

## Aspire Feedback: 2019 – 2020

### Sight for Surrey

Sight For Surrey celebrated their amazing families last Summer with a grant from Aspire for their residential family weekend at Sayers Croft. SFS sent us an array of photos of the 12 families (40 individuals) who gathered for a weekend of fun and activities including team building, swimming, challenges, archery, caving and pottery. The weekend also gave the families downtime to enjoy company of others who knew how complex life can be with loved ones who live with blindness.

*“Just want to say a massive THANK YOU for a fabulous short break. You guys rock. What you do for these children and families is second to none. We really appreciate all that you’ve done for us. Don’t want to go home – we’re all sulking and can’t wait for the next one – and the next one – and the next one”*

### Merrow Bulb Planting

*‘We set out on a frosty November morning eagerly awaiting the wonderful gardening group and some green fingered pupils from Merrow Infants School to support a community bulb plant for the residents, commuters and walkers of Bushy Hill Drive and Hall Dene Close. The green space along this main route has a huge amount of passers-by including two main commuter routes, dog walkers, those who want to get out for some fresh air and all those students who walk to their surrounding schools and we felt it was a great opportunity to add some Spring colour. Who would have thought how important the Spring bulbs would be for positivity and hope back then! With our trowels and gloves, two of the wellbeing team kept morale high (and warm squash on hand) for the amazing group who planted around 400 bulbs to the area. It was lovely to see so many children learning about the space and wildlife and seeing the excitement for the bulbs to grow in the months to come.’*

### Intergenerational art at Shawfield

For the first time last year, we set up an inter-generational project which brought together children from a local nursery school with visitors to the Shawfield Day Centre. The children attended on a weekly basis for a term and during that time the children took part in various activities, including painting, storytelling, parachute games, bowling and exercises.

*‘The pleasure on the older people’s faces were a joy to see and they very much looked forward to their visit from the children’.*

The numbers were kept low, 6 children to about 10/12 older people. During that time, the children were able to build up a repertoire with the older people and they soon got to know each other. –

*‘These relationships were invaluable to both the children and the older people and in fact, a gentleman who had previously not engaged with many people, seemed to take great joy in chatting with the children. Walking sticks and frames were of particular interest to the children!’*

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## **Thrive at the Hive**

Thrive at the Hive was launched in 2020 just before Covid-19 took hold but the set up and creation of this project enabled services who were helping those struggling amid the pandemic to access bedding, children's items, shoes, clothes and kitchen ware. Families expecting babies and those in emergency housing needed essential items and Thrive At The Hive was able to facilitate this. The project is now working in a more streamline way with donations coming in and items going out to the community.

*"This is such a wonderful project and everything in here just looks amazing"*

*"This is my new favourite place to come! I love that I can bring things that no longer fit my children and pass them on to others as well as take items that my family can use too"*

*'Thank you so much for the two bags of baby things you have provided me and with. This will be such a help and she will look lovely in all the clothes you chose for her. The toys were also very suitable as well. Please can you send me over the address of your charity so I can send a thank you card.'*

## **Whatever the Weather**

Whatever the Weather was an intergenerational arts project which brought residents from Japonica Court and clients from the Shawfield Centre together with primary school children from Walsh Junior School, Ash. Poet and performer Justin Coe worked with both the children and older clients each week and put together an array of poetry. The poems focused on different topics and the older people were able to reminisce about things they had done or seen in their lives.

Justin would take the poems written by the older clients and take them to the school children to read. In return they would write a poem about the same topic but from their perspective and the older clients were then able to read this and see the differences which they certainly found eye opening.

Justin put on a performance of his pirate poetry play which gave the older clients and primary school children a chance to meet and watch together. To end the project some of the children from the primary school came to meet some of the older clients to share readings of the poems they had written.

## **Grassroots networking**

Aspire has been integral in enabling and supporting our popular, well attended 'Grassroots' network events. Held three times a year for over 10 years, 2020 brought about a new challenge as social guidance restrictions did not support face to face gatherings. We wished to deliver something engaging but alternative for the usual October event.

We asked attendees if they would support a 'resource document' of their current services (albeit reduced/and or virtual) that we would compile. To date we have over 32 statutory, voluntary, community and faith led organisation details to add and subsequently share with people so we can support our communities across the borough

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## **Watts Gallery**

Working in partnership with Watts Gallery various themed crafts, drawings and art-based sessions both took place at the Park Barn Centre for all ages and abilities. Positive feedback was offered throughout, and we were told that many of the activities supported those feeling isolated.

The interaction has supported those that are less mobile and perhaps felt that Watts Gallery

*“wasn’t a place for them”*

*‘couldn’t afford to go to and visit’*

*‘unable to get to Compton’.*

## **The Community Fridge**

In February 2020 Guildford Community Fridge was launched. In its short time operating from the Park Barn Centre it has been successful. Setting up alerts from key food suppliers has enabled food to be offered to those that visited. Recipes were regularly created & made available. In fact, we continue to offer recipes via the wellbeing fortnightly newsletter. People would also ‘pop in’ with individual donations. Kings College students started as regular volunteers.

## **Young People**

A local Kings College student, Zac, approached us last year to do work experience with the Team. Zac linked up with a member of the team and joined her for various meetings, helped design leaflets for projects and events and was keen to get involved. One of the meetings Zac attended was around providing a Youth Café in the Park Barn Centre and he was very interested to be involved. In preparation for the opening of the Youth Café, Zac attended many meetings to discuss the ‘vision’ of the café. Subsequently Zac headed up the young people’s steering group for the Youth Café which launched in early November 2019 and he was able to bring in other pupils from Kings to support the project.

The Youth Café was held weekly and between 35-40 local young people attended to join activities including pool, table tennis, gaming, socialising, arts and crafts and learning new skills. Also, with the help of the Centre staff, several young people were able to learn the skills of running a coffee shop, which included barista training.

Following on from the success of the project, many students have been involved in things at the centre and follow up work has been done including one student from the Youth Café doing artwork for the project and interest in working on the Community Fridge project in the future.

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## **Response to ASB**

We organised a mini street party due to issues involving ASB in a particular area. We wanted to support and develop community relationships and improve relations with neighbours. We tied this event in with 'The Great Get Together' held a street party picnic with street games in a safe environment and celebrated the community coming together. This event was extremely successful and many of the residents said how much they enjoyed it and want it to happen again as they met people they didn't know lived in their street! Furthermore the ASB around taunting neighbours ceased.

## **Covid 19 support**

### Mental Health

A gentleman contacted us through the GBC website asking for a food parcel. On his referral he stated that he had recently left hospital after a suicide attempt. We had no reply to phone messages so one of the team text him and opened a dialogue with him. She received a text message back implying that he was going to make another suicide attempt. We liaised with the police and visited. Luckily, he was safe and we have continuously supported him through frequent text messages. We have made a referral to Catalyst and he is now engaging with them and getting the help and support he needs. The team member is still in contact with the gentleman on a weekly basis and working with him to feel well.

### Practical Support

A concern was raised by a local charity with us about a husband and wife who had slipped through SCC shielding process. We checked on the couple and realised they needed to shield as both were having health problems, one terminal and yet they had received no correspondence to shield. We took on their welfare call support and made weekly telephone calls to check on health and any practical support needs. We decided for help to clear furniture in their property so medical equipment could be brought in and provided food parcels as well as wellbeing team newsletters and activity information We continue to telephone weekly and provide food support.

### Isolation

We called a gentleman who prior to lockdown and social restrictions, regularly volunteered with the team. Nearing the end of May it was clear that the gentleman (referred to us over 4 years ago via Surrey Choices) was not engaging with anyone or any group or club, other than his drop in carer. We talked about getting him back to volunteering as we were very concerned about his feelings of loneliness. We set about working with GLADE, Guildford Learning & Development Enterprise/SLLP to enable a weekly opportunity and it is working well. The staff member of GLADE is very grateful to have a volunteer each Friday assisting with Westborough litter picking duties. This arranged partnership is in its 11th week.

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### Older people support

As part of the welfare calls having come to us in early April, we called a very elderly gentleman who used to be a customer of Community Day Care Services. He enjoyed the weekly calls, but it was noticeable as the weeks passed that he was becoming increasingly agitated and forgetful about previous conversations. Contact was made with his NOK (daughter) where a positive connection was also made. She was extremely grateful to us for all the local support, care and advice offered. Living 4 hours away, she expressed 'it's so reassuring to know you are looking out for dad'. It was with great sadness that the gentleman passed away in August. His daughter made direct contact with us to share the family news & again thanked us for our everything over the period we'd been contacting her father.

### Older people support

A customer of Community Day Care Services was shielding and not going out at all. We supported her with food parcels support for a period and realised she needed help with her garden as she was worried the garden was becoming increasingly unmanageable. We contacted GLADE for a referral to 'strim and tidy' the garden. The lady was very grateful and so relieved saying she could not thank us enough and that her garden worries are no more. We provided her with our team newsletters and activities to help her with her feelings of anxiety and loneliness. The lady has said that once a local group is back up and running, as promoted via our newsletter, she will be visiting to help with feel less lonely and isolated.

### Keeping people well at home for longer

We called a shielded resident weekly and it became very clear that the elderly lady was having struggles at home. This was escalated and we were able to get an occupational therapist to get in touch with her. We were able to get her an aid to help her when she was bathing in the bath as she had been really struggling to do so on her own. We were then able to connect with other professionals involved in supporting this resident such as Age UK who are also supporting the resident and together, we have organised getting food for her whilst her volunteer was away.

### Domestic Violence

Through weekly calls to a shielding resident it became apparent that there were issues surrounding Domestic Abuse at her home. We escalated this straight to MASH and a social worker was allocated to the resident to offer support. We continued to keep contact with the resident via regular emails and phone calls. From this we were able to discover that the resident had a passion for volunteering, we signposted her to Voluntary Action and she found a regular volunteer role. The resident's confidence has significantly grown, and she feels like she has more purpose.

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