



# Report on Activities

September 2021 – August 2021



Dandelion Time

*Restoring hope to young lives*



## Report on Activities

### Introduction

Dandelion Time provides farm-based therapeutic programmes for children struggling with serious emotional and behavioural difficulties and their families. From its centres in Mid-Kent and East Kent, the child and wider family engage in a varied programme of group and individual therapeutic activities to help children overcome complex issues. Families care for the farm's animals and gardens, take part in natural crafts including woodwork, creative expressive activities, and cook using food they have grown and harvested on the farm.

Our purpose is to support children to overcome trauma, develop in confidence and self-esteem, have stronger relationships with those who care for them, and be better equipped to engage well with school, at home and in the community. Dandelion Time works with children and young people affected by challenging circumstances, many having been traumatised by abuse, domestic violence or neglect. Some have fallen out of education or are in foster care. Their behavioural, emotional and social difficulties are often a result of difficult and complex home lives.

### Achievements in the Last 12 Months

#### Activities

122 Children aged 4-15 and their carers have attended Dandelion's therapeutic programmes:



Each family has attended sessions weekly for up to 12 weeks. 617 family sessions were delivered in the period.



From our Mid-Kent and East Kent centres, we have supported each referred child and their carer/s for through weekly sessions, where individually or in small multi-family groups they have cared for the farm's animals and gardens, taken part in pottery, woodwork, cooking, and a wide range of creative crafts activities. Practical engagement in calming activities allows staff to explore each child's difficulties and helps them to grow in confidence and self-esteem and regulate their

emotions and behaviours. Dandelion Time uniquely tackles their difficulties by working with the child and their carers to resolve wider family issues, to bring sustainable change for the child.

## Referrals



**161**  
CHILDREN  
REFERRED

**Referrals in the last year have risen by over 35% and are at their highest ever level following the coronavirus pandemic.** Referrals have been for children with multiple and complex needs. Over 50 children are awaiting placement on the programme.

Typically, the referred children have come from families with multiple and complex difficulties, involving one or more of the following issues:



Abuse or Domestic



Fostered/ Adopted OR



Mental Health



Trauma

## Outcomes

The programme has had a positive impact on the children and families attending and brought significant benefits to children with serious emotional and behavioural difficulties. Evaluation in the period has shown the programme has brought positive changes to children's psychological wellbeing, self-esteem, confidence and resilience. Most children have re-entered or engaged better with school, become less isolated and have reduced anxiety, fear, and other emotional symptoms.

As well as personal emotional, behavioural and relationship 'Goals' which are set individually with families and scored at the start and end of the programme, we monitor and score a range of general outcomes for each child, through professional assessment/observations and feedback from carers. The programme has continued to bring about positive changes in emotional and behavioural wellbeing:



Improved  
**Emotional wellbeing**



Improved  
**Self esteem**



Improved  
**Behaviour at Home**



Improved  
**Confidence**

## Feedback & Testimonials

*"Magic happens at Dandelion Time. It was the glue that held us together." - Parent*

*"I have nothing but the highest praise for Dandelion Time. It has proved itself to be an important and positive part of our journey as a family." - Parent*

**Do you think Dandelion Time helped your child (or children) in any of the following ways?**



## Changes in the Last 12 Months

### COVID-19

Dandelion Time supports highly vulnerable families, and the isolation and circumstances brought about by Covid-19 placed them at immediate risk their difficulties could escalate, potentially leading to conflict at home, and further domestic abuse or neglect. Dandelion Time therefore continued to provide face to face services from the start of the pandemic, and continued to do so throughout 2020, adapting from small multi-family group sessions to one-to-one family sessions. Multi-family group sessions have now been able to re-start, with up to 3 families on each session.

### New Premises

In March 2020, Dandelion Time moved its Mid-Kent centre and headquarters to new premises, a small cottage with outbuildings requiring major development.

Works began on the building project in October 2020 and the majority of structural work was completed by September 2021. The centre will benefit up to 150 families from Kent annually and provide a long-term (and affordable) home for the charity. The centre will also provide a central hub from which the charity will co-ordinate our East Kent service and further provision in Kent. Works have included:

- Development of the **Long Barn** building attached to the cottage, to form the charity's main space for our indoor work with children & families. The Long Barn incorporates a large space for meals, craft activities and meetings, a small kitchenette area, an office space for the therapeutic team, and two toilets for use by children & families.
- Redevelopment of the cottage extension to form a new **Kitchen**. This has included building a new roof, installing roof windows, plumbing and electrics, and creating a new external entrance and internal door from kitchen into the newly converted Long Barn.

- Renovation of the **Pottery building**, including installation of a new roof, repairs to crumbling brick work to make the building watertight, and installation of new windows and doors.
- Renovation of the detached **Stable building** – to house an additional craft workshop.



## Priorities for the Future

Over 18 years Dandelion Time grown significantly to fill a gap in local services for children with complex emotional issues (the number of families attending has *almost doubled in 5 years*) there is substantial demand across Kent for the service. We typically receive 20-30 enquiries for referrals per month and have over 50 children awaiting placement on the programme. There is a high level of demand from parts of Kent outside reach of the service. In response to this, Trustees plan over the next 3 years to expand the charity's programmes geographically to reach more disadvantaged children whose needs remain unmet. **In this period, we aim to increase the number of children and families supported by over 60% provide a county-wide service, operating from at least 3 locations.**

*Thank you for your support!*

*Note: Due to the sensitive nature of our work and the vulnerable children we support, the photo/s in this document are not of service users.*