

# INFORMATION SHEET

## INTRODUCING STARF 20

You will be aware that due to macro-economic factors affecting the world and the UK, families across the UK are struggling with many kinds of hardship including financial and mental health. You may not be aware of the extent of such hardships within our local area of Ringwood and Fordingbridge are affecting families.

We are seeking businesses to complete our group of 20 businesses as members of STARF 20.



### What is the problem?

We are seeing financial hardship cases that are quite distressing - in one local school 30% of families are unable to cope on the money they have.

Our recent survey has identified a crisis in mental health and emotional issues among children and young people in our area that the schools do not have the capacity to deal with. The government service, CYPMHS (formerly known as CAMHS), has long waiting lists and in Hampshire waiting lists are the longest in country - sometimes over two years. In addition, many of the conditions do not meet the criteria for that service and have no available support. A report in 2022 identified that 2/3rds of children with a diagnosable mental health condition are unable to access NHS care.

### Stronger Together Across Ringwood and Fordingbridge - is a solution

At the instigation of a local business, Empower Energy, who became aware of these issues, STARF was founded and has enjoyed support from the Ringwood & Fordingbridge Business Community group and others over the last 18 months. STARF has given short term cash support to families, but more importantly has given advice that has created £250,000 of financial benefit through a School Hardship Worker (annual cost £30k) and helped over 60 children and young people through professional counselling (annual cost £50k). STARF also undertakes other initiatives as part of our longer-term education and support, including free meals outside of school term time to identified children and an annual Christmas party for vulnerable children.

Some of the key points about STARF and how we are attempting to address the problem are:

- All help and support is delivered through the 8 state schools in our area - we believe the schools are best placed to identify these needs where children are most affected
- Counselling, support, and education is provided by qualified professionals who are funded by STARF
- There are no admin expenses incurred out of your donations made - any donations are directed towards those in need. STARF is wholly administered by volunteers

Please see further details and testimonials on our website [www.STARF.uk](http://www.STARF.uk)

STARF was founded because a local business wanted to help families in need and our approach to fund-raising is consistent with that. We are here to provide a channel for your generosity and support any fund-raising ideas you may have. We would value the opportunity to talk to you about our work and approach.

We recognise that there are many charitable causes and needs that are seeking your funding. STARF is about local families in need - and that need has never been greater than it is now. We think focusing on local needs now is a good thing.

### **Our budget**

STARF has a budget of £100,000 per year including funding the School Hardship worker, and the Counselling team. These are regular and ongoing financial commitments. We have visibility of approximately £50,000 through continued support from our founding sponsor, grants from other organisations and donations from individuals (some of which is ad hoc). We therefore have a funding gap of approximately £50,000 per year.

### **What are we looking for?**

Our expenditure represents ongoing commitments mainly to people providing regular services. We therefore need some element of our funding to be secure. Thus, we are looking to identify 20 local businesses (or groups) in, or with connections in, the Ringwood and Fordingbridge area who would support us in any way they can. That could be in donations directly from the business or through the charitable efforts of the employees of the business.

### **Benefits of being a member of STARF 20**

We acknowledge this is a big ask from the local business community, but there are benefits including:

- As a member of STARF 20 - you would be named and thanked on our website and publications and would have the opportunity to explain your business on our website and in other channels appropriate for your business
- You can use your status as a member of STARF 20 on your own promotions and in your office
- Charitable activities are a proven tool in increasing employee engagement and sense of team and purpose in your company improving productivity and retention
- If you are a big employer then you may have members of your team who need help from STARF
- We hope that as members of STARF 20 with aligned values that there will be business networking within the group
- Tax deductibility

If this is not the right time or approach for you and your business but you would like to support our work in another way then let's have a chat.

### **Can we talk?**

We would value the opportunity to discuss STARF and how you can help whether that is as a member of STARF 20 or in another way. If you would like to discuss any aspect of the above then please contact us by phone as below:

- Peter Vandervelde, Fundraiser, [peter@starf.uk](mailto:peter@starf.uk) - mobile 0780 160 7305
- Mandy Underwood, Trustee [mandy@starf.uk](mailto:mandy@starf.uk) - mobile 0778 988 1963
- Kevin McCormac, Chair of Trustees [kevinm@starf.uk](mailto:kevinm@starf.uk) - mobile 07866 730 035