

HOME-START RUNNYMEDE AND WOKING – APPLICATION FOR FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Executive Summary

Home-Start Runnymede and Woking offers support, friendship and practical help to families in their own homes who are under stress, with at least one child under the age of 5, helping to prevent family crisis and breakdown in the Borough. Based in Walton Road, Woking, the Group's main aim is to prevent existing difficulties from developing into more serious situations which may require the intervention of statutory services, and to give young children the best possible start in life.

Home-Start Runnymede and Woking has applied for revenue funding of £10,000 in 2019/20, from which the sum of £7,500 would be to pay for ten additional co-ordinator hours each week, enabling the service to recruit, train and support ten new volunteers who will provide a home-visiting service to ten new Woking families. With the Council's funding during 2018/19, a total of 79 families were supported and 12 volunteers were recruited and trained to support families with additional needs.

The additional amount of £2,500 has been sought towards the cost of a School Readiness Programme in the Borough, for which a particular need has been highlighted. The Group has previously received training from the Children's Centre staff, and its own staff member (a qualified teacher) has been working with a small number of families to help their children become school-ready. It is proposed that the programme is rolled out across its service and advising local nurseries that it can work with families who have children who are some way off being ready to make the transition to school. The Group employs a Qualified Teacher who is currently working with local families on the topics to be included. Feedback from her work with families as well as further consultation with local education and health providers will shape the final programme. Volunteers will be trained and supported to deliver the programme so that more local families benefit.

The Group has also indicated that next year its funding support from Surrey County Council is to be significantly reduced from £53,700 to an expected £36,000, following the appointment of Surrey Care Trust as the lead provider, representing a reduction of a third. Work is taking place to establish other sources of income for core services.

The work of the Group supports those families experiencing difficulties, whatever the cause, with a view to assisting them through the worst times to avoid family breakdown. It is proposed that the Council again supports the Group in the coming year and that funding should be awarded at £10,000 to cover both the existing service and the provision of the School Readiness programme.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:

RESOLVE That a grant of £10,000 be awarded to provide additional support to families in Woking and the School Readiness Programme.

Reason for Decision

To support the service of Home-Start Runnymede and Woking for families in most need of assistance residing with the Borough of Woking.

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Legal Authority	S142 Local Government Act 1972 S111 Local Government Act 1972
Conditions	<p>Accounts. The Organisation must submit audited accounts for the year in which the grant is awarded, including an income and expenditure account and balance sheet. Please note that accounts for other years may also be required.</p> <p>Monitoring Information. The Organisation must submit quarterly monitoring information as a measure of its achievements. Failure to provide details will jeopardise the award. E-mail requests will be sent to the applicant on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Publicity. Where possible, the Organisation is required to publicise the support received from Woking Borough Council, including on all literature and leaflets produced.</p> <p>Payments. Unless exceptional circumstances exist all invoices must be received quarterly with details of the costs incurred and monitoring information for the previous quarter.</p> <p>Payment Period. Final quarter claims must be made by the second week in March. Unclaimed awards will not be available at a later date unless exceptional circumstances can be demonstrated to the Council before the end of the award year.</p> <p>Joint Working. WBC expects the Organisation to engage positively on health and wellbeing multi-agency joint work affecting Woking. Groups which refuse may place their Council support at risk, e.g. grant, concessionary rent and other assistance.</p> <p>Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Following the introduction of new legislation from April 2018, the council will expect the support of partner agencies in identifying people at risk of homelessness as early as possible to maximise the opportunities to prevent such. Partner agencies / organisations will be expected to be engaged in joint working arrangements to assist in finding suitable housing and support solutions, and where appropriate to undertake and respond to the new 'duty to refer'. Groups which do not support this new legislation and way of working positively, may put their Council support at risk.</p>
Performance Indicators	<p>Users. The Organisation to provide a breakdown of the users in the past quarter.</p> <p>Enquiries. The Organisation to provide a breakdown of the enquiries received during the last quarter.</p> <p>Publicity. The Organisation to advise how the Council's support has been publicised over the last quarter.</p> <p>Statement of Use. The Organisation to provide a statement stating the use to which the grant money has been put.</p>
Future Support	<p>The financial pressure on the Council's budgets is expected to continue in the coming years and accordingly the overall level of support available in future years may be reduced. The applicant is therefore to be advised that the award of funding for 2020/21 does not imply that a similar application in 2021/22 would be supported. In particular, it is emphasised that the Council is unlikely to be in a</p>

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position to award any sums above the 2020/21 levels.

In view of this, the applicant is to be advised to ensure that contingency plans for the Group's operations for 2021/22 have been drawn up in the event that the Council is unable to continue its support beyond April 2021. All applicants are strongly recommended to pursue alternative sources of funding and are encouraged to approach Woking Borough Council's Community Support Team for advice and support.

The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendations.

Background Papers:

2020/21 Application Form.

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1.0 Summary of Application	
1.1 Status and Aims	<p>Home-Start Woking was founded in 1994. On 1st January 2015 the Group merged with Home-Start Runnymede to form Home-Start Runnymede and Woking.</p> <p>The Charity's aim is to offer free confidential support, friendship and practical help to families with at least one child under five who are experiencing difficulties and struggling to cope with the challenges of parenting. The staff assess each family's individual needs and assign an appropriately skilled and experienced volunteer.</p> <p>All volunteers are parents and undergo a high-quality training course and receive continuing support from staff. A volunteer will visit the family once a week in their own home for up to a year and will work co-operatively to enable their family to cope with the demands of being a parent, to develop resilience and independence in the family and prevent the need for intervention by statutory services.</p>
1.2 Employees	<p>5 comprising the Scheme Manager (25 hours per week), two Co-ordinators (working a combined total of 40 hours per week), a Family Support Worker (15 hours per week) and an Administrator (25 hours per week).</p>
1.3 Volunteers	<p>41. Eight volunteers are trustees responsible for the governance of Home-Start Runnymede & Woking. The Chair is also a member of the Board of Trustees of Home-Start Surrey, the consortium contracted to Surrey County Council Children's Services for the provision of the Early Help contract.</p> <p>Volunteers are trained to provide home-visiting support to parents with a least one child under five. All volunteers have parenting experience, are DBS and reference checked and complete a six week training course. Families need support and practical help for a variety of reasons including family breakdown, illness or disability, domestic violence, multiple births, bereavement, isolation or a combination of factors. Volunteers provide support in the home and accompany families to a range of appointments with professionals and help them to access services on a regular basis. The support given is non-judgmental, confidential and aims to increase the confidence and self-esteem of the family, developing their independence and improving their ability to cope and manage better on their own.</p>
1.4 Clients/Users	<p>520, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 249 male 281 female 93 disabled 155 ethnic minority 303 resident in Woking 131 aged 0-5 23 aged 5-10 9 aged 11-18

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	<p>140 aged 19-65</p> <p>During 2018-19 the Group supported a total of 79 families with young children living in Woking. This was enabled in part by the Woking Borough Council grant which allowed it to maintain staff and volunteer support to families living in Woking. The demand for the Group's service continues to be high, 73 referrals were received for families living in Woking from Health, Children's Centres, Children's Services, Family Support Programme and occasionally direct from families.</p> <p>Across the scheme as a whole, a high number of referrals for vulnerable families were received including those on Child Protection and Child in Need plans. Home-Start has also continued to receive high numbers of referrals from families with Domestic Abuse issues and those receiving multi-agency support, including those supported by the Family Support Programme with Early Help Assessment and Team Around the Family support plans.</p>
1.5 Members	8.
1.6 Sum Requested	<p>£10,000 (Revenue)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - £7,500 to fund 10 Co-ordinator hours per week to support local families (as in past years) - additional £2,500 to establish a programme of school readiness for families in Woking
1.7 Project	<p>Since the merger of Home-Start Runnymede and Home-Start Woking in January 2015 the Group has significantly increased the support to families in Woking through home-visiting. Across both boroughs in 2018/19 Home-Start Runnymede & Woking supported 98 families by home-visiting and 40 families received occasional support, which included sign-posting and referral to other support services. Due to the grant from the Council, the Group is on target to support the same number of families in the current year.</p> <p>The grant of £7,500 applied for would be used to continue to fund Co-ordinator hours thereby ensuring that they are able to meet the needs of families in Woking and continue to support parents and children in difficult circumstances. Without this funding Home-Start would have to reduce staff hours and be unable to recruit, train and support the same number of volunteers. As one of the most cost-effective schemes in Surrey, early help and prevention support is provided to families which reduces the risk of escalation and costly referral to statutory services.</p> <p>The additional grant of £2,500 being requested would be used to implement a school readiness programme in Woking. A particular need has been highlighted on school readiness. The Group has previously received training from the Children's Centre staff, and its own staff member (a qualified teacher) has been working with a small number of families to help their children become school-ready. The Group is proposing that the programme is rolled out across its service and advising local nurseries that it can work with families who have children some way off being ready to make the transition to school. As with its current service, the majority of work would be carried out by volunteers and therefore would be very cost effective. The additional funding would cover training, supervision and support for volunteers</p>

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	<p>and resources for the work with children.</p>
<p>1.8 Cost breakdown:</p>	<p>The Group will use the grant of £7,500 to fund 10 Co-ordinator hours per week which will enable it to provide a home-visiting service to 10 new Woking families.</p> <p>Current gross salary cost: Co-ordinator NJC Scale point 15 is £23,520, pro-rata for 10 hours per week = £6,356 plus employer's National Insurance £381 plus employer's pension (5%) £318 = £7,055 (Gross salary costs pro-rata to 10 hours / week).</p> <p>The balance of the request would reflect the Co-ordinator's travel expense cost for 10 hours / week incurred in supporting 10 Woking families.</p> <p>For the additional grant applied for of £2,500 for the school readiness programme, the Co-ordinator would spend an average of two hours per week on the project, equating to £1,411 plus NI and employer's pension costs, along with travel expense costs and resources.</p>
<p>1.9 Community Benefit</p>	<p>The funding for 10 hours of Co-ordinator time will enable 10 Woking families and approximately 20-25 children to be supported. The beneficiaries of this support would be the parents, their children and the local community.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The parents would benefit from support which is bespoke and designed to fit their needs. This support would help improve their parenting, well-being and ability to manage the home. In addition, volunteers help parents access local services so that, once Home-Start support is finished, they can access the help they need themselves. Home-Start aims to help parents develop greater resilience for the challenges of life. - The children would benefit from more consistent parenting, routines and boundaries and a more stable home life, thus giving them the best possible start in life. The Ofsted Early Years Report (March 2014) highlights that a poor start in life has a negative impact on a child's emotional and educational development in later life. - The local community benefits from the increased confidence and resilience of the family – families are better able to access community services and are more connected with their local community which leads to a reduction in dependence on statutory services. <p>Outcomes for parents and children are monitored and evaluated on a quarterly basis and the family journey is tracked from the point of referral to the end of support.</p> <p>In addition, volunteers who are all local parents benefit from the training and opportunities. Many volunteers use their time volunteering as a springboard into the work. Following their training with Home-Start, previous volunteers have gone on to work with the Family Support Programme, as Outreach workers for local Children's Centres and as Special Needs Assistants in local primary schools.</p> <p>As a result of the proposed school readiness programme, 20 children in Woking would benefit from being more able to engage with schooling from the moment they start school. Having a positive start in school would have long term effects on their education. Research by the Education Policy Institute showed that the school readiness gap at</p>

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	<p>five years old explains 40% of the attainment gap at the end of secondary school.</p> <p>Children who receive free school meals are nearly twice as likely to not be school ready as those who are not in receipt of free school meals. Home-Start would seek to support families in receipt of benefits and whose children accessed FEET funding. Volunteers would be trained to encourage parents to participate in the programme. Parents would then be better equipped to ensure that any younger children in the family are, when the time came, more ready for school.</p>
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2.0 Financial Background	
2.1 Budget	<p>At the time of the application, the Group held £107,066 in the bank, including reserves to cover the costs of closure. In addition, under Pensions Legislation the Group has a potential liability to the Pensions Trust of approximately £7,500 but this figure could increase significantly if the scheme closed, with an estimated debt on withdrawal of £21,583 as at March 2018.</p> <p>The Group has submitted a budget for 2020/21 which shows an anticipated income of £106,500 against an anticipated expenditure of £93,736, resulting in an anticipated surplus of £12,764.</p> <p>Anticipated income includes Surrey County Council (£37,000), Children in Need (£25,000), Garfield Weston (£10,000), Big Lottery (£10,000), Woking Borough Council (£7,500) and other fundraising activities such as bids, events and awards (£10,000). Items of expenditure include salaries, NI and pensions (£68,817), staff expenses (£2,900), volunteer expenses (£2,900), office rent (£6,500), telephone, IT and office costs (£2,400), fees to Home-Start UK (£2,400), advertising (£400) and website costs (£350).</p>
2.2 Accounts	<p>The Group has submitted accounts for 2018/19 which show an income of £140,737 (£126,767 in 2017/18) against expenditure of £115,110 (£96,497 in 2017/18), resulting in a surplus of £25,627 (a surplus of £30,270 in 2017/18). The sum of £120,179 was carried forward at the end of the 2018/19 year.</p>
2.3 Support over the past five years	<p>2019/20 – £7,500 2018/19 – £7,500 2017/18 – £7,500 2016/17 – £7,500 2015/16 – £7,500</p>

3.0 Assessment of Application		
3.1 Key Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Constitution ○ Registered Charity ○ VAT Registered ○ Equal Opportunities Policy 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Safeguarding Policy ○ Reserves Policy ○ Quality Mark ○ Other funding sources pursued ○ Other support by the Council ○ Fundraising ○ Two quotes ○ Regular monitoring provided previously 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>N/A</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>3.2 Consultee Comments</p>	<p><u>Adam Thomas, Family Support Manager</u></p> <p>Home-Start Runnymede and Woking are requesting £10,000 to continue to fund Co-ordinator hours, enabling further volunteers to be recruited and placed with Woking families who need support. It will also enable them to deliver a school-readiness scheme including the training of volunteers. In the current climate of changes in funding and provision for vulnerable families, this is a welcome request and one that I support, to work in conjunction with the newly established Woking Family Centres Team.</p>	
<p>3.3 Assessment</p>	<p>Home-Start Runnymede and Woking aims to offer free confidential support, friendship and practical help to families with at least one child under five who are experiencing difficulties and struggling to cope with the challenges of parenting. Reasons for referral include isolation, family breakdown, illness, disability, bereavement, multiple births, housing issues and financial hardship. 73 referrals were made in Woking in 2018/19, with high numbers from families with domestic abuse issues and those receiving multi-agency support (including from the Woking Borough Family Support Programme).</p> <p>Following a referral, the Group's staff assess each family's individual needs and assign an appropriately skilled and experienced volunteer. The current trend is that Home-Start Runnymede and Woking is increasing the number of home visits, reducing emphasis on occasional support.</p> <p>The applicant has indicated that consistent and frequent help empowers families manage better and enables them to eventually become self-sufficient. On this basis the Group's work can reduce dependence on statutory agencies in Woking, and if the issues encountered are more serious, signpost to specialist charities (e.g. in cases of substance abuse, domestic violence). The work undertaken represents a high quality and cost effective service to vulnerable families in Woking.</p> <p>The work of the Group continues to support those families experiencing difficulties, whatever the cause, with a view to assisting them through the worst times to avoid family breakdown. With the Council's funding during 2018/19, a total of 79 families were supported and 12 volunteers were recruited and trained to support families with additional needs.</p> <p>The Group is also applying for £2,500 towards the School Readiness Programme in the Borough which would assist children with the transition to school. The SCC Early Help in Surrey data shows that</p>	

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children claiming Free School meals tend to make worse progress in the Early Years transition stage than their peers, along with those who choose English as a second language.

The need for the School Readiness Programme comes from feedback from the Group's referrers along with local nurseries and schools. Based on discussions with those in health and education locally the programme covers the following areas:

- Early writing skills – games to encourage name and letter recognition
- The importance of routines and how to help families implement them, including good bedtime routines
- Self-care and independence – advising on potty training and self-dressing
- Modelling and encouraging reading with children
- The importance of play, particularly imagination games and how parents can enjoy this with their children
- Eating at regular times, at a table
- Encouraging play that boosts fine and gross motor skills

Parents would consent to Home-Start volunteers working through the programme with them as part of their home-visiting support. The programme would comprise of games and activities for the volunteer to do with the children. Parents would be encouraged to try activities with their children in between volunteer visits. In addition, support and advice would be offered to parents on issues such as routines, healthy eating, play and self-care. Home-Start Runnymede and Woking employs a Qualified Teacher who is currently working with local families on all the topics above. Feedback from her work with families as well as further consultation with local education and health providers will shape the final programme. Volunteers will be trained and supported to deliver the programme so that more local families benefit.

The Group has also indicated that next year its funding support from Surrey County Council is to be significantly reduced from £53,700 to an expected £36,000, following the appointment of Surrey Care Trust as the lead provider, representing a reduction of a third. Work is taking place to establish other sources of income for core services.

It is proposed that the Council again supports the Group in the coming year and that funding should be increased to £10,000, to cover both the existing service and the provision of the School Readiness programme.

REPORT ENDS