunteer support and supervision of one to one (preferably face to face) recorded contact every 12 weeks	<b>8e.2</b>
<b>Action recommended to improve practice</b>	
<i>Obtain written confirmation of car insurance, MOT etc.</i>	
<i>Develop ways of further encouraging families to volunteer after their support has ended</i>	
<i>Develop volunteer files containing all information kept on volunteers</i>	

<b>9. Learning and Development</b>		
<p><b>Home- Start proactively supports and develops its people to achieve its mission. Trustees, staff and volunteers receive a thorough induction. Ongoing learning and development opportunities are resourced, encouraged and monitored.</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> The trustees set a training budget which is said to be accessible with staff and trustees feeling that training and development is valued. A Training log shows details of training offered and taken up. A named trustee is responsible for the induction programme for new trustees and materials have recently been reviewed and updated. There is a fully comprehensive 10 week preparation course. If any sessions are missed then there is an expectation that they are 'caught up' before placement with a family.</p>		
Criteria	Met	Unmet
a) The scheme shows a commitment to supporting and developing all staff, trustees and volunteers to achieve its purpose of supporting families.	✓	
b) Trustees, staff and volunteers are given the information required to be effective in their job from the start, and receive ongoing training to further develop their knowledge and skills.	✓	
c) Learning and development needs are identified, planned and resourced and based on the needs of both the individual and the scheme.	✓	
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>	✓	
Action Points required to meet Standard	Criteria	
<b>none</b>		

## 10. Quality and Scheme Development

Home- Start is committed to improving the quality of services to families and works within the terms of the Home- Start Agreement. Self assessment is an integral part of the work of Home- Start and contributes to continuous improvement. Information and experiences are shared regionally and nationally and inform policy and practice.

### Comments:

Home-Start Banbury and Chipping Norton works in accordance with the Policy and Practice guide. The scheme maintains regular contact with Home-Start UK through the Regional Consultant and the Chair attends area Home-Start meetings. There is also regular contact with other schemes particularly those within Oxfordshire. All statistics and monitoring is provided as required. The scheme has responded to national consultation. A full cycle of self assessments has been followed. Although Quality Assurance has previously been the responsibility of a few individuals this has now been integrated into the work of the scheme with all trustees expected to take part. Action plans have been sent to the Regional consultant. Staff development needs are met through a range of learning opportunities.

Criteria	Met	Unmet
a) The scheme works within the terms of the Home-Start Agreement and contributes to Home-Start's support of families nationally.	✓	
b) The scheme maintains and improves the quality of its services to families by using the Home-Start Policy and Practice Guide as a model for delivering good practice and contributing to its development. The scheme carries out self assessment and review against the Home-Start quality assurance system.	✓	
c) The scheme learns and develops from its own experience and that of other Home-Start schemes across the UK, and shares its experience and good practice with others.	✓	
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>	✓	
<b>Action Points required to meet Standard</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	
none		

## 11. Managing money and resources

**Home- Start manages its money and resources effectively and prudently. Budgets are carefully monitored and Trustees ensure reliable financial controls are in place and are compliant with the law. Adequate funds are secured to ensure financial viability.**

### Comments:

Trustees have a good grasp of the financial position of the scheme. Accounting procedures are all legally compliant. The financial procedures are adhered to and understood by all concerned with trustees reporting that they feel fully informed about the schemes financial position. The treasurer sets an annual budget which is regularly monitored and accounts are drawn up every month and presented to the trustees. A reserves policy has been drawn up and is awaiting trustee approval. An annual Target for fundraising has been set however the scheme does not currently have a detailed fundraising strategy linked to current plans. The Trustees are all aware of the funding requirements of the scheme but have up until now been reactive rather than proactive in their approach. Expenditure is currently exceeding income though careful management of money and reserves has helped with management of the current serious financial problems. The treasurer is mainly responsible for funding bids with support from the fundraising sub committee. The reviewers saw evidence of some written finance procedures such as controls on expenditure though full standing orders outlining all responsibilities and systems have not been adopted.

Criteria	Met	Unmet
a) The scheme manages its money to meet legal requirements and to make best use of available financial resources.	✓	
b) Trustees take responsibility for the scheme's finances and resources in line with the scheme's aims, objectives and values and ensure appropriate financial controls are in place.	✓	
c) The scheme's premises and facilities are welcoming, fit for their purpose, safe and accessible.	✓	
d) Securing funding is planned to ensure the financial viability and sustainability of the scheme.		✓
e) Financial reports are accurate and form a sound basis for internal management and accountability to stakeholders	✓	
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>		✓
Action Points required to meet Standard	Criteria	
Develop proactive approach to funding with some funding strategy linked to strategic planning priorities	11d.1	

<b>Action recommended to improve practice</b>	
<i>Consider drawing up more detailed standing orders for financial management as detailed in the Policy and Practice guide</i>	11b

<b>12. Health and safety</b>		
<p><b>Home- Start makes the health and safety of its people and users a high priority by assessing risk and taking steps to maintain necessary safety measures. Staff and volunteers understand and follow safety policy and guidelines.</b></p> <p><b>Comments:</b> All legal Health and Safety measures are in place. Documented risk assessments are carried out on all activities such as outings and home visits. The Organiser is currently working on formalising lone worker procedures however staff have a good understanding of related issues and procedures. A Personal safety policy is given out to staff and volunteers and a named trustee is responsible for carrying out an annual safety checks, though a risk assessment for the new office is outstanding. There is currently no first aider but the building is shared with the Children's Centre and there is a trained person is on the premises. All equipment is tested regularly.</p>		
<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Unmet</b>
a) The scheme conforms to health and safety legislation and requirements.	✓	
b) The scheme acts to minimise risk to its people, its users and its resources.	✓	
c) Home-Start premises, facilities and equipment are safe and fit for purpose.	✓	
d) The personal safety of staff and volunteers is a priority and the scheme does all it reasonably can to minimise risk.	✓	
e) The scheme learns from incidents and takes appropriate action to prevent recurrence.	✓	
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>	✓	
<b>Action Points required to meet Standard</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	
<b>none</b>		
<b>Action recommended to improve practice</b>		
<i>Separate incident and accident book which comply with legal requirements re data protection (see HSE)</i>		

### 13. Monitoring and Evaluation

Home-Start records its work efficiently and collects and analyses sufficient information to assess the benefit of its work with families. Collecting the views of families, volunteers and other agencies is an integral part of Home-Start's work. Monitoring and evaluation informs decision making and is used to improve services.

**Comments:**

Records are kept as required and monitoring is transparent though within confidentiality guidelines. Questionnaires and feedback mechanisms have been developed for families and volunteers to help evaluate the support provided. Volunteer exit interviews with a trustee have been taking place for many years. Family progress is regularly reviewed every 3-6 months with input from the volunteer and family. The scheme has begun to introduce the recommended family files. Monitoring and evaluation data is available to stakeholders through annual reports and a regular monitoring process is carried out with the Local authority. Referrers felt they were very much listened to and their views taken into account.

Criteria	Met	Unmet
a) The scheme uses the model Home-Start monitoring and evaluation process and annual information collection systems. It keeps records as an integral part of family support and the effective administration of the scheme.	✓	
b) Monitoring and evaluation is used to assess the benefit of the scheme's support to families.	✓	
c) The views of families and other stakeholders are an integral part of monitoring and evaluation.	✓	
d) Monitoring and evaluation is used to improve the quality of support to families and to develop the scheme.	✓	
e) Information is used by the scheme to inform funders, referrers and other stakeholders.	✓	
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>	✓	
<b>Action Points required to meet Standard</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	
<b>none</b>		
<b><i>Action recommended to improve practice</i></b>		
<i>Review storage of information to ensure all family and volunteer information kept separate (e.g. diary sheet)</i>		

## 14. Supporting Families

Home-Start offers support to families within their home in a culturally sensitive way. Support is based on assessed need and respects the diverse range of family structures. Appropriately prepared and trained volunteers and staff work together with families to build their confidence and self esteem. Support outside the home is offered in response to expressed need.

### Comments:

The support offered to families in the area was said by all stakeholders interviewed to be of extremely high quality. The families the reviewers talked to spoke movingly about the difference Home-Start Banbury and Chipping Norton had made to their lives. One mother in particular described how Home-Start had moved her life forward in a way she had not imagined possible. All families reported that Home-Start was flexible to their needs and the approach non stigmatising and enabling. Ongoing support of the family is monitored and practice is good. Regular evaluation reviews take place and are monitored on the database. Families are encouraged to access other opportunities and local services and recent changes have been made to the training and support of volunteers to further emphasise the importance of this. There is a waiting list but this is regularly reviewed and monitored and families and referrers kept informed of progress. Referrers were extremely positive about the support for local families and one referrer said she felt 'pretty desperate' when she heard referrals for Chipping Norton were not being accepted because of the reduction to service.

*"There is a significant unmet need in Chipping Norton, we must recognise how important this support is for rural areas as well as urban deprivation"*  
Referrers receive regular progress letters.

The scheme currently works within the recommended benchmark of families to Organiser hours however there is a danger this will be exceeded with the current pressures on the Organiser with increased demands on her time.

Criteria	Met	Unmet
a) The scheme offers support to families within the Home-Start ethos, priorities and benchmarks.	✓	
b) The scheme's core activity is to offer support within the home to families who are experiencing difficulties or suffering stress, to encourage parents' strengths and emotional well-being.	✓	
c) The scheme tries to meet the individual needs of each family and to support families under stress	✓	
d) All support for families is carefully managed.	✓	
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>	✓	

<b>Action Points required to meet Standard</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
none	
<b><i>Action recommended to improve practice</i></b>	
<i>Regularly monitor and review number of families supported in relation to the benchmark in view of increasing demands on the Senior Organisers time.</i>	

## 15. Working with other agencies

**Home- Start values its relationships with other agencies and works together with them to provide services to families in a co-ordinated way. It recognises that it is more effective through sharing information and working together. Referral procedures and practice ensure the best interests of the family are maintained.**

**Comments:**

The position of the scheme within a children's centre ensures effective links with other agencies working with families. The board of trustees has representation from a variety of agencies. The scheme is an active player in the local voluntary and community sector and is a member of various local voluntary groups such as CVS and OCVA. Referrers to the scheme reported that they were kept fully informed at all stages. Progress letters were sent and they could phone Christine at any time. Concern was expressed over the closure of the referral list and one referrer said she would like more intensive support at times but had 'great faith in the service'. Excellent matching was said to be a key element in the effectiveness of the provision.

Other agencies demonstrated a good understanding of Home-Starts role with families. Written agreements are drawn up where necessary e.g. with the Local Authority. The staff work closely with Children's centres and consulted with other agencies when considering the need for new developments such as the Tiggerz group and expansion into Chipping Norton.

<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Met</b>	<b>Unmet</b>
a) The scheme works with other agencies to provide services for families in a co-ordinated way.	✓	
b) The scheme has an effective system of referrals.	✓	
c) The scheme works in formal partnership to deliver services more effectively and to meet specific needs	✓	
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>	✓	

<b>Action Points required to meet Standard</b>	<b>Criteria</b>
none	

## 16. Working in the wider context

Home-Start maintains a high profile and proactively publicises its support for families. Information and expertise is shared with other agencies and used to influence policy and service development locally, regionally and nationally. Home-Start proactively keeps up-to-date with changing government priorities and opportunities that may affect its work.

### Comments:

Home-Start Banbury has been operating in the area for 22 years and has built up a comprehensive knowledge and awareness of local needs. Discussion with trustees and staff showed understanding of local priorities though these could be included more in scheme planning documents. The Organiser attends local network meetings when time allows as well as consultation meetings. The Organiser and Chair have always worked with the other Oxfordshire schemes and have recently begun to make this partnership more formal in preparation for local moves towards the commissioning of family support services.

The scheme recently recruited a new trustee with PR skills though he has since had to resign. The achievement of the Queens award for voluntary service has been used as an opportunity to promote the scheme locally. The Organiser has appeared on local radio and with some trustees promotes Home-Start within the area.

Criteria	Met	Unmet
a) The scheme's support for families is rooted in its local community.	✓	
b) The scheme works strategically within the framework of national, regional and local initiatives.	✓	
c) Promotion of Home-Start's support for families is a regular part of the scheme's work.	✓	
d) The scheme plays a role in family support/early childhood policy development locally and nationally.	✓	
e) The scheme works in the community to develop resources and services.	✓	
<b>Overall this standard was:</b>	✓	
<b>Action Points required to meet Standard</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	
none		

## Signed

On behalf of Home-Start UK:

\_\_\_\_\_ Lead Review Consultant      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ 2<sup>nd</sup> Review Consultant      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

On behalf of Home-Start \_\_\_\_\_:

\_\_\_\_\_ Chairperson      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Senior staff member      Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Appendix 1

### What Referrers told us:

"One Mum I referred lacked self esteem and really struggled with any routines. The volunteer gave her the confidence to put these in place"

"Home-Start is there when families need it

### made to them:

then"

"Before Home-Start I wouldn't go out, I didn't know how to manage the children. Now we do things together. I am helping at the centre and going to college to do Maths and English"

"I may like to be a volunteer one day as they have helped me so much"

"I kept going because I knew she (my volunteer) would be there again on Thursday"

"My volunteer was absolutely wonderful and could have adapted to any family"

### What families told us:

### When asked what difference having Home- Start

t are absolute magic"

er backs up what I say to my children and they listen to me

## **Appendix 2**

### **Overview of review process**

The review was carried out in 2 stages. On 21st April 2008 Mike Reynolds visited Home-Start Banbury & Chipping Norton to review documentary evidence provided by the scheme.

A further 2 days 13<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> May 2008 were spent at the scheme by Heather Alexandra and Mike when meetings and interviews were conducted with stakeholders of Home-Start Banbury & Chipping Norton.

At the end of the second day, Heather Alexandra/Mike Reynolds met with Deborah Hayter and Christine Yarborough for a closing meeting.

#### Group Trustee Interviews:

Aimee Evans

Viv Bennett

Jo Graves

#### Chair Interview

Deborah Hayter

#### Treasurer Interview

Nigel Randall

#### Referrers:

Fiona Richards Heath Visitor

Sue Billington Health Visitor

Dawn Jeffs Social Worker

#### Individual Staff Interviews:

Christine Yarborough Organiser

Angela Esland Administrator

#### Volunteers:

Deborah Alexander

Viv Bennett

Jo Bonner

Pat New

Janet Owen

#### Family Interviews:

Three families were interviewed.

## **Appendix 3**

## Documentation seen at Document Review

- Home-Start Agreement – signed 11/06
- Charity Commission return
- Charity Number
- Inland Revenue returns
- Strategic Plan
- Business Plan
- Policy File with all essential policies
- Signed Management Board Minutes
- Policy review Evidence
- Safeguarding Policy and signed Codes of Conduct
- Emergency contact list
- Strategic Planning 'Away Day' file – 23/11/07
- Staff Files
- Family Files
- Trustee Training Log
- Partnership evidence – OCC SLA/Oxfordshire Compact agreement
- Risk Assessment evidence – Outings/Xmas Party
- Message Book
- Insurance Certificate
- Financial Standing Orders – 19/07/06
- Terms of Reference for Personnel and Funding Sub-groups
- Listening to Children file
- PAT evidence
- Various Volunteer documentation
- Staff Terms and Conditions of employment.
- Letters to referrers and families
- Self Assessments
- Annual report
- Promotional materials
- Register of trustees
- Scheme statistics