

**GRANT APPLICATION 2017/18 – ASSESSMENT AND RECOMMENDATION**

<b>Priority Corporate Outcomes</b>	To support families and individuals that need help, such as to change behaviour, live more healthily and lead active lives To build more resilient communities where people do more to help themselves and reduce their reliance on statutory services To identify and address at an early stage any issues that may impede a successful childhood and progression to adulthood	
<b>Organisation</b>	<b>HOME-START BARNET</b>	ref 216/C/FAM
<b>Address</b>	Stephens House, 17 East End Road, N3	

**Corporate policy, aims and objectives**

The council is committed to helping people to be independent and live active lives, focusing on preventative services; the delivery of targeted information and advice; and ensuring people have the right support at the right time. Strategic priorities include supporting the resilience of families in the greatest need and on the cusp of becoming vulnerable, recognizing that some people, such as those handicapped by low income or other forms of social exclusion, may need additional help in a crisis; promoting the health and well-being of disadvantaged local residents and encouraging them to adopt healthier lifestyles; and creating the conditions for children and young people to make the best possible start in life.

The Children and Young People’s Plan, 2016-20, sets out a vision of making Barnet the most family-friendly borough by 2020. The theme of resilience underpins the Children’s Service’s ambition for strong communities in which people bounce back from stress and adversity and take on new challenges and children and young people can thrive and achieve.

**Activities / proposal**

Formed in 1997, Home-Start Barnet (HSB) is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee affiliated to Home-Start UK, one of the country’s leading family support charities. A holistic, early intervention service designed to prevent crises; increase resilience; and strengthen family bonds, it provides fully trained volunteers to deliver one-to-one emotional and practical support to families in need of help in their own home for three hours a week, supporting and equipping them to navigate present and future problems. The service embraces listening; signposting; building social and support networks; help with forms; support to engage with other agencies; and modelling parenting skills.

Other activities include a ‘money smart’ project, training low-income families to budget and spend more wisely; parenting courses; one-to-one family and perinatal health coaching for people experiencing multiple disadvantages and pregnant women with low level mental health issues respectively; women’s support groups, helping victims of domestic violence to reclaim control of their lives; a therapeutic play scheme for children experiencing domestic violence; baby massage for new mothers to promote attachment and bonding; and outings for families during the school holidays when money is tight and stress levels often high.

HSB primarily works with families with young children and expectant mothers. In 2013, it successfully piloted Barnet’s first community coaching project with outstanding results. In 2016/17, fifteen paid staff and 229 volunteers supported 1,518 children, young people and families in Barnet. A common theme is that parents feel isolated, often because of post-natal depression or other mental health problems. 60% were lone parent families. 10% of families had twins or triplets. The service was extended to Harrow in October 2015.

This application relates to a proposal to pilot a weekly 'family supper' project at which families will be shown how to prepare healthy, but inexpensive, home-cooked meals instead of buying pre-packaged, convenience and fast food or relying on food banks. To be delivered in partnership with Homeless Action in Barnet (HAB), at whose premises in N12 the project will be based, using ingredients sourced by that agency for its own meals service for homeless people, it seeks to address not only an increase in adult and childhood obesity or malnourishment arising from poor choices; a lack of nutritional awareness; and a perception that cooking is time consuming and tedious, but also a rise in the number of referrals made by HSB to food banks from 45 in 2013 to 250 already this year.

Each session, which will have capacity for 15 to 20 families (including children), will include a cookery demonstration, styled around a challenge of how to make a cheaper and healthier version of a favourite meal, which will then form the dish of the day, to be served in a family-centred environment, designed to encourage the formation of new friendships and new social networks. There will be a focus on the cost effectiveness of home cooking and families will be supplied with the raw ingredients and recipe to try at home. As the project develops, other presentations and workshops linked to the topics of nutrition and healthy eating will be added to the itinerary, to be determined by users' needs and interests.

The project will be targeted at Barnet-based families in receipt of benefits or with low income known to HSB, backed up by local publicity and a referral procedure with a network of partner agencies, including Barnet Homes, children's centres, voluntary groups, schools, churches and a mosque in the vicinity of where it is to be delivered. The ethos will be to encourage families, who are often distrustful of involvement by officialdom, to take an interest, explore options and decide on their own solutions. The project, to be integrated with HSB's core services, to which participants will have access, will be another way of reaching out to vulnerable families, facilitating the early identification of needs and the reduction of inequalities.

Places will be booked on a first-come, first served basis in the interest of maximising capacity. Participants will be monitored to assess impact, such as regards the preparation of home cooked meals; the selection of healthy options; and the financial benefits of such.

The family services division of the Children's Service is supportive of HSB's work, delivered, as it is, within a clear and robust management, monitoring and evaluation framework. The family and perinatal health coaching, women's support groups and children's play therapy are all commissioned services that are producing good, evidence-based outcomes. The family supper project is recommended for support on the basis of how it seeks to develop families' independence, well-being and resilience, reducing the demand for statutory interventions and complementing the vision of making Barnet the most family-friendly borough.

Barnet & Harrow Public Health concurs in these comments, having regard to the incidence of adult obesity in a number of socially deprived certain wards in the borough as identified in Barnet's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, 2015-20.

#### **Cost and financial need**

In 2015/16, HSB incurred expenditure of £385,541, of which £316,178 (82%) was on salaries and staff costs. Premises and administrative costs and the cost of running the organisation's charity shop, now closed after three years because of the modest level of profit generated, largely made up the balance. Practically all of HSB's income is by way of contracts with the council and grants from charitable trusts. A surplus of £20,190 reflected the differential phasing of payments received. Net current assets at 31/3/2016 were £78,049, unrestricted funds that equated to a working contingency equivalent to 16% of estimated expenditure this year.

A three-year contract with the Children's Service to develop and deliver the community coaching contract expired in 2016. HSB currently has three other contracts with that service, collectively worth £135,946 in 2017/18, supporting the work that it has commissioned. Grants valued at £178,249 this year by eight charitable trusts underpin other elements of HSB's work in Barnet. A four-year grant of £375,000 by the Big Lottery, extending to 2019, is funding the expansion into Harrow. Outstanding grant applications in the sum of £40,000 are for new work with the victims of domestic violence and a new financial literacy programme.

Although much of HSB's service provision is free of charge, it self-generates income from the imposition of fees for its parenting courses; for childcare; and for providing work experience placements for social work students.

HSB last received a corporate grant in its own right in 2006. It is currently the indirect beneficiary of a 2016 award of £10,000 to St Peter's Bourne Management Company in support of a new life coaching service for families with teenage children, in which it is a partner.

A grant of £10,000 is requested to pilot the family supper project over six months. The budget includes £3,900 for the hire of HAB's facilities and the ingredients that it will supply; £1,500 for additional food and materials to be sourced; and £2,400 for an existing staff member to co-ordinate the project. The balance is made up of volunteer training and development and management supervision.

The award recommended excludes provision for providing families with healthy snacks and other items to take home on the basis that a proposal to ask participants for a voluntary donation of £1 per session should defray this element of the budget.

The application fails to specify exactly how the project will be sustained, assuming that the pilot is successful, other than by seeking alternative sources of funding. Although it is acknowledged that HSB has a good relationship with grant-giving charities, any such bids to which will be strengthened by the ability to demonstrate positive outcomes from the pilot, a more coherent sustainability strategy will be required before any grant is released.

#### Grant recommendation, type and conditions

**£9,500** (from Edward Harvist Charity)

Start-up grant  
One-off grant

#### Special conditions:

Payment of the award should be made subject to (a) agreement of targets and milestones for monitoring purposes; (b) clarification of how the project is to be evaluated; (c) submission of a sustainability strategy; and (d) the receipt of a progress report after three months and an undertaking to provide an evaluation of the project at the end of the pilot phase.

#### Target grant outcomes

To improve the independence, well-being and resilience of families with young children, in particular their capacity to change damaging behaviour and adopt a healthier lifestyle.

**Date:** August 2017