

# Big Leaf Foundation

annual review

april 2021

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# welcome

What an unexpected year it has been for everyone. None of us could have predicted the challenges so suddenly thrown up by a global pandemic, or the ever-changing situation that ensued. The new world into which we were plunged turned all of our plans on their heads and we found ourselves having to rethink and rebuild all of our programmes, almost overnight.

We knew from the start that the vital information around keeping safe from COVID was not necessarily reaching people whose first language was not English and we wanted all the young people we support to be as clear as possible on how to keep themselves safe. We knew that the ever-changing guidelines and rules around social distancing, as well as the surge in fake news and misinformation, meant that simple and accessible information for everyone was more important than ever.

We were deeply concerned about the impact of enforced isolation on the young people we support who are often already so alone; and were particularly worried about all those arriving who would not be able to connect with their new community in lockdown.

And we knew that for many, educational progress was likely to be severely impacted, either due to reduced provision, limits on access or the enormous challenge of sustaining motivation for online learning over such a long time.

But we also knew that Big Leaf needed to respond to these challenges – to ensure our young people knew they were not forgotten, and to remain committed to our fundamental belief that where there is hardship, there is also hope.

And in the midst of all these challenges and concerns, there came times of real opportunity and optimism.

Moving projects online meant that we could reach young people all across Surrey, and not only build our understanding of their needs and hopes, but also adjust our projects accordingly.

Being compelled to think creatively brought us ideas we hadn't considered before, and in exchanging ideas with like-minded organisations, we discovered new connections that have turned into lasting partnerships.

Through all of this, Big Leaf itself has continued to grow. In the last year we have welcomed a new trustee, three new paid staff and 10 new volunteers. It's this incredible commitment, passion and diversity of experience within our team that enabled us to reach more young people, run more projects, raise more funds to support our work and expand our ideas and plans for the year ahead.

We continue to be amazed by the generosity of the people around us, from our funders and individual donors to the many people offering to help in other ways. But most of all we're inspired by the young people we support, by their willingness to show up, engage and grasp opportunities and support when it's offered, even in the most difficult of times.

As we move into what we all hope is a more optimistic time for the world, we're taking with us the knowledge that there is a whole community around us who share our determination to help these incredible young people begin their new lives.

**Kayte & Vicki**  
Big Leaf Foundation Founders

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**UK Registered Charity Number 1181180**



Image © Vicki Felgate / Big Leaf Foundation

## about us

Our vision is of a community where displaced young people are valued, supported and given the opportunity to create better outcomes for themselves.

Big Leaf Foundation is a small charity working with displaced young people aged 16-25 living in Surrey.

Our aim is to provide a nurturing programme of activities, projects and events that focus on combating social isolation and improving wellbeing for the young people we support.

We want to engage the young people we work with to be excited about the opportunities available to them, and to value their unique talents and abilities so that they can rediscover their potential and move forward with renewed optimism.

We want to support and empower these young people to know they are more than the status they have been given, and help them find their place within the local community.

Our projects range from sports, equine-assisted learning and creative arts projects to providing casework support and residential workshops, alongside our new online programme, built in response to the restrictions on social contact during the pandemic.

[www.bigleaffoundation.org.uk/about](http://www.bigleaffoundation.org.uk/about)

“

“First time in my life I have this big enjoy. First time I big happy. In Afghanistan... only sad and pain. My life on farm big big enjoy. My first long happy in my life.”

**B about his time with Big Leaf at Jamie's Farm**

# about our beneficiaries

The young people we support have all been forced to leave their homes – many fled conflict and religious or political persecution, some were trafficked, some were kidnapped from their families and forced to train as child soldiers, and others were promised the dream of a better life and smuggled to the UK at huge cost to their families.

Surrey remains the third largest receiver of Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) in the UK – there are around 145 (under 18s) living in care in the county. And there are many more displaced young people who were resettled in Surrey with their families as part of the government's Vulnerable Person Resettlement Scheme (VPRS) or who arrived as UASC and have now turned 18 but still need support.

Over the past year, we have worked with 70 young people – from Albania, Afghanistan, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Kurdistan, Libya, Niger, Sudan, Syria, Vietnam and Yemen.

The majority of young people we support arrive as UASC. Each has a unique story of how they came to the UK but the challenges they face once here are similar.

Separated children arrive alone, often in shock and without language or cultural understanding, and have to navigate their new lives, and the long and complex asylum system, without the support of family or friends. Even for those who come with family, the experience can be overwhelming, confusing and incredibly difficult.

Cut off from everything that is familiar to them, displaced young people are particularly vulnerable to loneliness, isolation, anxiety and boredom. They face huge barriers in accessing legal support, education, employment and, most importantly, in finding a community.

These issues have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, with no way to make new friends, difficulties accessing education and an increase in targeted scams and disinformation leaving them even more isolated and fearful.

Some are living in limbo, awaiting a decision from the Home Office as to whether they'll be allowed to remain in the UK or if they'll be forcibly returned to the countries they once fled. For these young people in particular it can be impossible to imagine any kind of a future.

But despite these challenges, and the trauma and anxiety about family or friends left behind, the young people we work with are strong, resilient and determined, and given the right support can thrive in their new communities.

“

R was lucky enough to meet people who supported him to feel safe and embrace the opportunities available to him. Through determination and hard work, he's now started an electrical apprenticeship. He's a person who has come a long way and will go far.”

**Petrina, foster carer**

# our approach

We're a growing team of passionate individuals, determined to support and empower displaced young people to know they are more than their status, and help them find their place within their local community.

Our team includes refugee care and migration studies experts, experienced youth workers, ex-social workers and finance, project management, fundraising and communications specialists. The team has combined experience of more than 20 years working with displaced young people.

## our values

### Trust & Transparency

Nothing is more important to us than trust, because so many of our young people have experienced a world in which they can trust no one. It's essential that we build trusted relationships with our young people, and that they have confidence that we will always act in their best interests. We do this through maintaining high standards of openness, honesty and transparency.

### Equality

We approach everything we do with a deep sense of empathy and compassion. We strive to create a sense of community to which we all belong, on equal footing and to create a safe, secure and non-judgemental space for young people to engage and build new friendships, explore new activities, and uncover their talents and passions.

### Growth

Everything we do is focused on promoting the personal growth of our young people – growth that allows them to know they are more than the status they have been given and that each one of them is unique and valued.

## working in partnership

Working in partnership with local organisations, agencies and business is an important part of our approach. These partners bring valuable skills and experience to our work but this also enables us to build community engagement and create understanding and trust in the place we all live. Over the last two years Big Leaf has built has a network of more than 25 community and multi-agency partners who are core to delivering our projects.

“

“Big Leaf works closely with us to enable access to education, combat isolation and improve wellbeing. Each project, event or online interaction makes a profound and lasting impact. It's a privilege to work in partnership with the team and to witness their unequivocal support for our young people.”

**Anna, Surrey Virtual School**

## over the past year we:

- launched **10 projects** including a new online programme
- engaged 70 displaced young people** in our projects, 33% more than the previous year
- provided **28 young people** with **casework support**
- more than doubled capacity with **3 new part-time staff**
- engaged a team of **volunteers** who together have **given 1500 hours** to supporting displaced young people
- partnered with 9 new local organisations and agencies** to deliver our projects
- raised more than £90,000** to support our work.



# our achievements

Over the past year we have launched 10 projects – focused around health and wellbeing, building relationships and staying connected during lockdown and providing opportunities for learning. This has included a new casework service (below), our online Keep Talking programme (p10), an outdoor summer school (p12), a summer activity week (p13) and a music project in partnership with Surrey Arts (p14).  
Read on to find out more.

## CASEWORK | ensuring young people have access to the support they need

We launched our new casework service in April 2020, providing tailored advice and advocacy and helping young people understand and access the services to which they are entitled.

Our caseworker worked with 28 young people over the last year, supporting them to access welfare, legal, healthcare, education or recreation services.

Much of our casework provision is around giving young people emotional support in the difficult situations in which they find themselves and acting as an advocate for them.

Building relationships where the young people trust that we genuinely care about their wellbeing and will be honest with them is essential. We know it makes a difference for the young people to feel that someone is helping them and they are not alone.

One of our young people recently said “**Big Leaf is always on your side**” and this is perhaps the greatest compliment we can hope for.

[www.bigleaffoundation.org.uk/casework](http://www.bigleaffoundation.org.uk/casework)

### case study

**Most colleges moved to online learning in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. With timetables often subject to change at the last minute, B struggled to follow what he was meant to be doing and when, and had problems accessing online lessons.**

**Our caseworker supported him to raise these issues with the college and as a result, the college assigned B a Progress Coach to help him access online learning and catch up with the work he'd missed.**

**Without Big Leaf's support, B would have found it very difficult to access his studies and would have been at risk of disengaging altogether. He's now engaging and working well.**

“

“Louise has gone above and beyond in supporting my young person... attending medical appointments, ensuring interpreters are available and finding educational support. She offers so much support and guidance.”

**Ann, keyworker**

### over the past year we also:

- recruited and trained **3 new casework volunteers** to enable us to increase our casework provision
- introduced a **new database system with multi-factor authentication** to ensure all sensitive data is secure

- engaged with local MP** on the cases of two YP who have waited more than 18 months for their substantive interviews.
- With thanks to **The Tresanton Trust** for funding our casework provision.

## SUPPORTING THROUGH TRANSLATION |

### helping keep young people safe

It's essential that displaced young people have access to the same information as everyone else, and are not further disadvantaged or at risk because of their low level of English.

### translated covid-19 updates

Over the last year, the government has released extensive guidance about COVID-19 – the signs and symptoms, what to do if you think you have it and the rules you must follow to help prevent spreading it. But very little of this is available in the languages spoken within our local displaced community and the translated guidance that does exist is often complicated and relies on people having a high level of literacy in their own language, something that's not always present among our beneficiaries.

Since the pandemic started we've created simple translations, in up to 12 different languages, each time there has been a significant new update to the guidance.

### combating fake news

Fake news and malicious disinformation have surged during the pandemic, with reports of vulnerable or minority groups being deliberately targeted.

Misleading health advice and ill-informed conspiracy theories put everyone at risk. But at a time when lockdown and social distancing measures have pushed people back into their rooms with the internet for company, we have been increasingly concerned about the risk to the young people we support.

In response, we created a short film in 10 languages representative of our displaced young people – to help them identify, and avoid spreading, fake news.

[www.bigleaffoundation.org.uk/fake-news-film](http://www.bigleaffoundation.org.uk/fake-news-film)

#### over the past year we also:

- made and **distributed 100 reusable fabric facemasks** to displaced young people throughout Surrey
- created a simple **leaflet in 12 languages** showing the **main SMS scams** & tips on how to check a message is real

These translations have been shared through our network of partners and direct with young people themselves to ensure they reach all who need them.

[www.bigleaffoundation.org.uk/covid-19-advice](http://www.bigleaffoundation.org.uk/covid-19-advice)

“

“These are so helpful, thank you.”

**Janine, Children & Family Health Surrey**



“

“I have just watched the film and it is brilliant, clear and accessible.”

**Kalyani, British Red Cross**

With thanks to **The National Lottery Community Fund** and the **Community Foundation for Surrey** for their continued support in funding our COVID-19 translations.



Image © M



Image © H

## KEEP TALKING | staying connected through lockdown

We developed a range of online activities to help local displaced young people stay connected, with us and each other, during lockdown. Our Keep Talking programme has helped young people improve English, be creative and share concerns about health and education throughout the pandemic.

2020 presented new challenges for us all. But for the young people we support it was especially difficult, with limited access to school and college, no way to make new friends and worries about keeping safe or about friends and family back home. With the pandemic restricting movement, we couldn't to run our normal activities and we were concerned that our young people were at greater risk of isolation. We needed to create something to help them keep talking.

We teamed up with some of our trusted partners to provide a wide selection of activities – from creative arts, cartooning and photography to sport and fitness and English and maths.

“

“It was an absolute pleasure to help. I was over the moon with their engagement... joking and having fun.”

**Mohamed, Keep Talking volunteer**

### photography

During the first lockdown, we worked with acclaimed photographer, Kate Stanworth, to set weekly challenges that young people could complete at home using camera phones.

Kate invited our young people to take photos of something that interested them on their daily walk, be it the park, streets or a local footpath.

**ABOVE | M's image (top left)** shows his creative use of filters with a rainbow, the symbol of thanks to NHS staff during the pandemic, overlaid on a photo of his favourite tree. H's image (top right) shows his own reflection in the stream he passed each day on his walk.

### as part of our keep talking programme we also:

- distributed 50 lockdown activity packs, containing art materials, origami and seeds to grow indoors
- held a virtual Iftar celebration – delivering homemade meals and hosting an online session to break fast together
- hosted regular 'ask a question' sessions for young people to get online support with homework
- ran a Friday night 'film night' exploring different genres of film and talking about our favourite films.

## creative arts

We've seen first-hand at our summer camp the powerful impact art can have on displaced young people – offering distraction from daily stressors and instead providing calm focus and opportunities for positive connections to the past.

Working with graphic journalist, Dan Archer, and Big Leaf co-founder and artist, Vicki, we created video tutorials on cartooning and origami for people to try at home. We also ran a series of online art lessons.

“

“I really like drawing more than anything because when I start drawing I don't think about anything else, I don't stress and I just focus on drawing.” **M**

## English and maths

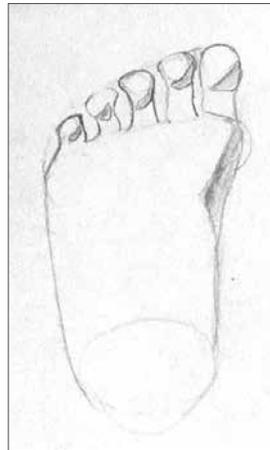
We've been running English and maths lessons online for young people still awaiting college places or those in college but wanting some extra support. These sessions are deliberately dynamic and informal and there is always a lot of laughter. We have a fantastic team of translators and volunteers supporting the sessions and the group has found a level of familiarity and ease which means the classes combine learning and achievement with a sense of fun and friendship.

## sport and fitness

Our online sport and fitness sessions have provided an opportunity for young people to keep fit and improve their English through talking about the sports they love.

The weekly workout segments, where the group warm-up and train together, have been a great motivational and team-building space which the young people have really enjoyed.

£ With thanks to the **Community Foundation for Surrey** for funding our Keep Talking programme and to all of our **volunteers, translators and partners** who supported us to make this programme a success.



Illustrations © M

**ABOVE** | M's artwork which focused on the human form and the photos (**opposite**) were featured in a lockdown-inspired exhibition in Guildford in the summer.

“

“Lockdown was the hardest time for me as I have never experienced anything like it before. However, I kept myself busy by practising my English and doing different activities. I was studying English on zoom [with Big Leaf]. It was sensational. I learned a lot of new words and sentences.” **H**

Collectively, these online activities have created a safe space and opportunity for regular interactions to take place; for young people to share concerns about health and education, or raise questions about the pandemic in general while also connecting with new friends and improving their language skills.

[www.bigleafoundation.org.uk/keep-talking](http://www.bigleafoundation.org.uk/keep-talking)



Image © Louise Baumberg / Big Leaf Foundation

## SUMMER HIVE SCHOOL | outdoor learning after lockdown

This summer we ran an outdoor Summer Hive School in Guildford to help displaced young people re-engage with learning after the disruption of the lockdown period, and introduce those new to the UK to the basics of English ahead of the start of the college year.

We heard from key workers, foster carers and young people themselves that the long period of lockdown affected their mental wellbeing and made it difficult for them to engage with college work – sometimes due to technical or accessibility issues, but also because of a lack of focus and growing lethargy towards engagement of any sort.

We wanted to address this. But restrictions meant we couldn't run sessions indoors. So we borrowed a pop-up classroom from the Human Hive and ran an outdoor summer school in a local park.

The weather in the UK can be unpredictable at best. Some days the heat was so intense that everyone was tired and distracted. Other days there were gales that blew away our cardboard whiteboards and threatened to take the classroom too. Then there was the rain, which came in sideways and soaked everyone, and a thunderstorm...

...but the joy of language learning is that everything, including the weather, provides an opportunity to learn.

“

“The team have given B enormous help to further develop and improve his English, general knowledge and overall confidence. I simply cannot thank them enough.”

**Foster carer talking about the impact of the summer school.**



© Kayte Cable / Big Leaf Foundation

Claps of thunder led to discussions about different words for sounds. The heat brought about a list of words to do with exhaustion, and the importance of knowing the difference between *knackered* and *naked*. Running for cover from the rain into the multi-storey carpark provided new light opportunities for our photography session.

“

“It was great. I loved it all.” A



Images © Vicki Felgate / Big Leaf Foundation

## SUMMER ACTIVITY WEEK | re-imagining our summer camp

Covid restrictions meant we couldn't run our annual summer residential at Trill Farm in Devon. But having seen the impact of lockdown on our young people we knew we had to do something in its place. If we couldn't go to Trill, then we should take as much as possible from our Trill experience, and bring it to us.

Working with a brilliant team of partners, we organised a week of activities in Surrey. We wanted to remain true to our Trill outcomes: to give young people the chance to be outside, and in company (especially after so much time inside and alone); to create time and space to breathe; to boost language skills through participation in a range of different activities; to interact with the community around us; to eat well and to have fun.

We spent a day with the team at The Heart Centre in Ockham. Working with horses, building trust through grooming, and leading them through the obstacle course in the paddock, had such a calming effect and even the most nervous participant immersed himself in the tasks.

### over the summer we also:

- ran a **woodcraft session with Big Hat Bushcamp** – making music sticks and cooking together over an open fire
- joined forces with Surrey Virtual School to take **6 young people to Jamie's Farm for an activity day.**

We went to Surrey Outdoor Learning and Development centre in the hills just outside of Dorking, first for wood whittling and leatherwork and then later for climbing and high rope activities.

The first day at SOLD was a different pace... activities that required the use of hands, attention to detail, and focus. H spent two hours carefully shaping and engraving a walking stick for his foster carer and another showed us how they used to decorate sticks back home. But the second day was full of energy, a chance to challenge themselves and to support one another as they climbed, abseiled and leapt (with a harness) from the high trapeze.

In between, there was music, food, organic gardening at the wonderful Rosamund Community Garden in the pouring rain and whole lot of laughter.

“

“I could come often to see friends and learn English, and have fun, so I wasn't lonely this time.” **A**

[www.bigleafoundation.org.uk/blog/keep-talking-activity-week-2020](http://www.bigleafoundation.org.uk/blog/keep-talking-activity-week-2020)

With huge thanks to **everyone who donated to our crowdfunding campaign** to support our summer activities and to **The Human Hive** and all our partners for their kindness and support.



Pixabay

## MUSIC CONNECTS | bringing young people together

2020 presented many challenges, not least the increase in isolation for young people already very much alone. But it also brought opportunities. Opportunities to engage new young people, new partners and to think creatively about how to respond to the ever-changing situation. Music is a great connector and connection is something we all needed. In December we launched a new collaborative music project to bring together young people from both displaced and local youth communities to write and record a song.

Talking to people about our work and why we do it is important to Big Leaf. It gives us a chance to correct false or malicious narratives in public discourse and share the human, rather than political, side of displacement.

During lockdown we were invited to speak to several sixth-form groups about issues of displacement, and on each occasion, it was notable that most students had heard negative misinformation about refugees and asylum seekers. But after hearing from our team many were keen to help.

The challenge is that these two peer groups rarely have the opportunity to meet each other. Our Music Connects project was designed to change this.

Working with the brilliant team at Surrey Arts, we created a new songwriting project bringing displaced and local teenagers together through a series of online sessions, that cut across language and cultural divides.

We didn't want this to be a project where local young people came to "help" displaced young people. We wanted to create an equal footing from the start while still embracing the seven different languages and the range of musical tastes and experiences within the group. We wanted to acknowledge the diversity and the commonality – and there was so much of both.

We were delighted to have two professional musicians with us on this project. Representing two very different musical genres, Manchester rapper, DJ and producer Chimpó, and the 90s pop icon, performer and songwriter Chesney Hawkes, worked side-by-side with the tutors and young song writers while providing unique insights into the music industry.

“

“It's been so great working with everyone on the project... from different countries, different parts of the world, different backgrounds... it's been so great to gain an idea of different cultures and just make amazing music together.”

**Music Connects participant**

Together the team ran a series of online workshops focused around songwriting, performing and recording. But it was the first few sessions, building a sense of trust and community between the young people (and the tutors), that were perhaps the most important. We shared favourite songs and examples of music from around the world and the tutors led activities that encouraged movement and broke through any shyness or self-consciousness. And when it came to creating the song, it all fell together so naturally because everyone felt relaxed, safe and supported to share their ideas.

They spoke of how the pandemic had brought us all together in a shared experience, that has at times been difficult, lonely and anxious. From this came the idea to write about a different place – a place that is beautiful, peaceful and safe, and most importantly, somewhere you will not be alone.

This idea also gave space to talk about other things: anxiety, self-doubt, identities, friendship and love, subjects everyone could recognise. And “**remember who you are**” became a leitmotif of the song.

The song is now in its final mixing stage and we can't wait to share it.

Follow us on twitter [www.twitter.com/bigleafoundation1](https://www.twitter.com/bigleafoundation1) or on our website [www.bigleafoundation.org.uk](https://www.bigleafoundation.org.uk) for more information about the song release.

“

“It's helped me gain so much more confidence, it's such an amazing experience... it's been absolutely amazing getting to know all of these different people that I otherwise probably would never have met.” **Music Connects participant**

This was a new approach for us. It was exhilarating and at times, overwhelming. But the feedback from participants speaks for itself. We want a community that is willing to reach across different languages and life experience and that sees strength and opportunity in its diversity. Perhaps it's our teenagers who can do this better than any of us.

£ With huge thanks to the **National Lottery Community Fund** for funding our Music Connects project, and to **ACM, Chimpo, Chesney Hawkes**, the brilliant **Surrey Arts** team and our **volunteer translators**.



© Kayte Cable / Big Leaf Foundation

**ABOVE |** The Academy for Contemporary Music (ACM) offered us use of their flagship studio in Guildford for the final recording. Restrictions meant we couldn't record together but the studio experience was a source of huge excitement for everyone and as people arrived and left, there were shouts and waves as they recognised other faces from the screens of the preceding weeks.



Images © Vicki Felgate & Louise Baumberg / Big Leaf Foundation

## EAST SURREY LAUNCH | celebrating our new programmes

To celebrate our expansion into East Surrey, we took a group of young people from Redhill and the surrounding area to Surrey Outdoor Learning & Development (SOLD) for a day of activities.

Providing much-needed respite following months of lockdown, our first in-person event of 2021 focused on those *most* isolated. It was a chance to connect, to make friends and to be outdoors. For most, it was the first time we had met off screen and the power of in-person connection was shared by participants and the team alike.

Surrounded by greenery in SOLD's peaceful grounds at High Ashurst, the morning was about getting to know each other, practising English and team-bonding through games and activities. We drew hand mandalas to reflect our likes and dislikes, and share our hopes for the future. We worked in groups, with each team competing to get as many people jumping together, in time, using a Japanese Nawatobi (a giant skipping rope) and we ate lunch *together*, after so much time in lockdown eating alone.

In the afternoon, it was over to the brilliant SOLD instructors for some climbing, abseiling and high ropes. The group supported one another, both physically and mentally, anchoring each other during the climbs and shouting words of encouragement from below.

The 'let it land' session at the end provided a chance to reflect and share thoughts about the day. Everyone said **"meeting new friends"** was the best thing about it. But there was another shared theme in the responses and A's words capture it best: **"It was my happiest day since coming to UK."**

The SOLD launch event was a special day and an exciting glimpse of the potential for us to offer support in East Surrey. But most importantly, it reminded us about the importance of human interaction and social networks for vulnerable young people during an incredibly challenging and isolating year.

“

"I can't thank you enough. M really enjoyed it. He showed me pictures on his phone as soon as he got in the car! Thank you for giving him this opportunity." **Molly, Social Worker**

£ With huge thanks to **Surrey Virtual School** for its support in funding our activity day and to the brilliant team at SOLD for making our visit so special.

# priorities for the year ahead

Big Leaf Foundation is entering its third year. We have a brilliant and dedicated team but also a growing number of displaced young people in need of our support. The last year has shown us that where there is hardship there is also hope and we know that with your support we can continue to make a positive difference in the lives of these young people.

## expanding our programmes

In late 2020, in response to growing demand, we expanded our activities and geographical reach to provide much-needed support for young people in and around the Redhill area. Our East Surrey programme seeks to build on previous successes in other parts of the county – combining a range of sports with a regular drop-in hub, while also creating new activities to suit the interests and needs of participants.

Over the coming year we will expand to facilitate educational and vocational opportunities in East Surrey, developing participatory approaches to include young people in their own development.

Working with local partners we will also grow our sports programme to combine football with tailored ESOL classes. The I Speak Football programme will focus on English language and literacy through both playing and studying football.

## supporting young leaders

We are committed to supporting displaced young people to participate in the development and leadership of Big Leaf. Our new Young Leaders programme, launching this autumn, will support young people to build their confidence and knowledge. Using a trauma-informed approach to explore identity, advocacy, leadership and legal rights we aim to help participants feel more empowered within themselves, their local community and within Big Leaf itself.

## amplifying our voice

Big Leaf Foundation is entering its third year and we're growing – both in terms of the number of young people we support and our geographical spread. To ensure we can continue to fulfil our objectives we need to engage more people in our work and make our collective 'voice' louder through increased awareness of the issues and how people can help. But we also recognise the need to do more to improve the rights of displaced young people and/or ensure existing legal rights are upheld.

Over the coming year our new Communications and Campaigns Coordinator will expand and enhance our presence to engage more people in our work, and explore how Big Leaf can best support and add value to campaigns that work to improve and uphold refugee rights.

## growing our knowledge

2020 has been a difficult year for all of us, but especially for the young people we support. The pandemic has kept people in their homes, sometimes with just the internet for company, and the impact of this enforced isolation and changing context shouldn't be underestimated. We're committed to responding to this. Over the coming year we will focus on growing our team's knowledge in several areas (through both internal and external training for staff, trustees and volunteers) including: risks and vulnerabilities, mental health, campaigning and advocacy, and media and communications.

Find out how you can help us to achieve these aims on [page 23](#) or at [www.bigleafaffoundation.org.uk/support-us](http://www.bigleafaffoundation.org.uk/support-us)

# governance, structure & management

Big Leaf Foundation is controlled by its Constitution incorporated on 14 July 2018. It was recognised as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation on 14 December 2018 (UK Registered Charity Number 1181180) whose only voting members are its charity trustees ('Foundation' model constitution). The charity is run by the Board of Trustees who are responsible for ensuring the charity has a clear vision, mission and strategic direction and is focused on achieving these.

## appointment of trustees

Any person over the age of 16 who is willing to act as a trustee, and has not been disqualified from acting as a trustee by virtue of sections 178-180 of the Charities Act 2011 (or any statutory re-enactment or modification of that provision), may be appointed to be a trustee by a decision of the trustees.

There must be at least three trustees and a maximum of eight. Apart from the first trustees, every trustee must be appointed for a term of three years, by a resolution passed at a properly convened meeting of the trustees.

Retiring trustees are eligible for reappointment. But a trustee who has served for three consecutive terms may not be reappointed for a fourth but may be reappointed after an interval of at least one year. In selecting individuals for appointment as trustees, the trustees consider the skills, knowledge and experience needed for the effective administration of the CIO.

Big Leaf Foundation's trustees include business and charitable sector professionals with experience in youth work, education, finance, project management, IT, fundraising and communications.

Big Leaf Foundation is committed to the ongoing professional development of its trustees and their

knowledge is kept up to date through internal and external training, knowledge sharing with partner organisations, academic reading and regular participation in project team meetings.

The trustees meet at least six times per year and more regularly in periods of high activity or change. We ask that trustees attend a minimum of two Big Leaf Foundation projects per year as we strongly believe this contributes to a better understanding of our organisation, how we work and the young people we support. All trustees are DBS checked at an enhanced level.

The Programme Managers report on the operational plan at each trustee meeting. Big Leaf Foundation has a Safeguarding Sub Committee that meets to discuss safeguarding and review and update safeguarding policies and processes as needed. This committee includes the DSL, DDSL and the Chair or trustees.

The trustees have delegated authority to the Programme Managers with clear limitations. The Chair and the Programme Managers also have regular meetings to discuss operational matters and resource needs.

## risks & mitigations

### Risk of harm to the young people we support

Mitigation | Safeguarding is embedded in Big Leaf, with all staff and volunteers trained at an appropriate level through our safeguarding partner. We have a range of policies in place to support good practice, including safeguarding, health and safety and code of conduct for staff and volunteers. Our policies are reviewed and updated once a year.

### Insufficient funds to achieve our objectives

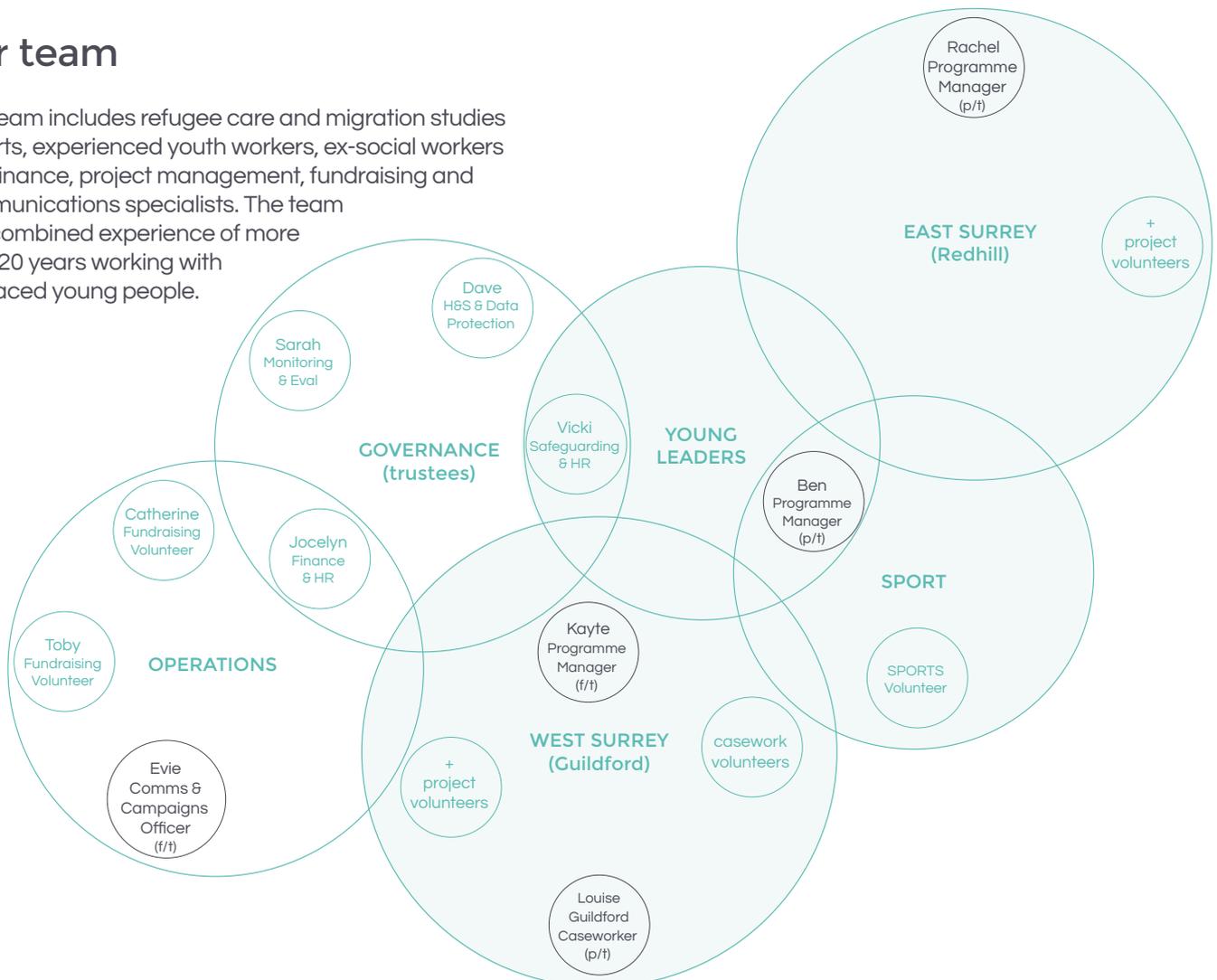
Mitigation | In year one Big Leaf was reliant on two main funders for the majority of its income. Since then we have continued to grow and diversify our funding base and in year two we received funding from ten trusts and organisations. We have also recruited two experienced fundraising volunteers who, together with the support of the trustees, are working to secure additional long-term core funding.

### Loss of core team members & associated knowledge

Mitigation | We invest in our team through both professional training and providing clinical supervision sessions for all direct contact staff to support wellbeing. Our pay structure is in line with sector median average and reviewed every two years. We use a horizontal management structure, with all team members on an equal level; and an open and creative work culture where ideas are valued and successes are shared.

## our team

Our team includes refugee care and migration studies experts, experienced youth workers, ex-social workers and finance, project management, fundraising and communications specialists. The team has combined experience of more than 20 years working with displaced young people.



# finance & accounts

Big Leaf Foundation is a registered charity and relies on donations from both trusts and individuals to continue its work.

We have a small dedicated team of fundraising volunteers who work together with the trustees and core team to research and make applications to relevant grants and funders.

We are extremely grateful to our four main grant funders and donors who together fund our core staffing costs. But over the last year we have also received a number of pandemic-related emergency grants from the Community Foundation for Surrey, the National Lottery Community Fund and Sport England.

Together these grants have enabled us to engage remotely with our young people, create accessible translations of the ever-changing Covid-19 guidance and run outdoor fitness sessions for young people after the first lockdown.

We're delighted to have also seen an increase in the number of regular monthly donations from individuals in the last year.

## statement of financial activities for the year ended March 2021

income	
Trusts & Grants	£79,264
Individual Donations	£12,191
Gift Aid & Interest	£1,642
<b>TOTAL</b>	
<b>£93,097</b>	
BROUGHT FORWARD from FY20 (ending March 2020)	
General Fund	£7404
Restricted Funds	£91,240
<b>Total brought forward</b>	<b>£98,644</b>

expenditure	
Core Costs	£10,941
Staff Costs	£62,784
Project costs	£18,983
<b>TOTAL</b>	
<b>£92,709</b>	
BROUGHT FORWARD to FY22 (ending March 2022)	
General Fund	£5,770
Restricted Funds	£93,253
<b>Total brought forward</b>	<b>£99,032</b>

This year we submitted our first independently audited accounts (for the year ending March 2020) as part of our commitment to the Charity Commission. This was our first full external financial review and resulted in smooth sign off.

Our FY21 (ending March 2021) accounts will be audited over the coming months. The independent auditor's report will be available on our website [www.bigleafaffoundation.org.uk](http://www.bigleafaffoundation.org.uk) and added to this review and republished.

## restricted funds

Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes. Current restricted funds include grants for specific project work or income that is allocated to staff costs.

Our team members engage with us as self-employed contractors rather than employees. The majority of our restricted funds are held in reserve for these contractor costs.

### restricted funding includes:

project name and/or funder	purpose
National Lottery Community Fund in partnership with the Community Foundation for Surrey Emergency response (Covid) fund	Emergency response funding to enable Big Leaf Foundation to continue providing COVID-19 updates in the languages spoken within our local displaced community.
Community Foundation for Surrey Equine-assisted learning	Funding to run equine-assisted learning programmes throughout the year (postponed due to Covid-restrictions and due to restart in April 2021).
National Lottery Community Fund Music Connects	Funding to run our collaborative music project – bringing together young people from both displaced and local youth communities in Surrey to write and record a song.
Sport England Tackling Inequalities Fund in partnership with Active Surrey Park Gym	Funding for outdoor fitness programme to re-engage displaced young people in exercise after lockdown.
Surrey Virtual School East Surrey projects & hub provision	One-off grant for an activity day for new UASC arrivals in East Surrey and a 4-week hub programme in Redhill.
Tresanton Trust Casework & hub provision	Two-year grant, providing funding for our part-time caseworker and weekly hub in Guildford.
Twelve Healers Trust & Healing Herbs Ltd. Staff costs	Funding for programme managers and new Communications & Campaigns Coordinator.

Over the coming year we will focus on increasing our fundraising activities. We have now reached an income threshold that means we are eligible to apply for larger long-term grants that were previously unavailable to us.

We have made significant progress in diversifying our funding streams in the last year but it is our intent to diversify further, both in terms of core funding and project funding, so that we can support more young people through our work.

# thank you

We'd like to thank everyone who has worked with us this year. From our funders to our brilliant team of volunteers – we couldn't have done it without you.

## donors

- Mashood Ashraf
- Active Surrey
- Capgemini
- Chertsey Rotary Club
- Community Foundation for Surrey
- Guildford Philanthropy
- Healing Herbs Ltd
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- Salesforce

- Sport England
- Surrey Virtual School
- The Tresanton Trust
- Twelve Healers Trust
- Jocelyn Zanasi

We'd also like to thank everyone who donated to our crowdfund campaigns and Christmas appeal or give regularly through our Charities Aid Foundation page. There are too many of you to list individually here, but your contributions funded our summer school, supported our summer activity week and ensured we were able to make young people feel welcome at Christmas.

## partners

- Big Hat Bushcamp | Ian Brember
- Musical artists | Chesney Hawkes and Chimp
- Child and Family Health Surrey | Janine Gallini
- Jamie's Farm | Liz Ikamba, Dom Koole, Clare Martin and the whole Jamie's Farm team
- Photographer | Kate Stanworth
- Love the Ball | Jack Holmes and Jack Oxenham
- Rosamund Community Garden | Clare Millington, Helen Harris and John Bannister
- Streetwise Safety Training | Martyn Bowie

- Surrey Arts | Liz Ikamba, Sara Koorosi, Orli, Jim Pinchen and Richard Smith.
- Surrey Virtual School | Lisa Smith and Anna MacLean
- Surrey Outdoor Learning & Development | Ben Rayner and the SOLD team
- Surrey Police | PC Phil Jebb, PC Laura Magwick-Smith and Borough Commander David Bentley
- SwimLab | Salim Ahmed
- The HEART Centre | Wendy Firmin-Price
- The Human Hive | Darren Abrahams

## volunteers

- Pippo Ajroldi
- Marco Ajroldi
- Hilal Alshareef
- Toby Athersuch
- Charito Berru
- Jaego Cable
- Jessame Cable
- Richard Cable
- Sarah Cozens
- Alison Craze
- Ghaith Durkawi
- Susan Eade
- Huda Farran
- Ashagre Hailu
- Ella Hood

- Sokol Klogjri
- Arian Kochi
- Bahar Joya
- Catherine Loy
- Rami Mehri
- Sarah Nuttall
- Daniela Palazzolo
- Felicity Penn-Jones
- Jim Pinchen
- Miranda Postance
- Mohamed Ragab
- Helen Shepherd
- Akira Takenaka
- Aliyu Tanko
- Binh Tran

- Katie Wilson
- Rachel Wright
- Giorgio Zanasi

### trustees

- Vicki Felgate
- Sarah Phillips
- Dave Wagstaff
- Jocelyn Zanasi

### core team

- Louise Baumberg
- Kayte Cable
- Rachel Ellis
- Ben Monro

# support us

We can only achieve our aims with your help. Your support will mean that displaced young people in Surrey will be able to rediscover their potential and find their place in the local community.

## donate

Your money will help to fund projects that combat social isolation and improve wellbeing among young refugees and asylum seekers in Surrey.

[www.bigleaffoundation.org.uk/support-us](http://www.bigleaffoundation.org.uk/support-us)

## partner with us

We work with a growing network of organisations and individuals to develop projects that will inspire our young people. If you have a project idea that you'd like to talk to us about please email

[contact@bigleaffoundation.org.uk](mailto:contact@bigleaffoundation.org.uk)

## volunteer

We're a small and dedicated team, determined to support and empower displaced young people. If this sounds like something you want to help us achieve please get in touch.

[contact@bigleaffoundation.org.uk](mailto:contact@bigleaffoundation.org.uk)



Image © Vicki Felgate / Big Leaf Foundation



“

The greatest gift any of us can give is to make a difference to peoples lives. Big Leaf Foundation has achieved this. Thank you to everyone.

UASC foster carer

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