

East Kent



Annual Review

2015/16



Jason Gerlack **Chief Executive Officer**

At a time when many charities are struggling, East Kent Mencap has not only continued to deliver core services to a high standard, but also diversified to ensure we can respond to the increasing number of people with a learning disability that require our support.

Following a major investment in services for children & young people, we are seeing a large increase in the support we can offer, improving their lives & providing much needed respite for their families.

We have also secured external funding through the Big Lottery Fund to deliver our GOLD project, offering free information & signposting that's easy to understand for people with a learning disability in Thanet.

Across East Kent, we have championed the rights of people with a learning disability, from engaging people in democracy during the last election, to working with health professionals to produce easy read materials.

Whilst this review can only give an overview of how our work impacts on the lives of adults & children with a learning disability, I hope that it demonstrates our commitment to providing opportunities which enable them to achieve the things they want out of life.

Our Vision:

A world where people with a learning disability are valued & treated equally.

Our Mission:

To provide opportunities in East Kent for adults & children with a learning disability, enabling them to achieve the things they want out of life.



Claire Goldfinch **Chair of Executive Committee**

Every parent wants their child to experience the world as any other person does. I'm proud of how my family members with a

learning disability are developing & creating their own lives. I'm also proud to be Chair of an organisation that encourages & supports so many people with a learning disability to achieve the things they want out of life, from exhibiting their photographs or performing in front of an audience, to living more independently or finding a job.

Whilst we face challenges from funding cuts & contract reviews, I am excited about the future & our commitment to maintaining & developing services that provide the very best opportunities for people with a learning disability, their families & carers. This review also reflects the commitment of our outstanding staff & volunteers & the exceptional support from local organisations, individuals & families.

Our Values:

- **Being people-centred.**
- **Empowering, including & respecting all people.**
- **Transforming lives.**
- **Being brave & developing new ideas.**
- **Challenging wrong ways of thinking about learning disability.**

This year we:

- **Recruited 27 members of staff, employing 87 people between 2015-16.**
- **Lost 8 staff, resulting in a turnover of 10%.**
- **Attracted 20 new volunteers.**
- **Supported 2 volunteers to develop careers within East Kent Mencap.**
- **Utilised external funding to access certified training in areas such as medication, safeguarding & leadership.**
- **Secured funding for NVQ Level 2-5 for all qualifying employees.**



Raising funds

In response to a presentation about the demand for our holiday clubs, groups of young people from the National Citizen Service organised a number of fundraising activities in Canterbury & Thanet.

These activities ranged from raffles to sponsored walks.

During the presentation, the fundraising team discussed the groups' plans for the summer & explained why young people with a learning disability cannot always take part in these activities. This inspired the groups to raise over £1,400, which would cover the cost for 14 young people to attend one of our holiday clubs.

This year, we achieved our aim of securing significant long term funding, with a four-year grant from the Big Lottery Fund totalling £422,531. Getting On with Learning Disabilities (GOLD) will support people in Thanet to remain independent, become less dependent on welfare services & achieve greater control. The project will provide advice, information & support to people with a learning disability & their families in Thanet, particularly targeting those who do not meet the social services eligibility criteria.

A tender was also submitted to Kent County Council for a major contract to provide specialist youth services in Thanet, resulting in funding of £120,790 over two years, enabling us to significantly develop these services to meet the growing demand.

Our new resource centre in Ramsgate attracted strong support from local councillors, enabling us to purchase key resources including IT, photography & cooking materials. Funding from Comic Relief & Kent Community Foundation was also secured to start up a healthy living club, which is proving very popular.

Over the 12 month period, income from donations & grants from trusts, companies & individuals totalled £119,358, with a further £428,936 pledged for projects in following years. This includes £5,000 worth of gifts in kind.

Raising awareness

We continue to raise our profile through partnership working & community fundraising events. Through our partnership work with National Mencap, we have held a number of events at Westwood Cross with Land Securities, who chose Mencap as their Charity of the Year. These events have ranged from those that simply raise awareness to those that also raise funds. Examples include a flash mob showcasing the work of our drama club, & carol singing with the support of local choir, Blend. In addition to this, we also took part in National Mencap's Hear My Voice campaign, encouraging people with a learning disability to vote in 2015 general election.

Over the 12-month period, groups that use our services have showcased their work at a number of other public events, from stage shows to photography exhibitions. These events have been well attended by members of the public, including local councillors, & have raised vital funds for our services. Members of the public have also held fundraising events in our name, from raffles & bake sales, to quizzes & sponsored challenges.

We have promoted these events both on- & offline, raising awareness of the experiences of people with a learning disability & the work we do to support them, whilst also challenging assumptions about people's aspirations.



50+ mentions in
the local press



8,000 new
website
visitors



4,000+
followers
& likes on
Twitter &
Facebook

2,000+
newsletter
subscribers



150+ hours of YouTube
videos watched



EVENTS

Supporting people

In May 2015, staff supported members from the Canterbury area to go on their first group holiday. Muriel, who receives support in the community, joined tenants Holly, Jez, Gary & Alison for a five-day break at Butlins in Bognor Regis. During their stay, the group took part in activities they may not otherwise have been able to, including swimming, rock-climbing & go-karting. For Holly, this was the first holiday without her parents, which gave her a real feeling of independence. The holiday to Butlins was so successful that in 2016 the group arranged to go abroad for the first time.

Our housing & community services in Thanet, Swale & Canterbury support people with a learning disability to become as independent as possible & live within the community.

Alongside everyday tasks such as cooking, cleaning & ironing, individuals are supported to take part in community activities, ranging from simply going out for a meal to going on holiday.

By supporting individuals both at home & in the community, we aim to increase independence & reduce isolation, improving the overall health & well-being of individuals. We encourage the transition from supported living towards greater independence.

HOUSING



933 hours of support was provided on average per week to people at home & in the community



34 people in our properties were supported to become as independent as possible

20 people in the community were supported to engage with their local area



Enabling people

SUPPORTING
PEOPLE
ENABLEMENT TEAM



The Supporting People Enablement Team (SPET) was established in December 2012 to provide one-to-one support to East Kent Mencap tenants to enable them to become more independent & access a greater number of services in the community.

The SPET team support our tenants to achieve the things they want out of life, whether this is maintaining contact with friends & family, finding a job, or speaking up about the things that are important to them. They support tenants to understand their tenancies & run monthly tenants' meetings to help people to speak up about tenancy-related issues. The team also provide person-centred plans to support people to realise their goals & be the person they want to be.

SPET has demonstrated that providing specialist, one-to-one support to people with a learning disability can have a significant impact on their level of independence, be it through travel training, finding employment & voluntary opportunities, or education. The team's work has challenged assumptions about people's aspirations & forced through organisational change by being focussed on these, rather than maintaining the status quo.

Pierre was feeling lonely & asked the SPET team if they could support him to visit his dad, who he had not seen in some time as he was yet to travel independently to his home in Whitstable. The team supported Pierre to organise the visit & a member of staff travelled to Whitstable alongside him & his girlfriend, Amy. Together they spent the day reminiscing over old photographs, which left Pierre in good spirits. Being supported to visit his dad has encouraged Pierre to undertake travel training, so he & Amy can get the train to Whitstable independently together.

Listening to people



**DISTRICT
PARTNERSHIP
GROUPS**

In February 2016, we held screenings of our lottery-funded film in venues across East Kent. *Changing Kent Communities* showcases the work of the DPGs in supporting people with a learning disability to become more independent & engage with their local community. Participants worked closely with the film's producer to create a piece of work that would inspire others to achieve the things they want out of life. A film documenting DPG campaign work is currently in production & will demonstrate the positive impact that people with a learning disability can have on their own lives.

After the government recognised that people with a learning disability have a right to lead their lives like any others, we became part of a Kent consortium which facilitates support groups across the county.

The District Partnership Groups (DPGs) provide the opportunity for people with a learning disability to talk about the things that are important to them.

This year, topics of discussion have included leading a healthy lifestyle, keeping safe on- & offline & understanding rights. Various speakers have attended the group meetings, from a fitness instructor to a community liaison officer.

43 opportunities were provided for people to talk about the things that are important to them



897 people had their voices heard

222 local organisations supported our cause



Advising people

GOLD

Getting On with Learning Disabilities (GOLD) is a lottery funded project that was set up in response to recent welfare cuts. We were becoming increasingly aware that many people with a learning disability were falling through the net after experiencing cuts to their support packages, or no longer meeting social services eligibility criteria. GOLD is a four-year project that was launched in December 2015 to enable individuals to remain independent, become less dependent on welfare services & achieve greater control of their lives.

The project operates across the whole of Thanet, targeting people who either receive less than five hours support a week, live independently with no support, or live with unpaid carers & receive no other support. Alongside a number of support groups, where individuals can share information with their peers, GOLD offers one-to-one confidential support. Here, individuals can be signposted to information & services relating to:

- benefits,
- housing,
- debt & budgeting,
- work, volunteering & training
- leisure activities
- community engagement, &
- campaigning.

The people that use GOLD's services continually help to structure it. On request, the team have organised a number of workshops in partnership with local organisations such as Thanet Volunteer Bureau, Kent Community Health NHS Trust & Kent Police.





Including people

Natasha has been coming to our holiday clubs for a number of years. Due to a lack of opportunity in the past, Natasha was reluctant to try new things & the only time she socialised outside of school was at our holiday clubs. Initially, Natasha found it difficult to interact with the other young people at the clubs. However, after some encouragement from staff, Natasha now takes part in a number of group activities.

This has made Natasha feel more confident when socialising with others, & after receiving additional support, she now meets up with another young person from our holiday clubs.

Our youth clubs provide the opportunity for young people with a learning disability to take part in activities they may not otherwise be able to.

We have also made a difference to families during the school holidays with additional clubs, allowing disadvantaged young people to make the most of their time off & providing much needed respite for parents & siblings.

Following a number of successful funding bids, we are currently in the process of expanding our children & youth services to meet the requirements of young people with higher support needs.



114 young people were supported to take part in activities they might not otherwise have been able to

135 families received advice & guidance



6018 hours of much needed respite was provided for parents & siblings

Respecting people

Our resource centres in Thanet, Swale & Canterbury enable people with a learning disability to develop their life skills, take part in therapeutic activities & access services within the community.

Our 1:4 staff to service user ratio allows individuals to take part in activities of their choosing, from cooking & arts & crafts, to swimming & bowling.

Due to the increasing number of people that required our support in Thanet, we opened a second resource centre in April 2015. This is based in Ramsgate & receives ongoing support from local councillors.

Melanie, who has been attending our Margate resource centre for a number of years, was very pleased when we opened a centre in her hometown of Ramsgate last year.

Having a resource centre open so close to home has made Melanie feel more a part of her local community. At the centre, Melanie is being supported to develop new life skills, from shopping for necessities to finding out what's on in her local area. By attending our Ramsgate resource centre, Melanie has also met lots of new people from other local organisations who East Kent Mencap has worked in partnership with.

113 people were supported to develop their life skills, take part in therapeutic activities & access their community



28 distinct activities were offered

We worked on a 1:4 staffing ratio



RESOURCE CENTRES

Empowering people

Maria likes to sing & dance, & in 2015 was encouraged to join our drama club by her mum. Initially, Maria found it too challenging to take part in the group activities, so chose to watch instead. The staff were very understanding of Maria's needs, & after six months, she began taking part in the group activities & performed in Triple Threat's 2016 Variety Show. Before joining the drama club, Maria did very little in the community. Through the club, Maria has not only made new friends, but grown in confidence. As well as Triple Threat, Maria now also attends disco nights at Gateway Club.

Our social clubs allow people with a learning disability to meet others & try new things. From bowling to drama, our clubs are activity-led & suitable for a wide range of ages & abilities.

The Gateway Club is part of Royal Mencap's Beacon project. This enables us to share information about the themed club nights we have with Mencap groups across the country & improve our services.

We are always responding to feedback & are currently developing a healthy living club at our Ramsgate resource centre.

SOCIAL CLUBS



452 individuals met new people & tried new things

10 distinct social clubs were offered



178 club nights were held

Making a difference

“After discussing volunteering opportunities with the GOLD team, I feel I’ve taken the first steps towards paid work & getting on with my life.”

Joanne Allison, who accesses our GOLD project

“Making Changing Kent Communities helped me to understand many of the difficulties people with a learning disability experience. I hope the film will raise awareness of these difficulties & change the inequalities within our society.”

Anton French, who produced our latest film

“Members of our drama club are really proud of their work, & being able to showcase it to members of the public alongside established groups such as Blend means so much to them.”

Maria Kourellias, Senior Support Worker at East Kent Mencap

“It doesn’t seem like a year since I first came to Foresters Hall to visit in my capacity of a newly elected councillor. I began volunteering for East Kent Mencap soon after & can honestly say that the commitment of the staff is second to none; they will always go that extra mile.”

Cllr Janet Falcon, who volunteers at our Ramsgate resource centre

“The funding from BBC Children in Need made a real difference to the lives of young people with a learning disability. Many parents tell us that their child doesn’t do anything else during the holidays, so our youth clubs are particularly meaningful.”

Angela Brown, Children & Youth Manager at East Kent Mencap

“Headway members have all sustained a brain injury at some point in their lives, & our special relationship with East Kent Mencap enables them to consider the lives of others & realise that you can still fulfil your potential despite the challenges life throws at you”

Michelle Christie from Headway, who works in partnership with our Ramsgate resource centre

“The photography group was very proud to exhibit their work at a local library & pleased to see the Mayor at the open day. Being able to have a presence in such a community setting helps to challenge assumptions about people’s aspirations.”

Russell Miles, Support Worker at East Kent Mencap

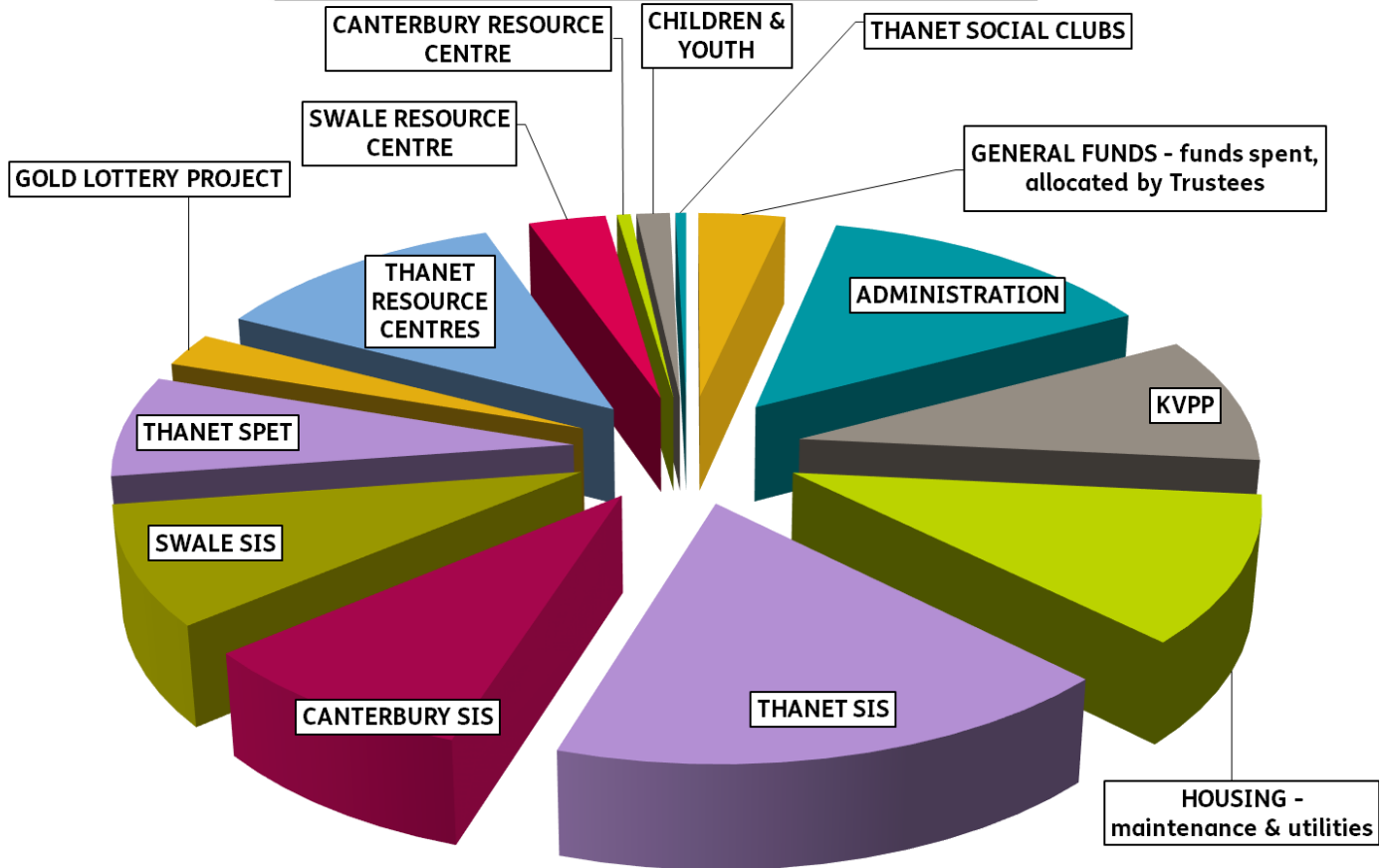


Notes on our finances - 1st April 2015 - 31st March 2016

- Our total income for the year was £1,838,465, (2015: £1,684,668) & our expenditure was £1,623,535 (2015: £1,635,399). This included Kent County Council contracts (£799,195), income from housing benefits & rent (£398,756), direct payments for our services (£331,663), Supporting People funding (£153,683), & grants, donations, fundraising & miscellaneous income (£155,168).
- The trustees have set our reserves at £125,000.
- The unrestricted general reserve was £1,344,304 (2015: £1,104,707), calculated as unrestricted net current assets.
- Total funds have increased to £1,825,851 (2015: £1,610,921).
- Our freehold property, shown in the accounts at £1,621,353, is subject to depreciation per accounting rules. However, the Trustees consider the market value considerably higher than the amount stated in our accounts.
- We have mortgages of £701,520 set against our freehold property.

As a service driven charity, over 90% of income is derived from contracts, commissioned services & individuals purchasing our services. Income from independent funders, whilst a small percentage, can have a huge impact, allowing us to develop our services & trial new projects, whether that is updating equipment, operating in a new location or giving a more professional edge to our shows.

Where we Spent our Money 2015/16 - Total £1,623,535



Thank you to our supporters & donors



Registered Charity No: 220798

Executive Committee:

- Claire Goldfinch - Chair
 - Amy Rutland - Vice Chair
 - Keith Smith - Treasurer
 - Angela Stuart - Secretary
 - Doreen Leach
 - Sue Smith (Resigned Jun '16)
 - Lynda Holding
 - Dora Smith
 - Sarah Hammond
 - Mandy Rackley (Co-opted Jul '16)
 - Audrey Emmett
 - Paul Pinder (Co-opted Jun '15)
- Holding Trustees:**
- Joan Backler
 - Angela Stuart
 - Peter Cox
 - Robert Mousdale

Chief Executive Officer: Jason Gerlack

New Gateway House
 132 Northdown Road
 Cliftonville, Kent
 CT9 2RB
 01843-224482

info@eastkentmencap.co.uk
www.eastkentmencap.co.uk



Designed & edited by Siobhan Rose O'Gorman

We are very grateful to the people & organisations whose generosity through grants, donations & gifts made a real difference to our work this year

