



2024/25 Impact Report



























About Us

Kangaroos Mid-Sussex (RCN 1150202) provides a range of fun, social and recreational activities, clubs and outings in the local community for around 333 children and adults with learning disabilities.

Disabled people often struggle to access mainstream activities and are more isolated, spending their time only with parents or carers. Their disabilities, anxieties and behaviours make it extremely difficult to meet socially outside of school, college and work and therefore they do not get opportunities to meet and spend time with friends. This sadly can lead to mental health issues, social isolation and feeling marginalised in their local community.

Our Vision is a future where people with learning disabilities are valued and accepted by all.



Our Service Values:











Our Mission is to enrich the lives of individuals enabling them to thrive without limits.

Kangaroos provides opportunities for people with learning disabilities to engage in a wide range of activities away from an educational or home setting. Kangaroos focus is on friendship, inclusion, self-worth, independence and increased confidence in social and community settings.

We offer age specific clubs to children and adults with learning disabilities. Our eldest member is currently 45, but we welcome people to join Kangaroos who are of any age. Activities are tailored to the ages and abilities of each group and vary from craft sessions or game nights to days out and residential stays across the country, and sometimes beyond!





A Note from our CEO

Emma Hunt

2024 was an important year for Kangaroos. As well as celebrating our 30th year, we were focussed on building a sustainable, efficient and transparent operating mode, the year started with analysis, strategy and reflection and ended with ambitious infrastructure improvement proposals, including plans for new premises.

With a skilled, hardworking and resilient staff team, the help of wonderful external experts, including a team at Morgan Stanley, a plan was devised and in January 2025 Kangaroos set out on a path to achieve its three strategic aims.

I am immensely grateful to the Edward Gostling Foundation, who awarded us a deed of grant in April 2024, That, alongside our multi-year grants from the National Lottery Community Fund and Children in Need, provided the security for Kangaroos to embark on our change journey.

A revised staff structure was rolled out in February 2025 and a new operating framework was prepared, to go live on 1 April 2025. With an injection of fresh skills and energy, a regular programme of activity is currently being rolled out to Kangaroos members. Whilst it will take time to embed fully, the scalability is already evident for future years. The Trustees made a firm commitment to parents and service users to endeavour to keep the service going throughout the change programme. To date this has been honored.

Concurrently, conversations were started and are ongoing with Mid Sussex County Council and a land developer, for Kangaroos to benefit from a purpose built community hub as part of a housing estate in Bolney, Mid Sussex. Whilst this will be a few years away, it is providing a focus for improvements and business development opportunity for Kangaroos.

These are exciting times for Kangaroos. This journey wouldn't be happening without the confidence of funders, the forward looking Trustee Board and the dedicated and resilient staff team at Kangaroos, for which I am very grateful.

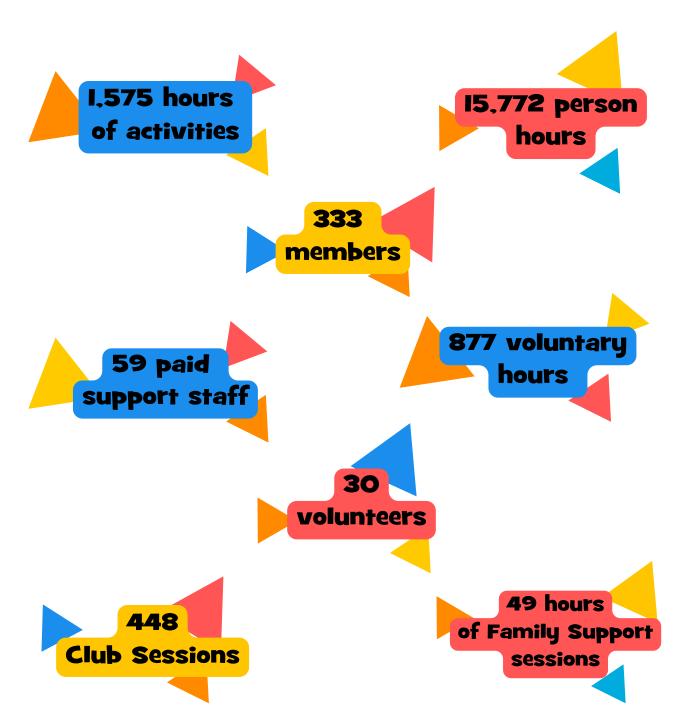
Our Strategic Aims

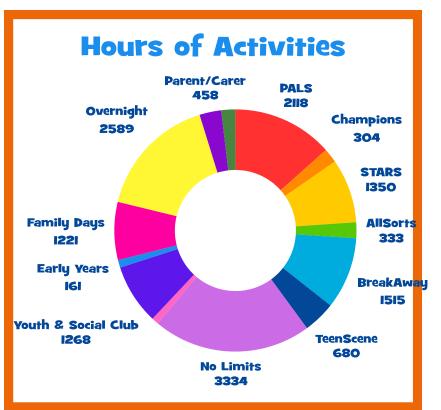
Invest in our infrastructure to enhance the experience for members, families and staff, establishing a sustainable efficient delivery model for future membership expansion, with a transparent culture at its core.

Build on our specialist knowledge and our capacity to enable our services are accessible to all children, young people and adults with learning disabilities and complex needs and help more members and families across Mid Sussex access high quality provisions.

Understand the opportunity potential in adapting a central hub to secure delivery of our high quality specialist services in an efficient, cost effective and needs lead way for the Kangaroos community.

What we Delivered





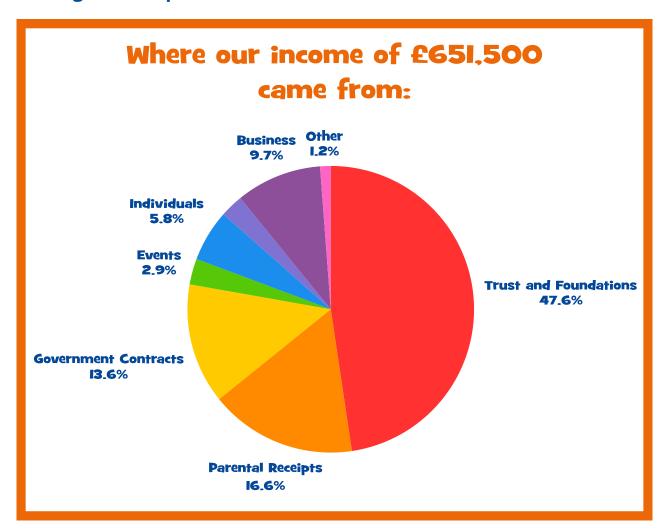


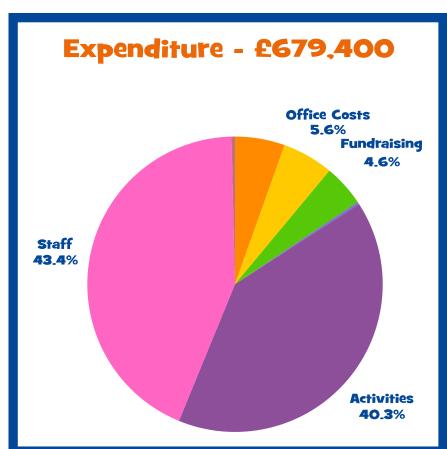


Financial Summary 2024/25



The fundraising team had an extremely successful year despite financial challenges across many sectors. In 2024/25 our total income totalled £651,657 (2024: £565,515). This is a 15% increase on the previous year, reflecting funder confidence in Kangaroos strategy towards sustainability and growth. A total Expenditure for the year of £679,989 (2024: £565,679) includes operational investment and costs relating to a staffing restructure which was part of the strategic development.





Staff and Volunteers

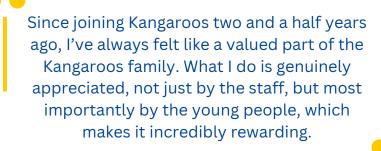
We are continually grateful to our amazing sessional staff and volunteers, whose dedication to our weekly clubs, activity days, and residentials makes such a difference. Their commitment to our values ensures every member is treated with dignity, respect, and care.

Meet Julie

Julie joined the Volunteer Team in 2022 and very quickly contributed to trips out and fun sessions with PALS, Breakaway and No Limits but more recently she has been a regular and very valued part of Team TeenScene but is still a much respected volunteer at other groups too. She brings such energy to every session and really takes time to support individuals as well as the group as a whole, naturally just knowing what help is needed, where.











I especially enjoy supporting Teenscene, holiday activities, and outings. It's wonderful to see the young people having fun, growing in confidence, and just being themselves. My husband always says he can tell how much I enjoy it from the smile on my face!

Julie, Volunteer





Complex Needs

STARS

We continue to deliver services including support, clubs and day trips for members with complex medical needs and limited mobility. STARS is a weekend and Holiday Club with dedicated equipment and activities to meet the needs of young people who are all wheelchair users with disabilities that include; Cerebral Palsy, epilepsy, gastrostomy feeds, catheterisation, and complex feeding needs as well as individuals with visual and hearing impairments.

We offer an extremely safe and structured environment with activities tailored to the young people's complex needs. Equipment is suited and adapted to our members needs, including toys, musical instruments and cooking equipment which are all switch adapted, sensory equipment, and specialist seating, as well as a range of computer equipment and iPads with tailored software and hardware. We also have other equipment to meet specialist care needs, such as hoists, changing tables and specialist toilet seating.

Rockets

Rockets was created in 2024 especially for children aged 8–18 who require at least 1:1 specialist support due to their behavioural needs.

Meeting once a month, **Rockets** provides a safe and fun environment where every activity is tailored to the needs of its members. From water play and bowling to high ropes adventures and transport-themed sessions, including a visit to the Bluebell Railway and Shoreham Airport.

Rockets is all about creating memorable experiences.

We carefully plan all our sessions which run throughout the year at the Ashenground Centre in Haywards Heath, to enhance the experience of all our children and young people.

Our vision is to offer trips and experiences that challenge our members and are outside their usual experience. This year, our members have taken part in a range of sensory and messy play sessions, visited accessible playgrounds, taken the train to London to visit Sky Garden, a visit from Reptylers to meet snakes and lizards, a trip to Eastbourne seafront and visited local attractions.











Meet Thomas

Thomas is 9 years old and has been a regular member at **STARS** for 4 years. Thomas has cerebral palsy and is a full time wheelchair user, he is also registered blind.

He loves music, being out and about and knowing what staff are at each session when he arrives as he is very reliant on others to help him interpret his surroundings and participate in activities.

Thomas now actively looks forward to Kangaroos sessions, approaching holidays he always asks where he will be going. He is more than happy for me to leave when I drop him off, he's built secure relationships with Kangaroos staff and knows he will be having fun. He's been able to access some wonderful trips out

that he's always able to fully participate in. His independence and confidence has grown.

Kangaroos has enabled me to have a break from caring, with peace of mind that Thomas will be cared for, safe, his needs fully met, and he'll be happy. It's also enabled me to meet families and other parents who have similar experiences, and a sense of being part of the Kangaroos community.

It was very isolating for both myself and Thomas.

I really wanted Thomas to be able to access a club that could cater for his needs, where he'd be happy to go, look forward to, be social in his own way, understand that he is safe. I wanted him to broaden his experiences by doing new activities and grow his independence. When we came to meet the team I knew Kangaroos was the right fit for us.







Children's Clubs



PALS

For children aged 6 to 12. **PALS** takes place on Saturdays and as a holiday playscheme at the Ashenground Community Centre in Haywards Heath. We support children with a range of disabilities, providing 1:1 or 2:1 support as required. **PALS** members enjoy in-house activities as well as day trips out, doing activities they wouldn't normally get the chance to do, including overnight stays at outward bound centres. In the last year, **PALS** members have been on many trips including a trip to Brighton, to go on the open top tour bus and Volks miniature railway, Blackberry Farm where we enjoyed tractor rides, the playground and feeding the animals and a trip to Ardingly Watersports. They have also taken part in a range of themed in-house sessions such as discos, a pamper and sensory session and lots of messy play.

Champions

Champions runs on a Thursday after school at the Kangaroos Hub for children aged 6-12 years. Champions offers a range of activities from crafts to cooking, as well as trips out. Champions members have taken part in a wide range of activities this year including baking, making fruit smoothies, a visit to Clip 'n' Climb, a pirate themed session and a mad hatters tea party.

AllSorts

AllSorts is our term-time club for members aged 8-14. The weekly sessions vary in activity and include trying out different art styles, learning about cultures around the world and studying nature. AllSorts took part in food critic sessions, where they tasted different foods and talked about which ones were their favourites and why, visited White's Festive Lights and also designed t-shirts, created them, and put on a fashion show!















Meet Zachary

Zachary, aged nine, has a diagnosis of Autism. He has attended **PALS** since May 2022 and also enjoys **Family Support** activities with Kangaroos. Oliver (Zachary's twin brother) also attends sibling events by himself such as meals out, Go Ape, Crazy Golf and together they enjoy joint SEND and Sib sessions including Fun Day in the Summer holidays.

Zachary has been denied access to clubs at his school due to his disability, and we are delighted and proud that Kangaroos has provided him with opportunities to experience activities and adventures just like other nine year old boys.

Kangaroos has given him a sense of belonging, as he feels this is his special club. Additionally, family days and SEND and Sib days have created meaningful chances for him to bond and positively develop his relationship with his twin brother, Oliver. As parents of a disabled child, it's often hard to fully relax since we're always on high alert. However, whenever Zachary is with Kangaroos, we feel at ease, knowing he's in the care of staff who truly understand his needs, giving us some much-needed respite.







He absolutely loved participating in the water sports activities at Ardingly, and I've never seen him as happy as when he returned from a transport day in Brighton.

Zachary had the time of his life traveling on both the train and the open-top bus.

Despite his limited speech, he couldn't stop

talking about how much fun he had.





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Teen Clubs



BreakAway

BreakAway is a weekend and holiday activity club for people with learning disabilities aged 12-18 years. With this group, we give the members the opportunity to dictate what sort of trips they would like to do which has resulted in a brilliant range of activities throughout the year. **BreakAway** members have enjoyed pamper sessions, karaoke, discos, treasure hunts, arts and crafts and sports sessions. They have also been on lots of trips including visiting Amberley Working Museum and the Science Museum in London.

TeenScene

TeenScene is a weekly youth club for teenagers aged 12-18 years. The groups are kept relatively small to ensure the young people settle, forge friendships and grow in confidence. The approach is to enable the young people to be as independent as possible, while staff support them with making friendships within the group. Activities are aimed at encouraging them to bond, work together and to help individual personalities to shine. Each week, every member is encouraged to share what they have been up to with the group which really helps with public speaking. This year **TeenScene** members worked with an artist to create a self portrait, which was then used to decorate a kangaroo in our KangaTrail. They have also tried Salsa dancing, celebrated various awareness days and enjoyed visits from Lost Woods and local author, Julia Macdonald.













Meet Bella

Bella is 13 years old and has been a regular member of TeenScene and BreakAway since April 2024. She has Autism and Sensory Processing Disorder.

Before joining Kangaroos Bella had very limited opportunities to socialise with other children outside of school. As an only child, this was particularly important for her. She couldn't access mainstream clubs without her mother accompanying her and struggled to connect with the children in her class and was clearly lonely and yearning for friendships. Her family felt quite isolated and wanted to be able to network with others in similar situations.









Bella is so much happier now and genuinely looks forward to her weekly TeenScene sessions and the BreakAway trips. Her confidence has grown immensely—especially when it comes to being away from us. She's genuinely happier, more confident, and feels like she belongs to a community. She's even formed a close friendship with another girl she now sees outside of Kangaroos, and I've become friends with her mum.



We honestly can't thank Kangaroos enough. It has had such a positive ripple effect on all our lives—giving Bella the social connections and joyful experiences she truly needed, and giving us as parents the support and community we'd been missing for so long. It's a lifeline.









Adult Clubs

No Limits

No Limits is our social and recreational programme for young adults 18+. Our oldest member is currently 45 but the programme is open to adults of all ages. No Limits members enjoy a range of activities with their friends in a supported environment, it gives them tools to improve social and life skills and make friends here and in their wider community. The sessions run in the evenings, holidays and at weekends, offering them activities and outings many of their age group take for granted. From a trip to the local pub to a theatre visit, fitness sessions to discos, No Limits always have a fantastic time out and this year highlights included visiting the Friends Experience in London, lunch at Talking Hands in Hassocks and neon silent disco.















Our **Youth Club** (18 and above) and **Social Club** (aged 25+) are held on alternate weeks in the evenings. These club nights are a chance for members to catch up with their friends in a chilled and relaxed environment. We put on optional activities such as film nights, keep fit classes and craft tables which our adults can join in with if they want to, it is led by their decisions. Highlights this year have been a pub themed night, Greatest Showman themed disco and gardening.



Meet Ethan

Ethan is 19 years old and has been a regular member of No Limits. He has been attending Kangaroos for over 12 years, he attended PALS, Champions, AllSorts, TeenScene, BreakAway and Family days. He has Autism and Learning Difficulties.

Before he came to Kangaroos Ethan was lacking confidence and his self esteem was extremely low. He was very isolated socially and his anxiety level was extremely high. Due to lack of support at school he was finding it really difficult to build trust with adults. He showed very aggressive behaviour towards children and adults. He had no friends and wasn't even invited to any birthday parties or other kids events.

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Ethan has made some friends at No Limits and they are the only friends he has. He feels that No Limits is his special place to meet with his friends and this is his safe socializing place. He feels safe, loved, understood, supported and confident in the Kangaroos environment.







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By attending social sessions for meals together with his peers has helped Ethan to gain more confidence in such places as restaurants. He has started to order his own meals, whereas before he would never place his order and would expect adults to speak to the waiter.



Ethan's achievement at school and college has improved as he has come to understand himself more and was learning to accept himself. The massive part for this achievement was done with huge support of Kangaroos helping to reduce some anxieties. Through Kangaroos Ethan has developed a love for cricket. He now has aspirations for his future and is starting a university course in September at Brighton Uni to study Sport coaching with performance.





Family & Sibling Support

This year our family support programme has expanded to provide more catered support for parents/carers and siblings of people with learning disabilities as well as activities for the whole family to enjoy together.

Family Support

This year we've hosted a number of parent and carer coffee mornings. Once a month, we take over the Kangaroos Hub, provide refreshments and welcome anyone who is a parent or carer to someone with learning disabilities to join us. This group has provided parents and carers with a space to share experiences, lend advice, or just simply have a chat with other people that are experiencing similar challenges.

Family Days

Our Family Days continue to be a critical part of our activity calendar. Each quarter we aim to host at least one family event that focuses on bringing parents, carers, siblings and members with learning disabilities together in one space to spend quality time together. This year one of our most popular events was a family picnic in Brooklands Park and cycling. Each family got to try out a range of specialist bikes, thanks to Cycall Adapted Cycling.

Siblings

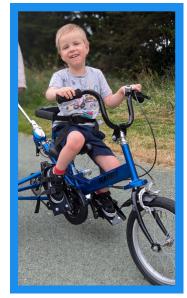
We offer several services to siblings of people with learning disabilities. Some activity trips focus on siblings spending quality time with their disabled brother or sister, whilst other days out give siblings independence from their family, and time with other young people in a similar situation to them. Some highlights from the past year include decorating one of our kangaroos for KangaTrail, an outdoor games session at Beechurst Gardens and dinner at the Harvester.

0-5 Years (Stay and Play)

Our 0-5 years Stay and Play sessions continue to grow in popularity. These monthly morning meet ups give parents and carers, as well as their babies and toddlers, the opportunity to socialise and play in a safe and sensory stimulating environment.











Family & Sibling Support

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Both the siblings only days and the Kangaroo and sibling days are absolutely amazing for my girls. The sibling days have amazing activities and have helped to increase my daughter's confidence and self esteem, and made her feel special. My daughter particularly loved the trip to Bubble Planet, and the Caddies mini golf and Pizza Hut trip.





I've always found the parent/carer coffee mornings a good chance to chat to other parents and be a completely open and honest space, it's nice to be able to chat away from our children. Also the family fun days are a chance to spend quality family time together in a space that is completely inclusive and accessible.





Family fun days have been brilliant, lots of activities to enjoy together and to get to know other kangaroos families.











Residentials

Our overnight stays are always the highlight of our year. We take mixed groups of members away for a night away from home, building independence skills and self-confidence and enabling them to try new things together with their friends. For some, this is their first night away from their parents ever! Here are some of the trips that we went on in the year:

Hindleap Warren Outdoor Centre

Our first residential was our annual trip to Hindleap Warren which is one of our most popular activities and this year Kangaroos spent 3 nights at the outdoor centre, firstly welcoming a group of 10 members for a one night stay followed by 12 members staying for two nights. All the children and young people have severe learning disabilities, but this didn't stop them enjoying challenging, fun activities and companionship in the Ashdown Forest. With support and care from Kangaroos experienced staff, the youngsters of all ages and abilities, chose to stay for one or two nights.

Activities at the centre were fully inclusive so everyone, whatever their abilities, got a chance to enjoy the different sessions. They tried lots of different outward bound activities such as the climbing wall and the always popular zip wire.

Brighton

18 Kangaroos members took on Brighton for a weekend staying at the YHA Hostel for a 2 night stay. They visited the Sealife Centre, The Pier, The Volks Railway, went for a windy walk along the seafront, played crazy golf and went shopping. They ate lots of ice creams and meals at Shelter Hall and Donatello's. A great weekend had by all. This was the first time we organised a residential here, but it was a great hit, so watch this space for future overnights here.







He did rock climbing and came down on a zip wire. He also toasted marshmallows around a campfire! These are activities that we would never have thought he would do.



Residentials

Camp Kangaroos at WoWo Campsite

Over May Half term 22 members camped overnight at Camp Kangaroos adding up to over 400 hours of care. The sun wasn't always shining but everyone had a great time. They paddled in the stream, danced to the evening entertainment music, got very muddy, toasted marshmallows around the campfire, painted some beautiful creations and went bug hunting. For many of our members this was the first time they had slept in a tent and they all did so well with their first camping experience.

Legoland

For our final residential trip last summer we took 17 children and young people with disabilities on an Official LEGOLAND Windsor sleepover where they also enjoyed two days in the park.

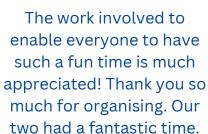
Our members stayed overnight in the Education Centre and had a VIP showing of a Lego film and an exclusive Lego workshop. They went on lots of rides, met Lego characters, watched the pirate show, went on multiple trains around the park, spotted landmarks in Miniland and ate a few ice creams!

It was a fantastic trip and definitely a highlight of the Summer.























Events

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KangaTrail

Summer 2024 saw our first ever Kanga Trail, an inclusive art project and community event. To represent the 30 years we have been running, no less than 30, four-foot wooden kangaroo's, were decorated by our members and supporters. Each one had a different name, chosen by our members and were decorated individually by our member and supporter groups. "Joey" and his gang then hopped their way around the Mid-Sussex area, waiting to be discovered.

Armed with a trail map, participants went on the hunt for Joey and friends, in this free, inclusive activity. Families and friends came together, delighting in spotting all 30 Kangaroos over the Summer holidays. Thank you to all of those who took part in the trail and to the businesses that supported us and sponsored a Kangaroo.

We have really enjoyed finding all the kangaroos on the trail. Lovely to see the colourful kangaroos all over Mid Sussex promoting awareness of this fabulous

organisation.











Rok Skool

In February half term, 2025, a group of our members participated in some fantastic music workshops at Rok Skool, Building confidence and focus through music, the workshops culminated in a sensational performance by our members, who formed a band called the Kangaroos Collective. This was an incredible opportunity and a really exciting, confidence boosting experience for members. It was loud, fun and full of energy!

We are immensely grateful to Rok Skool for this amazing opportunity, which formed part of their community engagement initiative. Performing in front of over 70 people was no small feat, and we couldn't be prouder of our members for taking to the stage and shining!







Events



KangaFest

What a fantastic way to celebrate 30 years! On Saturday 27th July 2024, we welcomed over 300 people to celebrate our anniversary at KangaFest held at Woodlands Meed School. It was a true Kangaroos community event with members, staff and volunteers past and present, local community groups and companies together with local dignitaries.

















Kangafest was a really wonderful, inclusive event, and we all had a great time.
Thank you so much to everyone who helped make it happen!





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Looking Ahead from our Chair of Trustees

Tom Acott



Looking ahead, Kangaroos is entering a year of substantial change in order to future-proof its vital service. Work will take place in 2025/6 to stabilise the new offer and start to develop growth plans for potential expansion into a new operating hub.

We will continue to use our service values to shape the programme of activity:

- Family Centred
- Fun and Friendship
- Safe and Supported
- Pushing Boundaries
- Building Independence, Confidence and Self Esteem

Whilst it reshapes its programme and staffing model, Kangaroos will continue to provide and grow substantial benefit in three main target areas:



- Children and Adults friendship groups, inclusion and promotion of self-worth, independence and increased confidence in social and community settings. Clubs and activities are designed to be fun, giving the young people a positive experience away from an educational or home setting. Our programmes are all designed with input from the young people.
- Family Support social network of parents with children with similar needs and experiences, much needed respite during activities or overnights and signposting to other events, associations and information sources. Support for siblings, through Family Days, inclusive events and activities
- Complex Care Kangaroos aims to be non-exclusionary in its support. It runs a specialist group for children and adults with complex medical needs (STARS) and one for complex behavioural needs (Rockets).

Our firm commitment is to offer the complete Kangaroo's activity provision to meet the demand from learning disabled people and their families in Mid Sussex.

A special thanks to our retiring Trustee Shouvick Ghosh, who was instrumental in creating ambition in the charity to get us to the strategy that we are now embarking on. A warm welcome to our new Trustees, who will drive the strategic direction.

Our amazing staff are the key to our success. They continue to show extraordinary passion and resilience over the last 12 months and, despite a challenging fundraising landscape, we continue to develop our service.

Thank You

Donations however big or small are greatly appreciated.



We rely greatly on diversified income and gifts in kind and greatly appreciate all those who have contributed in some way. Thank you!

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Childwick Trust

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ESCC Short Breaks

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Focus Foundation

Gallus Trust

Garfield Weston Foundation

Gatwick Airport Community Trust

Happy Days Children's Charity

Haywards Heath Town Council

Hedley Foundation

Hendy Foundation

Masonic Charitable Foundation

Matchroom Sport Charitable Foundation

Mid Sussex District Council

National Lottery - Reaching Communities

Peter Harrison Foundation

St James Place Foundation

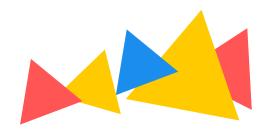
Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust

Souter Charitable Trust

Sussex Community Foundation

Wellesley Foundation

WSCC Short Breaks





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