

Play-Provision during the Covid Pandemic



Special Needs Play-Provision during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Following the Covid-19 lock-down at the end of March the Management and Trustees at Enable Ability made decisions to put the majority of staff on furlough leaving only Manager: Richard Soutar and Deputy Manager-Children & Young People: Julie Nethercote working on matters related to services.

In April Portsmouth City Council Children Services asked us to provide a small play-provision that they could refer children to and specifically only those supported by their Special Needs Education department. Due to the lock-down protocols in place at that time the maximum spaces we could offer was limited to six places and only for two hours per day. All children referred were from special-needs schools.

We were offered the use of the Charles Dickens Centre which proved to be a perfect venue to allow adequate social distancing and to establish appropriate cleaning regimes, so we joined the queue for Personal Protective Equipment supplies and made our plans. We opened the first service pod there on 23rd April that was run by Julie Nethercote and six other staff who had come off furlough. It was commissioned on a week by week basis due to the changing rules from government. Referrals for children in mainstream education from the Special Needs Education Department were being received so we extended our sessions into the afternoons to accommodate them.



Julie (right) and her team at Charles Dickens Centre pod in full PPE ready for the day's activities.

'Bubbles'

When it became clear that the lock-down restrictions might be in place longer than first envisaged we then extended our offering to full-day sessions and were able to increase each session to eight children per day by building consistent 'Bubbles'. One of the bubble was for children from Special-Needs School referrals that had previously attended mornings and another bubble was for children that had been referred from mainstream education and had previously attended afternoon sessions. Children in each bubble were offered two days a week.

Alongside this we started to implement a small education programme in order to keep the children school-ready in anticipation of schools opening again in the near future.

Due to the government guidance our protocols had to be adapted to require all children having to remain in their specific play-provision bubble without the ability to join another bubble. This helped simplify the planning but was essential to ensure our services remained safe.

Throughout the lock-down period Trustees met weekly with Manager Richard Soutar using video-conferencing to review plans and agree any additional support where required.



From the start of the summer holidays government guidance permitted us to expand the Charles Dickens pod bubbles to fourteen and each bubble was offered two days, although there was a bubble of two children that attended on Fridays only due to their particular needs.

Due to more referrals for children in Mainstream Education with additional needs we set up a second play-provision at Paulsgrove Family Hub, again with a small consistent staff team. The maximum number of children that could be in each bubble here was eight and many of the children referred were between school placements and had been out of school for several months before lock-down. This scheme gave them structure to their day as well as starting to prepare them to return to education. The scheme offered two days to the under 8's bubble and two days to the 8 to 11 year old bubble. These were able to be expanded to ten per bubble by the summer holiday.

As summer approached we set up four more play-provisions to run during the summer holidays. Buckland Family centre had fourteen children per bubble and offered two days per week for five weeks. The children in these bubbles attended Special-Needs Schools in Portsmouth. Mary Rose Academy pod play-provision was set up with one bubble of ten for children with profound care needs. They had eight days over a three week period. Landport Community Centre pod play-provision was focused on Mainstream children referred by the educational special needs department and had ten children per bubble. Lastly Highbury Community Centre pod was set up for teenagers that attended Redwood Park Academy and again all were referred by the Special Educational Needs coordinator at PCC. These were two bubbles of seven young people and each was allocated two days each week.

We were very proud of the way we could work in partnership with colleagues from Portsmouth City Council and in particular with the way our staff responded to the changing needs and in being very flexible taking on new and different roles during the height of the pandemic.

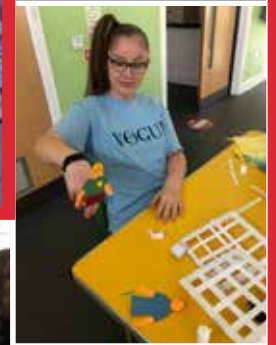
Of course the benefits to the children always make it worthwhile and we hope you can see those results from the smiles and laughter in their faces in the photographs included in this report.



Theatrical Make-up



Ukelele Strummers



Barbecue Time



Highbury Pod





Paulsgrove Pod





Charles Dickens Centre & Buckland Pods

(both pages)







Landport Pod





Say "cheese"!
...don't forget to share on social media
f /StauntonCP
t @StauntonCountry

Special-Needs Play-Provision Locations.

Previously our normal Special Needs Playschemes have been delivered at Redwood Park Academy but due to building work was unavailable this summer. Additionally the need to be able to work safely and keep our young people from the risk of Covid infection meant that we needed more locations with multiple play-spaces to allow for adequate distancing and the ability to sanitise regularly. Working with Portsmouth City Council we were able to identify five new locations in addition to our own Landport Community Centre (which itself needed partitions in the main hall to create individual play-spaces) as service pods and that gave coverage across the whole of Portsmouth.

Play-Provision Facts: Summer 2020

Service hours offered	633
Individual children supported	125
Support Staff	73
Delivery locations	6

**Paulsgrove
Family Hub**



**Highbury
Community Centre**



**Buckland
Family Hub**



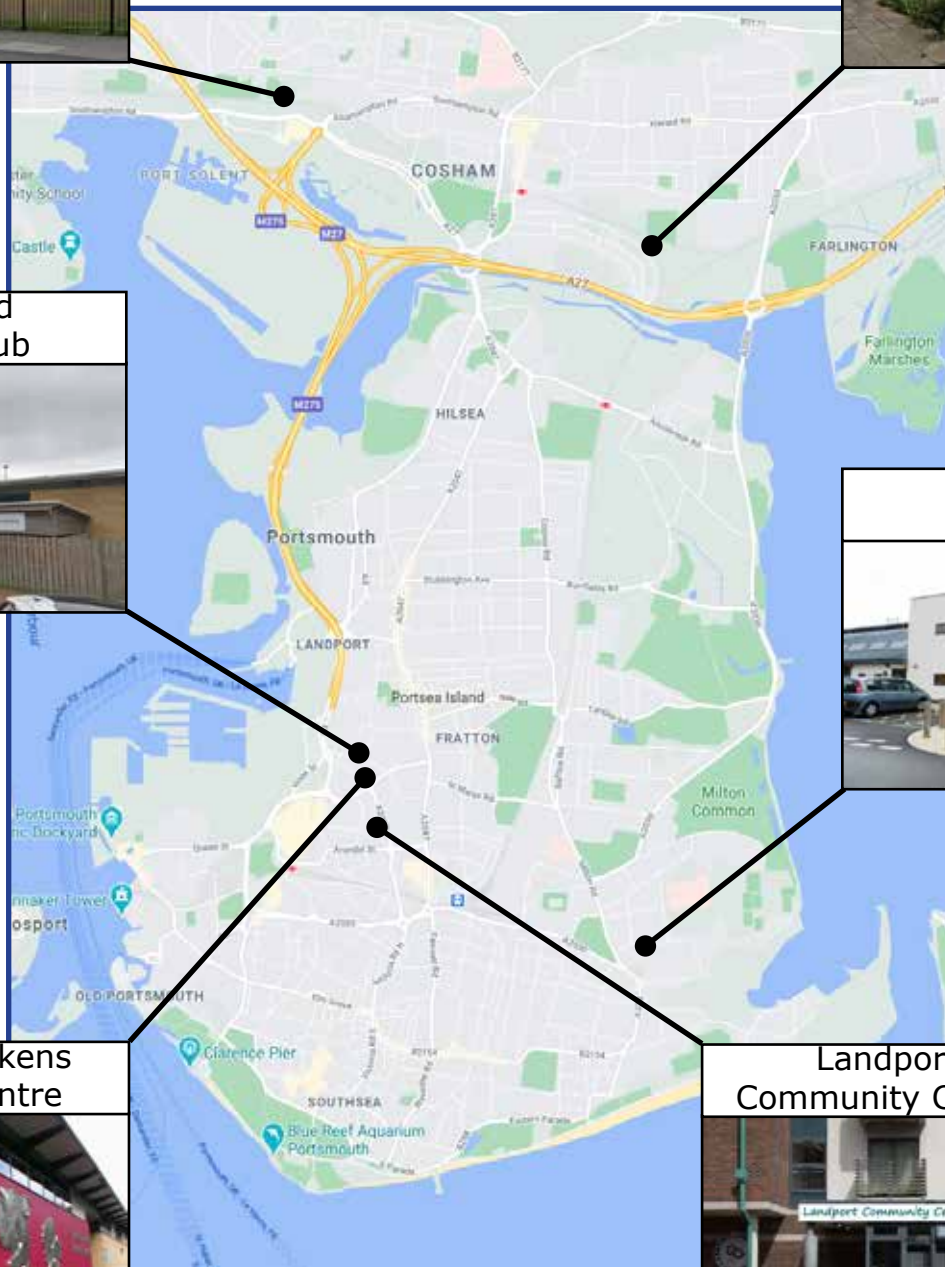
**Mary Rose
Academy**



**Charles Dickens
Activity Centre**



**Landport
Community Centre**



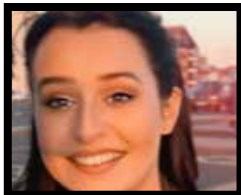
Meet the delivery teams:



Julie Nethercote
Deputy Manager - Children & Young People



Adam White
Team Leader: Paulsgrove Pod



Ashlyn Collins
Senior: Paulsgrove Pod



Evan Watts
Senior: Paulsgrove Pod



James Donougher
Team Leader: Highbury Pod



Mia Sandells
Team Leader: Landport Pod



Michelle Morgan
Team Leader: Buckland, Mary Rose & CDC



Alex Di-Palma
Senior: Charles Dickens Pod



Paul Watts
Senior: Charles Dickens Pod



Charlotte Bleach
Senior: Buckland Pod



Lauren Kew
Senior: Buckland Pod



Jacqui Munro
Senior: Mary Rose Academy Pod



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Above: some images from the first play-provision at Charles Dickens Centre when the nation was still clapping for the NHS on Tuesday nights.

Cover page: 'Star man' Adam White and his team at the Paulsgrove pod.

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