



Time to Talk

Examples of Impact



About Time to Talk

Established in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, [Time to Talk](#) has been successful in engaging young people with learning disabilities and/or who are autistic and their families, making rapid and significant improvements to their lives.

Government funding from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund, distributed by The National Lottery Community Fund, has helped us to deliver Time to Talk. The project quickly became oversubscribed and initial funding ends in February 2021. A full evaluation of the project will be complete in March 2021.

Personalised support and planning

Young people aged 16-25 are paired with a supporter and have regular online or telephone sessions providing them with the opportunity to:

- talk about the things they like, what's worrying them and their strengths
- discuss what matters to them and their hopes for the future
- develop self-determined goals and activities to help make plans

Supporters help young people to identify their strengths and also the challenges they have in relation to health, social issues and/or access to future training or employment and assist with plans to overcome these. Supporters also meet parents and carers providing relevant links to information and local networks to bolster family support.

Since September we have supported 54 young people aged 16-25 years. 75% of uptake has been by isolated autistic young people with mental health issues who are not in receipt of services with no aspirations about the future and high levels of anxiety. Each person's plans are different. Outcomes include applying for jobs, managing interviews for university, increasing independence skills at home, developing daily exercise and making new social links with social activities online.

Examples of impact & case studies

Building confidence and supporting aspirations

E (aged 21) is an autistic young man with very low confidence and no ideas for his future when he started. Following Time to Talk he wrote to his supporter:

Thank you for helping me gain some confidence these past few weeks. I will make sure to use the materials you've sent me and push on to make, create and hopefully occupy myself with a new job! I will keep in mind your words in regard to what I've done and what I can do and try to keep momentum! I was able to play a football match last Sunday and whilst that was a bit scary, after finally playing again, I felt a bit more confident about going out further from home.

Support and signposting

A is 17 and has had mental issues since primary school. She has been diagnosed as having severe social anxiety and is severely introverted. A never goes out of the house. She has tried to get help but was told she too old for children services and too young for adult mental health services. She requested support from Time to Talk in October 2020 and after 5 sessions was confident enough to share the severity of her mental health difficulties and reveal how these were affecting her general health. Since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic A has found eating and drinking more and more difficult due to her OCD and fear of contagion. She can only eat very small amounts and is fed by her mother. Since March 2020 she has lost four stone.

A's Time to Talk supporter linked her to a regional NHSE autism and learning disability lead who is working to secure funding for her to get independent advocacy for her, a second opinion on her autism assessment and peer support for her mother in the local area. A's mum wrote:

"I cannot express enough my gratitude for the support you have given to A and the hope you have given us for moving forward. You have been an absolute lifeline and she feels that you are the first person throughout her many years of difficulty and GP and CAMHS referrals who has actually listened and heard what she has to say."

Gaining Confidence

When requesting support from Time to Talk, M's mum wrote:

"We have no idea what do now, M never leaves the house and has to always be with someone and sits on his computer every day, all day."

M is 17 years old, autistic and has severe depression. He has been excluded from school and had not been out of his house/bedroom for two years. M spent the first two Time to Talk sessions hidden from camera and spoke from a little from under the table.

After a couple of weeks, M was encouraged by his supporter to give an informative talk on Xbox games (his passion) and age banding. After this session M began to really enjoy the individual time he had at Time to Talk. By week five he was setting himself mini goals including walking out of the house once a day on his own and having more fruit and vegetables in his diet. He is currently looking for a course on computer technology.

"I was so chuffed 😊. I hope you realise the positive impact you have had on M. A year ago, he wouldn't have engaged with anyone, but he has been moving in the right direction and you came along at the right time. I'm also not sure he would have connected with anyone else the way he did with you. I can't believe he did all of the sessions on his own!"

Contact Information

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