



Board of Trustees

In Autumn 2025 the Board of Trustees undertook a skills audit and held a visioning meeting to look at ways to enhance and strengthen governance and further support the CEO and delivery team. This resulted in further developing our sub-committees and seeking new expertise to chair and support each one. Our four sub-committees include Finance and Income Generation, Strategy, Policy and Development, People and Culture, and PR, Communities and Partnerships. A programme of recruitment has ensured additional highly skilled trustees are currently being recruited, and a relevant staff member has been co-opted for each committee. This has further enhanced the relationship between staff and trustees and ensured the momentum for growth.

Thanks to Funders

We are always grateful to our generous funders and supporters and this year more than ever every penny has counted as we have diversified our work and set up our Family Charity Shop and Community Hub. We needed to generate the highest level of income so far to meet the growing needs of families and to help with longer-term sustainability. Our huge thanks go to all the charitable organisations, trusts and grant givers who we are so lucky to work with and who have supported us this year. Whether this is through one-off, regular or multi-year funds, through donations, expertise or advice, it has all helped us to get where we are today, *thank you!*

Summary of Annual Accounts

Full Annual Accounts and Financial Statements are available from the Charity Commission

| INCOME                                                                                                                                           | 25/26    | 24/25    | EXPENDITURE                              | 25/26    | 24/25    |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|----------|------------------------------------------|----------|----------|
| The National Lottery Funding                                                                                                                     | £159,750 | £111,500 | Salaries & Pensions                      | £556,935 | £439,166 |
| Home-Start UK Grants                                                                                                                             | £16,187  | £25,854  | Office, Phone & Internet                 | £3,914   | £3,592   |
| Dorset Council                                                                                                                                   | £87,770  | £77,212  | Staff & Volunteer Expenses               | £28,656  | £23,328  |
| Henry Smith                                                                                                                                      | £51,280  | £47,700  | Building Work, Repairs & Maintenance     | £35,618  | £10,852  |
| Leathersellers                                                                                                                                   | £27,500  | £32,300  | Rent, Light, Heat & Power                | £11,003  | £4,903   |
| Valentine Charitable Trust                                                                                                                       | £15,000  | £15,000  | Governance Costs                         | £1,526   | £1,614   |
| Alice Ellen Cooper Dean                                                                                                                          | £10,000  | £10,000  |                                          |          |          |
| Dorset Community Grants                                                                                                                          | £49,600  | £49,200  | PR, IT & Office Equipment                | £17,200  | £14,326  |
| Fundraising & Local Business Support                                                                                                             | £54,454  | £21,772  | Accountancy & Legal Fees                 | £4,057   | £3,779   |
| Other grants/donations including Albert Hunt, Waitrose, Ironmongers, Christchurch Charitable Foundation, CIN, SNG, Town Councils, Asda and Tesco | £194,341 | £103,961 | Fundraising, Consultancy & Support Costs | £13,611  | £11,013  |
| TOTAL INCOME                                                                                                                                     | £665,882 | £494,499 | TOTAL EXPENITURE                         | £671,520 | £512,573 |

Developing & Diversifying

2025-26 has been another fantastic year and pivotal in our development as we have focussed on income generation and longer-term sustainability. We have diversified our business through establishing the provision of our new specialist Family Charity Shop, Community Hub and e-commerce centre, as well as ensuring the formation of stronger bonds with Dorset Council. Our first step into retail involved an incredible amount of work to transform disused premises into our new outlet which opened on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2026 in Christchurch by our Patron, local children's author, Sarah Lean. The hugely successful launch was attended by many of our local funders, businesses, the Charity Retail Association and the local Mayor, as well as other local people and supporters. We are delighted to say that we have been inundated with donations from members of the public and are confident that this will help to bring in essential funds as well as helping the environment, being able to support more families and increasing our profile.

During the year we have continued to receive an unprecedented number of referrals for our support and have been resourceful and dynamic in ensuring we continually adapt our services to meet the demand. The pressure on staff has remained high and through resilience, dedication and determination, support has been provided to a new record number of families once again this year, including supporting over **1000** children for the first time ever. Considerable thanks go to all our staff, volunteers and trustees in remaining united to ensure that we have been able to make this happen.



Kathy Fryatt-Banks  
CEO



## Awards for Business



This year we are so proud to say our charity has won a number of Business Awards. Winning these awards has not only recognised our organisation for the

work we do across the community and to support families in need, but also that we are a force to be reckoned with as a business thriving in a highly competitive environment. During an extremely turbulent time for charities, we have not only survived, but further developed and diversified, expanding our business in innovative ways. We have worked incredibly hard to provide the best possible services with limited resources, improving our technology, increasing our efficiency and training and developing our staff and volunteers. Through times of huge strain in terms of capacity and resources we have worked together as a team, empowering and inspiring each other to keep going. We are so delighted to have won awards in Dorchester, Bridport, Weymouth, Wimborne, Poole, Bournemouth, West Dorset and BCP for not only 'Services to the Community', but also as the 'Best Place to Work'.



## Military Families



Thanks to funding through the Armed Forces Covenant we have recently been able to extend our support to military families. Kirstein Harrison our new Military Projects Intervention Worker is leading this work. She has been a military spouse for 10 years and understands the unique challenges that military families face. "I know what it's like to face difficult times on your own as a military spouse while your partner is deployed, and I never want anyone to have to face that alone." Kirstein is linking directly with Bovington and Lulworth Camp Welfare Officers to provide appropriate services and we have now opened our very first Dandelions Specialist Family Group at Bovington Camp. The group brings military and civilian families together providing a safe, judgement-free space for children to play and develop and parents to feel connected and access relevant support. Participants have already commented on how valuable it is to have a space where they can meet others, build relationships, and feel more connected to their community.



## Partnership with Dorset Council



Following on from our work setting up new groups across Dorset with the Families First Pathfinder Programme, we are now delighted to confirm we have been awarded further funding to keep these groups going. The Programme supported us to open six groups across the Purbecks, East and West Dorset and due to the success of these groups and the difference it has made to local families, Dorset Council is supporting us to keep them going. Our work is now embedded with communities linking to the Family Hubs in Swanage, Weymouth, Dorchester and Wimborne and further work is planned to enhance our services through all localities, especially focussing on supporting families with high-level needs and where there is child poverty. This work also links to the Best Start in Life local plan goal to increase the percentage of children in Dorset who will achieve a good level of development and be "reception ready". Our school readiness approach and Home-Start UK Big Hopes, Big Future learning programme align nicely to this ambition. It is thanks to the dedication all staff and our incredible volunteers that we can continue to make such a difference to local families lives which can never be underestimated.



### Family Feedback:



"Without HSW I would have sat at home and cried and be stuck in a rut."

"Without HSW I would have fallen apart."



96% of parents reported improved parenting skills  
98% of parents reported improved self-management  
96% of families reported improved children's well-being  
97% of parents reported improved well-being



## Women & Girls Big Give



We were delighted to have raised an incredible £5,068 through the Big Give Women and Girls Match Fund 2025 to support women and girls across Dorset. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, every contribution was doubled, helping us continue our vital work with mothers facing challenges such as mental health struggles, financial hardship, isolation, domestic abuse, and homelessness. We were incredibly grateful to everyone who donated and helped us exceed our £5,000 target, with special thanks to Select World Travel Foundation and Town & Country Communications for their significant contributions.

## Volunteering



Kirsty Shatwell



"I started Home-Start over 7 years ago and have loved it ever since. I am extremely passionate about this charity mainly because of its simplicity. Who knew for some families that just a listening ear and occasional practical help with appointments could make such a difference. I was lucky enough to have Home-Start support when

my 3 were babies and it really did make a real difference I was struggling and that guaranteed 3 hours every week was an absolute life saver. I can honestly say I get a lot more out of volunteering than I deserve with only using 3 hours of my time a week and coming away with a 'Home-Start Glow'. Thank you for my 'Room to Reward' excited for my weekend away!"

## Fundraising



It's been another busy year, spreading the word about our charity and raising vital funds.

Holt Recruitment have continued to support us with Christmas gifts for our families and raising lots of money with another crazy fundraiser, this time a 'Boxathon'!



We once again entered a team for the Dorset Plane Pull. It was a fantastic sunny day and gave us a chance to show off our new branded gazebo. Thanks to all our 'pullers'!



The support of the business community is crucial to our success and we also thank Dorset Tea, Tesco and Rotary for their continued support. And we're grateful to Saffery, and Harkwells for choosing us as their charity partner.

