

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. 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.

An application has been received for revenue funding of £10,000 over the coming year to pay for ten additional Co-ordinator hours each week, enabling the service to meet the needs of families in the Borough and continue to support parents and children in difficult circumstances. The funding will also enable a member of staff to help lead a group in partnership with the Woking Family Centre. The group would meet on a weekly basis to provide support and advice to local families, as well as helping to reduce isolation. With the Council's funding during 2019/20, a total of 81 families in Woking were supported, with an 58 referrals being received and 17 volunteers were recruited and trained to support families with additional needs.

The Charity has been severely affected by the Covid-19 pandemic. It had been expecting to receive funding from BBC Children in Need for two of its three front-line posts. Unfortunately the organisation had taken the decision to reduce its funding for projects located within Surrey. In addition, from January 2020, the funding received from the contract with Surrey County Council to provide Early Help support was reduced to £36,000. In its budget for 2021/22, there is a potential deficit of £30,000 which the Charity plans to mitigate through applications to grant-giving bodies such as Community Foundation for Surrey, Home-Start UK (the Government Loneliness Fund), Comic Relief, Henry Smith and BBC Children in Need.

Since March 2020, the nature of support provided to families has had to change, although visits had been re-started provided they are outside. The Charity is working hard to assist the families it works with, many of which have incurred increasing feelings of isolation or worsening mental health during the lockdown period. The main areas of need for families are children's wellbeing, domestic abuse, healthy lifestyles, educational attainment gap, maternal mental health, new mums, school readiness and toddler social skills.

Taking into account the consultee comments and noting the excellent and valued work of the Group, it is proposed that the Council again supports the Group in the coming year and that funding should be set at £10,000, the same level as during the previous year.

Recommendations

The Executive is requested to:	RESOLVE That , subject to the outcome of the Council's budgetary process, a grant of £10,000 be awarded from the Community Grants Budget to provide additional support to families in Woking.
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.
Legal Authority	S142 Local Government Act 1972

Home-Start Runnymede and Woking – Application For Financial Assistance

	S111 Local Government Act 1972
Confirmation of funding	<p>This award is provisionally made on the expectation that the Council's budgets for revenue and capital projects remain at the same level allocated for the current financial year. The Council's overall budget, including the sums allocated for community grants, will be determined by Council at its meeting on 11 February 2021. In the event the grant budgets are set at the anticipated levels, confirmation of the Council's support will be sent to successful applicants. Groups should not plan for the 2021/22 funding until this confirmation has been received.</p> <p>Should the budgets be reduced as part of the Council's efforts to achieve savings to offset the impact of Covid on the Council's financial position, a special meeting of the Executive will be held to review the provisional awards and allocate the funds available on a priority basis</p>
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</p>

Home-Start Runnymede and Woking – Application For Financial Assistance

	<p>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>Due to the impact of Covid-19, the financial pressure on the Council's budgets is higher than ever and is expected to continue in the coming years. 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 2021/22 does not imply that a similar application in 2022/23 would be supported. In particular, it is emphasised that the Council is extremely unlikely to be in a position to award any sums above the 2021/22 levels.</p> <p>In view of this, the applicant is to be advised to ensure that contingency plans for the Group's operations for 2022/23 have been drawn up in the event that the Council is unable to continue its support beyond April 2022. 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.</p>

The Executive has authority to determine the above recommendations.

Background Papers:

2021/22 Application Form.

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Home-Start Runnymede and Woking – Application For Financial Assistance

Home-Start Runnymede and Woking – Application For Financial Assistance

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>6 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> <p>In addition, a specialist Family Support Worker who is a qualified teacher and SENCO (special educational needs coordinator) has recently been recruited. The postholder works for 15 hours per week and the Charity hopes to increase the hours to 25 each week from January 2021.</p>
1.3 Volunteers	<p>56. 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>The majority of 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.</p> <p>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> <p>The Charity's staff and volunteers have many years of experience in supporting vulnerable families. The staff team includes: a former health visitor and a qualified teacher with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) expertise. The volunteers include teachers, social workers, doctors, nursery managers and former nannies.</p>

Home-Start Runnymede and Woking – Application For Financial Assistance

1.4 Clients/Users	<p>403, comprising:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 199 male 204 female 93 disabled 133 ethnic minority <p>221 resident in Woking:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 102 aged 0-5 11 aged 6-10 4 aged 11-18 104 aged 19-65 <p>During 2019-20 the Group supported a total of 81 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, 58 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> <p>In the past year the most common reason for a referral was maternal mental health, equating to 32% in Woking. 19% of the referrals in Woking were because there was a child in the family with additional needs, requiring support. 40% of the referrals received were for lone parent families and 36% of referrals were for Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic families.</p>
1.5 Members	8.
1.6 Sum Requested	£10,000 (Revenue)
1.7 Project	<p>The Group states that due to the grant award from the Council and other funding received, last year the number of families supported increased by 15%. Across both boroughs in 2019/20 Home-Start Runnymede & Woking supported 106 families through the home-visiting service. An additional 53 families received occasional support which included signposting and referral to other support services. Referrals during the Covid-19 crisis have been lower than normal as usual referrers are not having the same type of contact with families. It is expected that referral numbers will increase from September 2020 onwards.</p> <p>The grant applied for would be used to continue to fund the Co-ordinator hours thereby ensuring that the needs of families in Woking are met and support provided to parents and children in difficult circumstances. Without the funding, staff hours would have to be reduced and the Group would be unable to recruit, train and support</p>

Home-Start Runnymede and Woking – Application For Financial Assistance

	<p>the same number of volunteers, resulting in a decrease in service provision. As one of the most cost-effective schemes in Surrey, the Group prides itself in offering early help and prevention support to families, reducing the risk of escalation and referral to statutory services which can be costly.</p> <p>In addition to funding the Co-ordinator to support ten families at any one time with the home-visiting service, the funding would enable a member of staff to help lead a weekly group in partnership with the Woking Family Centre. The group would provide support and advice to local families, as well as helping to reduce isolation and strengthen the local community.</p>
<p>1.8 Cost breakdown:</p>	<p>The Group will use the grant of £10,000 to fund ten Co-ordinator hours per week which will enable it to provide a home-visiting service to ten Woking families at any one time.</p> <p>Current gross salary cost: Co-ordinator NJC Scale point 15 is £23,978, pro-rata for 10 hours per week = £6,480 plus employer's National Insurance £456 plus employer's pension (5%) £324 = £7,260 (Gross salary costs pro-rata to 10 hours / week).</p> <p>The balance of the request would fund a member of staff to help lead a group in partnership with the Woking Family Centre. It is anticipated that the Co-ordinator would spend an average of 2.5 hours per week on this project. The time spent on the project would be front-loaded to include planning the content of the sessions with Outreach Workers from the Family Centre.</p> <p>Current gross salary cost: Co-ordinator NJC Scale point 15 is £23,978, pro-rata for 2.5 hours per week = £1,620 plus employer's National Insurance £116 plus employer's pension (5%) £81 = £1,817 (Gross salary costs pro-rata to 2.5 hours / week).</p>
<p>1.9 Community Benefit</p>	<p>The funding for 10 hours of Co-ordinator time would enable ten Woking families and approximately 20 to 25 children to be supported at any one time. Over the course of the year this number could increase to 20 families and 40 to 50 children, depending on the length of support. The beneficiaries of this support would be the parents, their children and the local community:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • 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

Home-Start Runnymede and Woking – Application For Financial Assistance

	<p>services.</p> <p>The Group monitors and evaluates outcomes for parents and children on a quarterly basis using the online database 'Charity Log', tracking the family journey from the point of referral to the end of support.</p> <p>In addition, the volunteers are all local parents and benefit from the training and opportunities on offer. Many 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 Family Centres and as Special Needs assistants in local primary schools. In the last year 15 new volunteers have been trained.</p>
1.10 Covid-19 Impact	<p>Since 18 March 2020, staff have been working from home, with one member of staff now going into the office. The team has held meetings on Zoom and also at an outdoor location. During the lockdown local families continued to be supported as the Group adapted its ways of working to respond to their needs whilst ensuring social distancing. The work has included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- telephone and video support for families- support for homeschooling (telephone support from the Group's Family Support Worker who is a qualified teacher and trained to work with children with additional needs, as well as delivery of resources)- deliveries of games, toys, puzzles and craft resources for families that are struggling to keep their children occupied- advice and ideas for families on how to maintain emotional wellbeing of children and parents during lockdown- signposting and referring to other local agencies including the Foodbank and Your Sanctuary (domestic abuse refuge and advice) <p>With the gradual easing of restrictions visits had been able to re-start, albeit outdoor and socially distant.</p> <p>Financially, Covid-19 has led to a reduction in income which has led to the furloughing of 2 members of staff and the reduction of hours for 3 staff members. Other sources of income are actively being sought to ensure continuity of service.</p> <p>Families are advising the Charity that the current crisis has affected them in many ways and that the needs going forward will be significant and widespread, as they are in greater financial need than ever before. The main issues identified:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Children's wellbeing – many parents have stated that their own mental health issues have impacted on their ability to protect their children's wellbeing during this stressful time. Volunteers and staff are trained to work with parents to increase levels of attachment through positive play. The Group will continue to provide guidance and ideas for parents, as well as craft resources / toys / games where needed. Once social distancing eases and home-visits resume, volunteers and staff will be able to model play with children as well as giving parents some much needed respite.- Domestic abuse – there has been an increase in women advising the Charity that their partner or ex-partner is being abusive.

Home-Start Runnymede and Woking – Application For Financial Assistance

Volunteers and staff are trained to know what questions to ask to enable victims to feel able to make a disclosure, in the knowledge that they will be supported and helped. The Group signposts support women to get specialist support and to be safe. In addition, referrals are accepted from the local Domestic Abuse refuge for women who have fled abusive relationships and moved into the local area. The Charity provides emotional and practical support to establish the women in their new neighbourhood; through registering with the local GP and dentist, finding nurseries and schools, and accessing local groups to help them build a network of friends.

- **Healthy lifestyles** - parents have been reporting that they have been struggling to provide healthy meals and snacks for their children during the lockdown, often because of financial pressures or parental mental health issues. In addition, many of the families do not have a garden and the children have been very sedentary during the lockdown. Staff are trained to deliver the HENRY course which will help families begin to make healthy choices for their families in terms of food and exercise.
- **Educational attainment gap** – the closure of schools and nurseries has widened the educational gap in children who were already behind their peers. Families have struggled with home-learning either because of parental literacy and numeracy issues, parental mental health or due to a lack of laptops / tablets / broadband. An application has been submitted to the Community Foundation for Surrey for a project to provide volunteers to work with children to support their learning and reduce the attainment gap.
- **Maternal mental health** – mothers have been commenting on the impact that lockdown is having on their mental health, particularly if they are parenting alone and/or have previously suffered with anxiety or depression. The Charity receives many referrals from the Peri-natal Mental Health team and other professionals working alongside mothers with mental health issues. It continues to provide emotional support to mothers via the phone or video and through walks or garden visits. Mothers are encouraged to access online counselling. Once the Charity is able to conduct visits inside homes it will continue to provide emotional support alongside practical and respite support.
- **New mums** – Local GPs have seen a rise in non-accidental injuries in young babies. Anne Longfield, the Children's Commissioner, has written about her concerns for babies born in lockdown, highlighting how up to 50% of Health Visitors had been redeployed to other areas of the NHS and that new mothers and babies were not receiving the usual levels of care and support. Referrals for new mums continue to be accepted by the Charity and are matched with a volunteer who can offer support, guidance and encouragement during the challenging early days of motherhood. Work with other local Home-Starts has been undertaken to launch Zoom groups to help new mums connect with one another and encourage them to meet up, for example socially distant walks in the park.
- **School readiness and toddler social skills** – life skills development and peer socialisation have been missed at a critical

Home-Start Runnymede and Woking – Application For Financial Assistance

time. The Charity works with parents to help develop the practical, social and emotional skills that children need to ensure they are ready for school.

2.0 Financial Background

2.1 Budget	<p>At the time of the application, the Group held £130,664 in the bank. The sum of £15,398 is reserved for a Pensions Liability in the event of closure and restricted reserves of £10,000 are held for groups that are currently not able to run but for which funding has been received. In addition, the Reserves Policy requires six months' expenditure to be held.</p> <p>The Group has submitted a budget for 2021/22 which shows an anticipated income of £81,000 against an anticipated expenditure of £83,851, resulting in an anticipated deficit of £2,851. However, the income includes a potential transfer from reserves of £30,000 which may be required depending on the outcome of funding applications.</p> <p>Anticipated income includes Surrey County Council – Early Help (£36,000), Woking Borough Council Grant (£10,000) and donations (£5,000). Items of expenditure include salaries (£59,811), telephone costs (£2,600) and volunteer expenses (£2,200).</p>
2.2 Accounts	<p>The Group has submitted accounts for 2019/20 which show an income of £90,624 (£140,737 in 2018/19) against expenditure of £96,034 (£115,110 in 2018/19), resulting in a deficit of £5,410 (a surplus of £25,627 in 2018/19). The sum of £114,769 was carried forward at the end of the 2019/20 year.</p>
2.3 Support over the past five years	<p>2020/21 – £10,000 2019/20 – £7,500 2018/19 – £7,500 2017/18 – £7,500 2016/17 – £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 ○ Safeguarding Policy ○ Reserves Policy ○ Quality Mark ○ Other funding sources pursued ○ Other support by the Council ○ Fundraising 	<p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>Yes</p> <p>No</p> <p>Yes</p>
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Home-Start Runnymede and Woking – Application For Financial Assistance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Two quotes ○ Regular monitoring provided previously 	<p>N/A</p> <p>Yes</p>
<p>3.2 Consultee Comments</p>	<p><u>Adam Thomas, Family and Community Services 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. This is a well-respected and valued organisation, helping vulnerable families and it works well in partnership with Woking Borough Council's Family Services teams. This grant will help to continue and build on the support that is needed for families now more than ever in the current economic climate.</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. 58 referrals were made in Woking in 2019/20, 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 to 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 2019/20, a total of 81 families were supported and 17 volunteers were recruited and trained to support families with additional needs. The primary need of referral families in 2019/20 is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maternal mental health – 32% Child additional needs – 19% Neglect / safeguarding – 9% Domestic abuse – 4% Parenting support – 27% Parental disability / illness – 9% <p>A significant number of referrals come from the wards of Kingfield and Westfield and Maybury and Sheerwater where the percentage of children living in poverty is significantly higher than the borough average (source: Surrey). In addition, support is also provided to families awaiting decisions on asylum, those with no recourse to</p>	

Home-Start Runnymede and Woking – Application For Financial Assistance

public funds and also Syrian refugees. During 2019/20, 40% of families supported were lone-parent families.

Many families have become more isolated during the Covid-19 period. This may be because of lack of community network, poor mental health, disability or housing/transport issues. It is vital for parents and children to have opportunities for socialisation. In working with the Family Centre the Charity will be enabling more families to reduce their levels of isolation, improve parental mental health and boost children's developmental opportunities. Staff will be able to advise and signpost families to access further support where appropriate.

During the 2021/22 financial year, funding of £36,000 will be received from Surrey County Council for the Early Help work. In addition, the sum of £10,000 has been applied for from the Community Foundation for Surrey for work to reduce the educational attainment gap and train new volunteers. Applications have been made to Home-Start UK (the Government Loneliness Fund) for funding of £5,000 to support isolated mothers; Comic Relief to support work taking place with new mothers; and to Henry Smith and BBC Children in Need.

It is hoped that these further applications will result in increased income of £30,000 for the Charity, thereby reducing the call on reserves to operate on a break-even basis next year. The Group's ability to fundraise has been curtailed during the pandemic, although during 2019/20 it had been the named charity for Hoebridge Golf Club.

Taking into account the consultee comments and noting the excellent and valued work of the Group, it is proposed that the Council again supports the Group in the coming year and that funding should be set at £10,000, the same level as during the previous year.

REPORT ENDS