



HOPE CHARITY PROJECT

Annual Impact Report 2025/26

Supporting families before crisis point

Early emotional wellbeing support for families and young people aged 11 to 18



Who we are and why we care

Support that starts with the family

HOPE Charity Project is a West Sussex charity providing early intervention emotional wellbeing support for families and their young people aged 11 to 18.

We work with the whole family in a calm, welcoming setting. Together we agree what support will help. Young people can build confidence, coping skills and friendships, while parents and carers gain understanding and support of their own.



OUR MISSION

To support families and their young people before difficulties reach crisis point.

“ Finally someone was there for us, listened intently to us and for the first time in weeks we felt hope.

Parent feedback

The year in review

A small charity responding to complex need

486 meaningful
contacts during
2025/26

Families needed consistent support while young people struggled with anxiety, low mood and other emotional wellbeing difficulties. Many were also waiting for specialist services, navigating pressures around education and trying to keep everyday family life moving. HOPE remained responsive and flexible throughout the year, while strengthening its evidence base and working to develop a more sustainable service model for the future.

01**AUTUMN 2025**

Individual support and creative groups provided a trusted weekly rhythm.

02**JANUARY 2026**

Seeds of HOPE pilot launched with support from the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner and West Sussex County Council.

03**SPRING 2026**

Parent support became more integrated into the family plan.

04**SUMMER 2026**

The pilot moved into evaluation and HOPE strengthened its evidence.

**A responsive community
model**

Small enough to respond personally, structured enough to demonstrate impact.

Why support matters now

Needs recorded in referrals for young people



82%

already on a waiting list

95%

reported low mood

54%

experienced school avoidance

Needs rarely appeared alone. Anxiety, low mood, neurodivergence, school absence and risk concerns often overlapped, leaving families to manage several pressures at once.

39 recorded referrals

The 39 recorded referrals for young people form the denominator for these percentages. More than one need could apply to each referral. These are presenting needs, not clinical diagnoses.

How we help

One family, one shared plan

HOPE combines individual, parent and group support. The mix reflects what each family needs, while keeping the work purposeful and time bounded.

1 Listen to the whole picture
A free parent consultation explores need, risk, family context and what has already been tried.

2 Agree a proportionate plan
The family and practitioner agree priorities, boundaries, goals and any onward referrals.

3 Support the whole family
One-to-one sessions, parent and carer support, groups, walk and talk sessions and time with Rudy, our therapy dog, can be brought together as one coordinated offer.

4 Review progress and next steps
For 2026/27, our early intervention pathway offers young people up to twelve sessions alongside support for parents or carers. We agree goals, review wellbeing and plan next steps with each family. Early support may be enough for some. Where needs are more complex, we help while families wait for specialist services and access the right care.



“The relationship matters, and so does the plan around it.

HOPE Charity Project

Impact at a glance

What HOPE delivered during 2025/26

31

families supported

32

young people

46

parents and carers

274

one-to-one sessions

31

family consultations

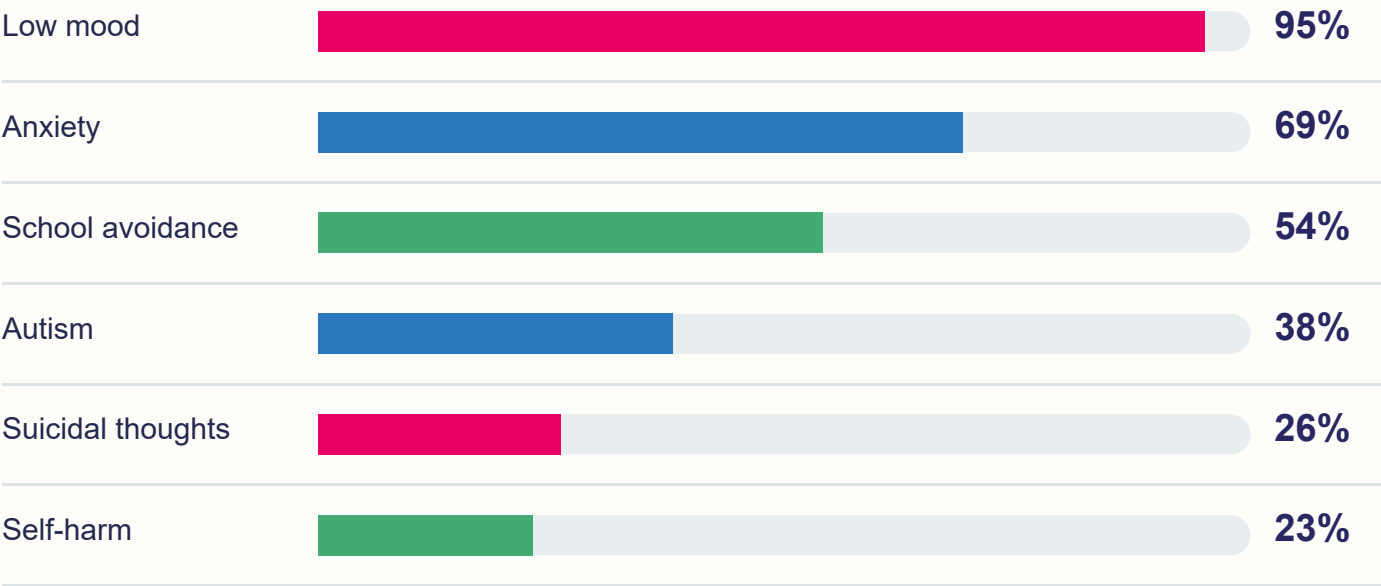
181group and community
attendances

486 total meaningful contacts

One-to-one sessions support young people; family consultations bring parents and carers into the support plan.

What families are facing

Presenting needs across 39 recorded referrals



Needs frequently overlapped

A young person recorded under school avoidance could also be coping with low mood, anxiety, neurodivergence or risk. Percentages therefore do not total 100%.

Risk can sit alongside ordinary family pressures

Self-harm and suicidal thoughts appeared in a significant minority of referrals. HOPE uses clear safeguarding and escalation routes when needs require clinical or statutory intervention.

Source: HOPE Impact Statistics Tracker 2025 to 2027. Presenting need data, denominator 39.

A voice returning

AN ANONYMISED FAMILY STORY

16 years old

A young person had experienced selective mutism since 2022. Following an Early Help referral, HOPE provided weekly one-to-one support from January to July 2026.

What changed

The young person spoke to her HOPE practitioner from her very first session but had not spoken to members of her family since 2022. After four months of weekly support, she began speaking to her family again. Together, the young person and her practitioner created Talk Tuesdays and Fridays, a simple structure to use at home that gave family communication a predictable and manageable place each week.

Over time, the family reported stronger communication and greater confidence. The practitioner saw the biggest shift in the young person choosing when and how to use her voice.

“The greatest change was not simply that she began talking again. It was that she chose to use her voice.

HOPE practitioner reflection

Details have been anonymised to protect the family.

Families at the heart

Young person and parents supported together



A free parent consultation creates space to understand what has been happening, what has already been tried and what change would feel meaningful. This shapes the plan before individual work begins.

Why the family matters

A young person may be managing mood, attendance, relationships and regulation at the same time. Supporting parents builds understanding at home and gives new strategies a better chance to continue between sessions.

“ My daughter has been given space and time to talk. We no longer feel so alone in all this.

Parent feedback

Creative support and connection

Belonging can be part of recovery



181 group and community attendances

127

Supportive Creative Group

4

Dads Group (2 sessions)

26

Mums Group

24

Coffee Morning

Our supportive creative groups use shared activities to help young people connect and talk. Mums Group and the weekly Coffee Morning give mums a place to share and build friendships. We have also started a Dads Group, which has met twice so far.

“ I loved the sessions but the group made me friends.

Young person feedback

Confidence and belonging

AN ANONYMISED FAMILY STORY

13 years old

Bullying, family change and school withdrawal had left one young person isolated and low in confidence. HOPE combined one-to-one sessions with a creative group so she had both private support and a route back into connection.

What changed

Her confidence grew and she formed friendships in the group. The family moved to online home schooling, and she began looking ahead with enough confidence to consider returning to HOPE as a volunteer.

Progress meant friendship, choice and a place to belong.

“ My confidence has gotten a lot better and I’m very capable of things.

Young person feedback

“ My daughter has completely transformed from being unable to attend school, withdrawn and showing signs of depression, to her usual bubbly self.

Parent feedback

Seeds of HOPE

A targeted pilot from January to August 2026

5

families entered the pilot

4

families completed

6

months of learning

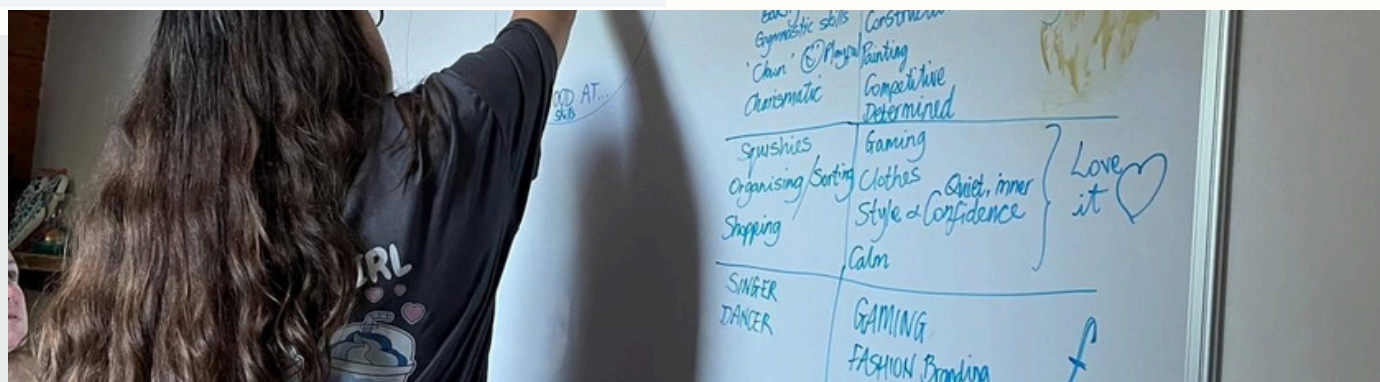
The pilot gave young people sustained, trauma-informed support and time to build trust at their own pace.

What the pilot showed

Young people developed trusting relationships, became more confident expressing their thoughts and emotions, and gained a better understanding of their individual needs and emotional triggers.

Through one-to-one sessions, group work and creative, nature-based activities, young people developed practical strategies to manage difficult emotions, communicate more openly and cope during periods of stress or anxiety.

Feedback from parents reinforced the value of supporting the whole family. What we learned is informing how HOPE Charity Project develops this work, including dedicated parent and carer sessions and more flexible, age-appropriate support.



Partners

Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner and West
Sussex County Council

School engagement

Emotional wellbeing and education are closely linked

54%

of recorded
referrals
included school
avoidance

By the time attendance falls, families are often already exhausted. Anxiety, low mood, sensory overwhelm, bullying or unmet additional needs can all sit underneath the absence.

HOPE's contribution

1

Understand what sits underneath

The work looks beyond attendance to the emotions, relationships and needs shaping it.

2

Build readiness in manageable steps

Young people practise regulation, communication, and confidence without forcing a rapid return.

3

Support the adults around the child

Parents gain clearer strategies, while HOPE signposts when education, health or statutory input is needed.

“

Huge boost in confidence and he has been able to try things he couldn't face before.

Parent feedback

Community and partnerships

Local relationships make early help possible

Schools, parents and community supporters help families hear about HOPE Charity Project. When specialist help is needed or a safeguarding concern arises, practitioners use the charity's referral and escalation procedures to connect families with the right services.

01

Families and parents

Plans begin with lived experience and what meaningful change would look like.

02

Schools and colleges

Schools and colleges signpost families to HOPE Charity Project when a young person needs additional emotional wellbeing support.

03

Seeds of HOPE partners

The pilot was supported by the Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner and West Sussex County Council.

04

Community supporters

Groups, events, local media and businesses help families know where to turn.



Local relationships matter

Early support works best when families know where to turn and the people around them are connected.

Our people and Rudy

The relationships behind the service

HOPE Charity Project is delivered by a small team with a wide reach. Practitioners, leaders, trustees and volunteers bring professional skill, lived experience and local knowledge.

Rudy

His calm presence can lower the temperature in the room and offer a gentler route into conversation.



Leadership during 2025/26

Claire Sherman, Founder and Chief Executive, and Leanne Grace, Deputy Executive Director, led the charity during the reporting period.

Trustees during the reporting period

Adrian Willard, Hannah Tombs, Lynsey Maisingiri, Rod Farnan, Derek Tyrrell and Claire Sherman.

“Consistency, warmth and trust are how the work happens.

HOPE Charity Project

Supporters make this possible



Every grant and donation becomes time, space and support

HOPE receives no guaranteed core statutory funding. Grants, donations and community fundraising keep support accessible and help the charity carry the costs that sit around every safe session.

Thank you

BBC Children in Need

Frontline support and continuity

Tesco and Asda Foundation

Funding for HOPE’s creative support groups and activities

Freemasons Lodge

Marketing and website

Office of the Sussex Police & Crime Commissioner

Seeds of HOPE pilot

Horsham District Community Lottery

Income raised through community lottery ticket sales

Families and community members

Events, advocacy and introductions to others

The David Hunt Trust

Local connection and community reach

The Albert Hunt Trust

Unrestricted funding supporting HOPE’s core work and running costs

The Homity Trust

Funding for HOPE’s creative support groups

Ernest Kleinwort Charitable Trust

Donation supporting HOPE’s work with young people and families

Trustees, donors and local businesses

Money, time, skills and belief in HOPE

Why unrestricted funding matters

Coordination, safeguarding, supervision, insurance, systems and premises make every frontline session possible. Flexible funding also protects free and subsidised places for families facing financial hardship.

Commissioning and public value

A transparent comparison using published NHS costs

HOPE provides structured early support for families before difficulties escalate. The figures below compare HOPE's full delivery cost with the latest published 2024/25 costs reported by NHS providers serving Sussex. They show relative scale, not a claim that every family avoids crisis or specialist care.



Local provider cost context

Ambulance assessment and transport to hospital	£523 average reported cost across 428,972 incidents, South East Coast Ambulance Service
Emergency department attendance	£320 average reported cost across 340,921 attendances, University Hospitals Sussex
Inpatient mental health care for young people	£2,322 average reported cost per bed day across 2,363 bed days for young people aged 13 to 17, Sussex Partnership

These figures are provider-wide averages, not tariffs or West Sussex-specific costs. HOPE does not claim that these costs are directly avoided. Future commissioning would allow outcomes, service use and cost per improved outcome to be tested.
Source: NHS England, National Cost Collection 2024/25, organisation-level unadjusted data. Unit costs calculated as actual cost divided by activity and rounded to the nearest pound.

Evidence and next steps

Using evidence to understand what changes

HOPE Charity Project records referrals, presenting needs, attendance, completion, safeguarding concerns and family feedback. We also use the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, a short wellbeing measure, at the start and end of support.

During 2026/27, our focus will be on using these existing measures consistently, helping us understand who we reach, what changes during support and where families may need further help.

What we measure

Emotional wellbeing

Changes in wellbeing questionnaire scores, individual goals, confidence, coping and identified risks.

Engagement with support

Attendance, completion, cancellations and the reasons support may end early.

Family Experience

Feedback from young people, parents and carers about what changed and what they found helpful.

Public value

Cost per family, completion and cost per improved outcome

Priorities for the year ahead

- 1 Protect access**
Keep free support available for eligible low-income families, alongside subsidised places for families who need help with the cost.
- 2 Strengthen outcomes**
Set clear goals with each family, use consistent measures at the start and end of support, and record what families say has changed.
- 3 Build sustainability**
Develop HOPE's community hub, build the evidence and partnerships needed for commissioning, and seek funding that lasts beyond a single year.



Thank you

To every family who trusted us with their story, thank you.

Your honesty, courage and feedback continue to shape HOPE. We are also grateful to our practitioners, volunteers, trustees, funders, donors, and partners who made this year possible.