

### **For the big grant – Home-Start to recruit, train and supervise a Homestart volunteer to support a family in Long Ashton Parish.**

The grant would be used to facilitate the training, supervision and travel costs of a volunteer to support a Long Ashton family with under school age children for a year.

**Quote from volunteers** – ‘With the help of a Home-Start volunteer the impossible can become possible’

‘we all need help at different times in our lives and Home-Start is a wonderful charity that is there ready to lend a helping hand with those early years of parenting, to help parents enjoy family life and get through the trying times’

Families requiring support are self-referred or identified by professional agencies such as health visitor. Reasons for referral are many fold and include isolation, mental health issues, family illness or disability, multiple births or general support in managing a new addition to the family. The volunteer will be carefully matched to the family and regular supervision, by a Home-Start coordinator, will take place for all involved.

**Quote from a family** - ‘Support made the difference between just coping and being able to actively able to help the children by having time and energy to engage with them on a one to one basis.’

The visits are for a few hours each week and enable the family to receive non-judgemental and practical support. Accompanying families to medical appointments, sign posting facilities and resources, joining local toddler groups, demonstrating strategies for good behaviour and play as well as a listening ear. The families accessing this support say how their confidence has grown as well as improving their general wellbeing and having a more positive experience with their children.

Research has shown that this early intervention has sustainable benefits not only to the immediate family but to the extended family and friends. The supported family can grow within the community and become more established sharing their experience with peers. On several occasions those supported have become volunteers themselves thus expanding the invaluable work of Home-Start.

**Quote from the Founder Margaret Harrison** - ‘Supporting a family can be best done in their own home where it can be shaped to the needs of the family. If parents get support and friendship from another parent they will be better equipped to learn to cope with the many difficulties life can bring and will be able to give their children the best start to their lives.’

Long Ashton is already an active participant in Home-Start as a member of staff, volunteer and two supported families live in the village.

#### **Who will benefit**

The family and their extended family and friends

The toddler groups and schools as the young people receiving support are more prepared for school so do not need extra provision.

The health providers who, by recommending a volunteer to assist the family, can use their limited resources where the need is more complex within the community.