

Jane A family's story

Jane has sadly suffered from severe drug-resistant depression for about ten years leaving her unable to work. She experienced a difficult pregnancy with her first child – as well as the depression, she developed a condition called cholestasis, a potentially life threatening condition for the baby. It was a very stressful time for her and she was hospitalised on several occasions during the pregnancy.

Being single, Jane felt isolated and alone – none of her existing friends could identify with the situation that she was in. The various health services were very concerned about her mental health issue, so the perinatal psychiatric team contacted Home-Start Nottingham. She was visited by her co-ordinator, Pip, before the birth, who matched her with her volunteer, Vicki. Vicki's visits started before the birth.

Jane was nervous about the visits at first but then began to really look forward to them. She felt that she could identify with Vicki – they had similar backgrounds and approach to life. She certainly felt more cheerful during her visits. Her baby daughter was born safely but she suffered from colic and cried a lot, so the mother also became very tired and was finding that small inconsequential matters became extremely significant to her. Jane was able to discuss these and other childcare related matters with Vicki and, importantly, call on her experience as a mother.

After the birth she was also finding that motivating herself to leave the house was very difficult, so Vicki encouraged outings together – mainly just walking – and this gave her more confidence.

After a 15 months of visits Jane was doing better and it was decided that she no longer needed the support. She was sad that the visits had to end but acknowledged that this was inevitable and that there were now others in greater need.

Depression is, unfortunately, still an issue – Jane is still taking medication, has regular psychiatric appointments and is awaiting an appointment to establish a new line of treatment. She is also still finding motherhood difficult but now has more confidence in her abilities. She has made friends with other parents in the area so feels a lot less isolated. She is able to leave the house with her child now and enjoys a various outings with her – such as a community bakery, “baby cinema”, Mum's choir.

Jane would [and has] recommend Home-Start Nottingham to others in a similar situation. It helped her cope, feel less isolated and gave her confidence. She felt that Vicki was there to support both her and her baby.

Jane would definitely recommend Home-Start Nottingham to other mothers in a similar situation.