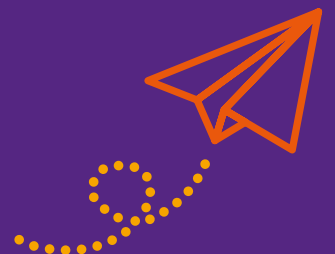


TOGETHER WITH FAMILIES

THE HOME-START STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK 2022- 2027



OUR FOUR STRATEGIC COMMITMENTS

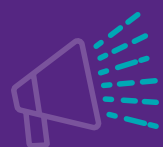
Led by our passionate movement of Home-Start volunteers, staff and supporters, we will bring our vision to life for families through four strategic commitments.



GROWTH

A collective ambition to reach significantly more families

More parents with young children can access support in a way that works for them



VOICE

Home-Start will stand alongside families to make the case for support

More families avoiding crisis as a result of receiving appropriate early support



INCLUSION

Home-Start will advance inclusion and equity in all we do

Everyone feels included at Home-Start



IMPACT

Local Home-Starts will be stronger together

A thriving, collaborative UK-wide community of high-quality Home-Start provision for families with young children



HOW WE WILL KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL

By 2027, through a vibrant, resilient, inclusive Home-Start movement, we will:



AMBITION 1:

Home-Start will be working directly with 50,000 families each year through home visiting and group work (currently 26,000).



AMBITION 2:

20,000 active volunteers will power our Home-Start movement across the UK (currently 10,000).



AMBITION 3:

We will see greater diversity across Home-Start volunteers, trustees, staff and leadership, and in access to our support from underrepresented groups.



AMBITION 4:

We will be working with our network to develop new models of partnership, delivery, and services with the potential to radically scale our reach and accessibility for 200,000 families.



“Having someone who believes in you at a young age and someone to motivate and inspire you makes such a difference to your future self.” – **Sharena**

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WHY HOME-START IS HERE

Through our distinctive offer of volunteer-led home-visiting support, Home-Start stands alongside families in communities across the UK. Over the past 50 years, we have helped to give hundreds of thousands of children a better start in life.

We know that it takes a village to raise a child. When families feel isolated and lack support around them, nurturing a family can feel a real struggle. For far too many, parenting can be a lonely experience. In one recent survey, over half of new parents said they feel lonely.

The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated this strain on families, particularly for the third of families with a child under the age of five who live in poverty.¹ Too many parents struggle to access the support they need to thrive. As many as two thirds of parents find themselves unable to access essential early years services – this is equivalent to 3.5 million parents in England alone.² Home-Start make sure those years count so that no child's future is limited.

At Home-Start, we believe early childhood can't wait. This strategy sets out our ambitions to double the number of families that we work with across our federation to 50,000 each year, and to explore new ways to ensure relational, compassionate support for 200,000 additional families. We want to strengthen and diversify our work so that Together With Families we can improve outcomes for children and families in the years to come.

In 2021 we supported 46,000 children in 25,000 families, in 182 communities across the UK and among British armed forces families in Cyprus. We are proud to stand alongside these families and see the difference that our dedicated staff and over 10,000 Home-Start volunteers make every day.

But we can't stand still. As we enter our 50th anniversary year we want to shape a country where all children have the best possible start in life.

We want to make sure that no parent or family feels alone in the critical task of raising children.

There continues to be significant need for early years support – particularly in the first 1,001 days from the start of pregnancy – and right now we can only work with a fraction of the families we'd like to.

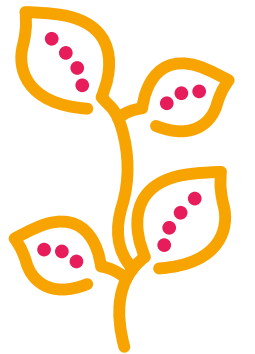
¹It takes a village: how to make all childhoods matter, JRF/Little Village, Feb 2021

²Beyond reach: barriers to accessing early years services for children, Action for Children, 2021





THE PANDEMIC EXPERIENCE FOR FAMILIES AND HOME-START



It has been said that it is in the worst of times that we see the best in people. Amidst the destruction, darkness and trauma of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have also seen spectacular individual and collective acts of kindness. At Home-Start, our staff and volunteers have shown outstanding commitment to supporting parents and connecting communities. Local Home-Starts have been agile in their responses to the pandemic and rapidly introduced new ways of providing support. Examples of services included:

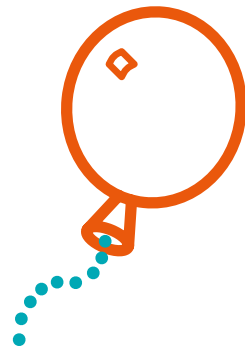
- one-to-one and group support online, by text or telephone, including groups for babies, toddlers, twins and multiple siblings, along with sessions for expectant parents
- when regulations allowed, face-to-face support such as doorstep visits, walk and talks, outdoor group sessions and picnics to keep families connected
- working with food banks, baby banks and corporate partners to help deliver essentials to those experiencing poverty
- online content such as storytelling and craft sessions to keep children (and parents!) entertained

- innovative partnerships with funders, supporters, and corporate partners to respond to the needs of families – from distributing emergency relief to families and essential funding for local Home-Starts, to securing technology and data provision to families who are digitally excluded
- building digital confidence and tackling digital exclusion among volunteers, practitioners and families, and exploring how digital technology can support engagement alongside traditional face-to-face contact.

Across our UK-wide federation of Home Starts, our focus over the next five years will be on building compassionate communities of support for families, parents and children - because childhood can't wait.

“ I honestly think every family should be offered a Home-Start volunteer. The difference that would make to people, both now and also to future generations would be huge. Every family having a Home-Start volunteer would make the world a better place. I want to normalise dads asking and accepting help, and encourage dads to do the best for their children.” – Ben

THE DIFFERENCE HOME-START MAKES



Home-Start works in a different way to many statutory and other services, because families invite us into their homes and lives. We form relationships with families so that our peer volunteers and expert staff can offer non-judgemental, compassionate, confidential help. Recognising the importance of the early years of a child's life, we focus on families with children under the age of five.

In 2021, we asked families what makes a difference for them and they highlighted a range of practical and emotional ways that we support them:

- “kindness and friendship”
- “accessible for all”
- “no judgement”
- “really helpful and making sure the kids have what they need”.

There is strong evidence for the value of preventative, peer-led support for families in the

early years.³ The particular value of the role of the volunteer is made clear in supporting families who may otherwise not receive, or be wary of, support from statutory services.

“I am so grateful to be working with my Home-Start partners. The collaborative working is so beneficial to the families I work with and I can see the difference the service makes. For me Home-Start is my first go-to place when I want to support a family in need.”

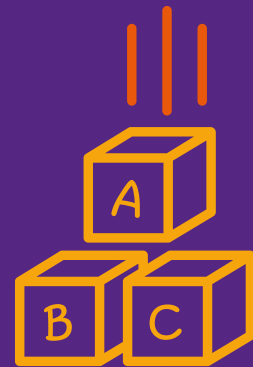
Response from a Health Visitor in our 2021 stakeholder survey

“I’m proud to work for a charity that makes such a difference. My experience is of benefit when presenting about the charity or to volunteer training courses. It gives an insight into the other side before they go out to meet their first families.” – Eve

³ See for example: Mothers’ accounts of the impact on emotional wellbeing of organised peer support in pregnancy and early parenthood: a qualitative study - PubMed (nih.gov)



WHY IT MATTERS



The start of a child's life, starting from pregnancy, lay the foundations for physical and mental health. Babies' brains develop rapidly and are at their most adaptable in the earliest years of life.

- These years are full of challenge and opportunity, vulnerability and growth. To give children the best start for life requires nurturing relationships, an enriching home environment, and parents who are supported to fulfil this essential role.

- Young children develop within the context of relationships, where strong attachments with loving caregivers underpin their early development and can act as a buffer against adversity.
- In particular, socio-economic factors have a stronger influence on younger children's health outcomes than those of older children, suggesting that families' circumstances are crucial in the years before school.



HOW HOME-START'S MODEL MAKES A DIFFERENCE



When families find themselves vulnerable, stretched or isolated, they might benefit from support to realise and build on their strengths. Our core model of volunteer-led home-visiting support, provided alongside a wide range of projects, activities, group support and more targeted support, allows us to work responsively with parents to meet a range of needs.

- Home-Start's work seeks to build upon parents' strengths, to empower them and their families to move forward. A trusted relationship between parent and volunteer, starting in the home, is one of the key elements of our impact that enables people to feel more comfortable about asking for help and to feel less judged by others.

- Our volunteers and staff are effectively trained, supported and equipped to provide practical and emotional support that's tailored to each family. Staff and volunteers offer consistent contact with families, often visiting homes once or twice a week over many months, enabling trusted relationships to form with parents and children. This informed, responsive support enables Home-Start to harness the experience, knowledge and skills that are rooted in communities, and in other parents and caregivers.
- The Home-Start approach and our roots in communities mean that we are particularly well placed to reach and support families facing challenges or experiencing distress, for example through disability, poverty, poor physical or mental health, isolation or a relationship breakdown.





DEVELOPING OUR COLLECTIVE VISION



During 2021, local Home-Starts from across our UK-wide federation worked together to shape our plans for the future. The process involved:

- hearing the views of over 100 families who use our services and over 100 volunteers
- holding 12 workshops involving the staff and trustees from more than 100 local Home-Starts
- forming a Strategy Advisory Group that met five times to guide the process and ensure it was inclusive
- surveying more than 70 partners who work with Home-Start, including frontline professionals, health visitors and social workers, funders, commissioners, and other charity federations.

Home-Start would like to thank everyone who took part in this process.

Throughout this process, we noted a growing urgency for our work. Across the UK, during the pandemic, so much has been placed on hold, and child development is not something that can wait. We have observed parental burnout and isolation, pressure on parental and child mental health, and the very real effects of poverty on families. Parents are worried about lost opportunities for play and socialisation, and they

are anxious because their children have missed out on so much. At government level, there has seemed a disappointing lack of attention on family, family relationships, childcare and the early years.

With our network and partners, we identified three core challenges ahead:

1. A profoundly challenging post-pandemic landscape and rising costs of living that will affect the most vulnerable families and least resilient charities.
2. Even though families and funders recognise greater demand for support and would welcome more trusted Home-Start provision, we have limited resources and capacity to increase our provision.
3. We could achieve greater impact for families by working together as a movement to pool insight and experience, build our profile and partnerships, and test new models of support for families.

Though the pandemic has been traumatic, at the same time, this extraordinary period also offers us hope for the future. The humanity, humility and care we have witnessed in communities provides a clear opportunity for strengthening the resilience and wellbeing of families.

“ One of my Home-Start volunteers speaks Arabic. A few years ago she was in the same position as me. She’s inspired me to make plans about my future. I’m determined to keep improving my English, so that I can volunteer for Home-Start and help other families, like she is doing.” – Aamira

OUR COMMITMENTS



As we developed Together With Families, a clear shared ambition emerged across our Home-Start network. We all want to shape a world where all children have the best possible start in life and have an ambition for Home-Start to take on a bigger role and meet the true scale of demand from parents and children.

We know that our work makes a difference, and Home-Start has a central role to play in building compassionate communities where people are there for families and children at the earliest moments of needing support. So, our bold ambition is to work as a federation to make our relational, compassionate support available to more families and in more communities.

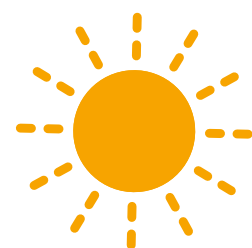
There should be no parent that feels alone in the critical task of raising children. And so, we have set ourselves ambitious aspirations:

- We aim to double both the numbers of volunteers and the numbers of families receiving Home-Start support. **Over the next five years by 2027, we aim to have 20,000 volunteers supporting 50,000 families a each year. (from our current position of around 10,000 volunteers supporting 26,000 families per year)**
- We will work with partners to explore activities that have the potential to scale up the provision of early help. **By 2027, we aim to have developed activities and services that are able to reach over 200,000 families each year through digital services and community-centred activity.**

“ Being able to help people is such a privileged position to be in. I’ve met some wonderful families. Over the years I’ve gone through a lot but that experience helps me empathise and relate to families who themselves are going through difficulties. It’s a great feeling when a family no longer needs you. You get a warm feeling to see them in a much better place than when you first met.” – **Debbie**



OUR FOUR COMMITMENTS



Led by our passionate movement of Home-Start volunteers, staff and supporters, we will bring our vision to life for families through four strategic commitments.



GROWTH. A collective ambition to reach significantly more families

To help us reach significantly more families, we will inspire more people to volunteer and support our core offer; establish new local Home-Starts; and develop new partnerships and digital services for families.



VOICE. Home-Start will stand alongside families to make the case for support

We will enhance the support available for all families across the UK, by raising awareness and making the case for better access to early years' services and compassionate support for families. We will amplify families' voices and lead or lend our support to campaigns that will help them. We will grow the movement of supporters backing our work to enable this ambition.



INCLUSION. Home-Start will advance inclusion and equity in all we do

We will address inequalities in access to early years' and family support by reviewing our reach, enhancing our diversity, ensuring inclusive ways of working across all we do, and using our influence to effect change. We will be inclusive and accessible by

design, have diverse representation throughout our work, and be proactively addressing inequalities that exist in communities.



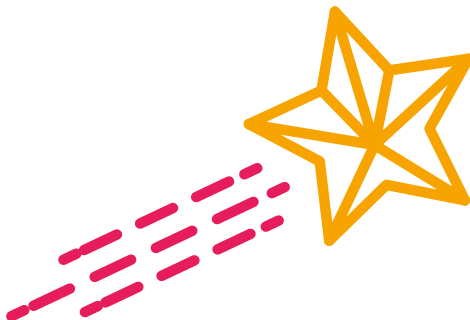
IMPACT. Local Home-Starts will be stronger together

We will enhance the collective impact and sustainability of our network by connecting local Home-Starts with each other and developing our shared approaches to quality, impact and learning. We will ensure a sustainable, thriving, collaborative federation of high-quality Home-Start provision for families in communities across the UK.

The strength of our federation is that we can work as local charities to adapt to the different strengths and needs of different communities. With this in mind, these four commitments will be developed in many different ways across the federation. Working as a Home-Start movement, we aim to pursue these commitments in alignment, but with the local autonomy required for Home-Starts to adapt their local responses to the needs and contexts of their community. Through this approach, we will achieve more together.

Centrally, Home-Start UK will shape its programmes of work and available resources to drive capacity, resources and support to help the Home-Start network deliver these commitments. Home-Start UK will centre its plans on the same four commitments and play our role in developing the national partnerships and funding required to achieve our federation's growth for families.

HOW WE WILL KNOW WE ARE SUCCESSFUL



We will have achieved our vision when there is an overall increase in wellbeing for children and families across the UK, along with a reduction in the number of parents who report feeling isolated or unable to cope.

To help chart our progress over the next five years, we have developed four headline ambitions to help drive our collective impact as a federation.

By 2027, through a vibrant, resilient, inclusive Home-Start movement, we will:



AMBITION 1: Work directly with 50,000 families each year through home visiting and group work (currently 26,000).



AMBITION 2: Be powered by 20,000 active volunteers underpinning our Home-Start movement across the UK (currently 10,000).



AMBITION 3: Achieve greater diversity across Home-Start volunteers, trustees, staff and leadership, and in access to our support from under-represented groups (We work in the first year to establish baselines of current representation so that we can define our future ambitions).

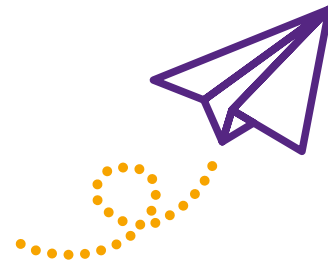


AMBITION 4: Work with our network to develop new models of partnership, delivery, and services with the potential to radically scale our reach and accessibility for 200,000 families.

These ambitions will only be achieved if our collective Home-Start federation is on a sustainable footing and local Home-Starts feel well connected to others in the network, and equipped to thrive and grow their impact. A central part of Home-Start UK's work will be to ensure that every local Home-Start is equipped to thrive.

“ We had various social workers in and out of our home, but it wasn't until my daughter's nursery referred us to Home-Start that I finally felt supported and that there was someone on my side.” – Charlotte

WHERE NEXT?



Together, we are Home-Start. Together With Families.

This strategic framework is written with and on behalf of our 182 local Home-Starts and Home-Start UK.

We work as local charities so that Home-Starts can adapt to the strengths and needs of their communities. There are many different ways we will achieve our ambitions – but as a Home-Start movement, working in alignment as a federation and playing to the strengths of local charities responding to the strengths and needs of their communities - we will achieve more together with families.

For the Home-Start network, this is our first ever co-developed strategic framework and highlights our priorities over the next five years. Working as a movement, we will pursue these commitments in alignment and also with local autonomy as Home-Starts adapt their local responses to the needs and contexts of their communities. Through this approach, we will achieve more together across the UK.

At Home-Start UK we will develop resources for local Home-Starts to use this framework to review and refresh local strategies. We will shape strategy and reference groups to build our understanding and

learning in key areas of work to achieve our ambitions. Home-Start UK will develop and share our own business plan that will show the role we can play in supporting these shared ambitions.

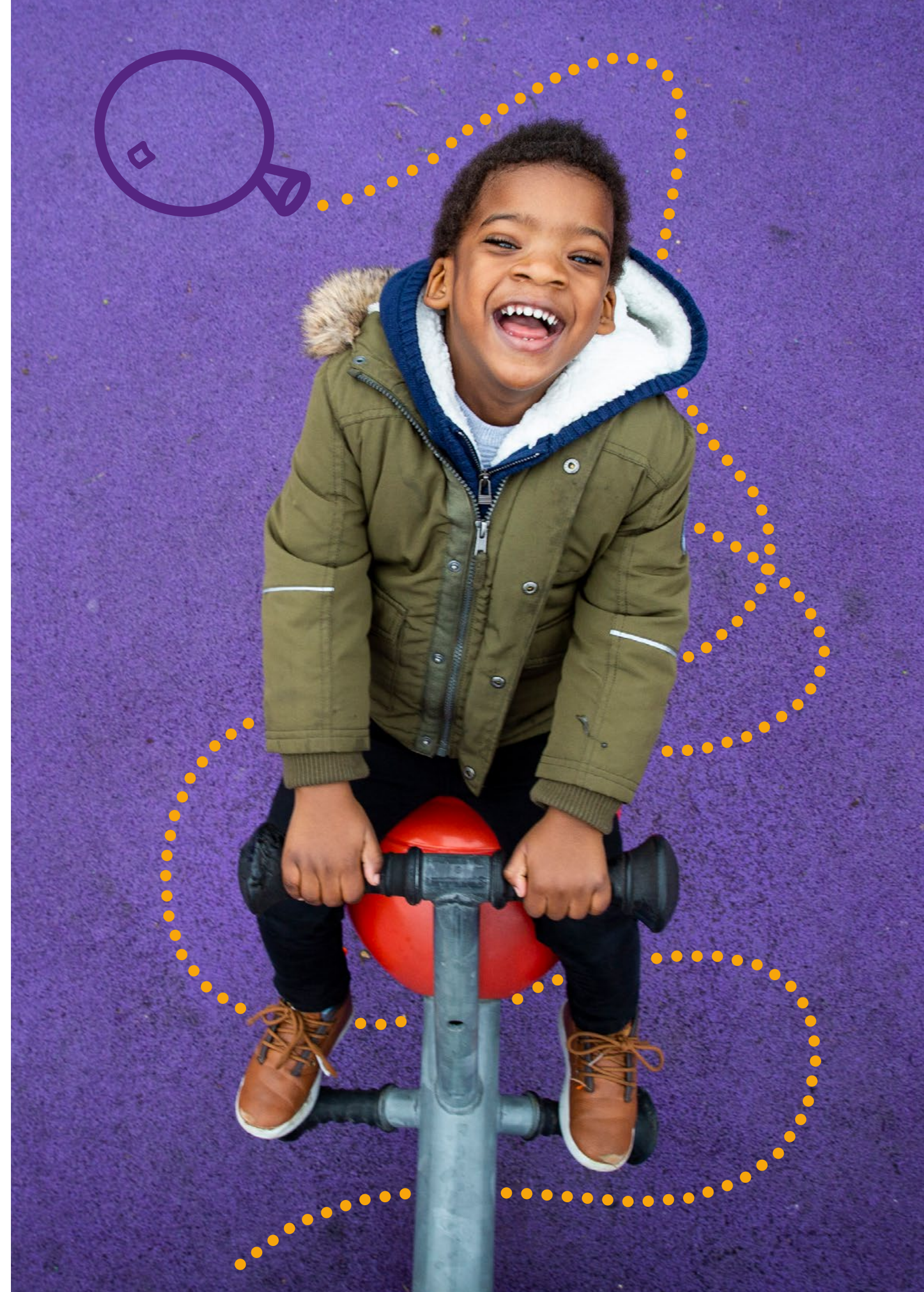
Our strategic development priorities identify areas where we must stand together if we are to have the impact we desire for families. We know it is a tough environment for families with a cost of living crisis escalating, and for local charities fighting to survive - we strongly believe that it is together that we can face these large, complex and interconnected challenges.

As we build this work, we will do so together with humility, humanity and hopefully even some humour. We listen carefully to families and our communities, building partnerships, amplifying the voices of parents and children, and working side by side across our fantastic network to respond to the urgency and scale of the challenge.

I am excited to see how our federation rises to the challenge ahead and how our local Home-Starts adapt to the different strengths and needs of different communities.

Peter Grigg,
Chief Executive,
Home-Start UK

“ Having seen how Home-Start changed the future prospects for my own children I decided to become a home visiting volunteer, so I can do the same for others. I’ve nearly finished my volunteer training. It’s been the most thought-provoking and stimulating thing I’ve ever done.” – **Kelly**





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