



Welcome to the August newsletter.

We wanted to keep you up-to-date with what we have been doing and our plans for going forward. Firstly, our *sincere thanks* to you all for your continued support ... and patience! ... during the ongoing coronavirus outbreak. Despite the fact that frustration and unease are prevailing feelings for us all at the moment, we are delighted to be able to share some very positive updates with you.

STAFFING NEWS

New Fundraising Assistant - Lizzie Keenan

We were very pleased to welcome Lizzie as our new Fundraising Assistant on 1st July. Lizzie will be working 7 hours/week to provide some really valuable support to Stella in these particularly challenging fundraising times. Lizzie knows HSSL very well from her work with the South Leicestershire Mobile Toy Library and is already contributing a great deal to this important work.

Finance Manager Recruitment

As explained in an email at the end of June, we will be saying a very fond and sad farewell to Stephen Ashpole, Finance Manager, who has decided to retire at the end of October after almost 20 years with HSSL. Recruitment for this key role began early to enable a two-month handover, and we are greatly relieved to confirm that the recruitment was successful - more details soon.

We will, of course, let you know of our plans to mark Stephen's retirement in due course.

Other Staff News

We are delighted that Becky, Active Families Coordinator, will be returning from maternity leave in September.

We are also very much hoping that Naomi, Young Parents Coordinator, who is currently on the equivalent of furlough, is able to return to work, as she wishes to do, once schools are fully open.

Support for families involved with these projects is continuing, the work being covered by other staff—Jo is covering the Active Families Project and Nicky the Young Parents Project.

Staff have recently been taking up a lot of training opportunities, including some HSUK webinars and other virtual courses—all very helpful with the new way of working with families.

FAMILY CONNECT – Our support for families

We gave some details in our last newsletter about how we have been continuing to provide support for families, albeit in a different way during these exceptional circumstances. This service has been given the name of 'Family Connect' to encapsulate the new form of support that HSSL can offer through :



- * Telephone support from Coordinators and, where appropriate, volunteers
- * Provision of information / advice
- * Variety of videos and information on our social media platforms
- * Facilitating a buddying connection between families where possible
- * Links and referrals to local support from other agencies such as Voluntary Action South Leicestershire, Children & Family Wellbeing Service as well as other local charities.
- * Facilitating collection and delivery of sunflower growing kits (Sows & Grows Project).
- * Delivery of Activity Packs from Leicestershire & Rutland Sport
- * Delivery of food parcels from local foodbanks

FEEDBACK ON HSSL's support during the pandemic



One funder to our Family Connect project gave some very reassuring and heartening feedback, expressing thanks for what we are doing and recognising that ***“you are the ones who know how to help people at this time and, without you, things would be a lot worse for people”.***

A recent article in the HSUK ‘Family Matters’ magazine shows just how helpful HSSL support has been to one particular family. The fantastic support given to them by Jo is, of course, also provided to families supported by Sarah and Nicky.

Take a look here <https://www.home-start.org.uk/news/family-matters-ss20> at the full article on the HSUK website which also has a link to the Family Matters magazine.

We have received other positive comments and, in particular, great feedback about the wide variety of videos and information on our Facebook page and YouTube channel.



In fact we hadn't realised how much creativity and resourcefulness was held within our staff team – as well as some natural media presenters!!

The range of what's been done is too large to mention here but includes numerous videos of –

- Many much-loved **stories** read by Nicky with the clever use of props and locations.
- A variety of **songs** beautifully performed by Sarah, and by Jo, with musical accompaniment from her ukulele.
- **‘Let's Get Moving’** ideas from Nicky for family physical activities.
- **Craft** ideas from Nicky and Naomi.
- Easy **recipe** ideas and instructions from Jo.

In addition, we want to say a huge thank you to Bob Renwick who, as well as his caretaker role in helping to maintain our premises, is a wonderful editor, creative producer and musical director of the videos. Also unseen in the background, we wish to acknowledge the help of family camera operators!



There are regular, frequent postings to make sure families have a good variety of resources as well as the chance to see favourites again, and staff continue to plan new ideas.

Take a look at our Facebook page to see some of the things we have been doing.

<https://www.facebook.com/homestarts/>



VOLUNTEERS – News and Updates

Paediatric First Aid Training

Six volunteers were able to take part in one or more of the three online training sessions held recently which were well received. The trainers certainly made the sessions not only very informative but also entertaining!

Safeguarding Competency Training

Two refresher sessions have been held in August via Zoom as a way of keeping up-to-date with our safeguarding responsibilities. Volunteers will be contacted directly with an invitation to any future sessions.

VOLUNTEERS – News and Updates *continued ...*



Volunteer Virtual Get-Togethers

So far we have held two half-hour sessions on Zoom - 1st and 23rd June - as a way of helping volunteers and staff keep in touch through a virtual social event.

1st June Zoom Get-Together

We would like to plan another get-together now that training sessions have taken place, so we will let you know when we have a date for this.



Activity ideas/pictures welcome

If volunteers would like to share any pictures or ideas for activities for families with us we would be happy to receive those and add to our Facebook page.



FUTURE PLANS

One of the biggest frustrations for us all has been the inability to restart visits or groups. We are working hard to think creatively about substitutes for the latter. Jo, Sarah and Nicky are also working on delivery of the Family Know How Project cooking and healthy lifestyle course, and the Family Post-Natal illness Project course.

Restarting home and/or outside visits to families

Groups, unfortunately, are not yet feasible but we are hard at work now planning and creating detailed risk assessments to help us move forward with the possibility of restarting home and/or outside visits to families.

Coordinators will be in touch with volunteers when we have firmer news to give you about this but we certainly anticipate starting to do this – probably initially in a small way – later this month.

Getting families ready for return to school

Nicky is putting together some video ideas for providing support to families prior to schools starting, eg getting into a useful routine and other reassuring advice for parents and children to help with this big change in their lives.

Our focus has been very much on offering support for our existing families but we have also been receiving some new referrals and know how much Home-Start support is valued by many parents.

Fundraising and our current Funding Position

Stella has been working hard to secure funding wherever she can in an increasingly competitive field and has been successful in securing grants from a variety of emergency funding sources but, as you can imagine, this is a relentless task.

It may be that we have to use some of our reserves in this extraordinary year in order to balance the books but we are in a good position, with the strong support of our Board of Trustees, to plan ahead in a determined way to continue supporting families who are now facing even more challenges in their lives.

See the next page for a reminder of three simple ways you and people you know can help keep our services running to help more families affected by the crisis



Fundraising Opportunities

Do please share these with others.

Home-Start South Leicestershire Emergency Appeal Covid-19 Mental and Emotional Support for Families



We've launched an emergency appeal through our **Local Giving** on-line donations platform to support our services.

Please share this link widely to help us hit a target of £5,000—so far we're half way there!

www.localgiving.org/appeal/hsslcovid19

In support of this appeal we have to thank our multi-talented caretaker, Bob Renwick, for pulling together a fantastic, must-see promotional video which you can view on the above link or on our Facebook page.

Harborough Lotto

You can buy tickets and select us as your chosen charity on a one-off, or regular basis. Prizes are given out locally every week. You can win up to £25,000! We only have a few regular tickets sold so far out of our goal of 50 tickets so please help us reach this.



<https://www.harboroughlotto.co.uk/support/home-start-south-leicestershire>

Easy Fundraising – Raise funds for us while shopping on-line

We are signed up to Easy Fundraising and we'd encourage you to share this with people you know as it's a really easy way for additional funds to be raised for us when people shop on-line.



Visit www.easyfundraising.org.uk to get started, and search for Home-Start South Leicestershire.

Once you've chosen Home-Start South Leicestershire an alert will appear on your screen when browsing the internet asking you to "Activate Your Donation", and the easy fundraising logo will be marked against shops in your internet searches where this scheme applies. Each time you click 'activate' while you shop, it will automatically provide us with a donation. Simple as that. You can add it to all your devices to make sure you don't miss out a chance for an easy donation to us.

Finally, we have a date for this year's **AGM – Tuesday 27th October** – never too soon to make a note in your diary! At the beginning of lockdown, we certainly did not anticipate that life would possibly still be so topsy-turvy at this stage but we will keep you informed about the format our AGM will take nearer the time.

With thanks for your continued support and commitment to Home-Start South Leicestershire, and for all the ways you help us in supporting local families facing difficulties.

With warmest wishes from all here at Home-Start South Leicestershire

Becky
(currently on
maternity leave)

Jo
Erika

Naomi
Lizzie

Sarah
Nicky

Stephen
Stella

Stella is currently on sick leave but we are all keeping in touch, sending her our best wishes and looking forward to her return.