

# How a Community Organisation Adapted During the COVID-19 Crisis

September 2020

By working with our colleagues in the Voluntary and Community sector, we have a series of reports on our website that capture the experiences and issues from the point of view of services and groups that support local people in the community.

This is an independent case study showing an example of one community organisation's story of adapting and what the future holds.

## About the organisation



Cruse Bereavement South Hub's vision ensures that bereaved people have somewhere to turn when someone dies. They offer support, advice and information to children, young people and adults when someone dies and enhance society's care of bereaved people.

“Cruse was set up 61 year ago and has grown organically nationally. We provide face-to-face groups and individual sessions; normally someone has six sessions of support over six weeks. We provide immediate and historic support.

*Ted Hill, Cruse Bereavement South Hub*

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## What were the immediate challenges?

Cruse Bereavement South had to stop all face-to-face sessions and move to phone calls. After a few weeks they were able to offer a more blended approach of virtual and phone access.

“We launched our online training for new Group Volunteers and they have responded very quickly, going above and beyond.

”

Staff were able to work from home as they had IT equipment. Initially there were some reservations as to whether the service could be provided remotely. Group Volunteers were also unsure if they had the right skills or confidence to do it. Training was provided to increase confidence and support them.



Demand plateaued during lockdown, but they are expecting a surge in the summer so have used this time to recruit new volunteers and develop new online/virtual volunteer training.

Many of their 120 volunteers in West Sussex also needed to self-isolate and they are now seeing an *increase of younger people* coming through. The 200+ new volunteers *came to them; they did not have to advertise.*

## How has COVID affected their finances?

Cruse Bereavement Care had just sorted out their finance budget for the year and already had challenging targets for fundraising; then all community fundraising stopped.

This left a big void with a need to make savings. Their fundraising team have remained active and creative.

They were successful in gaining funding from the Clinical Commissioning Group and Sussex Community Foundation to fund new ways of working and training for volunteers. *This was an easy process and they are thankful for this support.*

“ We did not furlough anyone in the Hub as we have been incredibly busy. It is the intermediate that is a concern - some nine months down the line we may not have any additional contracts and finance is needed. ”

## How have they begun to forward plan?

The organisation knows that its work will increase as lockdown eases and the emotional impact of the COVID trauma hits. Many people are in survivor mode and doing daily things, but as time moves on the emotional aspects will show.

“ The loss of a loved one and not being able to say good-bye. Maybe the last time you saw them was in the back of an ambulance and you have not been able to attend the hospital or funeral or grieve as a family. ”

Last year they saw 1026 people and this year will be far higher. *They anticipate increases in the service which could be huge.*

## What are the concerns for the future, post-COVID?

The main concerns are financial as they are not a commissioned service and currently unable to fundraise fully.

Bereavement impacts on other health issues, especially mental health, if not well supported.

## Contact details

To learn more about Cruse Bereavement South - [www.cruse.org.uk](http://www.cruse.org.uk)

Telephone: 0300 311 9959 (Please leave your name and a telephone contact number)

Email: [westsussexarea@cruse.org.uk](mailto:westsussexarea@cruse.org.uk)

Or write to them: Lodge Hill Centre, Watersfield, nr Pullborough, RH20 1LZ



*Supporting community action across Mid Sussex*

During this time of uncertainty, we have undertaken a range of different activities to support our members.

**General Enquiries:** 01444 258102

**Learn more from our website:** <http://www.msva.org.uk/>

**Admin Hub:** Delmon House, 36-38 Church Road, Burgess Hill, RH15 9AE

**Registered charity number:** 1158780

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to make local health and social care services better for  
people that use them.



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in West Sussex.

We record what people tell us and share this anonymously with those who make  
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**You can contact us in several ways:**



Telephone - 0300 012 0122



Email - [helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](mailto:helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk)



Website - [www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk)

You can also follow our social media channels to always be updated with the latest in  
health and social care news across West Sussex: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#).

If you have questions about the content of this update, please either call 0300 012  
0122 or email [cheryl.berry@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](mailto:cheryl.berry@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk)

