Home-Start Clackmannanshire

Strategic Plan 2023 to 2026

Approved by Trustees on 23 February 2023

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service

Supported by Clackmannanshire Council

1. Background

1.1 Clackmannanshire and its needs
According to the 2011 census there are c.4,400 families with dependent children aged between 0 and 11 years old in Clackmannanshire, which provides an approximate figure for the number of potential beneficiaries of Home-Start Clackmannanshire (H-SC.)

The level of deprivation in Clackmannanshire is higher than in Scotland as a whole. According to the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD2020) four of Clackmannanshire's "data zones" fall in the 5% most deprived areas in Scotland. (The whole of Stirlingshire, whose population is double the size of the "Wee County", has only 2 such data zones.)

SIMD2022 indicates that the most deprived areas in Clackmannanshire are, in order of priority:

i) Alloa South & East: four of its five data zones remain amongst the 5% most deprived areas in Scotland, and have been since at least 2012 when the first SIMD was produced. The fifth data zone is amongst the most deprived 10%.
ii) Tullibody: two of its ten data zones remain amongst the 10% most deprived areas in Scotland
iii) Coalsnaughton: one of its two data zones is amongst the 20% most deprived areas in Scotland (but this is an improvement from 2016, when that data zone numbered amongst the 10% most deprived areas).
iv) Sauchie: three of its six data zones are in the most deprived fifth of Scotland
v) Tillicoultry: the south west of this village is in the most deprived fifth of Scotland

The current cost of living crisis, caused by rising energy prices, is predicted to last well into this strategic period. It will have a big impact on families with low incomes; with figures showing those on lower incomes spend three times as much of their family budget on energy as the most affluent fifth of households in the UK.

There is also a strong link between deprivation and mental health. Socially disadvantaged people have an increased risk of developing mental health issues to the extent that adults living in the most deprived areas are approximately twice as likely to have common mental health problems as those in the least deprived areas. As such ONS data tells us that in parts of Alloa South & East where 17.5% of the population suffers from long-term mental health issues.

Many of these areas above have very high levels of single parent households. There is one postcode in Alloa South & East where 44% of households are single parent families, and a number of postcode areas across the county where more than 19% of households fall into this category.

In 2020/21 there were 119 incidents of domestic abuse recorded by the police in Scotland per 10,000 population. Data for Clackmannanshire, at 158 incidents per 10,000 people, was significantly higher than that average. Only Dundee (177 per 10,000) and West Dunbartonshire (168 per 10,000) fared worse.

There is an additional area which does not rank highly for multiple deprivation, but the data points to significant need: Muckhart ranks in the bottom 10% in Scotland for poor geographic access and so might have a higher propensity for isolation and loneliness.

1.2 Home-Start Clackmannanshire and Home-Start UK
We recognise that being a parent, wherever you live and whatever your circumstances, is not always easy. Add in the pressures of illness, financial worries, loneliness, and without the support of family and friends the stress can become over-whelming.

Home-Start Clackmannanshire (H-SC) offers a unique service, recruiting and training volunteers to visit

Paddy, Lynn, Joan and Louise (Chair)

families at home who have at least one child under 12. We offer informal, friendly and confidential support to help give children the best possible start in life. Home-Start supports parents and carers as they grow in confidence, strengthen their relationships with their children and widen their links with the local community.

In 2023 H-SC will have been supporting families throughout our community for 35 years through a combination of home-visiting, group support, our Play in the Park summer programme and direct support from our Family Support Workers.

Home-Start UK (H-SUK) is a separate charity, which works at a national level to support and help to strengthen the leadership, operations, impact and sustainability of more than 180 independent, local Home-Starts around the country. In particular H-SUK provides us with, and monitors us against, a quality assurance framework which reassures us and external organisations of the quality of the service we deliver.

1.3 The changing needs of our families
As a result of the socio-economic landscape set out above, and the recent pandemic, referrals to us now include many more families with complex needs. In 2022 approximately 40% of the families we support have needs which are deemed complex. These include families experiencing mental health issues or domestic abuse.

Families with complex needs often require a degree of support which is beyond what can be asked of a volunteer. As a result a larger proportion of our families are supported directly by our Assistant Manager, three Family Support Coordinators, and two Family Support Workers.

1.4 Review of the last Strategic Plan
Over the last strategic period (2018 to 2021) H-SC has made considerable progress against three of our four objectives: starting a social enterprise to deliver employment experience for parents and provide a new source of funds; supporting more families by establishing more group sessions; and increasing awareness of our services.

After piloting our social enterprise on a small scale, we secured a new location for the shop which has higher footfall and visibility in the centre of Alloa. In the 2021/22 financial year we assisted 108 families, and did so from a number of new locations in Alloa, and in Tullibody and Tillicoultry. That figure is a 7% increase on the position where we started the last Strategic Plan, when we supported approximately 85 families a year. We have also made great progress in improving our website and social media presence.

Over this period we also responded to the global pandemic. The presentation of a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2022 was, in part, an acknowledgement of how effectively the team changed the services we deliver rapidly adapted our services to respond to the effects of, and the constraints imposed by, Covid-19.

One area where we had less success, mainly because of the pandemic, was in relation to our plan to work directly with schools.

2. Mission, Vision, Aims and Objectives

2.1 Our Mission remains unchanged:
To help families with at least one child under 12 to achieve strong foundations for a healthy and happy future.

2.2 Our Vision also remains unchanged:
To be able to identify and support every family in Clackmannanshire who needs our help.

2.3 Our Aim will be a difficult balancing act:
We will continue to increase awareness, accessibility and availability of our services so that we can support more families; while also enhancing those services to reflect the complex needs that are being presented to us.

2.4 Objectives for 2023 - 2026
Staff, volunteers and trustees conducted a Development Day, including a SWOT analysis, in 2021, and trustees and staff have had several further discussions in 2022. Following these conversations it was decided that H-SC will broaden our reach and enhance our services by:

- Ensuring that we have increased awareness of our services both amongst the residents of the five most deprived areas in Clackmannanshire (set out in Section 1.1), and amongst potential volunteers.
- Developing the support we provide when a family member has mental health issues, has been the victim of domestic abuse, or other issues identified by our CharityLog data.
- Doing more to assist the school-age children of the families we support.
- Continuing to widen our sources of unrestricted funds.

These objectives will be delivered through our CEO's operational plan.

The Board of Trustees will examine our progress against these objectives on an annual basis, and – if necessary – refresh or revise these objectives.

3. Service delivery

3.1 Different support for different families
We tailor the help we provide to the families we work with, depending on the nature and complexity of their needs. In order to do this effectively and efficiently in the coming years, we may require additional investment in technology during the period of this strategic plan.

3.2 Home visiting by volunteers
Home visiting by trained Family Support Volunteers is at the core of our work. Having a pool of trained and committed volunteers is critical; as is the matching process, where we identify the right volunteer for each family.

3.3 Support through professional staff
Home visiting, and ongoing support via phone and text, delivered by professional Family Support Coordinators and Family Support Workers, allows us to support to families approaching or in crisis. In these circumstances a trained volunteer is not an appropriate support mechanism.

3.3 Group support
Group support sessions encourage and allow parents to engage in positive play with their children; and to enjoy some respite whilst their children are engaging in age and stage appropriate activities with our Group Workers and Family Group Volunteers. The groups are very welcoming and informal and are used for supporting families to build friendships and links within the community. There is a lot of laughter as well as sharing of ideas and discussions on child development. Professionals from external organisations are invited during group time to offer specialist support and information.

3.4 Tailored group support
We have already set up a Mental Health & Wellbeing Group to provide a more tailored version of our standard groups. We aspire to do more in this space.

3.5 Holiday activities
We give families additional support during the school holidays by organising and funding a programme of activities and visits.

3.6 Training
We provide employment experience and retail sector training to parents and carers in our shop.

4. Resources

4.1 Staff
H-SC benefit enormously from a committed and professional team of staff. We have a duty of care to our staff, and must ensure that they are supported appropriately as they perform their roles, and trained to deal with the more complex cases we are now seeing, and any new technology we introduce.

4.2 Volunteers
H-SC benefit enormously from the tireless support of our volunteers. However, we need to recruit and retain more. We aim to retain our volunteers by continuing to: communicate with them regularly, organise social events, and provide ongoing skill development training packages. We aim to recruit more volunteers by raising our profile more effectively across the county, leveraging our 2022 Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

4.3 Office and shop capacity and location
Our office and shop are currently fit for purpose. However, as we continue to grow the expectation is that we will need bigger or different premises to meet demand for the service.

4.4 Funds
We continue to receive anchor funding from Clackmannanshire Council and have been successful in attracting additional funds from other sources, particularly grant-giving bodies. Partly as a result of the income from the shop, and partly as a result of consistently high quality funding applications, the proportion of our income provided by Clackmannanshire Council has dropped from 66% in 2017, to 20% in 2021. During that same period our income has tripled. Clackmannanshire Council is undertaking a review of the services it funds. We need to continue to develop our capacity to find new sources of funding, and to maintain an appropriate level of reserves in accordance with our reserves policy.

4.5 Processes, Standards and Benchmarks
Much work has been undertaken over the past ten years to improve our systems and processes, and to ensure that we achieve the appropriate external standards and benchmarks. This focus must be maintained to ensure that we retain the confidence of H-SUK and assure ourselves and external organisations of the quality of the service we deliver. We may decide to constitute the shop as a separate legal entity from the charity during this strategic period.

4.6 External Partners
In addition to our families, our volunteers, our staff and our trustees there are a range of interested stakeholders who could and should provide us with advice and direction. We are committed to consulting with these individuals on this strategy as it develops. This will include contacting members of the local Health Board, officers and councillors from the local authority, previous donors to H-SC, and our MP and MSPs.

4.7 Trustees
Trustee numbers have been stable over the last strategic period. Additional trustees would increase the diversity of the Board and their capacity to support the staff and volunteers.

4.8 Technology
We have made great strides in the last few years, moving to cloud based systems, but we may need further investment in technology, and the accompanying security measures, in order to deliver the efficient service our beneficiaries deserve from us.

5. Risks

5.1 Risks
As with any organisation there are risks associated with the services we deliver and the operation of a charity which has contact with many members of the public, particularly children and young people.

A Risk Register setting out those risks and how we mitigate them is at Annex A. The Risk Register is regularly reviewed and updated by the Board of Trustees.

Annex A: Risk Register (as at January 2023)

Hazard	Impact (I) Low Med High 1 2 3	Probability (P) Low Med High 1 2 3	I x P = Risk Low Med High 1-2 3-5 6-9	Risk Minimisation *(Action to take now to reduce/eliminate risk)*	Residual Risks *(after mitigation)*	New Risk Level Low Med High
Systems 1: Business continuity affected by pandemic, fire, flood, terrorist attack	2	1	2	**1.** CEO developing a Disaster Recovery Policy for Board approval.	Short-term disruption to the service	**Low**
Systems 2: Operational failure: IT, equipment, office, shop or other space	2	2	4	**1.** Need a full budget for the shop and establish a new reserve fund for it. **2.** Board to monitor our IT provider contract and performance as their role becomes even more important. **3.** Board to check on our cyber security provision now operations have moved largely online.	Short-term disruption to the service, but spoiling of shop stock hard to mitigate against.	**Med**
Systems 3: Too many, or not enough, referrals	2	2	4	**1.** "Real time" monitoring processes implemented **2.** Trajectory report to be tabled at each Board of Trustee meeting. **3.** Comms plan will be actioned in 2023 **4.** Board to check/develop policy for Trustees' domestic/ personal IT security and encourage use of cloud storage.	Cannot mitigate against economic conditions and reduced public sector funding.	**Low**
People 1: Loss of staff or volunteers	2	2	4	**1.** To a certain degree the Assistant Manager role mitigates against departure of CEO, but a refreshed personal and professional development plan for that individual will also be important. **2.** Need to reinstate the Salary Working Group to ensure that our pay-scales appropriately reflect roles, responsibilities and skills, and are equivalent to other similar organisations in local area. **3.** A volunteer support package should be discussed by Trustees.	Natural churn will occur for reasons outside our control	**Low**
People 2: Operational failure: IT, equipment, office, shop or other space	2	2	4	**1.** Implement regular Self-Care and Mental Health awareness sessions. **2.** Deputy Manager role mitigates against absence of CEO. **3.** Review of workload is part is regular 121 conversations.	Short-term disruption to the service, but spoiling of shop stock hard to mitigate against	**Low**

Hazard	Impact (I) Low Med High 1 2 3	Probability (P) Low Med High 1 2 3	I x P = Risk Low Med High 1-2 3-5 6-9	Risk Minimisation *(Action to take now to reduce/eliminate risk)*	Residual Risks *(after mitigation)*	New Risk Level Low Med High
People 3: Disputes and claims	2	1	2	**1.** Board to continue to update and monitor adherence against HSC and HSUK policies		**Low**
People 4: Our competences and skills do not match or evolve with the changing needs of families	2	2	4	**1.** Continuing to run family surveys, interrogate our data, undertake sessions with staff and other external contacts should all ensure new needs are identified and H-SC changes to deliver them. **2.** Investigate potential membership of Scottish Social Services Council to ensure appropriate competences and skills required for service.		**Medium**
People 5: Accident which causes injury	2	1	2	**1.** Training run by the Personal Safety Centre. **2.** Regular checking of Health & Safety processes by Board to ensure they are adequate, and functioning effectively.		**Low**
People 6: Trauma and abuse (for the latter, of beneficiary by volunteer or staff or vice versa)	3	1	3	**1.** The organisation is currently small enough for us to pick up early warning signs of both trauma and abuse, but the risk changes as we grow. **2.** A positive, supportive culture, embedded through 121 conversations and training, should mitigate against trauma **3.** Regular support and supervision sessions and 'open door' policy are in place to capture signs of abuse. **4.** The CEO and Chair are accessible outside normal working hours to allow for discussions away from office environment.	Difficult to mitigate away the high impact of failure.	**Medium**
People 7: Inadequate governance through lack of skills, process or numbers	3	1	3	**1.** Regular trustee skills audits required **2.** Shop to become a separate legal entity from the charity **3.** The Board of Trustees will scrutinise processes (accident reports, risk register mitigations, salary reviews etc) more regularly during their meetings. **4.** We are seeking a Trustee with a legal background to supplement our existing skill set.	Natural churn will occur as trustees decide to step down	**Medium**

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Finance 1: Catastrophic loss of, or significant reduction in, funding	2	2	4	**1.** Need further diversification beyond Council and CEO's ability to apply for funding. Board and CEO to identify and develop new funding streams. **2.** Board needs to prepare for move by Clackmannanshire Council towards commissioning of services. **3.** Continue to maintain dialogue with core funders, and adhere to reporting and evaluation protocols	The move to commissioning has been long discussed by Clackmannanshire Council	**Medium**
Finance 2: Ineffective finance procedures, leads to fraud or poor planning	2	1	2	**1.** Treasurer position is currently filled **2.** Robust reporting procedures are in place **3.** Accounts are audited annually **4.** Staff are trained in accounting package and procedures **5.** Three personnel involved in the financial process **6.** Approval sought for purchases over £500 **7.** Signatories have full visibility with access to online banking	There is a limited range of proportional, additional mitigations available to us.	**Low**
Reputation 1: Abuse, or an accusation of abuse, or unfair dismissal would impact our reputation	3	1	3	**1.** CEO is responsible for online monitoring to pick up any issues on social media quickly **2.** Board of Trustees has a communications professional to help the organisation manage media enquiries **3.** We have existing policies, an organisational culture, and a strong emphasis on transparency, which mitigates against perceptions of unfair dismissal. **4.** We have established channels of communication with our families, funders and other stakeholders.	There is always the chance of vexatious or unfounded accusations	**Low**
Legislative 1: Changes to legislation which we can't or don't apply	2	1	2	Home-Start UK and Home-Start Scotland provide a good alert system for us. No additional mitigations proposed.	Minimal	**Low**
Legislative 2: Inadequate data protection	3	1	3	**1.** H-SC has enforced data protection rules in the past, which clearly shows to staff the value Trustees place on this. **2.** The transfer to CharityLog reduced the use of paper in the organisation.	Difficult to mitigate away the high impact of failure.	**Medium**

Home-Start Clackmannanshire

Chief Executive Officer:
Louise Orr

Assistant Manager:
Jacqueline Kidd

Office Manager:
Linda Kerr

Family Support Co-ordinators:
Irene Richmond
Maureen Holden
Paula Paton

Family Support Workers:
Megan Thomson
Leyanne McLean

Family Support Group Workers:
Carole Evans
Carolyne Nicol

Charity Shop Managers:
Sarah Gray
Emma Clark

Social Media Planner and Website Maintenance:
Sofie Meier

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