



Dandelion Time Strategy 2020-25

Dandelion Time offers help to children with very challenging emotional issues, often resulting from trauma, violence or serious health difficulties in the family. Our approach is family based and creates opportunities for new beginnings and improved relationships. The service recognises the importance of nature connection, being in a peaceful natural environment, absorbing children in calming hands on activities. Therapists guide families to harness the healing powers of the natural world using materials such as wood, wool and clay, to care for animals and to grow and eat healthy food thus laying down new positive memories. This helps them to discuss and explore the difficulties they are facing and enables the wider family to come together to build stronger bonds. Children grow in confidence and resilience and have achieved remarkable and long-lasting changes in their lives as a result of coming to Dandelion Time.

During 2020 the charity has continued to provide these vital services to vulnerable children whose lives have been negatively impacted by the pandemic and the lockdown. Demand and need for our service has continued to grow.

The strategy sets out:

- **Our Vision and Shared Values**
- **Why are we here?**
- **Our Purpose and Strategic Aim**
- **Our Strategic Objectives**
- **Meeting Strategic Objectives**



Due to the sensitive nature of our work and the vulnerable children we support, the children pictured in this document are not our service users

Dandelion Time Vision

Every child has the opportunity to grow up in a safe and nurturing environment to feel loved and to be free of fear.

Shared Values

1. We put the child at the centre of every decision we make
2. We uphold mutual respect in all relationships.
3. We value our interdependence with the natural world
4. We put nature at the heart of our work

Principles Underpinning our Work

1. We work with children and families to shape their own future
2. We provide a safe non-judgemental space
3. We develop our work in the light of current therapeutic, systemic and ecological thinking
4. We strive to achieve the highest quality in everything we do
5. We serve and are supported by our local communities
6. We recognise that mental health and healing require good physical health underpinned by activity and nutrition
7. We are a learning organisation, continually striving to improve

Why are we here?

The Children's Commissioner [1] estimates that 2.3 million children in England are at risk from living within vulnerable family settings. Of these, 70% do not currently have access to appropriate help, leading to an increase in mental health difficulties.

Due to the strain on welfare and mental health services which have increased markedly due to the pandemic, many vulnerable children are left without the guidance and support required to help prevent permanent school exclusion, family breakdown or permanent mental health challenges.

Dandelion Time offers early support for these children who have been affected by experiences of abuse, trauma and neglect. With a long history of successful engagement with children and their families, Dandelion Time generates lasting improvements many lives. It has developed a non-medical systemic therapeutic model that addresses the cycle of abuse and neglect. Children and families work experientially with the natural world and crafts to heal relationships and develop skills and confidence.

Purpose and Strategic Aim

To deliver sustainable change for vulnerable children and their families using a relational therapeutic approach and the healing potential of the natural world

Our strategic aim is to be a beacon spearheading change in the way our services for children relate to the world around them.

Our Strategic Objectives

To develop a detailed plan to replicate and disseminate our model effectively across the country, which will include as early steps:

- To significantly increase the number of children and families attending Dandelion Time
- To increase geographical reach influence and impact

- To increase adoption of the Dandelion approach by those working with children and in the wider community
- To influence mainstream medical and psychotherapeutic models

Meeting our Strategic Objectives

An approach to expansion has been tested through the establishment of an additional centre in a new catchment area, learning from this and developing the optimum model for further expansion. Our certificate training programme was put on hold during the Covid 19 pandemic we plan to expand and develop the training programme to underpin our expansion.

Separate plans will be developed to address:

1. **Expansion Plan** – Develop and implement a plan for wider expansion exploring available models and pilot a franchise model
2. **Therapeutic Programme** - Provide a consistent, high quality service to an increasing number of families and centres using assessment and evaluation to continually improve services
3. **Training** - Increase numbers attending and geographical reach of training programmes to ensure more children and families can be further helped in future
4. **Finance and Governance**- Provide sustainable funding, management structure and systems to support the expansion. Ensure our structures fully reflect the diversity of our community
5. **Income Generation Strategy**- Raise increased funds to deliver the expansion and ongoing work of the charity
6. **Outreach Strategy** - Communicate the vision more effectively and actively engage with like-minded organisations, influencers and funding bodies building stronger partnerships to effect change
7. **People Strategy**-To develop and expand human resources to meet increasing need at a pace that retains the Dandelion Time ethos, values and high level of expertise

[1]https://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/publication/childhood-vulnerability-in-england-2019/?utm_source=Children%27s+Commissioner+for+England&utm_campaign=534916651b-EMAIL_CAMPAIGN_2019_07_01_07_43&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_5e06e44c59-534916651b-14628749