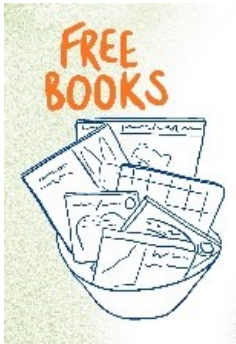


## July to September 2020: Growing Minds picks up the pace

After the initial shock of lockdown, families and our Growing Minds services are adapting to the 'new normal': social distancing, fewer face-to-face services, and rapid acceleration in the development of online services. More families are now being referred to Growing Minds, and delivery partners are responding with a variety of imaginative ways to support them.

### Progress



Following the initial impact of COVID-19 on families and front-line services, quarter 3 has seen delivery partners start to bounce back, with our numbers of referrals increasing again and the variety of interventions growing. Here are our headlines for quarter 3:

**102 families are now receiving support from Growing Minds**

**46 families in Berinsfield, 56 in Littlemore**

**69 of our Growing Minds families have babies, 33 have toddlers**

**17 local professionals across the two communities have been trained through Growing Minds**

Over the summer months our partner services have experimented with providing online groups, and assisting families through newsletters, activity packs, video stories and a host of other types of support. Schools reopened in September; Birth Registrars begun to register births again; and Health Visitors are starting to run weigh-in clinics that had previously ceased. Progress remains slow, with many family support agencies not able to provide face-to-face support, the Berin Centre and John Henry Newman closed for normal walk in, and group provision and guidance changing regularly. However, a lot was achieved during this time of tremendous change, including:

- Regular video stories sent to families
- Partnership trialled with the Oxford Together volunteer matching initiative to identify families needing practical support
- Regular newsletters to families with inspiring home-learning activities
- Ongoing phone contact from trusted practitioners
- Online Peep group sessions
- Continued deliveries of monthly Imagination Library books to families
- Exploration of partnerships with other agencies, such as Good Food Oxford, to use food provision as a vehicle to promote home-learning.

### GROWING MINDS IN ACTION

#### Case example:

A single mother and her two young children (5 and 2) were referred into Growing Minds by John Henry Newman Academy. Coping with family breakdown and trying to get support in another language was proving difficult, and mum reported both children had language delays. The family are now engaging with People in one-to-one sessions with a practitioner who speaks their first language, Urdu, and the youngest child is receiving Imagination Library books on a regular basis.

Mum reports that her own emotional wellbeing has improved as a result of this support, and after receiving advice on everyday activities to improve communications for the children, has started to sing to them regularly.

*People Practitioner*

#### The Growing Minds Partnership:

The Berin Centre, John Henry Newman Academy, Abbey Woods Academy, Oxfordshire Health Trust, Oxfordshire Birth Registration Service, People, Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire, Home-Start Oxford, Oxfordshire Community Foundation

## Learning

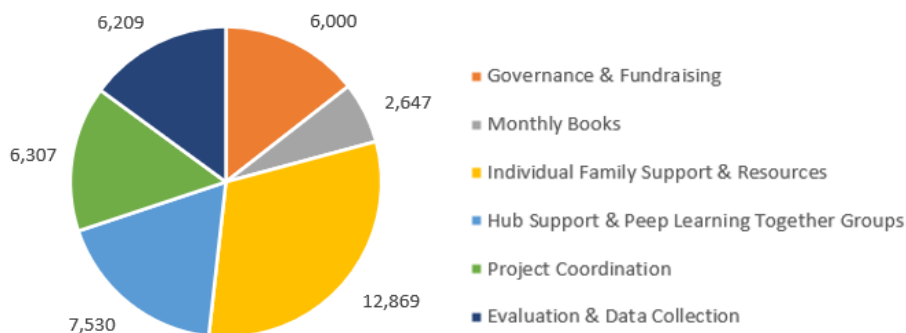
- 1) Families seem to have an increased interest in outdoor activities, social support forums and practical support, and are seeking inspiration for activities to do with their children. Practitioners in Berinsfield and Littlemore are now looking at how to provide Peep sessions in outdoor environments as a result.
- 2) There is a concern that the most vulnerable families are even less visible in a context of online contact. There is evidence from settings such as our partner schools that digital isolation is part of this problem – families have limited devices and data allowances. OCF is exploring how to promote digital inclusion and will continue to consult and work alongside partner agencies to this end.

## Evaluation

Over the summer Growing Minds commissioned a qualitative evaluation of the impact of COVID-19 and the effectiveness of online support for families. Oxford University's Department of Social Policy and Intervention is currently conducting interviews with front-line practitioners and families in the Growing Minds project, and begins analysis in late October.

## Deliverables and funding

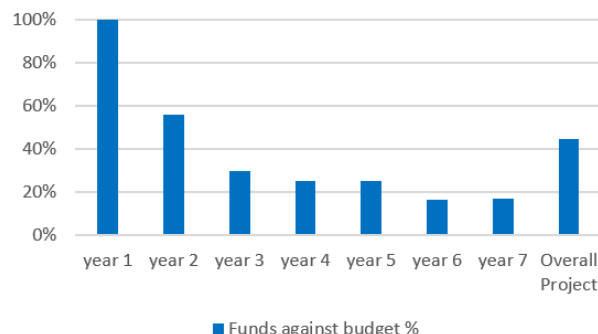
Quarter 3 Costs (£)



Expenditure in quarter 3 has risen slightly from quarter 2. This relates to an increased number of new families, receiving both more books and additional direct support, as well as the research costs.

We remain grateful for those who have helped secure the funds needed to deliver our initial year of Growing Minds. We continue to look for like-minded philanthropists to help us secure delivery over a number of years, facilitating learning and growth that will directly improve the prospects of the children we support.

Growing Minds Funds Committed



## GROWING MINDS IN ACTION

A single mum and her two young children, aged 4 and 20 months, have been receiving support from our Home-Start Practitioner in Littlemore. Mum reported feelings of isolation, housing problems and struggling to cope with her children, spending long periods of time in their home.

Through regular one-to-one sessions, and advice and inspiration on home-learning activities (including Lucy's story videos), mum reports that the family are spending more time outside in parks and open spaces. She is addressing the housing problems and is on the housing register. Mum has additionally enrolled on a course to improve her understanding of her son's ASD and is exploring options for accessing nursery sessions for her daughter.

*Home-Start Family Practitioner, Littlemore*

### The Growing Minds Partnership:

The Berin Centre, John Henry Newman Academy, Abbey Woods Academy, Oxfordshire Health Trust, Oxfordshire Birth Registration Service, Peep, Home-Start Southern Oxfordshire, Home-Start Oxford, Oxfordshire Community Foundation

