

# Our Impact

1 April 2020 - 31 March 2022

People with a learning disability in East Kent  
achieving what they want out of life



**Jason Gerlack**  
CEO

Our focus from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2022 was to support people with a learning disability, their families, and carers during COVID-19. Our aim was to reduce the impact of loneliness, minimise the pressure on families, alleviate crisis situations, and maintain or improve health and well-being.

We had to rethink how our services were delivered. Our employees were extraordinary and went above and beyond to keep people safe and connected. There are many learnings from COVID-19 and the achievements and positive developments have been embedded within our practice.

## What we do

We support individuals with a learning disability in East Kent to tell us what is important to them, so they can achieve what they want out of life, through choice, support, and opportunity.

## Our values

- We are people-centred
- We empower and are always inclusive
- We are positive in our work
- We develop new ideas
- We transform lives

## Our governance


We are governed by a Board of Trustees (Directors) who between them have experience as carers, in commerce, local government, health, and education.


In addition to the Board, our Members Committee is elected by people who use our services, to represent their interests. Their views are central to our strategy and play a vital role in steering our charity. They collaborate with numerous organisations and successfully deliver a wide variety of projects, which have positive impacts on our community.





## Putting our members first


We worked with Kent County Council to support people assessed as needing critical support. We gave one-to-one support at our 4 Hubs.

 **49** frontline workers continued to give face-to-face support

 **156** people were kept safe and connected reducing social isolation

 **83** people were supported in the community, providing personal care or support

 **41** tenants were supported during lockdown

 At the height of the pandemic and to avoid cross-infection, employees worked longer shifts, and “bubbled” with tenants, rather than go home to their families. We awarded an additional **£35,050** to our frontline workers in recognition of their extra costs

 **We secured additional funding:**  
**£5,000** on PPE      **£50,000** on upgrading our IT and communication systems



We worked with the NHS Community Nurses to transform Foresters Hall in Ramsgate into a temporary centre for vaccinations, for people with a learning disability who were nervous about visiting their GP or a vaccine centre.

We delivered **59** vaccines to people with a learning disability and their carers.

## Keeping connected

We pivoted our services to reflect the changing needs of people.

**East Kent Mencap reached 17,098 people through its virtual activities.**

**Employees recorded weekly online activities including fitness, upcycling, cooking, and music**

**83 people received weekly phone calls to reduce their feelings of loneliness**



**400 activity packs were created and delivered to support online services**



**Employees collected shopping or medicines for people who were shielding**

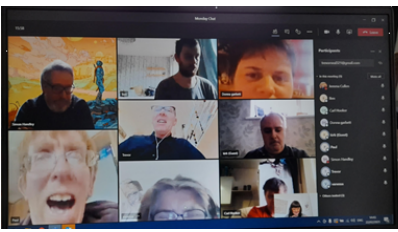


**7 Free virtual discos and 64 Facebook Lives were viewed by 2,670 people**



**An Online Fun Day connected everyone together virtually 57 packs were distributed prior to the day 25 videos were shared**

**GOLD (Getting on with Learning Difficulties) participated in 3 online teaching sessions with Canterbury Christ Church University for learning disability awareness training. They helped student Nurses and GPs to evaluate and improve the training programme**



**5** GOLD volunteers got involved with Facebook lives

**48** activities were shared on YouTube to support well-being

**9,340** views were achieved

## Investment in digital inclusion

We transformed our internal systems, ensuring that we had the right access, equipment, and skills so that we could successfully deliver online support.



**83** people were given 1 to 1 support to access online services for the first time



**20** digital devices were given to people to reduce social isolation and build knowledge of online services



**40** Vodafone sim cards were given to people to ensure they could stay connected



**9** large screens were set up across all our Hubs and housing, so we could connect online via our 'Virtual Huddle' system



### The Kara Project

We worked with Alcove to develop conference calls and test the Kent County Council Kara project, a service that provides people with virtual care and support through videophones, helping those with little or no technical ability to connect with others. **98** Kara tablets were in use across East Kent Mencap.

A carer shared: "The KARA phone has made a huge impact on K. For the first time ever, he was able to call his family independently and speak to them. He and his family were so delighted."

## Rebuilding confidence after lockdowns

Face-to-face groups restarted making use of outside spaces, such as Hub gardens and local parks to enable social distancing and rebuild confidence. Online groups continued for those not yet feeling safe or confident to meet in person.

Your Leisure delivered a free **12** week fitness programme for tenants to encourage exercise and enjoying time in the local community.



At the end of the two-year period, **82%** said they were now IT confident. We are building on this and continue to support people to develop their digital skills.

**£11,000** in funding helped to deliver COVID-19 confidence programmes. We ran activities and workshops, whilst supporting people to understand the latest guidelines to reduce infection.



We built relationships with over **98** partners

### Working with others

Maintaining links with other organisations remained important, as people struggled with the loss of their usual support groups. By working with partners, the community could continue to come together.

**Thank you to everyone who has worked with us!**



## Environment



We care about the environment and put in place sustainable initiatives



We support employees in hybrid working, where possible, and hold meetings online to reduce travel



We retain virtual records and online documentation, saving money, reducing wastage and carbon emissions



We run upcycling sessions and 'Crafternoons' to reuse and recycle resources



We support our gardening groups to create spaces that encourage wildlife and biodiversity



We reduce, reuse, and recycle craft materials with The ScrapStore @EKM

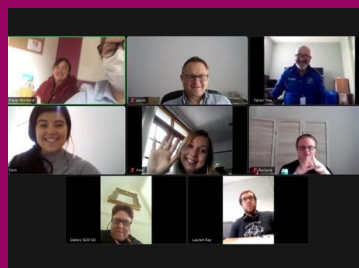
## Learnings and looking ahead



We were inspired by what was achieved during a crisis and continue to work together to deliver great results.



We created new relationships and skill sharing with the local community which we continue to nurture.

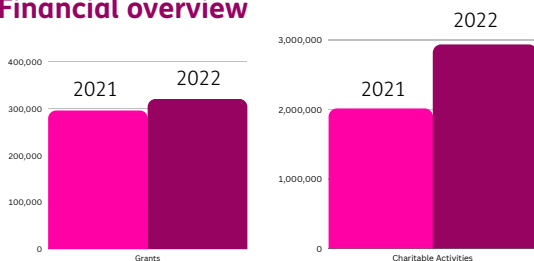


We will maintain virtual meetings, when appropriate, which save time, money, and the environment.



We recognise the importance of online services to reach people in their own home who choose not to travel.

## Financial overview



We secured more funding in 2022 to support the increased demand for our services



To meet this demand we recruited more employees and increased pay, with a 26.5% increase in employee costs from 2021 to 2022



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