

# 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



Time 4 Children was established in 2005 after its founder, Vicky Chalmers MBE, piloted a school project through 2003 to 2004 in Mid Sussex, while working with The Children Hours Trust.

It became very clear there was little support for many local children in need of having someone safe to listen to them. The project was hugely successful and as it reached its final days, the time had come to form a charity in its own right. Time 4 Children received charitable status in October 2005.



All children need to be listened to.  
There are many children who need the help and support of a '*listening ear*' and that's where Time 4 Children can help.

*Vicky Chalmers MBE Founder of Time 4 Children*



## What were the immediate challenges?

They would normally expect to support around 45 - 48 children a year working in 14 schools across Sussex. However while schools have been closed, their volunteer practitioners have not been able to support children and this is an area of concern. Throughout lockdown staff have been contacting parents regularly to provide support and advice.



It has been difficult to pick up on issues and safeguarding issues.



## How has COVID affected their finances?

Time 4 Children had to furlough three of four staff, as schools closed.

All of their planned fundraising activity also stopped. The service is run on a very tight and small budget in comparison to other services. The organisation does not receive any government or statutory funds.



*All funds to keep the service up and running are from donations, fundraising events and small grants.*



## How have they begun to forward plan?

Time 4 Children were in the process of *changing their business plan*, when lockdown began. Their forward plan from September is that before children on the waiting list can be supported, they will resume with children who had started receiving support before lockdown. 35 children are waiting and since schools partially reopened, a further 12 referrals have come through.

They expect to be inundated with referrals come September, as a consequence of COVID-19.

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

Time 4 Children aims to run a 12-week volunteer training course every year. The most recent course finished in February. As no fundraising events have taken place due to COVID-19, the next training course cannot be planned for this year.

The organisation now has 16 volunteer practitioners and any fundraising or donations received will be used directly to keep the service to children going as schools return fully in September.

## Contact details

To learn more about Time 4 Children contact: [www.time4children.org.uk/](http://www.time4children.org.uk/)



### *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



We have a simple ambition at Healthwatch West Sussex...  
to make local health and social care services better for  
people that use them.

We are here to listen, take action and influence positive change for local people living  
in West Sussex.

We record what people tell us and share this anonymously with those who make  
decisions about our health and care services.

#### **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  
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0122 or email [cheryl.berry@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](mailto:cheryl.berry@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk)