

Establishing The World's First Virtual Children's Hospice



Children's Hospices Across Scotland

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Context

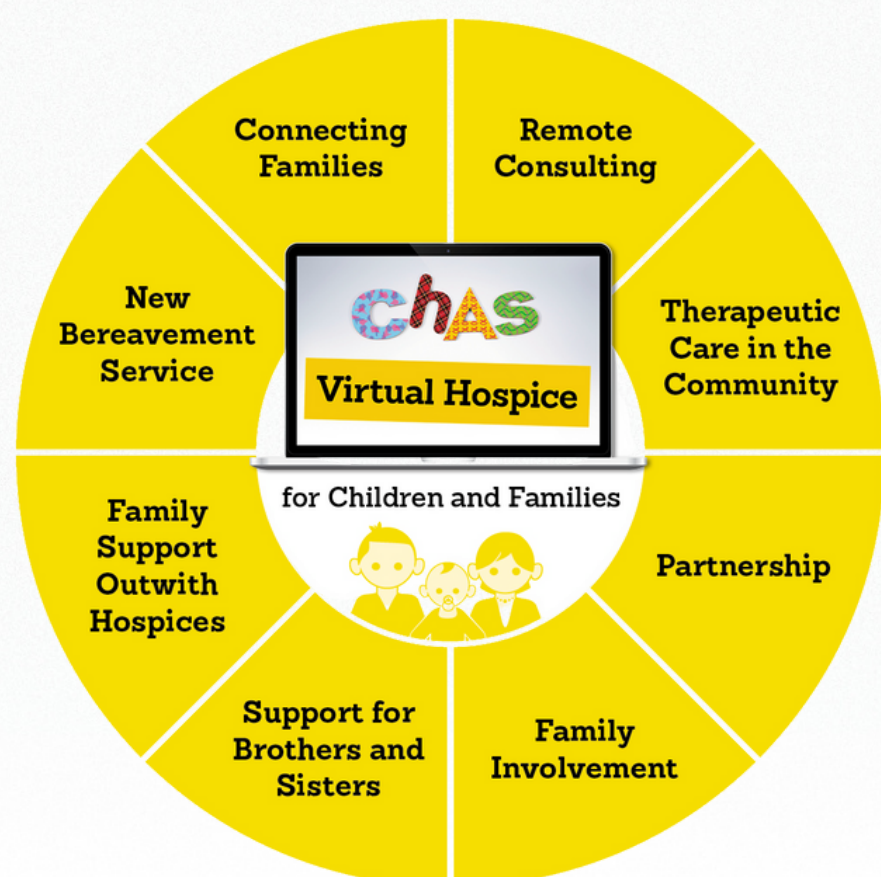
The pandemic has had a significant impact on children with life-shortening conditions and their families, many of whom starting shielding early to protect their clinically extremely vulnerable children. Many of the services they relied on stopped or changed. Our model of care had to adapt to support families whose resilience has been challenged, while also delivering as much care as we could, safely.

Aims and Objectives

We set ourselves a challenge: after the pandemic, we wanted families to say "CHAS was there for us".

Methodology

- In March 2020, CHAS launched the world's first virtual children's hospice to support children with life-shortening conditions and their families during the coronavirus crisis, and beyond.
- Turned triaging on its head by proactively conducting 'kindness calls' asking families what they needed, identifying gaps and offering bespoke support.
- Designed a range of virtual services to meet family needs, including virtual (video/phone) access to: nursing, medical and pharmacy advice; bereavement support; social work; and money advice.
- Children also benefited from online activities and therapeutic interventions, including storytelling sessions, music therapy, play therapy, and social contact with trained volunteers.



Benefits

- Reached significant numbers of families who would not otherwise have been able to interact with CHAS services due to pandemic restrictions.
- Extended reach to more families.
- Able to flexibly respond to need by providing more care at home, where and when families needed it. Home care visits doubled in two months.

Outcomes

- 1,583 hours virtual delivery.
 - 374 unique families accessed a virtual service.
 - Reached average of 170 unique families virtually every month.
 - 100% of children and families responded positively to each episode of care.
 - All families reported increased quality of life after engaging with our services.
- (all figures 2020-21)

"We're not going near anybody. We've not seen anybody. Your calls have been absolutely amazing." (CHAS family)

Learnings

- Clear leadership vision needed, with managers empowered to fail.
- Start quick and small.
- Keep tech simple and accessible.
- Not everything works virtually.
- Be led by family need.
- Clinical skills are vital.
- Partnership and relationships are key.



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