

Corton Hill Fund

Round 4

– grants to groups distributed in April 2023



Summary of funded groups

£87,500 was used to support 6 groups addressing fundholder priority themes. The grants have so collectively benefitted the lives of 3197 local residents, utilising 271 local volunteers.

Grant recipient	Amount	Area of benefit	Primary beneficiary	Funded activities	No of direct beneficiaries	No of volunteers involved
Age UK North, South and West Dorset	£8000	North, South & West Dorset	Older people	Core costs for services supporting older people in North Dorset	58	5
Citizens Advice Central	£30,000	Sherborne and surrounding including Gillingham, Blandford and Shaftesbury	People in poverty	Core funding for financial advice services the address poverty and employment issues	690	59
Escapeline	£5000	Dorchester	Children & young people	To support Child Criminal Exploitation awareness assemblies and workshops in Dorset schools	800	3
Future Roots	£5000	North and West Dorset	Children & young people	Towards core costs of charity offering specialist support to vulnerable young people, supporting their personal aspirations and employability	90	0
Home-Start North Dorset	£3000	Blandford Forum	Families	Core costs for charity supporting families with children under age 5, experiencing crisis	440	55
MOSAIC (Dorset Wide Support For Bereaved Children and their Families)	£2000	North Dorset	Children & young people	Providing support for bereaved children and young people in North Dorset	3	22

Youth Resource Services (The Rendezvous, Sherborne) Ltd	£5000	Sherborne	Children & young people	Core costs for charity supporting vulnerable young people in North Dorset including education, employability, mental health and services for young parents	241	41
Age Concern North Dorset	£5000	North Dorset	Older people	Contribution to part time manager who is single paid member of the organisation	450	8
Blandford Foodbank	£2250	Blandford	People in poverty	To support Christmas food hampers for families experiencing poverty, containing full Christmas dinner, additional festive foods, and toy voucher/s to purchase a gift for children	140	6
Dorchester Trust for Counselling & Psychotherapy	£3900	North & West Dorset	People with mental health issues	Offering counselling to for people with mental health issues	3	3
Family Counselling Trust	£5000	Dorset	Children & Young people	Counselling service for children and young people, providing wrap around support with parents & wider family	62	5
Mindful	£4765	Gillingham & Stalbridge	Older people	Core cost application for small group offering activities for older people with mental health and memory problems	90	15
Poole Foodbank	£2250	Poole	People in poverty	To support Christmas food hampers for families experiencing poverty, containing full Christmas dinner, additional festive foods, and toy voucher/s to purchase a gift for children	100	49
Prout Bridge Project	£4783.34	Beaminster	Children & Young people	To support 1 to 1 sessions for young people facing mental health challenges and other needs	30	0
The Blackmore Vale Charity	£1551.16	Sturminster Newton	People in poverty	Hands-on Cookery Education & Workshops form families experiencing poverty	TBC (awarded Nov 2023)	TBC (awarded Nov 2023)
	£87,500				3197	271

Below are summaries of the End of Grant reports received by funded groups, followed by a selection of case studies of students supported via the DCF Bursary scheme.

Age UK North, South and West Dorset

“Thank you to DCF, we always feel really well supported. I was able to get some pointers on the press release I issued. Huge thanks. I also wanted to say a big thank you to the Corton Hill Fund also, I know we have been really fortunate to receive funding. I feel it had been instrumental in supporting our visibility and providing access to services in the most rural locations.”

Funded activities

Our Independent Living team supported individuals in Shaftesbury with person centered visits to conduct a holistic review of their lives to see what support they might require to meet their needs. Initial visits can take up to two hours, and many visits require return visits to provide follow up, or matching with befrienders or accompanying to activities. We provided outreach by joining with the Shaftesbury Socially Connected project, offering a pop up monthly with social opportunity for residents to learn about the support available whilst enjoying a cuppa and a chat.

Impact and outcomes

We signposted individuals to local support groups, including Carer Support Dorset, exercise classes and other social groups. We signposted people to our own services, such as cognitive stimulation therapy, and got them spaces on our therapy course, which is a free service. We also linked individuals with our benefits team to support people with maximizing their income to make everyday living more affordable as well as linking with our information and advice team for complex enquiries. We also provided financial assistance where needed, through the household support fund, which we administer on behalf of Dorset Council. During the funding period, we were able to respond to referrals from GP practices and the like, as well as supporting self referrals.

Challenges and future plans

After 3 months, Shaftesbury Socially Connected closed down by the main organisers and we were left without a 'home' for our drop in social / information support sessions. The staff lead for this project left the organisation at the end of the funding period, and due to resources, we have been unable to continue offering the role in the area. Part of the proposal will remain in situ, in the form of our other services that can serve the area, but we will sadly no longer have a dedicated point of contact/conduit based in the area to provide this sort of outreach.

Stories of change

Mr and Mrs H were referred by the social prescriber at their GP's surgery. Mr H is suffering with complex health conditions including dementia. Our Independent Living Coordinator for North Dorset, visited the couple at home and conducted a full assessment of their needs. He helped them liaise with the Local Authority to have their care package reviewed. He also signposted the couple to other services that can offer support to integrate them into the community and reduce feelings of loneliness, such as Carer Support Dorset, and local mindful activities including Men's Marching On Group and CST which can offer engaging activity but also respite opportunities for Mrs H. We also linked the couple to a Help and Care Dementia Coordinator for long-term ongoing support. The couple now feel more connected to support available in the local area and have had a care package review to tend to Mr H growing needs.

Mr C, who lives in Shaftesbury contacted Age UK NSW for help sorting through his paperwork, as due to ill health and mobility issues he was worried bills were going unpaid. Our ILC Jonathan visited Mr C several times over the following weeks and helped him get his paperwork in order. Jonathan also referred Mr C to our welfare benefits team to check he was receiving all the benefit to which he was entitled. Mr C was receiving all the benefits he was entitled to but we applied for a Household Support Payment of £200 to help with his energy bills. We also (with clients consent) referred Mr C to the Help and Care Community Armed Forces Support Service for further long-term support.

Citizens Advice Central

“Once again, we would like to express our thanks to the Corton Hill fund for their generosity over the past few years, without which local residents in North Dorset and Sherborne would have found it more difficult to access our help. This has been particularly important through the cost of living crisis where many more people are finding it difficult to keep a roof over their heads and keep warm and healthy. We have always found the Community Foundation to be easy and straightforward to work with and we are grateful for their help managing our grants so effectively.”

Funded activities

Over the past few years, we have seen a significant increase in people needing our help – trying to survive on limited income while rent, food and fuel prices continue to rise. To meet this increase, we have been successful in recruiting a number of new volunteer advisers in North Dorset (volunteer workforce has risen from 47 to 59) and our focus this year has been on building their knowledge and experience so that they are able to deliver quality advice. We have used the grant to: - increase our supervision capacity to support advisers home working and in the office - pay the expenses of our volunteers - Continue to recruit new volunteers - Complete the training of our new advisers, following a successful recruitment campaign - Ensure that our existing advice team are well trained to enable them to respond to new issues arising for our clients - Develop and deliver our new hybrid service model which ensures we remain flexible and responsive to local circumstances. This has enabled us to continue to provide face to face advice 4 days a week in Gillingham, and 3 days a week in Sherborne as well as providing a number of outreaches in our more rural areas. We continue to provide telephone & email advice Monday to Friday 10am to 4pm.

Impact and outcomes

In 2023, our Sherborne and North Dorset offices helped 3,291 clients with 9,468 issues and helped those clients to gain over £2 million in welfare benefits, as well as getting over £156K in debts written off, and bringing in over £281K in grants and additional income. This represents an increase of 7% in demand from the previous year. 61% of these clients had physical disabilities or long term health conditions – the additional funding we have achieved for them has had a significant impact on their finances and their physical and mental wellbeing. This grant has enabled us to continue to deliver advice to local people, resulting in increased financial wellbeing as well as improved mental and physical health.

Challenges and future plans

The increased demand continues to put almost intolerable pressure on our teams, who work tirelessly to help as many clients as we can and are needing more and more to deal with clients who are stressed about their money and, as a result can become very angry. Our Advice Service Managers have been trained to identify mental health issues in their team and to know how to support their staff; our supervisors will shortly be undergoing similar training. A key speaker at our recent all-staff Away Day came from MIND and talked to us about how to manage our own stress and how to deal positively with aggressive clients.

Story of change

‘Abigail’ was in her 50’s and suffered from mental health issues and physical disabilities. Her teenage daughter ‘Penny’ had Aspergers and issues with anxiety and OCD as well as asthma and hayfever. Penny had been on Child Disability Living Allowance but had reached the age where she needed to apply for Personal Independence Payment (PIP) instead. Her initial claim for PIP was turned down and the subsequent request for mandatory reconsideration refused. Abigail and Penny approached our North Dorset office for help. We explained the process of appealing the decision, helped to gather evidence and prepare the grounds for appeal and lodged the appeal with the tribunal on Penny’s behalf. When the hearing date was fixed, we met with Abigail and Penny to prepare them and talk them through what would happen, and we accompanied them to the hearing to give them support. The appeal was successful and Penny was awarded £95 per week, amounting to £4,940 p.a. In addition, she was awarded £7,448 in backdated payments.

Escapeline

"Thank you again for the grant. It has supported us immensely with the invaluable work we do."

Funded activities

- Workshops and assemblies in primary schools, secondary schools and colleges to increase awareness of county lines and teach protective strategies.
- Targeted support to vulnerable young people identified as being groomed, or at risk of exploitation, by county line gangs, to assist them to break the cycle and move away from a path of crime and drugs; a 7-week education programme in schools, with either small groups or individuals.
- Parent awareness workshops and 1-1 support to provide them with the skills and knowledge to protect their children. We have recently set up a counselling service for parents whose children are being exploited, due to the significant impact it has on parent's mental health.
- Awareness in the community on the signs of county line activity and child exploitation. We visit local shops, cafes, doctors' surgeries, hotels and transport hubs, delivering posters and leaflets to educate staff on the signs of County Line activity and how to report suspicious behaviour.

Impact and outcomes

Staff say that our assemblies open up discussions with young people about county lines and the dangers. Our experts by experience who share their personal story in the education sessions have a big impact on young people, resulting in some disclosures, police involvement and police disruption. Feedback forms state 90% of young people feel they are able to keep themselves safe after receiving our education session.

"I have just spent time with two staff who were with you yesterday and they said it was excellent, brilliantly pitched and will empower our staff to be able to engage in further discussions with the children. A real success." Headteacher feedback.

Challenges and future plans

Over this last year demand has increased significantly and our 4 staff – (2 full time and 2 part time) work very hard and long hours to try and meet the demand. The amount of young people we have educated has more than doubled than the amount last year. Last year we educated 8443 young people and this last year we have educated 19,998 in Dorset and Somerset. Over the last six months we have been identifying and supporting more children at primary school age.

Story of change

In one of our workshops, police were concerned for a Year 6 and intel that he was being recruited by older teenagers. After the workshop, the year 6 disclosed that he had been approached by older teenagers who had tried to give him a wad of cash. The pupil disclosed that he followed exactly what he learnt in our workshop and said 'no', walked away and told his mum. He said that since then, the older teenagers have not approached him again. The pupil has since been involved in our peer mentoring project and has designed an awareness poster which will be put up in his school.

Our professional training enabled a teacher to identify a 6 year old in her class was showing signs of being groomed and raise the concerns with the head Teacher and ourselves. Escapeline provided intensive 1-1 support for the 6 year old and he has now pulled away from the concerned group and is doing well.



Future Roots

“Our engagement with DCF is always positive and helpful and we appreciate feedback and discussions about our work and grant applications”

Funded activities

The funding has been used to contribute to the installation of a Solar Panel system on our main barn and classroom area, offering the opportunity to reduce our core costs (power, heating, lighting and machinery). Full Cost was £14,102.

Impact and outcomes

We are already realising the net benefit of the grant funding in the evident savings in our energy costs. We have seen a reduction of £900.00 in the first year and anticipate this will improve year on year, allowing us to direct more funding towards our therapeutic programmes with children and young people.

Challenges and future plans

We needed an additional £2000 to upgrade existing wiring and electrical infrastructure. Costs above the grant total were met from core funding.

Story of change

‘Jasmine’ was 13 years old. She had been badly bullied and refused to attend school so had been home schooled for a year. Over this period her anxiety had increased and her parents felt that she had continued to lose confidence and become more withdrawn, hardly leaving the family home.

Jasmine attended Future Roots for 12 weeks for 2 hours each week with 1:1 support. Jasmine identified that she wanted *“to be more confident about myself and my body and I would like to be less scared round people.”* Her parents wanted her to *“have more confidence and feel good about herself.”* During the sessions animals were used in a therapeutic way to explore problem solving, managing mistakes, making choices, exploring strong emotions and building up resilience. Added to this we explored what makes a good friend, how to manage peer pressure and what made her unique. Over the 12 weeks we completed a memory book together and a folder of information she could take away with her and refer back to.

Jasmine was initially very quiet when she attended but over the sessions she began to build her confidence and faced some challenges such as being with the cows but later stated *“I am proud I am not so negative about myself.”* Jasmine started to be able to make her own choices about the animals she wanted to work with and began to be more talkative. As the weeks progressed she asked lots of questions and laughed a lot more. Midway through the sessions we talked about hopes and dreams and what she wanted to do in the future. At this point she began to question whether she wanted to be home schooled as she felt *‘lonely and bored’*. She began to wonder whether she could attend a different school and have a fresh start. She discussed this with her parents who told us she had changed and was *“focused on returning to school and making a future for herself.”* Over the last few sessions we continued to work on helping Jasmine feel able to manage going to a new school by looking at strategies she could use to manage peer pressure and how she could cope with any bullying. Despite her difficult past experiences Jasmine was determined by the end of the 12 weeks to start a new school and enjoy a brighter future.

4 months her Mum says *“Jasmine is now doing so well at her new school, she has a good friendship group. As with all friends they do fall out but Jasmine seems to be able to deal with the situation and the friendships are soon back on track. She is much more confident and happy. I have no doubt her time with you was exactly the intervention she needed to get her back to being Jasmine.”*

Home-Start North Dorset

“We are so thankful. Funding is so challenging and with expansion into the new area of Dorset this money is vital to ensure we can continue our work.”

Funded activities

We have used the money to recruit and train more volunteers.

Impact and outcomes

This grant has supported Home-Start Blackmore Vale to continue our work in the community supporting vulnerable families. The grant has ensured we have supported our current and new team of volunteers with training and ongoing supervision. As a result, we have supported more families than any other year.

Challenges and future plans

Our sister scheme Home-Start West Dorset closed in October 2023. As a result we have extended our reach to include Sherborne and some of the West Dorset area (Maiden Newton west to Beaminster). This has not had an impact on this project. Our work continues and we have recently secured a long-term grant that secures 30% of our work in North Dorset for the next 3 years. We still need to secure the other 70% of our funding.

Story of change

‘Sarah’ referred herself to our home-visiting service as her Health Visitor had suggested she might find the one-to-one support helpful. Sarah had stopped coming to our Mothers In Mind group because she found the group setting difficult to manage. She had received a recent diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition and amongst her challenges, keeping focus in a room full of people was a particular challenge. She also struggled to keep on top of things in the house and would frequently become so overwhelmed with everyday tasks. She was also struggling with the sensory issues involved in having two small children. The noise, the feeding, and constant physical contact was making her extremely agitated.

Her volunteer ‘Jenny’ is a trained counsellor as well as having an autistic grandchild. Together they created a list of things Sarah wanted to get done, and Sarah started to open up about how she was feeling. Her husband knew very little about ASC, and put her behaviour down to tiredness and stress, which further exacerbated her feelings of frustration and low self-worth. Home Start referred them to a Reducing Parental Conflict course as well as some training on ASC to support her husband with understanding the condition better (the eldest son is also suspected to be on the autism spectrum). At one visit Jenny was witness to an argument between the couple, with the youngest child watching from her highchair. Jenny had an open and honest conversation with Sarah after this, sharing her concerns and highlighting the impact on the child. Sarah was grateful for this intervention and together they researched local couples’ counsellors.

The husband has started to open up and Sarah reports that the relationship is much stronger and calmer. They are starting to understand each other and listen to each other for the first time. Jenny has supported Sarah through a PIP application which included a stressful hour-long telephone interview. Jenny has researched local support groups for adults with later diagnosis’s and has supported Sarah in asking for extra help at work through her HR department. Sarah has been very anxious about Jenny leaving and we have extended the support twice, to 9 months in total. They have created weekly and monthly plans for the house for Sarah to follow. Jenny has also encouraged Sarah to book in to speak to school regarding some concerns and follow through with HR at work.

Sarah said of Jenny at the last review visit : *“Jenny is wonderful. She is wise and good at gauging the room. She keeps me in mind when she’s not here. It really helps to talk to Jenny, she encourages me and makes me feel I can do things when I feel I can’t.”*

MOSAIC (Dorset Wide Support For Bereaved Children and their Families)

“Working with DCF is always positive. Emails are answered promptly and recommendations of trust funding available are excellent. Everyone is helpful and positive.”

Funded activities

The funding enabled us to provide 7, hour long sessions of bereavement counselling each, for 3 children/young people in Dorset. Sessions included engaging in craft activities, talking, drawing and taking part in games. These children/young people also attended one of our residential weekends near Swanage. Whilst at the residential, they were involved in group activities alongside other bereaved families, such as archery, orienteering, outdoor team games and crafting. Young people to create items such as memory stones, where they paint a stone to remember a loved one; decorating photo frames and many other crafting activities.

Whilst at camp, we held a candlelit ceremony, whereby everyone lit a candle for their loved one, alongside a photo, and everyone shared an emotional remembrance session; staff, volunteers and children together. There were also anger workshops, where the young people could express their anger and frustration by throwing balls of clay at a large sheet of material. Whilst there, we held a Doctor's Slot, where children and young people were able to ask a qualified doctor any question they wished, regarding mental or physical health, anonymously. A show was put together by the young people during the second day and performed in front of their parents/ carers as the weekend came to a close.

Impact and outcomes

The children and young people are able to talk openly about the death of their loved one. They have the skills to express feelings like anger safely without harm to themselves and others and understand that the emotions they are experiencing are normal reactions to the death of someone they love. There has been a reduction in isolation and improved attendance at school and extra curricular activities. Relationships with family members and peers is also improving. The supported families have made new friends and have been able to share feelings and emotions without feeling they are alone.

Challenges and future plans

The work is the main focus of the service we provide and we currently have grants from the National Lottery, Children in Need and a number of other grant giving trusts. We receive a small amount of funding from both Local Authorities in Dorset for a small number of children. We continue to apply for grants and trust funding and regularly attend big events where we raise both awareness and funds for Mosaic. We work closely with the community to organise fundraising events and maintain partnerships with corporate organisations throughout the year.

Story of change

School referred child (age 8) to Mosaic. Her uncle had died by suicide. Attended six sessions with MOSAIC. Play Therapy provided a safe place for this child to feel listened to and heard enabling them to explore and process difficult feelings. She began to share feelings which previously had been internalized, expressing how she felt through different mediums of play, sand, small world miniatures, drawing, play dough, puppets, and stories. Sensory activities such as orbi beads and clay helped soothe her dysregulated nervous system. We explored the impact of sudden loss and the feelings she may go through helping her try to make sense of what had happened, acknowledging that there are things that she may never know or understand. Reading stories such as 'Rafi's racing car' and working in the metaphor enabled her to ask questions and process some of her feelings. Part of the work was helping the child begin to find her new identify and her new kind of family. The memory box she created is ongoing - she can continue to add memories to the box about her times with her uncle and future activities that she would have liked to share with him.

Youth Resource Services (The Rendezvous, Sherborne) Ltd

“Nothing but praise and thanks.”

Funded activities

The grant has funded the Sherborne base which is the heart of the organisation. We have delivered Mental Health & Wellbeing (1:1 support and small nurture groups), Anxious to Awesome and Bekah's Kitchen (now Bekah's Kitchen Table). This year we have also set up a small pilot project that draws on the successful use of volunteers to provide a 'listening ear' support for young people who just need someone to talk to whilst they get through a short term issue. Mondays and Fridays are 'learning days' with 1:1 tutoring for Functional Skills English and Maths. Wednesdays are 'exam days'. We offer The Future is Yours sessions to help young people identify their next steps whether it's college, apprenticeship or employment and developing an action plan and giving them support to help them take that step. We also support parent with group sessions and 1:1 advice and information on housing, benefits etc plus wellbeing support.

Impact and outcomes

Young people have started to build and rebuild their confidence, self esteem and resilience and as a result have started to re-engage with the world outside. They've tried things, done things, gone places, started to learn, sat exams and planned for their future, writing CVs and going to college open days and being offered places in college. It means they stand a greater chance of succeeding as they move towards adulthood and having the happy, healthy and fruitful lives we want them to have. It has eased the life of families, reduced parental stress and anxiety, and improved whole family relations giving parents/carers the space and time back to look after the needs of other children.

Challenges and future plans

We are redesigning our 2 nurture groups to meet the change in need, including developing Bekah's Kitchen into Bekah's Kitchen Table which aims to be a larger social nurture group (for 10-15 max) to help aid those young people who are isolated with their social confidence and ability to mix with others their own age (essential if they are to move back into college). We have a number of multiyear grants and regular donors who have supported us for many years and of course new grants to target. We are focusing particularly on our community fundraising activity this year to address the pressure on trusts and foundations.

Story of change

“I came here after leaving school because I went through some really awful stuff. I couldn't bear the thought of leaving my house. I spent months cooped up, scared of the world. I live with my mum, who's a single parent and is really sick. During my time at the Rendezvous, I ended up becoming her carer. When I first arrived, I didn't have any clear goals or dreams for my future. I felt lost. But the people here saw something in me. They told me that I was smart and capable, so I decided to give it a shot. I started studying Level 2 Maths and English. It wasn't easy, especially with all the emotional baggage I was carrying, but I knew I had to push through. One day, we had this speaking and listening presentation and I decided to talk about my experience with school. I poured out all my thoughts and feelings, the good and the bad. I shared my insights and, yeah, a lot of anger too. It felt good to let it all out, to be heard without judgment. The team here encouraged me to work with [mental health lead]. I wasn't sure at first, but having that safe space to process my emotions was a relief. I could finally start to feel better. Then I joined 'The Future is Yours.' It made me think about what I wanted for my future, about college and all the possibilities. The Rendezvous team helped me attend an open evening at Yeovil College and supported me through the application process. I never thought I'd have a chance like this, but they believed in me. You won't believe how much my confidence has grown since I came here. They encouraged me to find a part-time job, and with their support, I did it. It wasn't easy juggling work and studies, but I kept going and guess what? I passed my Level 2 Maths and English qualifications! It felt like a huge weight lifted off my shoulders. But that's not all. I got accepted into College for September 2023! I'm going back to full-time education, and I'm really excited. “

Age Concern North Dorset

“It was lovely to have a visit from [Grants Manager] and two trustees this year. They came to meet Gina who they helped to fund this year and it was really nice to catch up and receive some tips from them.”

Funded activities

The funding was to support the salary of our Office and Service Support Manager. The grant has enabled her hours to be expanded from 15 hours a week to 17 hours a week so that charity is open for another morning. Gina supports all our services but also manages our Foot Clinic every fortnight and our Telephone Support Service when in the office. She works with the local gym who provide us with a trainer to run our Balance classes and she attends and works with the Social Prescribers from the Medical Centre who run the Carousel Sessions in Stour Connect every fortnight. We are supporting approximately 40+ clients a week with the various services. We were able to attend and support some local events this year both in Sturminster Newton and Child Okeford. Gina has a lot of knowledge about the other charities in the area because she is constantly updating her knowledge for our Telephone Support Service and she has many complex and research related enquiries each month.

Impact and outcomes

The grant has enabled us to continue and expand our services. We have made better connections with Stour Connect and now offer a Coffee and Chat session each Wednesday in the Connect Cafe. The more financial support we have the more we can offer our local community. This year we have started our Balance Classes. We have have a new member of staff covering Community Outreach. Also our new website is simple and easy to use.

Challenges and future plans

The new post of Community Outreach will be going out and about spreading the word and distributing new leaflets to all our outlying villages. It is also hoped the new website and the facebook page will help us to promote to a wider audience. We will continue to provide services as long as we still have funding. This new financial year we have achieved a grant of £3,000 from Allen Lane and £2,000 from YAPP. We have an outstanding enquiry with Alice Ellen Cooper Dean for £5,000. We will also have funds raised from our Balance Class and our Foot Clinic of approximately £800 total. Our budget for this year is £26,000.

Story of change

We have a client attending the balance class who is suffering from dementia. He has gone from attending with his wife for a couple of weeks to walking to the gym and attending the class on his own and walking home again. The trainer is aware of his condition and I am there to check clients in and help if necessary with the lift etc. Other clients now know him and support him if he looks lost. This has given him an hour of independence each week, which to a normal person may sound a small amount, but to someone with dementia who has to be monitored every hour each day, it must be really rewarding for him and his wife who has an hour to herself each day. She knows if there is a problem we would let her know and look after her husband. He lives very close to the gym so someone can go with him if necessary.

Blandford Foodbank

"Please let me extend our very grateful thanks for such a wonderful gift."

Funded activities

Receiving the grant meant we were able to provide 40 families with a Christmas food hamper to celebrate Christmas with. This would not have been possible if we had not received the grant.

Impact and outcomes

Many of our families come to us with high levels of stress and mental illness. Receiving a Christmas food hamper brought some hope and comfort during the festive period and meant they could have some treats at this special time of year.

Story of change

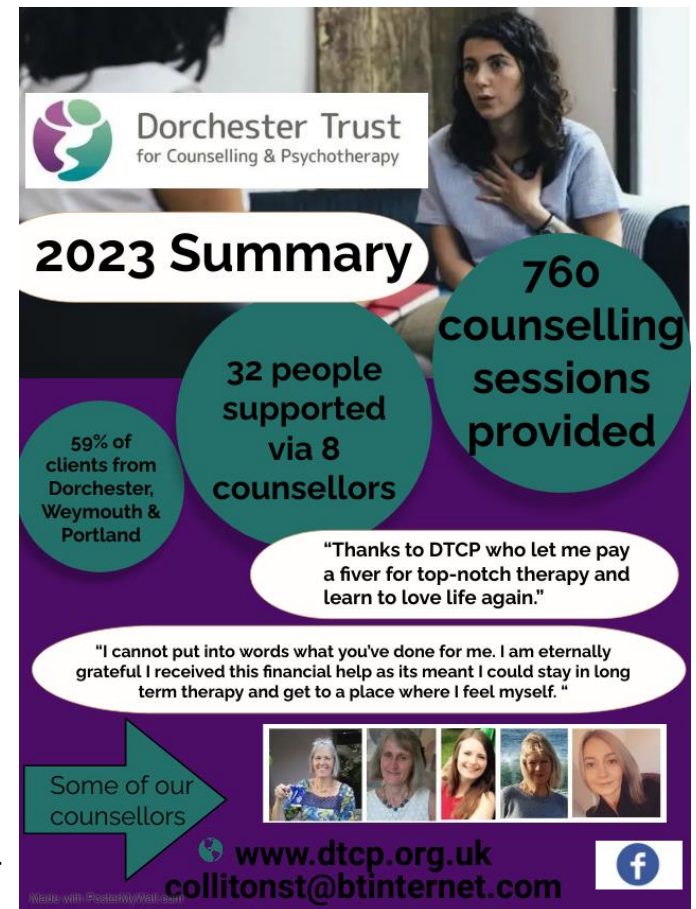
A mother of a family of five children was diagnosed with terminal cancer in November. Her husband gave up work to look after her and keep the family functioning. They had little income during this time and the food/treats we gave them helped to make her last Christmas a bit more enjoyable.

Dorchester Trust for Counselling & Psychotherapy

"As always, we are incredibly grateful for the support of DCF which makes a real difference to our ability to support local people and to the lives of those we help. Thank you so much from us and those your grant has supported."

Funded activities

Your kind grant enabled us to provide 156 counselling sessions to 3 local people who were struggling with their mental health and unable to adequately access counselling privately due to an inability to afford private support or due to long waiting lists and a limited number of sessions on the NHS. A full year of counselling is a long-term investment into an individual and will go on to improve not only their current lives but also their futures - and their children's too in some cases. They are able to function and contribute more fully within their communities and become more involved and effective members.



Impact and outcomes

This grant has made a huge difference to the lives of the three local people who were able to access a whole year of high-quality low-cost counselling as a result.

Challenges and future plans

Our service is very much ongoing and we are constantly applying to funders for support. The more funding we receive, the more people in need we are able to help. We have to be very careful that, when accepting a client, we have sufficient funding to cover the costs associated with them for a full year as this is our commitment to them.

“During the sessions, I received support, deep listening to my stories, and feedback. I believe that my anxiety levels have dropped significantly and I feel much happier. My family relationships have significantly improved. I discovered trust in myself in new ways, and no longer feel a victim. My sense of separation and abandonment I now understand. Thank you, thank you, thank you.”

Family Counselling Trust

Funded activities

Family Liaison Officer (FLORA) qualified to CPCAB Counselling Level 4 – processed 20 child/family Referrals and presented the anonymised case information to our Dorset Referral Panel, made up of mental health professionals. A course of Psychological Therapy was offered and taken up by 10 low income families with children/young people, receiving a minimum of 6 sessions. All counsellors are qualified to minimum level 5 C&YP minimum or equivalent.

Impact and outcomes

The SDQ scores show strong improvement for all the counselling cases, which would all have a knock-on effect for the families and the wider community.

Challenges and future plans

We have raised further funds from Brooks; The Fore; Dorset Resolution; Tedworth Charitable Trust; Masonic Charitable Foundation; Lyme Regis Rotary Club; Danson Foundation; Alice Ellen CD CF; Martinstown Circle Supper Group; G Eyre CTrust; Individual/Corporate Donors.

Story of change

‘NA’ is 6 years old and was referred by her school. NA Lives with her Mum. Her main issues were separation anxiety and the impact of witnessing domestic violence between her parents. May have copied behaviour from mums’ poor mental health re anxiety/depression. Also, Dad’s new partner can be unkind to her. Our Family Liaison Officer identified that Dad was emotionally abusive toward mum and left a number of years ago. Mum had a long relationship with a new partner but that broke down approx. 12 months ago. NA has become increasingly anxious about death, exacerbated by the recent death of her grandma's dog. She says she feels sad and becomes very upset at leaving mum when attending school. Following counselling, the SDQ (clinical measure) improvement score was 9, a really great improvement for this child - showing improvements in these categories: emotional, conduct, hyperactivity & peer behaviour. Feedback from Mum identified that she was better at going to school and going to dad, less crying and tantrums, and a lot happier.

Mindful

“Thank you for your continued support. We have found DCF to be very helpful and your investment in our charity has enabled us to expand and improve the service we provide at little to no cost to our service users, meaning our activities are accessible for everyone.”

Funded activities

Mindful ran a total of 62 cafes and 2 larger events over the course of 2023/24 showing that the additional funding has enabled us to offer more sessions than previous years and take on new members meaning our charity has now expanded considerably. Mindful cafe in Gillingham delivered 25 cafes per year i.e. fortnightly, Mindful cafe in Stalbridge delivered 12 cafes per year i.e. monthly. Mindful men’s group in Gillingham delivered 25 group meetings per year. The entertainment provided included activities such as Tai Chi lessons, music concerts, crafting, educational speakers, animal and pet talks, games and even a pantomime. We also visited Launceston Farm and had a Christmas Lunch. Your funding has enabled us to provide a transport service for those who cannot attend our cafe's independently or with a spouse. The funding has gone toward paying the mileage expenses for one of our volunteers who collects our participants and takes them home after the café. This is something we would look to improve and expand on in the future if we obtained additional funding.

Impact and outcomes

Something that has become particularly clear this year is that Mindful does not just support our participants but also their families and carers as well. Being able to expand our charity through grant funding and improve the service we provide has helped enhance the friendships, sense of community and interconnectedness that our participants, their families and carers experience during one of their visits. We have found that being able to provide a place for regular and consistent contact with people facing similar challenges really helps those living with memory problems to deal with everyday difficulties.

Challenges and future plans

The cafe's will continue in the same way as they have been run this year. We hope to organise one or two more excursions next year.

“Mindful came along at just the right time for us. My wife loved coming along to your cafes and it gave me a break and a chance to catch up with some jobs at home. I can’t thank you all enough for your help and support, it has made such a difference to us”

Poole Foodbank

"This funding really does make all the difference in the lives of the recipients. Until one meets someone who says that they thought that 'Christmas wasn't going to happen this year'. it is hard to understand the financial, emotional and mental stress that many households are suffering. Thank you so much!"

Funded activities

We provided 25 ambient Christmas food hampers; 25 x supermarket vouchers for fresh food; 25 x toy vouchers and applied £125 to core costs.

Impact and outcomes

The households identified would have struggled to provide any kind of Christmas for themselves and their children. The Christmas Hampers provided ambient Christmas goodies (alongside a foodbank food parcel) and also provided a supermarket voucher for the purchase of fresh food and a voucher for a family game. Apart from this funding, Poole Foodbank has no funds available to be able to provide anything like this kind of support. The funding has transformed the Christmas of 25 households in Poole.

Challenges and future plans

A challenge in previous years has been the provision of fresh food (ie meat and cheese etc) at a time of year that is our busiest. (ie the purchase, transport and storage of these items). This is why we made the decision to provide supermarket vouchers for fresh food. This has made the project easy to manage and has also given an element of choice and empowerment to the recipients.

Story of change

A young single mother of 3 sons came to Poole Foodbank for support when her eldest son committed suicide. Poole Foodbank provided food support and friendship. Anticipating a very difficult Christmas for her and her two sons, it was a joy to be able to offer her one of our Christmas Hampers, which was not only of practical support, but a massive support to her emotionally. She had not been able to 'get her head around' planning Christmas for the family, but this was the incentive that she needed.



Prout Bridge Project

“This grant is invaluable as it has a manageable application and feedback process which does not take valuable time away from face to face work. Your additional support is fantastic - [Grants Manager] is on hand to support and answer any questions. Thank you”

Funded activities

The young people accessing our sessions were from the following schools: Parret & Axe in Mosterton, Salway Ash Primary, Loders Primary, Marshwood Primary, Greenford, Broadwindsor and Beaminster Secondary School. They were age between 8 and 18. The 1:1 sessions went as planned with all booked sessions attended. During our sessions we gave out 5 of our distraction bags to young people experiencing self-harm and/or suicidal thoughts. These bags contain items and information that help distract young people from negative thoughts. Feedback from young people and their families was positive. We covered issues such as anxiety, anger management, resilience, bereavement, school attendance, behaviour, self-esteem, self-harm and suicidal thoughts and family & friendship relationship difficulties. Two young people were referred to Mosaic for further bereavement counselling and 1 was referred to CAMHS.

Impact and outcomes

Improved mental health can only be a positive benefit to beneficiaries and the community even if the initial improvement is small. Young people may not show an immediate improvement but small seeds that are planted during sessions tend to grow and improvement is made by small steps. By being able to offer follow on support to many young people via generic youth club sessions we can maintain contact as long as the individual needs. This has proved invaluable. Supporting young people at an early stage helps them improve their social skills, enabling them to start to create positive relationships with the wider community by understanding and recognising the effect their behaviour has on someone else.

Challenges and future plans

We have achieved several grants to enable us to work with more young people however, we are now at a stage where we are waiting on results so it is a nervous, waiting game. However, we have secured some funding for running costs through generic fundraising which we can use to ensure that we can offer some sessions. We also have had some funding from a secondary school to offer 1 day a week support.

Story of change

‘Peter’ is a worrier and a parent of one of his friends, had received a text saying he was going to jump off a bridge. The parent contacted school. Peter said he didn’t want to worry his mum and asked for someone to talk to. Aims – Support sessions to enable Peter to seek help rather than bottle up his emotions. We would like Peter to build resilience around negative peers and owning their worries and problems. Young Person’s identified need – *“I get bullied on the school bus; I don’t like people shouting. I feel like I’m annoying to my friends, when I’m anxious I make up funny voices and words, my whole family do, I have since I was 5 years old. I do feel down the majority of the time, when I’m not at home.”* Agreed plan – Youth Worker and Peter would work on resilience, understanding his emotions and why we feel the way we feel. That’s its ok if peers have off loaded their issues on him, that he doesn’t have to own or solve them. That he can have time out with an exit card to take a breath and have some silence. Peter was given support to enable him to tell a teacher at school if being bullied again. As a personal pick me up the Youth worker identifies “moams” were Peters favourite treat and created a tiny pot for emergency use only for when he was feeling low. Peter completed the 6 sessions and can refer himself if he feels low again.