

FEAGANS OUTCOMES REPORT 2019/2020

Achievements and Performance

Qualified children's one-to-one counselling

Case Study

Jack, now aged 15, described himself as 'a happy lad' when aged 7. This was before his mum had an affair and left the family home, never to be seen again. This young boy watched his Dad crumble before his eyes, which has understandably taken its toll. Jack has attempted suicide on a number of occasions. He struggles to leave the house and hates school; he rarely goes.

During my time with Jack I listen to him, I validate his feelings and show him some of the care that he has craved for many years. In his weekly sessions he feels valued and I am starting to make connections. Last week after refusing to leave the house and attend school he managed to find the strength to struggle into school, just so that he could attend his one hour of therapy. Jack is still very fragile but step by step I am hopeful that he will start to recognise that he is a precious, strong young man and that his life is worth living.

Our counselling service has continued to be in high demand over the last year, both in schools and for clients attending one of our centres.

Although Covid-19 closed our schools during term 4 and for all of 5 and 6, our numbers remained resilient due to rapid growth in terms 1, 2 and 3, testament partly due to the phenomenal effort of our leadership and management teams, but due also to the sadly rapidly increasing need for our services.

In the year ending 31 August 2020 we saw a total of 871 clients (2019: 806) and delivered 8,627 counselling sessions (2019: 10,168). Whilst the decline in the number of sessions due to Covid-19 is frustrating, given the waiting lists we are seeing in each of our areas, it is an incredible achievement in the light of the extreme budget cuts schools are continuing to experience.

The forms we use to monitor and evaluate the impact of our counselling service are wellbeing scales WEMWBS (for age 13 and over) and Stirling (for age 12 and under).

Our outcomes continue to be exemplary but deeply impacted by Covid-19; for example before lockdown the average start score for primary aged children's positive emotional wellbeing was 43.3; after lockdown the children were not in such a good place with an average start score of 37.5, a huge comparative drop in how children were presenting to us.

The WEMWBS scale (aimed at those in secondary schools) showed stunning changes in children's outlook, with an average starting score of 42.4 (out of 70) and ending 50.9, an increase of 20%. On average, there was an increase in all 14 statements measured. Some of the areas that parents and educators are concerned about today show huge improvements; for example, following counselling we saw:

- 30% average improvement in confidence of all children.
- 29% average improvement of teen girls feeling good about themselves

- 41% improvement of teen boys in feeling relaxed (calm)
- 33% improvement across all children in their ability to deal with problems well.

WEMWBS: Wellbeing

The chart summarises the split between low, moderate and high wellbeing before and after counselling. The client is categorised as:

- low wellbeing: where total score is less than 42
- moderate wellbeing: if the score is 42 - 58
- high wellbeing: if the score is greater than 58.
- 38% of teenage boys reported high wellbeing after counselling, compared to 0% before.
- 50% of children referred to us reported low wellbeing; before counselling, only 8% after.
- 88% of teenage girls had moderate or high well-being after counselling.

With our primary schools' work, 58% reported improvements in emotional wellbeing, an amazing outcome given the environment and level of difficulties we were working with.

Engagement with a Fegans counsellor doesn't just allow children to express themselves, important as this is, but it actually changes their perspective on their lives. And that's the greatest gift Fegans brings to the thousands of children and families we work one-to-one with in our therapy rooms, in schools, in churches and in our preschool every year.

Following our strategy of increasing the number of clusters that we work with, we continue to work in East Grinstead, the Weald and have now added the North Kent cluster. In addition, we will soon be opening in new clusters in West Sussex and East Sussex.

Parent Support

Case Study

"I have found the help from Fegans so instrumental in my going forward with family life. Without their help today I will still be massively struggling coping with my eldest daughters' terrible anxiety. I would not have been able to go forwards if it hadn't of been for all their help and guidance. They have given me different tools for me as her mother to help manage her anxiety and there are things that we can do too as a family, to help. There were things that were said that I would never have even thought about myself, whilst I realise it will take time, the fact I am confident enough now has given me the courage to go forward and not look back".

Again, Covid-19 impacted the volumes of parents we were aiming to work with significantly, but our outcomes remained very good. In total Fegans supported 84 families (mainly one-to-one) with their parenting (2019: 137 families). In response to lockdown we launched our zoom parenting service (live, one-to-one, face to face but online) and we are looking to grow this significantly throughout 2021.

Outcomes have been measured with Fegans "Family Tree" evaluation tool and reveal:

- 40% increase in children's emotional health

- 52% increase in children's behaviour
- 47% increase in children respecting boundaries
- 22% increase in establishing family routines
- 28% increase in parents' emotional health
- 54% increase in healthy family communication.

Funding parenting work is always complex, but we are delighted that last year the parenting team were again successfully working in partnership with Early Help. In addition, for the financial year 2019-20 we have been awarded grant monies from Jerusalem Trust and a second year with Tudor Trust among several others.

DAD.info

In February 2019 Fegans acquired DAD.info, a parenting website aimed at fathers. In the previous year we focused on absorbing DAD.info into the Fegans family and we are delighted to confirm that we have grown the forum to over 40,000 members (2019: 33,000) and we continue to offer new articles, webcasts, podcasts and blogs and vlogs every week.

We have been generously supported in this endeavour by the Jerusalem Trust to enable us to continue supporting this incredible resource for the hundreds of thousands of people engaging with us every year.

We have developed several projects that are current running on the DAD.info platform, including live parenting interventions on the forum, our animated "parenting in a pandemic" course (with over 1,000 subscribers) and host regular interviews via podcasts and via Facebook live to share parenting insight, reassurance and guidance in engaging, accessible ways.

We are delighted to have been awarded funds to update the underlying technology over the coming 6 months so that we can provide more resources as the platform gains the capacity to sustain them and also improve the usability of the site, ensuring that more parents find the support they need more easily.

Preschools – Buttons Thanet and Buttons ABC, Fegans' new Preschool

Jane Williams, Buttons Preschool manager has long had a vision of opening a second preschool which we did in September 2020. Over the last 6 years Fegans has moved from a capacity of only 18 children in the morning, to now over 60 children throughout the day. Like Buttons Thanet (our original preschool) Buttons ABC is situated in an area of great need and deprivation; also like Buttons Thanet, we have a dedicated parenting and counselling service working from the same premises to ensure that any family that needs help receives it.

Again, both preschools were deeply impacted by Covid-19, but both have proved incredibly resilient and under the management of Michelle, Buttons ABC Manager, we are confident that this precious family hub will go from strength to strength.

Former residents – Aftercare

The 'Aftercare' service is a small, but important aspect of our work. Fegans remains in contact with approximately 70 people who used to reside in the orphanages or children's homes previously operated by the charity. For many former residents Fegans is the only family that they have really known. A reunion is held annually in the UK; one was held at Stony Stratford (formally a Fegans Children's home) in May 2019 but sadly the reunion we had planned to celebrate our 150th anniversary was unable to take place. We have however been working closely with Screen Archive South East to digitise old footage of Fegans homes, which we plan to send to our remaining former residents as a commemorative gift.

Volunteers

Volunteers are an important resource for the charity, with up to 30 involved in the work at any given time. Volunteers have been particularly essential in the development of our PSP programmes with around 20 Parent Support Volunteers helping in the programmes as well as providing one-to-one support. Volunteers also contributed in this period to our fundraising, Buttons preschool and administration. The trustees are very grateful to those who help in this way. Where volunteers are involved with children, the same stringent pre-recruitment checks apply to applicants as they do to paid staff members. We have been especially fortunate to welcome a secondment from John Lewis as part of their Golden Jubilee Trust, who have paid for a member of their support team to work with us one day per week for a year to help with communication and fundraising.