



Home Link Family Support



Working with our volunteers to provide practical and emotional support to families with young children

ABOUT US	3
WHAT PEOPLE SAY	4
OVERVIEW	5
OUR CORE WORK	6
FINANCE	19



Who we are:

Home Link Family Support is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee, established in 1986. It is based in Edinburgh and operates throughout Edinburgh and Midlothian, offering a range of home visiting supports using an early intervention approach.

- > Antenatal Support Service
- > Midlothian Young Parents Support Service
- > The Family Support Service

Systemic Family Counselling Service in Midlothian: a unique therapeutic service for the whole family in their own home, for families with children aged 0-18.

What we do:

- > We work with volunteers and paid staff to provide practical and emotional support to families with young children.
- > We aim to support parents to fully engage with the positive emotional development of their children, to help nurture healthy parent-child relationships, and to encourage parents to fully understand and participate in their child's early learning. Through early intervention we seek to support families to bring up their children so that they can become successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens.
- > We also work with our strategic partners to influence the policy landscape as it impacts on families and young children in Edinburgh and Midlothian.

What one of our funders says:

"In Midlothian Home Link Family Support provide a crucial Third Sector provision through the range of Family Support, Young Parents Support Service and Systemic Family Counselling services. Staff have established a strong profile within Midlothian's Early Learning and Childcare community. The Family Support / Home Visiting project provides a much needed service for parents and young children who may experience a range of challenges. The Home Visiting service is a unique support which recognises how significant it is to establish warm supportive relationships within the family home.

Volunteers have participated in CPD training to develop their understanding of the richness of the home learning environment and how to promote parent knowledge and skills in supporting their child's play and learning. In the last year Home Link Family Support took a lead role in establishing the wider partnership agencies around the Lawfield Community Project. This has been a major achievement and early results are positive for this school community in one of the authority's priority areas."

Jacky Gillan – Midlothian Early Years Manager

What our partners say:

"Home Link provides valuable support to families and is a valuable organisation for Health Visitors and other services to refer families to. Because Home Link are a voluntary organisation and have volunteer befrienders, they are able to build relationships with families in a way that the more statutory services cannot. Family support within Early Years is so important as this is the best opportunity to provide Primary Prevention, that results in less families requiring statutory intervention. Also, Home Link covers the Oxcgangs area of the city, which has significant need but where residents do not have access to a lot of services".

Gordon McLean - Area Coordinator for South West Children's Services Management Group

"HLFS have a wealth of experience in delivering quality services from Family Support Workers and Volunteers. The Volunteers Service provided by HLFS is of a very high standard with excellent ongoing training, support and monitoring systems in place.

Without this support and intervention I have no hesitation in voicing my concerns that there would be gaps in support for families where there are welfare concerns that are not at the levels of requiring statutory intervention. However it could be in some cases that without this intervention more children may be at risk and also may end up in crisis. "

Helena Reid - Development Officer Parent and Carer Support (South Edinburgh)

What a service user and a volunteer say:

"I just appreciated having a kind and friendly person who was genuinely interested in me, my life and my children. She made me realize that I am not alone and that there are wonderful people in the world who are willing to give up their spare time to spend with complete strangers and help them out when they are really struggling. That in itself is truly heart- warming and made me feel good."

Family who received support in 2015-16

"I have received more support as a volunteer with Home Link than I ever got when I was a nursery teacher, as a result I feel really valued."

Volunteer who has been with the organisation for 5 years

Overview from the Manager

On behalf of the Board I would like to thank the volunteers and our highly motivated and committed staff team for their incredible support to the 167 families during the year.

We have been so fortunate with the high quality of the volunteers who have every week given their time to ensure that children are given the best start in life. There is no doubt that having the support of volunteers enhances the learning environment for all the children referred. We have invested time to review and improve the volunteer training programme resulting in its expansion to include an additional day devoted to play@home, early literacy and numeracy, speech and language development, and attachment. We are confident that this addition gives our volunteers more understanding of the importance of all of these activities in the early years.

We experienced great anxiety in the second half of the year when funding uncertainty hung over the Edinburgh services. It was a great relief when we

were awarded 3 year funding for the Family Support Service, giving much needed security of service provision to the children and families referred. We were delighted to be awarded, post-yearend, 5 year funding from the Big Lottery enabling the Antenatal Support Service to remain in operation and allowing us to expand service delivery in Edinburgh for the Family Support Service.

I feel truly privileged and extremely proud of the volunteers and team for their endless commitment and belief in what we are trying to achieve. As you will see from this Annual Report, 2015-16 was a year of fulfilling our commitments outlined in the previous Report and also building capacity to support more children and families by undertaking and succeeding in new opportunities.

Paula Swanston, MANAGER

YEAR in NUMBERS

40,080

Volunteer hours provided

268

Children supported

8,016

Home visits provided

53

New volunteers recruited

£288,576

Economic value of volunteer hours

Full time equivalent staff members employed

9.2

43

Funders and donors who contributed

167

Families supported

93

Volunteer network sustained

Our Core Work 2015-16

1 The Volunteer Family Support Service

- > **106 families were matched with a family support volunteer in 2015-16**
- > **A total of 145 children benefited from the support of a family support volunteer**
- > **The outcomes achieved as the result of having a family support volunteer**
 - Parents' improvement in establishing child friendly routines = 84%
 - Families who saw an improvement in their children's learning = 100%
 - Families who felt that their children's general health & well being had improved = 82%
 - Families who felt that they were meeting their children's emotional needs = 88%
 - Families who had felt they had achieved their own family outcome = 88%

The support offered is varied but has a general theme of supporting the parent and child relationship, encouraging child development, linking families into long-term local services, supporting parents to be the best that they can be. The reasons for referral have included parental stress, practical help, housing issues, parenting skills, special needs, family separation, child emotional health, domestic abuse, social and emotional isolation and child protection.

2 The Young Parents Support Service

was launched in January 2015. The service covers all of Midlothian and offers support to parents under 25 who have a child under 3 and where Health and Social Work professionals have identified that there are significant barriers to being able to provide the child with a safe, secure and supportive environment. We have supported 12 families with 23 children during 2015-16.

The Delivery Model

- > One-to-one in-home support from a volunteer for up to 3 hours per week for 12–18 months
- > Help to access external supports provided by existing universal services
- > Identification of other appropriate resources within the community and support and encouragement to access these
- > Support to work towards Child's Plan if this is in place
- > Priority is given to families from Midlothian's 3 priority areas of Gorebridge, Mayfield and Dalkeith, although we also support families across the whole of the area.



An example of how we have helped a young parent:

A recently arrived family from West Europe had a 4 year old with behaviour issues. There were also financial problems, relationship issues and problems with housing. The volunteer was primarily involved to support the mother with her parenting and encouraging the wee one to play and practice speaking English. She also supported her to go to the Citizens Advice Bureau about her debt issues and problems with the landlord. The volunteer encouraged Mum to start reading and singing in English and supported her with the transition to school. Mum and Dad have both acquired jobs and the child's behaviour has improved dramatically over the last few months: he is less frustrated when communicating and has made some peer relationships.

3 Antenatal Support Service

- > **Referrals: 14**
- > **Families Supported: 16 (20 children)**
- > **2 families participated in Mellow Bumps programme**



CASE STUDY: Linda and Dave

Linda was referred by her midwife in her final month of pregnancy. Linda and her partner Dave had had to move to an area of the city where they knew nobody to escape abuse from Linda's ex-partner and extended family. The couple had cut all contact with everybody to ensure that their new place of residence was not discovered. Linda suffered from depression and there were concerns that the isolation of this new situation would worsen this.

Linda had a history of alcohol misuse and had previously been in very abusive relationships. She had four other children all of whom had been accommodated due to her being unable to keep them safe or provide them with a nurturing home.

A decision had been made that the new baby would be accommodated in foster care at birth due to Linda's history. Linda was accepting of this but was determined to make things different this time round with the support of Dave. The couple had been engaging well with their midwife and with the Social Worker who had been allocated. Linda was concerned that she would not be able to bond with the baby as she had found this difficult with her last baby and felt she needed some support with this.

Linda was matched with volunteer Susan just before the baby, Anna, was born. Susan had previously been a midwife so was well placed to support Linda with early bonding. The match started slowly, the first meeting only lasted 20 minutes, the second extended to 30 minutes. Susan stuck with it and gradually Linda began to trust her and the length of visits built up to two hours. Although the baby did not initially stay with Linda, she was able to chat to Susan about how things had been during contact sessions. She was also able to talk about how her mood was and was supported to seek help for her depression which had become worse after Anna was born.

Linda and Dave worked well with professionals and when Anna was six months old she was rehabilitated to their care. The bond that Linda had been worried about was very evident and Anna settled at home very quickly. Susan continued to support the family helping build their confidence in their parenting. They did cooking together generally concentrating on healthy eating but occasionally adding baking. Linda was so pleased with her baking attempts that she decided that she wanted to make Anna a cake for her first birthday. Susan supported Linda to attend a group for Mums who had suffered PND, from this Linda realised that she was not the only one who lacked confidence, but also realised how much she had progressed. She was overheard when comforting another Mum saying "everybody needs support, if I hadn't had Susan I would never have got out the door".

4 Systemic Family Counselling Service

What is it?

Working systemically with families to talk about problems they are experiencing

- > Ensuring that each family member is given a voice
- > A time to talk together as a family about their concerns
- > Taking away the culture of blame enabling members to look at the family as a whole system
- > A resource for finding new ways of handling old problems
- > The sessions take place within the family home and usually last about one hour

Who is it for?

- > Any family who is concerned about a current difficulty in their family
- > The whole family together or individual family members
- > Families who would like to change their family relationships

How can it help?

- > Improve communication between family members by allowing everyone to have a say
- > Identify strengths already within the family
- > Help families find solutions to their problems and build positive relationships with each other

Number of people supported 2015-16

29 families
72 children
43 adults



Family consists of: Mum (M), Step-dad (SD) and son (S) who is 6 years old

Reason for referral:

M and SD were struggling to cope with S's aggressive and challenging behaviour which could result in S physically hitting his parents plus being verbally abusive. S was not coping well within school and was regularly being excluded. Parents were feeling helpless and powerless within their situation and desperately wanted support to improve things within the family.

An Art Therapist and a Systemic Practitioner worked together to support this family in their home. All three family members attended the sessions.

The first few sessions were tense due to family dynamics and strained relationships between them all. SD and S's relationship was particularly difficult. In the first few sessions S was verbally abusive to both M and SD which they were embarrassed by and felt ashamed of his behaviour. Using distraction techniques, the therapists were able to engage S in a positive way and allow for high emotions to settle. SD found this approach difficult to understand as he saw this as rewarding S for bad behaviour. We explained that unless S felt it was safe to join the session and would not be under a spotlight then he would never engage.

The main themes that came out of the sessions were: difference in parenting styles, ambivalent attachment style, communication problems, insecure relationship between all three family members, and lack of consistency in boundaries.

The two therapists helped the family to deconstruct their negative approach and defences toward each other and co-constructed more positive interactions with them. Working collaboratively with the family they were able to identify areas that needed to be changed and worked together on making these changes. Using art materials enabled the focus to be taken away from S as if he was the only problem and brought the family together to express themselves in a completely different way. They were able to join together as a family in a creative activity that allowed them all to be equal and share a new experience together. The first change the family made was their negative communication pattern and their differences in parenting. This brought about a sense of togetherness between the parents plus a feeling of support. Once this had been achieved they were able to focus on consistent boundaries, appropriate consequences and more positive interaction with S. Making time for each other and being together helped to build relationships between SD and S.

Although S's behaviour escalated and became even more destructive in the beginning, because both parents remained strong and showed S that they were able to contain him and not be blown over by him, he was then able to feel more secure. There were times when incidents occurred that caused flare ups within the family but the positive change was they did not last as long and everyone did not feel overwhelmed.

5 Intensive Family Support

We are delighted to see the return of the Family Support Worker in Midlothian to help provide intensive short term support for families with multiple needs.

- > Families worked with 10
- > Total no. children 18



CASE STUDY:

Family with 3 children, youngest of which, aged 4, has been diagnosed with autism. The child is starting school this year and the mother is having difficulty with his behaviour at nursery as well as out in the community. There are also issues with the older daughter, aged 12, who has mental health problems, which is having an impact on the family adding to increased anxiety being placed upon Mum, already struggling to keep the house in order and to ensure all are eating well. The Family Support Worker has been able to help Mum establish routines for the 4 year old, creating strategies on how to cope with him on shopping trips, going to the park, visiting others and being outdoors. Together they have created a visual timetable for him and Mum is reporting already that things have improved. Currently working on his transition to primary school and giving Mum a listening ear regarding her daughter's mental health situation and information on other supports available.





CASE STUDY: Early Learning Volunteer Family Support

Family Background

The family were referred to Home Link Family Support to support the mother with parenting and to provide some emotional support. Mum was a single parent with a 4 year old child living with her under a Compulsory Supervision Order. She had experienced long-standing difficulties with drug and alcohol misuse and her 2 eldest children were both accommodated. The resident child was attending nursery although attendance was inconsistent and she presented at times as being quite anxious, insecure and fearful, particularly around new people.

Assessment

Needs identified included:

- **Need to provide the child with a secure and stable home environment including regular mealtimes, bedtime, daily routine and regular attendance at nursery**
- **Need to provide consistent parenting and approach to discipline, putting boundaries in place**
- **Need for the child to feel safe and secure**
- **Need for Mum to prioritise her child's needs**
- **Need for Mum to develop her organisational skills with time-keeping and managing day to day activities**
- **Need for Mum to have someone outside the family to talk to about personal issues and provide emotional support.**

Home Link Family Support Intervention

The family were initially supported for around 9 months by a Family Support Worker who provided direct support with parenting such as working with Mum to have more regular routines and supporting her to put boundaries in place. After this came to an end, further support was offered by a family volunteer who continued to build Mum's confidence and helped her to have a more positive focus as well as reinforcing the need to maintain boundaries and routines that had been established by the Family Support Worker. The volunteer also spent time promoting play and early learning. She was able to act as a role model for Mum who in the past hadn't been able to engage her child in play. She was able to suggest games and activities with a specific focus on early literacy and preparation for starting school. In preparation for Primary 1, the Project Worker and Volunteer helped Mum to set up a visual timetable to help the child feel secure about weekly activities and key people such as who would collect her from school or when she attends an after-school club. A referral was also made to another agency to request support for the mother to return to work/college.

Outcome

There were several changes observed within the family:

- **Child's confidence significantly increased and more engaging with adults**
- **Child was more secure and less anxious**
- **Mum's confidence increased**
- **Improved capacity to manage daily activities and routines**
- **Child had increased and consistent nursery attendance**
- **Successful transition into Primary 1**
- **Mum started a college course**

Support from Home Link came to an end shortly after the child started school and around this time there was an annual Children's Hearing. It was agreed that as mum had made such significant progress with parenting there was no longer a need to have a Compulsory Supervision Order in place.

6 Volunteering

Our Family Volunteers are central to the delivery of our services and come from varied backgrounds. They must complete comprehensive training before working with families, which includes equalities and diversity. Key to their success in their volunteer role is the ability to be non-judgemental, to be supportive without being critical. Their role is to support, to develop a trusting relationship and to work alongside the family for the benefit of the children. We accommodate various learning needs and take these into consideration before and during the training.

We have refocused our volunteer service to take on a family learning approach, ensuring alignment with Scottish Government policy and through the learning and development of the Early Years Collaborative.

Volunteers have been trained to support families to engage more with early learning, through accessing any of the following parenting programmes:

PEEP (Parents as Early Education Practitioners) This training focuses on how to make the most of the learning opportunities in everyday life at home – listening, talking, playing, singing and sharing books every day - and helps parents to understand their role in children's early development. We continue to train volunteers as funding allows.

Play@home - We have continued to train our volunteers to deliver play@home, first introduced in New Zealand in 1990 and further developed in Scotland. Some of the main aims are to promote the benefit of physical activity and play, and strengthen bonds and communication between parents and children. 100% of our volunteers have been trained in this early intervention model.

Bookbug - We have an established partnership with the Scottish Book Trust and to date 70% of our volunteers have trained in the Bookbug Assertive Outreach Programme which has enabled them to feel confident to introduce books to children and parents and to know how to tell a story so a child remains engaged.

Volunteer Training Programme

- > **This year we saw a significant increase in the number of male volunteers trained - 7 in total. In 2014/15 we trained only 2. Male volunteers are particularly appreciated by families with no male role models for their children. The men bring their own useful experiences and values to the training and balance what can be perceived as a female dominated service.**
- > **We have added a new section to our training this year on Attachment because issues around early attachment are a common factor of support. Volunteers need to understand that by providing a consistent and reliable presence they can help with the development of a child's attachment and can help parents to understand how to respond to their child's needs.**



New Opportunities in 2015-16

Swimming lessons

Thanks to the Greggs Foundation who gave £2000, families with young children facing disadvantage have been provided with swimming vouchers for Edinburgh Leisure swimming centres that they have been able to use at times and venues most convenient for them. They have been supported and encouraged to start swimming by Family Support Volunteers who work with families on a weekly basis. Overall 45 families, including 95 children, have made use of the vouchers.

Family Support Volunteers support parents weekly in their own homes to interact with children, and use play, movement, song, reading, in order to promote development. Family Support Volunteers have encouraged families to use swimming as this provides an ideal opportunity for quality interaction and learning with their young children.

Swimming is an ideal opportunity for quality parent-child interaction, helping to promote strong relationships and healthy attachment. Swimming promotes children's learning and development as they interact with the water, develop coordination and engage in an exciting and imaginative play opportunity. The project offers a way to engage families in healthy physical activity, which can promote an active lifestyle, and can also promote relaxation and general wellbeing. Swimming can offer a welcome getaway for families in stressful domestic situations.



Many families, and especially children, report that have been really pleased with the opportunity to take up swimming. Children have said that it is fun, a favourite activity, and several have learned to swim as a result.

Parents have reported that it has enabled them to get out more, to relax, to become comfortable with local facilities, to meet other parents, and to spend quality time with their children and even acted as a stepping stone to exploring other opportunities locally.

Families are often facing poverty and deprivation, and are coping with a range of difficulties including family breakdown, mental health difficulties, unemployment and social isolation. Families we work with do not access community support services for themselves, therefore having volunteers come into families' own homes to provide support and actively encourage them to access other services and facilities makes a big difference. This helps children get a good start in life. Families would not be able to afford to go swimming without support. Swimming vouchers have helped to break down barriers these families face, with the potential to support long term changes.

Kids Love Clothes

In the past year we have been fortunate to work with Kids Love Clothes who have provided 20 families with 33 children with clothing. These clothes have been hand selected and beautifully packaged for each individual child; the staff have been so wonderful and worked hard to ensure the families we support have accessed clothing which has enabled children to attend nursery and pre-school.



Awards received 2015-16

We were recently successful in renewing our **Excellence in Befriending Award** from Befriending Networks with a rating of Excellent. We are proud to have achieved this twice, one of only 8 organisations in the UK to do so.



Midlothian Volunteer Team of the Year 2015

Jane and Paula showing off the award, which is voted for by the Midlothian Volunteer Centre's judges' panel



Children and Families Volunteer Training Network

Background

Through an event in 2013 looking at befriending with children and families across the city of Edinburgh, a small working group was established to look at pulling together existing resources. The working group members were: Home Link Family Support, Family Solutions, Barnardo's, Safe Families, Plus One Mentoring, The Broomhouse Project and Children 1st.

A commitment was made to coordinate additional training provision for all volunteers who support children and families across the city.

Implementation

Home Link Family Support provided basic administration and coordination.

- > Numbers of volunteers who accessed the training = 55
- > The most popular courses were: Child Protection, working with families, role of the health visitor, and Bookbug with an average of 10 volunteers attending each session.

The programme consisted of the following sessions:

- First Aid**
- Introduction to Systemic Practice**
- Bookbug Outreach**
- Supporting Fathers**
- The Children's Hearing Info Session**
- Engaging Children using therapeutic play**
- The role of the Health Visitor**
- Autism - Overview/Autism and sensory issues**
- SHB (Sexually Harmful Behaviours) workshop**
- Fostering and Adoption**
- Child Protection**
- Working with Families**

One Stop Shop

Home Link Family Support has led on providing a multi-agency Early Years Advisory Service to all parents living in the south of Edinburgh with children under 5 years of age. The 'One Stop Shop' is a new service offering parents:

- > An assessment of need including benefits check
- > Increase in uptake of 'Healthy Start' vouchers
- > Support with accessing welfare services/provision
- > Access to literacy/numeracy support and learning opportunities
- > Practical help with bringing up children in their early years.

Weekly sessions enabled parents to drop-in or to make an appointment. Sessions are staffed by a member of staff who is a representative from an action group/partner organisation, including the NHS Midwifery and Health Visiting Team, Home Link Family Support, Firsthand Lothian, The Advice Shop (CEC), Gilmerton Early Years Centre, Shelter and Community Learning and Development.

Midlothian Sleep Advice and Counselling

This was established in 2015 to help deal with sleep issues in children in Midlothian. A triage system was set up whereby a mixed support package of information leaflets, referral forms and basic sleep information sheets will be sent to all relevant organisations explaining to workers how to refer to the sleep early intervention practitioners.

We have 2 staff trained to deliver advice and counselling respectively and over the last year we have been a key partner in the Midlothian -wide Sleep Advice Sessions Programme.

The advice sessions have been offered across Midlothian: at the end of each session the parent was given a Sleep Information pack to help reinforce the advice given.

Families who received direct sleep support from our staff were categorised as follows:

- > **Sleep counselling - 4**
- > **Sleep advice by phone/email - 6**
- > **Sleep advice given by Co-ordinator/FSW - 8**

Improvements to Monitoring and Evaluation for all the family

The wellbeing of children and young people is the basis of the Scottish Government's policy of "Getting it Right For Every Child" (GIRFEC). We use the 8 SHANARRI wellbeing indicators as the basis for our monitoring and evaluation - that children and young people are safe, healthy, achieving, nurtured, active, respected, responsible and included. We ask all referrers to use these indicators at the point of referral helping them identify with the family what are their strengths and what they need help with. At the point of initial meeting with the family we revisit the SHANARRI indicators and discuss what the family feel they need support with, working with them to develop their own support plans that are unique to their situation and taking into account that they are the experts on their situation.

We can evaluate or work with very young children who may find it difficult to vocalise their thoughts and feelings.

Using "Talking Mats" child evaluation/communication of needs tool, using images and simple questions the children are asked to place the image relating to, for example, play under one of 3 faces happy/unsure/sad we use this model so that it allows children from the age of 2 years to tell us about their opportunities to participate in play, reading/storytelling and building positive

relationships. We then use this information to have a dialogue with the parents, taking into account that they are the experts on their situation, on how we can work in partnership - parent(s) and volunteer to work towards increasing opportunities to play, read, and build positive relationships for their child (ren). Our volunteers work in partnership with parent(s) building relationships, creating a culture of support with high expectations of what their children can achieve.

For all of the children and families that access our services we also record soft outcomes relating to emotional skills and wellbeing, asking our volunteers to record observations on how well they think the children and their parent/carers are doing. Our project seeks to empower parents by helping to increase their skills and confidence in parenting: we do this by taking a strengths-based approach for the children and their parents/carers helping celebrate what is working and what they would like to do more of or improve. We anticipate that parents who feel empowered will be more likely to take advantage of other support services within their communities and continue to develop themselves further.



Lawfield Community Project

The Lawfield Community Project (LCP) was set up by 5 key partners. These partners include Play Therapy Base, Home Link Family Support, Children 1st, Midlothian Sure Start and Midlothian Council.

The aim of the project has been to test how best to support Lawfield Primary School and to showcase how the voluntary sector can help meet specific need in the community by working in

partnership with education and other statutory partners.

A menu of interventions has been offered to children and families. These include: using the reflective approach with families and with staff; individual art, play or music therapy; 1-2-1 support and the chill out space for children; Dads Inclusion Project; sleep advice; family support and befriending; systemic family counselling and transition support.

The project has had a total of 43 families referred with 51 children.

The school reported on a number of key impacts:

- Absconding:** Dramatically reduced to virtually none
- Exclusions:** Huge reduction
- Parental Engagement:** Increase at Parents' Night attendance from 50% to 85%. Huge increase of community engagement at events with 300 attending the Dads Festival of Talent.
- Reading attainment:** Some of children increased from below baseline to 1-2 years above chronological age.
- Fathers Adventure Club:** Set up and growing attendance. Aims to be self-sufficient.
- Change in Culture:** School more Dad-inclusive. Staff more reflective of impact of community and family on children and more inclusive in dealings with families.



LCP CASE STUDY:

Reasons for referral: H moved to current primary school at the beginning of P2 when the family moved into the area. Mum is a single parent with 2 other children under 5. H is very shy and isolated and often in tears and requires learning support. Attendance is poor. Mum refused to engage with school or provide mobile number.

The systemic practitioner visited regularly and met with Mum, Aunt and paternal grandmother. Until a recent session, issues have mainly focused on the family's negative experiences of education. Mum then disclosed that both her partner and father had died suddenly and unexpectedly immediately prior to the move to this primary school a year ago. H has been trying to cope with these losses and her mother has been unable to support her by talking things through due to her own levels of distress.

We have already had a session involving Mum and the children around loss and H has shown me pictures which she has drawn on her bedroom wall of the 2 members of the family who died. Hopefully the opportunity for H to process her grief and additional support from school will result in better social and learning outcomes for H and better communication within the family.

PEEP in Midlothian

Home Link Family Support have offered PEEP training to our volunteers for a few years now, this training was offered for Continued Personal Development and Volunteer Befrienders along with being able to offer support to our families who would not be able to attend a PEEP group due to their vulnerability and lack of confidence. PEEP sessions were offered on a one to one basis with some families within their own home to introduce them to PEEP in order that they may eventually attend an organised PEEP group within their local area.

On 25th March a pilot group was set up at Mayfield Leisure Centre; this group lasted 16 weeks. The sessions were drop-in and for ages 0-4 years so this took away the restriction of families who had more than one child at different ages. In total there were 18 parents who attended and 21 children.



Parents and children at the PEEP group 2016

A couple of families attended on a few occasions and an average of 10 families attended more than three quarters of the total number of weeks.

At the beginning of the group most of the parents didn't read or share books with their children or, in fact, play with them as they felt the children were too young and wouldn't understand or they would feel stupid reading to their child as the child didn't read. By the end of the 16 weeks all parents read and shared books most days or at least once or twice a week. The majority now play with their child whether this is through messy play exploring texture or musical play with shakers.

The themes from Play@home were certainly a thread used throughout the sessions to give encouragement to the families that this was not difficult and was easy to achieve and even more cost effective to continue these activities within the family home.

Some feedback from the parents which was taken during the sessions included:

- "Great and interesting things to hear about my bairn and his needs".*
- "Brilliant Group, everyone feels welcomed and treated same, no cleeks here."*
- "Son loved it; he smiles a lot when we're here."*
- "Got me out of the hoose and really enjoying it."*
- "Good to see him smile."*
- "Feel so confident, as I was really nervous, great my kid loves it."*
- "My son's toy box is full of treasure basket stuff, I look at everything now and wonder what I could use it for as a toy, and my partner thinks I'm crazy."*
- "Oh my God! It's amazing to ken how the brain works never thought of that before how much playing changes it."*
- "It's been great hearing other mums' ideas. I don't feel as frightened to try food with her."*

30th Birthday Celebrations

In February 2016 we celebrated 30 years of supporting vulnerable children and families. We celebrated in style with a Family Craft Day. We had cake, art making, face painting, a magic show, and a visit from the Fire Service. Each child was given an early learning pack, including art materials and books, as a gift in memory of Angela Munro who was a volunteer Board Advisor and who sadly died in June 2015. We had a great day with over 100 children and their families coming along. We would like to thank Angela's family, friends and colleagues from Standard Life for their support during the event.



Future developments 2016-17 to enhance service capacity

2016-17 will see the expansion of the Edinburgh Service as a result of the 5 year funding commitment from the Big Lottery to maintain the existing Antenatal Service and enhance the Family Support Service with the recruitment of 2 new Early Years Coordinators who will provide a menu of support to families across the city including group work, one to one support and coordinated volunteer family support.

We will continue our partnership with the Lawfield Community Project with a view to increasing capacity to the wider Newbattle Learning community.

The One Stop Shop will reform to support Early Years' hubs in partnership with Health and Community Learning and Development.

We are committed to investing in the learning opportunities of our volunteers and remain a central partner in the growth of the volunteer training network.

Board Members at October 2016

Dave Kerr	Chairperson
Jane Ramage	Vice Chair
Lis Craig	Treasurer
Maria Thomson	Secretary
David Mason	
Nicky Yarrow	
Rosemary Millar	
Denise Nesbit	

Board members who retired during the year

Al Morrison	Chairperson
Chris Kelly	Vice Chair
Emma Jamieson	

Staff members at October 2016

Paula Swanston	Manager
Liz Pattinson	Finance Officer
Jane Ellis	Volunteer Officer
Sheena Smith	Senior Practitioner
Helen Gault	Antenatal Service Coordinator
Nadia Almaini	South East Edinburgh Family Support Coordinator
Heather McKie	Midlothian Family Support Coordinator
Vacant	South West Edinburgh Family Support Coordinator
Liz Notarangelo	Systemic Practitioner - Midlothian
Lyn Williams	Systemic Practitioner Newbattle Learning Cluster
Rachel Campbell	Young Parent Support Service Coordinator (maternity leave)
Wendy Rolland	Young Parents Support Service Coordinator (maternity leave cover)
Wendy Fraser	Midlothian Family Support Worker
Catriona Paterson	Early Years Coordinator - Edinburgh
Lyndsey Mullen	Early Years Coordinator - Edinburgh

Staff members who left us during the year

Amanda Vickery	South East Edinburgh Family Support Coordinator
Georgia Koutousi	South West Edinburgh Family Support Coordinator

Finance

Income and Expenditure Accounts

	2016	2015
Income	£	£
Charitable Resources Grants	305,333	310,890
Voluntary Income	38,527	58,225
Investment Income	794	787
Total Income	344,854	369,902
Expenditure		
Charitable Activities, Direct Support Costs	333,437	311,713
Governance	3,928	4,836
Total Expenditure	337,365	316,549
Surplus/(Deficit) for Year	7,489	53,353

	2016	2015
Balance Sheet		
Fixed Assets	0	1,323
Current Assets	257,796	296,343
Current Liabilities	52,358	99,717
Net Current Assets	205,438	196,626
Net Total Assets	205,438	197,949

The financial performance of Home Link Family Support has been challenging in 2015-16, due to dealing with uncertainty of large grant funding from local authorities. Fortunately we were successful in securing funding for 3 years from the CEC. Our small grant applications and trust awards are down in comparison to last year, but we implemented robust financial controls to ensure the financial position was secure. A small surplus of £7,489 was generated (Prior year: £53,353) based on income of £344,854 (PY: £369,902).

Midlothian continues to be Home Link Family Support's largest funder, contributing £149,000 (PY: £157,520). Home Link Family Support also received significant levels of funding from:

- > £48,520 City of Edinburgh Council (PY £48,373)
- > £25,000 The Cattanaich Trust
- > £25,000 The Volant Charitable Trust

Home Link Family Support continues to have a strong balance sheet with total reserves of £205,438 (PY: £197,949) made up of unrestricted reserves of £117,859 (PY: £152,764) and restricted reserves of £87,579 (PY: £45,185). We will continue to monitor the level of unrestricted reserves to ensure that the organisation is equipped to deal with the economic uncertainty which lies ahead.

The Board of Directors are confident that Home Link Family Support is well placed to meet the financial challenges which face all charitable organisations. Home Link Family Support has already secured the majority of its 2016-17 funding and beyond with a 5 year award secured from the Big Lottery and the Board are confident that the management and staff team are well placed to continue to provide the excellent services which have built Home Link Family Support's reputation.

Dave Kerr TREASURER



Home Link Family Support

Unit 1 Newington Business Centre, Dalkeith Road Mews,
Dalkeith Road, Edinburgh, EH16 5GA

0131 661 0890 info@homelinkfamilysupport.org
Scottish Charity No SC001360 | Company No 229797

DESIGN: www.lennon.design

Funders and donors 2015-16

On behalf of the Board, staff and volunteers and the families we support we would like to give our sincere thanks and appreciation to all our funders and donors this year. Without your support we would not have been able to help so many vulnerable children and their families.

The Merchant Company
The Hendrie Trust
Sir Ian Stewart Foundation
Katherine Mackenzie
Miss M E Swinton Paterson Trust
Dave Kerr
The Roger Vere Foundation
The Robertson Trust
The Avinou Family
Coles-Medlock Foundation
The Bruce Trust
The R S Macdonald Trust
City Of Edinburgh Council
Katherine Mackenzie
Standard Life Staff

Andy Wilson/Circle
Albert Hunt Trust
Lothian Health Foundation
Standard Life Staff (For books)
Paterson Logan Trust
Eliza Pedersen's Trust
The Cattanach Trust
Greggs Foundation
Binks Trust
L Kirk
Morningside & Newington Floral
Art Group
Henry Duncan Awards
Jenny Lowe
Chris Lowe

Gledswood Charitable Trust
Castansa
Midlothian Council
Kennedy Charitable Trust
Nancie Massey Charitable Trust
Big Lottery
Dr Mike Wilson
Thirkleby Trust
Sir James Miller Edin. Trust
Souter Trust
David & Claudia Harding Foundation
Bank Of Scotland Foundation
Ponton House Trust
Cruden Foundation

