

# How a Community Organisation Adapted During the COVID-19 Crisis

September 2020

By working with our colleagues in the Voluntary and Community sector, we have a series of reports on our website that capture the experiences and issues from the point of view of services and groups that support local people in the community.

This is an independent case study showing an example of one community organisation's story of adapting and what the future holds.

## About the organisation



Making Theatre Gaining Skills provide training programmes to increase confidence and employability for adults and young people. They work with adults with mental health challenges and learning difficulties. Most referrals come through the job centre.

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*For the past two years our main focus has been running the Bognor Institute of Laughter; a project that supports people with mental health issues and which was funded through the People's Lottery. This funding has come to an end, but additional grants have allowed us to plan work for the next year.*

Hilary Strong, Director

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## What were the immediate challenges?

Making Theatre Gaining Skills had been developing projects in the West Country, but these were put on hold due to the pandemic and will continue at the appropriate time. They lost planned funding from the Arts Council as project funding was switched to support emergency Covid-19 work. They have secured a ‘*bounce back*’ loan to get cashflow on track and recently three Covid-19 grants from other lottery and charity agencies.

They have received additional funding from Sussex Community Foundation for which they are *thankful*. Generally, their finances are in good shape to continue.

Making Theatre Gaining Skills is in discussion with the Department for Work and Pensions for an annual grant to run their services. This will enable them to work closely with those who are newly redundant. They hope to hear in September and will begin the services soon after in a building recently identified as a suitable home for the company’s various projects.



The Aldingbourne Trust has been a longstanding referral agency for our work, and we hope to develop the new building in partnership with them.



## How have they begun to Forward Plan?

Making Theatre Gaining Skills has an extraordinarily high completion rate of around 90%, as it is creative and builds softer but transferable skills - teamwork, problem solving, task management; and the key factor is that all the activities are practical and purposeful. They provide therapeutic advice and guidance plus individual learning plans to enable participants to access progression pathways.



We have ambitious plans for 2020/21 and will be developing new learning programmes including hopefully apprenticeship training. The new building will be accessible to all and will provide a range of making opportunities.



## Contact details

To learn more about this call **07808 481221**

Email [info@makingtheatre.co.uk](mailto:info@makingtheatre.co.uk)



# Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester

Our role is to enable, support and promote VCS groups across Arun and Chichester.

- Support for Member Organisations. Please contact us by downloading our referral form from our [website](#) or emailing [lucie.maldoom@vaac.org.uk](mailto:lucie.maldoom@vaac.org.uk)
- We provide a Funding monthly e-newsletter, and our funding surgeries via zoom.
- We provide regular Networking and Training Events, see our e-bulletins and website for details.
- Our e-bulletin provides the latest information for the VCS.
- Volunteers - if you would like to advertise for volunteers please get in touch with [Jenny.holmes@vaac.org.uk](mailto:Jenny.holmes@vaac.org.uk) or go to our website to upload your information. <https://www.vaac.org.uk/volunteering>

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We have a simple ambition at Healthwatch West Sussex... to make local health and social care services better for people that use them.



We are here to listen, take action and influence positive change for local people living in West Sussex.

We record what people tell us and share this anonymously with those who make decisions about our health and care services.

**You can contact us in several ways:**



Telephone - 0300 012 0122



Email - [helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](mailto:helpdesk@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk)



Website - [www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](http://www.healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk)

You can also follow our social media channels to always be updated with the latest in health and social care news across West Sussex: [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#).

If you have questions about the content of this update, please either call 0300 012 0122 or email [cheryl.berry@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk](mailto:cheryl.berry@healthwatchwestsussex.co.uk)

