



Your local charity  
**Building Resilience,  
Facilitating Change**  
Since 1964

# Services & Impact

2023/24

# Making a Difference to People and Communities

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## Message from our Chief Executive

**Over six decades, Imago has grown** to become an innovative provider of support and opportunities to people, families, and communities across the South East and London. We are focused on health and wellbeing, tackling isolation and loneliness, building social and educational opportunities, improving physical and mental health, increasing access to practical and financial support, alongside developing communities and the voluntary sector.

By embracing a model of co-production, working with clients, funders and partners, we empower children, young people, adults and communities to develop their strengths and opportunities, overcome barriers and gain confidence to enable them to grow and live independently.

Investing in relationships with organisations is at the heart of our success. We work with NHS primary and secondary care services, local authorities, housing and benefit agencies, alongside voluntary sector providers of specialist support, local community and faith groups, charitable trusts, and large and small businesses.

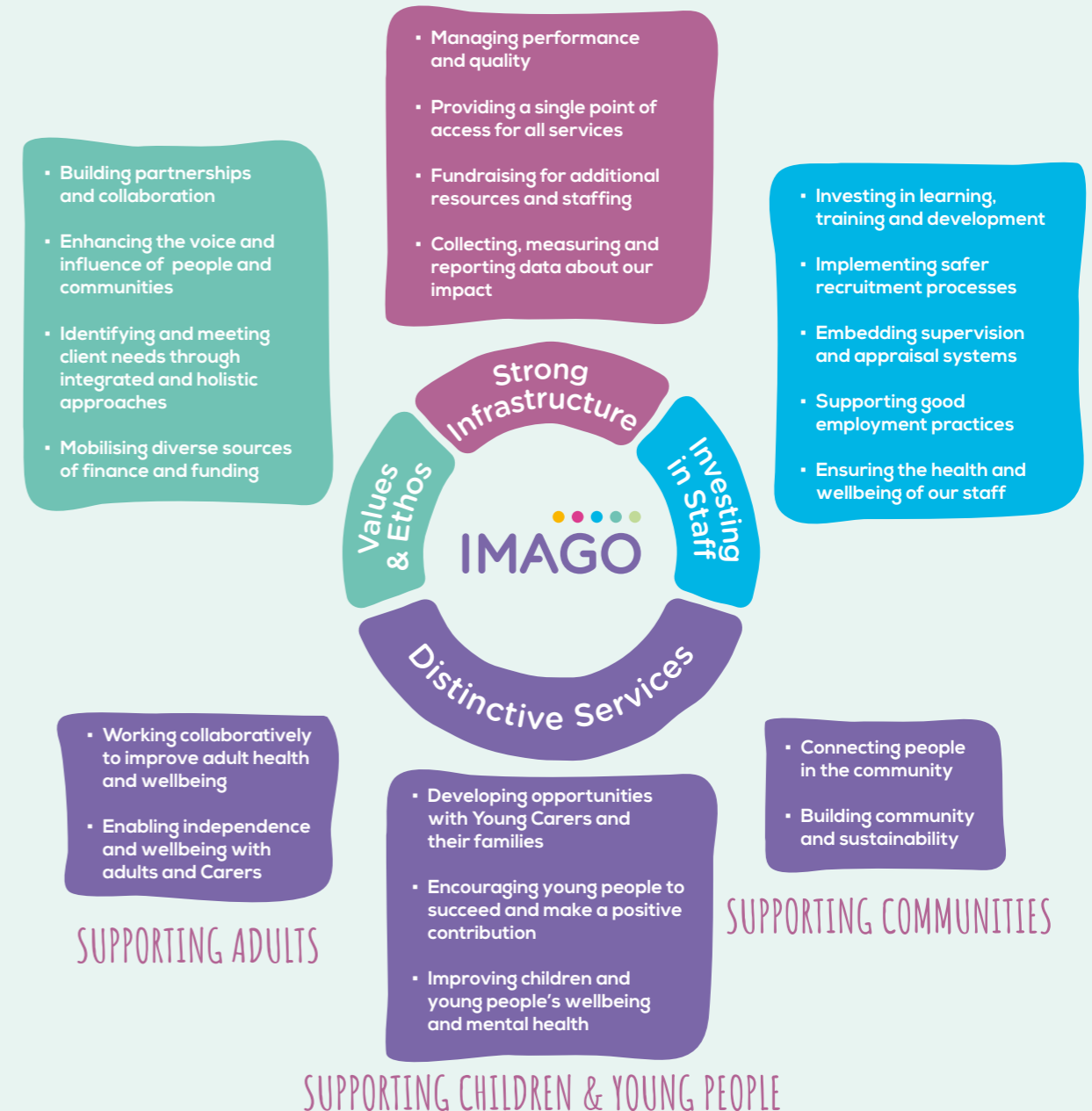
Our rapid and constructive response to the COVID-19 pandemic demonstrated our organisational strengths and flexibility. We are now bringing these resources to new challenges such as the cost-of-living crisis, increasing mental health challenges, recruiting skilled staff, and contributing to environmental sustainability. Imago is also piloting and delivering innovative new services in collaboration with our commissioners.

We invite you to read our new Services and Impact Report, which illustrates the breadth of our work, the services we provide, what clients say about our projects and details some of the outcomes we have achieved.

Enjoy!

Caroline Shaw

## Resilience through Diversity and Versatility



## Responding to the COVID-19 Pandemic: Innovation, Support and Growth



**Imago's response to the pandemic** illustrated and strengthened our ability to adapt to new situations quickly and successfully. Ahead of the first lockdown, we redesigned our business continuity and risk management processes so that clients and staff would remain safe, and ensured staff had all the tools necessary for remote working. Through the pandemic, we explored new ways of supporting people both virtually and through safe face-to-face contact, such as doorstep conversations and meetings in gardens and parks.

Collaborating with key partners in local authorities, the NHS and the voluntary sector, we:

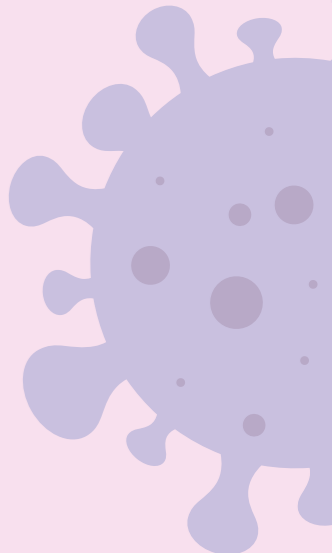
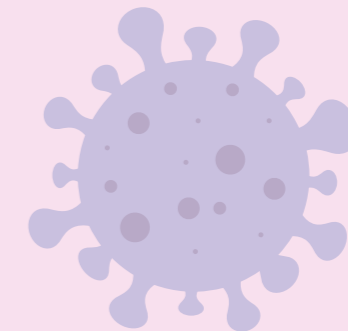
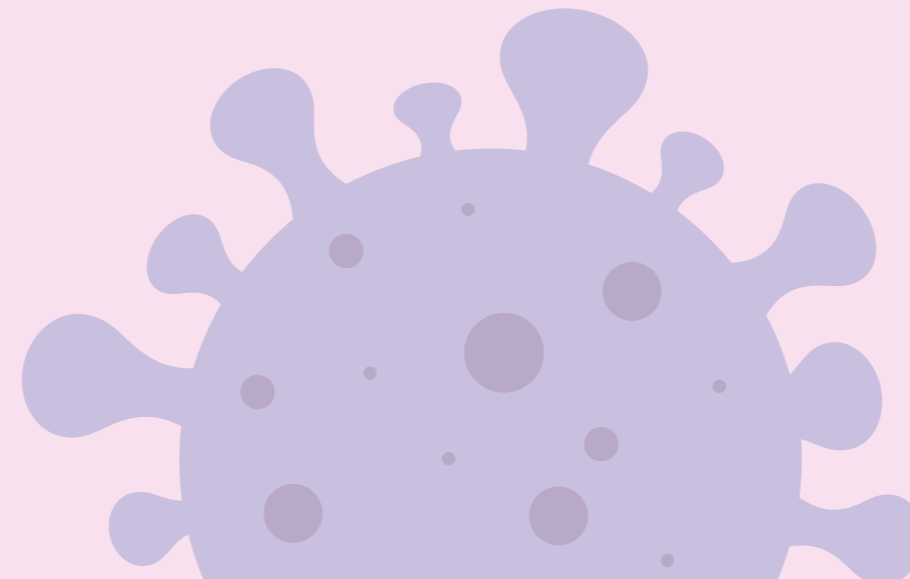
- Established a **single referral route** to triage individuals, simplifying and reducing the load on NHS and social care colleagues
- Checked-in with **over 4,000 vulnerable people** who were "shielding", ensuring they had help with shopping and medical appointments
- Liaised with local councils to deliver **food parcels, shopping and medication**
- Supported **vaccination clinics**
- Expanded and redeployed our team of volunteers who made **over 3,000 befriending calls**
- Raised **new charitable funds** to provide tablets and training to clients enabling them to **communicate with family, friends, support services** and continue **education** from home where needed

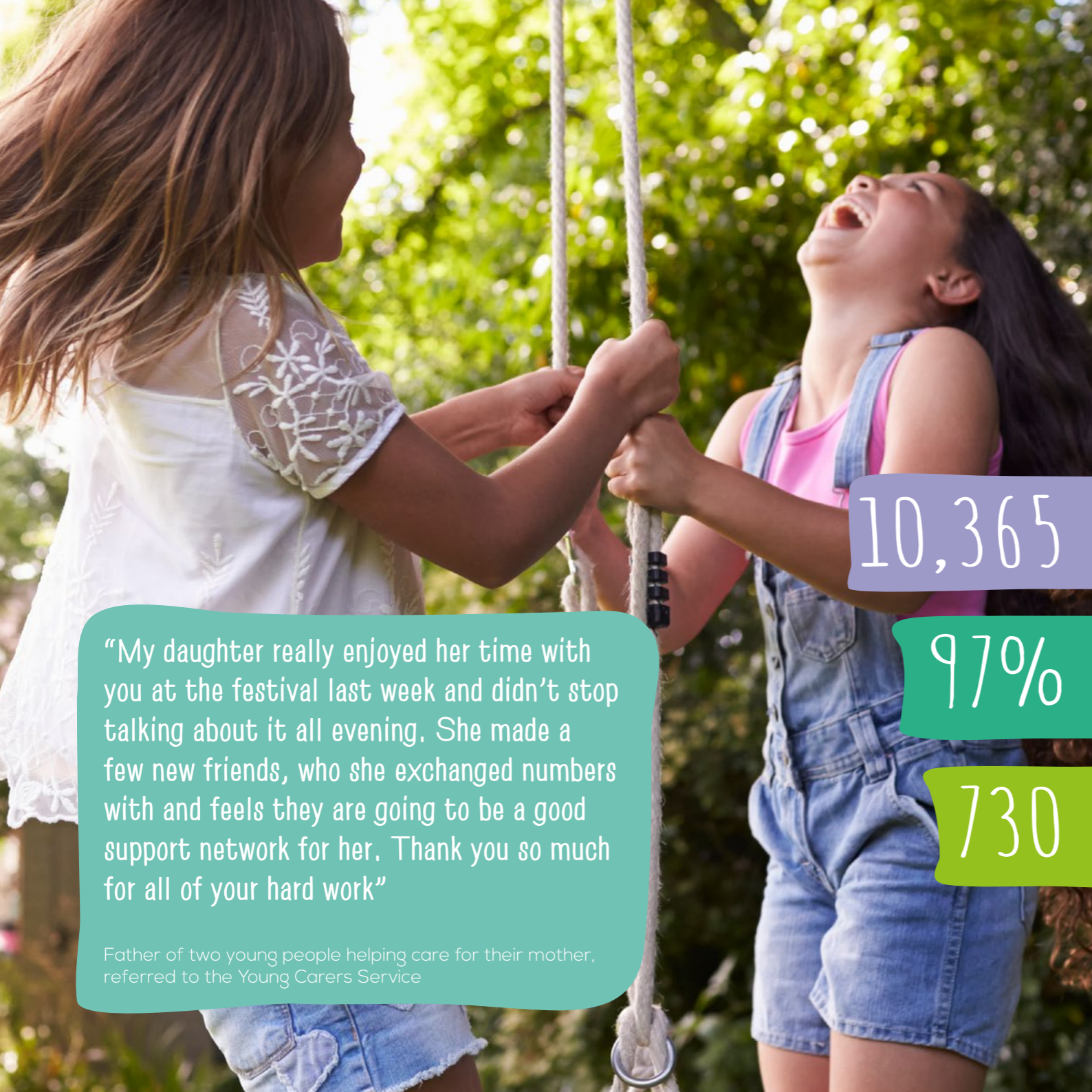
**Imago's partnership with Barnardo's** was established to respond to the additional problems faced by Young Carers during the pandemic, particularly the increase in caring undertaken, added stress and anxiety, followed by difficulties in re-integrating into school after prolonged periods of absence. The service has now been expanded and is a key part of our work with young people.

**Research on the impact of the pandemic on Carers** was commissioned by the NHS, which helped Imago identify the ongoing issues faced by Carers and how to better respond in similar situations.

**'Long Covid'** continues to affect large numbers of people. Our support service provides one-to-one and group support sessions, assisting people to manage their symptoms and aid recovery.

**Imago continued to grow** through the pandemic, reflecting our effective and responsive staffing and service delivery.





“My daughter really enjoyed her time with you at the festival last week and didn’t stop talking about it all evening. She made a few new friends, who she exchanged numbers with and feels they are going to be a good support network for her. Thank you so much for all of your hard work”

Father of two young people helping care for their mother, referred to the Young Carers Service

10,365

Young Carers currently supported across Kent, East Sussex and London

97%

of Young Carers reporting positive improvement from our support

730

professionals engaged in Young Carers awareness training in the past year

## Developing Opportunities for Young Carers and their Families

Young Carers provide unpaid care for a family member or friend with an illness, disability, mental health condition or addiction. They support the cared-for and other family members with practical tasks, physical care and emotional support, whilst at the same time trying to live their own life; and for older Young Carers, while transitioning into adulthood, further education and the workplace.

**Imago Young Carers** supports Young Carers aged 5–24, providing them with a statutory assessment and action plans focused on minimising the negative impact of caring, accessing social and educational opportunities, and providing emotional support. We enable them to have a voice in influencing the support they access, as well as local and national government policy.

**Young Carers Festivals** provide opportunities for respite from caring through fun activities. Over 150 Young Carers attend our annual Festival, taking part in activities such as rock climbing, archery, high ropes, bush craft and orienteering. They socialise with peers, make new friends and share experiences, whilst developing self-esteem and confidence.

**Re-integration into Education** arose from the impact of higher levels of caring during the COVID-19 pandemic on Young Carers’ school experience, attendance and attainment. We support children through the anxious times of Key Stage transitions, ensuring positive relationships between pupils, families and school; and encourage teachers to understand and adapt to the pressures on Young Carers, establishing school as a safe place.

**Workforce Development** of school staff, health and social care practitioners and other professionals has been vital in raising awareness about Young Carers and identifying those who may be ‘hidden’ or hard to reach. The service also advises on legislative changes and statutory obligations to Young Carers.

## Encouraging Young People to Succeed and make a Positive Contribution

**Imago Short Breaks** provides community-based respite in Kent, enabling disabled children to have fun, gain independence, learn and develop, while families get to take a break from their 24-hour caring role. We provide school holiday activities, monthly weekend activities, after school Youth Cafés, online workshops, parent support coffee mornings and family forums. Children develop social relationships, explore emotions, and enhance intellectual and physical skills through sporting, creative and cultural activities. Short Breaks has been consistently rated Good by Ofsted.

**Imago Siblings Support** engages with young people who have a brother or sister who is disabled, or has special educational needs or a serious long-term condition. Through advice and signposting, family forums, school-based support and engagement with local community services, young people are better able to cope with stress and crises, build confidence and independence, and improve family relationships.

**Imago's "Youth Voice"** acknowledges that young people accessing our services have unique needs and perspectives. It is important they can share their voice to help shape policy and inform decision makers about our services to meet their particular needs. We regularly pose new questions to young people through our Shadow Board and Young Carer forums and ask for their feedback. We contribute to National Voice, who represent Young Carers across England.

1,165

disabled children and young people supported

219

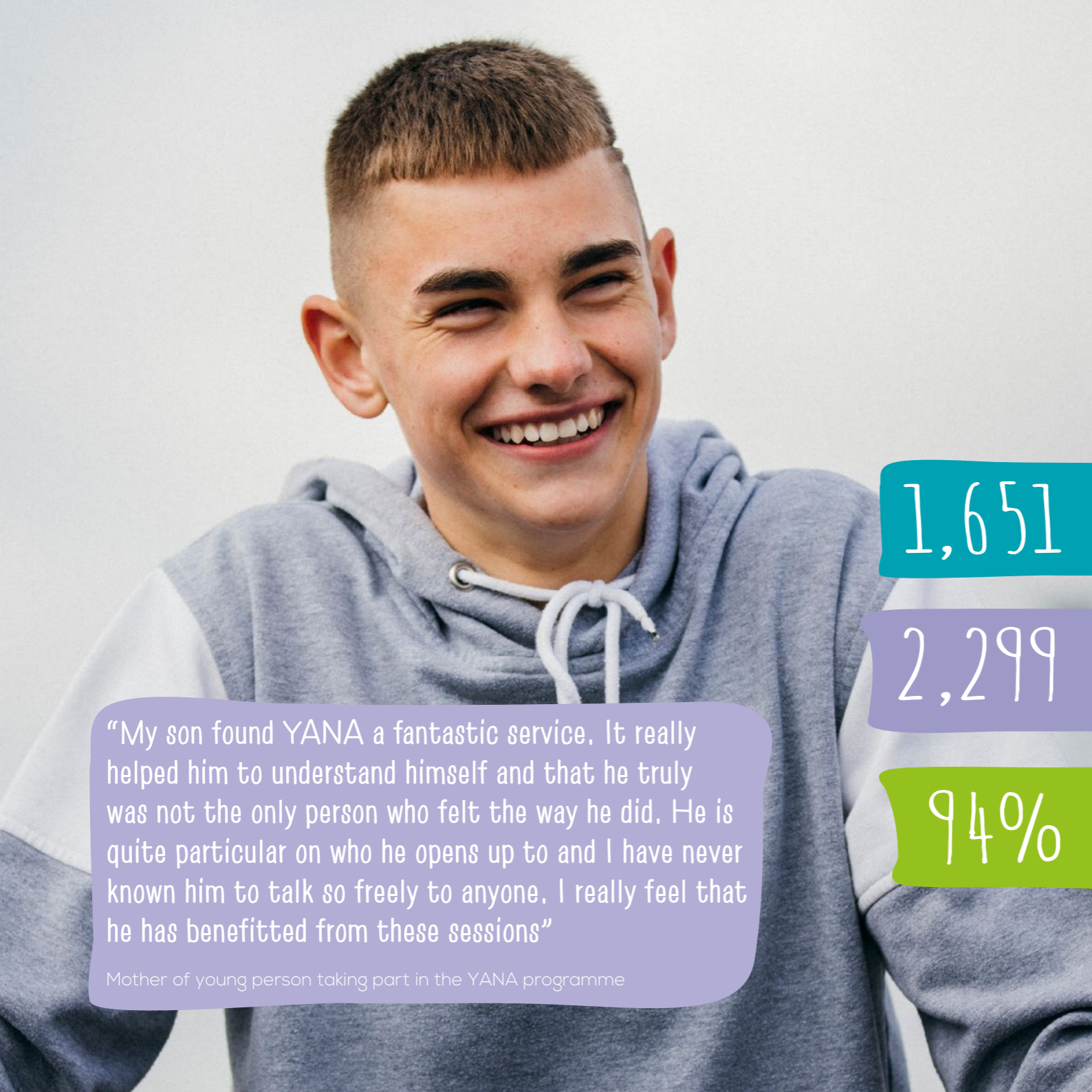
group activities delivered for disabled young people

92%

of young people reported improved confidence and self-esteem following Imago's support

"My daughter has profound Autism. She often does not want to leave home and finds social activities difficult. I can feel overwhelmed caring for her which means her brother often misses out. The Imago Siblings worker helped my son take part in respite activities which has got him 'out of his shell'. He's now always the first to try an activity"

Mother of young person referred to our Siblings Support service



## Improving Children and Young People's Wellbeing and Mental Health

**You Are Not Alone** (YANA) responds to the low level mental health needs of children and young people across Kent, raising awareness about the importance of emotional wellbeing and supporting individuals through learning more about themselves and the things that might help them, now and in the future. YANA delivers personalised planning, online wellbeing and emotional resilience workshops, tailored one-to-one coaching sessions, and information, advice and guidance.

**Children and Young Persons Mental Health Social Prescribers** provide a range of specialist support to build resilience and help children, young people and their families who are being directly impacted by mental health challenges. Working face-to-face in schools and other appropriate settings, we intervene to prevent those with low level mental health needs escalating to children and young people's mental health services (CYPMHS).

**Safe** is a school-based mental health awareness programme focused on promoting wellbeing, building resilience and good mental health. Safe delivers topical sessions including how to understand and look after your own mental health; and trains students as peer ambassadors to campaign and create safe environments in which young people feel able to talk about their feelings and seek help when needed. Young people with higher levels of emotional, behavioural, and social wellbeing, have, on average, higher levels of attendance and academic achievement, and are more engaged in school.

1,651

young people supported to improve their wellbeing

2,299

hours of one-to-one support provided to young people

94%

of young people now feel able to cope with change and new things

"My son found YANA a fantastic service. It really helped him to understand himself and that he truly was not the only person who felt the way he did. He is quite particular on who he opens up to and I have never known him to talk so freely to anyone. I really feel that he has benefitted from these sessions"

Mother of young person taking part in the YANA programme

## Danni's Story:

As a result of our Workforce Development programme, a School Nurse referred Danni (aged 11) to Imago's Young Carers service. Mum told us she has a major health condition and that Danni was her main carer, undertaking all domestic tasks and personal care. Imago allocated a named Support Coordinator to Danni, who carried out an assessment so that the appropriate support could be put in place, with additional support also being offered to mum via Adult Social Care. Danni was feeling isolated as a result of her caring role.

Imago worked closely with Danni, mum and school to offer a range of support:

- **Peer support** from other Young Carers who attended the group Imago had already established in Danni's school
- **Individual support** sessions arranged with the School Nurse
- **One-to-one** support provided by Imago staff
- Danni began to attend our Young Carer **workshops**, providing her with opportunities to meet other Young Carers and try new things.
- **Respite** activities such as trips to the pantomime, outdoor activity centres and summer outings
- First Aid and Fire Safety **training**, leading to a visit from Fire and Rescue Services to advise on home safety, and develop a personal evacuation plan

As Danni was also approaching transition to secondary school, the Young Carers Support Coordinator and School Nurse worked closely with her new school to ensure a smooth transition and continuing support.

Danni received the Try Angle award in recognition of her dedication to her caring role, and her bravery and resilience in what had been a difficult period of change. She grew in confidence, felt safer, gained new friends and better understood how to cope with mum's condition.



"I knew I could call on my Support Coordinator at any time, whether I was having good times or bad times, their door was always open"

Danni

"Imago's Young Carers Service has changed both our lives. Finally, we had someone we could turn to, someone we could talk to, someone who could help us. Imago's service has allowed Danni to be herself, to be a child with other children, without having to worry about me for a few hours each month"

Mum





# Working Collaboratively to Improve Health and Wellbeing

**Social Prescribing** connects people to practical and emotional community support, improving their physical and mental wellbeing. Working closely with primary and secondary health care professionals, our Social Prescribers support and guide patients to make changes to their lifestyle, providing self-management techniques and linking them with community resources.

Support is co-designed with the individual to meet their needs (such as anxiety, loneliness, financial concerns, diet and lifestyle). Bringing together health and social care staff, alongside statutory services including local authority, and voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations; patients are connected with appropriate support and activities.

We have developed specialist roles within our Social Prescribing service:

**Care Coordinators** ensure patients from specific GP surgeries are supported when being discharged from hospital or when a concern has been raised relating to their support needs, enabling them to remain living independently in their own home. They ensure that the patient receives an adequate care and support plan, connecting social services, local authority and NHS staff at the hospital.

**Adult and Children Mental Health Coordinators** bring a recovery-focused approach to supporting individuals to manage their mental health, providing support to help prevent deterioration, improve resilience, reduce anxiety and depression, and improve self-esteem and confidence. Practicing the skills important to leading a fulfilling life, aids patients in changing their story and achieving a better future.

**Health and Wellbeing Coaches** support people who may be struggling with maintaining a healthy and balanced lifestyle, to engage actively with their health and wellbeing. By using coaching and motivational skills, over multiple sessions, they identify needs, set goals, and implement personalised health and care plans.

84

GP practices are currently hosting our Social Prescribers

7,380

clients accessing Social Prescribing services

1,147

organisations and services actively engaged in supporting clients

“When I first became ill, I didn’t have anyone to help me. But the help of Imago and having a Social Prescriber to contact for advice was really reassuring. They regularly help me and I now feel more independent, I’m receiving counselling to understand my family issues and have a home of my own”

Service client referred following admission to hospital

## Enabling Independence and Wellbeing for Adults and Carers

**Wellbeing Matters (Kent)** supports adults over 55, anyone over 18 with complex needs and unpaid Adult Carers, as well as their family members, in the Dartford, Gravesham, Swanley and Swale areas. Taking a holistic approach, we support individuals to identify what will make the greatest difference to improve their health, wellbeing, confidence and motivation. The service provides information, advice and guidance, support with accessing a wide range of services, such as community equipment, telecare, benefits advice, form filling and social contact. A Navigator is located in Darent Valley Hospital to enable the timely discharge of patients to their home or other care.

**Wellbeing Navigation (Medway)** works alongside GPs and Multi-Disciplinary Teams, offering one-to-one support to individuals, and their families, connecting them with the appropriate community services and reducing pressure on statutory services. Navigators are also based at the Medway Maritime Hospital, working alongside the Discharge Team, facilitating patients timely discharge back to their own homes.

**Wellbeing Matters Plus** offers community-based opportunities for individuals aged 55 plus and adults with complex health needs, living in Ashford, Canterbury or Swale. Working on an individual basis, we support people to be active, keep learning, give back to their community, build social networks, take part in different leisure pursuits and take action to care for the planet.

**Young Adult Carers** can face issues in undertaking caring roles at the same time as transitioning to adulthood. Continuing education, taking up employment, finding a new place to live and becoming independent can create additional anxiety and stress. We provide one-to-one emotional and practical support, advocacy and information, advice and guidance to help them achieve their aspirations and improve their wellbeing.

9,630

clients supported by our Navigation and Wellbeing services

98%

reported improved wellbeing after receiving ongoing support

3,206

Adult and Young Adult Carers supported

“My husband’s dementia is getting worse and I was finding it increasingly difficult to care for him. Imago’s Navigator helped us get more support with personal care, reduced our Council Tax and arranged to fit door sensors, so I knew if he tried to wander off, I still get a bit stressed but do feel better able to cope and now know where we can go for help”

Navigation service client referred through a local Multi-Disciplinary Team



## Connecting People in the Community

**Befriending services** offer support and companionship to older people who feel, or are at risk of, becoming lonely and socially isolated. A volunteer or Imago team member calls clients once a week, for around 20-30 minutes. The aim of the call is to talk about areas of interest, with a view to helping identify other services or groups which can provide additional support.

**Come and Meet Each Other (CAMEO)** has proven successful in supporting vulnerable older people (50 plus) who are socially isolated or experiencing loneliness due to changing life circumstances (bereavement, separation etc.). Group members are able to join in with a highly varied programme of activities, which generally run over a 12 week period.

**Dial 2 Drive** is our affordable volunteer community transport scheme for older and disabled people who find it difficult to access public transport. Clients can book transport to access medical appointments, make shopping trips and take part in social activities.

**Imago Charity Shop** is located in central Tunbridge Wells and offers a wide range of pre-loved items kindly donated for sale. Volunteers are on hand to assist and offer a friendly welcome. Donations of good condition items are sold and funds raised support Imago services. Items that can't be sold are donated to places where they can make a difference, such as towels to animal rescue centres, coats for homeless support and underwear to Smalls for All.

824 clients supported to access services that reduce social isolation

4,104 hours of client support provided by our volunteers

£61,856 additional funds raised supporting our services, through our charity shop

“My husband is in a care home. It’s difficult for me to get about so I rely on the lovely volunteer drivers to take me to see him every weekend. They’re so friendly and always on time. It’s the only way I could get to see him and it’s the highlight of my week”  
Dial 2 Drive passenger


## Brian's Story:

Brian was 80 years old when he was referred to Imago's Wellbeing Navigation Services. He lives with his wife, who is his full-time carer. Cancer had caused sight loss in one eye, resulting in his balance, coordination and vision becoming impaired. He also has dementia and difficulty with memory. Our early assessment identified that Brian was not receiving any financial benefits, had no idea where to go or what to do, as their lives had been overtaken by hospital visits.

We provided emotional support and reassurance, enabling Brian to co-produce his own support plan. Following a holistic assessment of need, the following was put into place:

- **Attendance Allowance** application forms completed and awarded at the higher rate, and backdated (an additional £800)
- **Council Tax reduction** / discount forms completed, reducing their payments by 25%
- **Blue Badge** application was completed and awarded
- Working with his GP, we were able to refer Brian to a local **Dementia café**
- Arrangements were made for installation of **wet room aids**, gaining exemption for VAT, saving £3000
- An **Occupational Therapy** assessment of Brian's needs was undertaken and advice offered on making daily tasks easier
- A referral was made to Macmillan, who provided **additional support** around his illness
- Working with a local Carers organisation, we arranged support and **respite** for Brian's wife

A subsequent assessment evidenced improvement across all key areas and a major improvement in Brian's wellbeing.



“Just knowing someone was there to help/direct and complete the forms was a relief. I can concentrate on my health now as everything else has been put into place. I do not like asking for help as I have always been so independent, and I am now learning to accept help and readjust to my new way of life. I am extremely grateful to Imago”

Brian



# Building Community Sustainability

**Imago sustainability** is focused on reducing our environmental impact and working towards 'net zero' through increasing our recycling, reducing our emissions, and influencing other organisations on their policies and practices. We are delighted to be awarded ISO 14001, demonstrating our commitment to carbon reduction and validating our 'Green Plan'.

**Wellbeing Matters Plus** works in collaboration with a number of organisations to commission stimulating activities that prevent social isolation and improve wellbeing, tailored to individual needs. We build sustainable links within communities to reduce the impact on Health and Social Care.

**Community Development** services offer advice, support and training to local organisations and individuals on fundraising, governance, change management, quality, policy changes and mergers; reaching wider audiences through social media and newsletters, and championing the voice of the voluntary sector locally and nationally.

**Volunteer Centre** connects people with local opportunities enabling them to make a difference in their own community. The Volunteer Centre supports organisations and groups to recruit volunteers through events and publicity.

155+ face-to-face consultations with volunteers supporting 126 organisations

11,477 individuals regularly reached through Imago's multimedia networks

15.5 Tonne reduction of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from Imago fleet vehicles

“Working with Imago through volunteering activities has been something our staff have really enjoyed and appreciated. Several staff have gone on to volunteer long-term. It really is a mutually beneficial relationship from which our staff learn too”  
HR Manager, local medium-size business

## Our Quality



**Investors in People** demonstrates that Imago has strong leadership, a compelling vision and a culture of improvement. It recognises the commitment Imago makes to its employees



**ISO 9001** demonstrates that Imago provides structured and efficient services and programmes, ensuring consistency and quality of service delivery



**ISO 14001** demonstrates Imago's recognition of our environmental impact and responsibility. We are committed to raising awareness, and reducing waste and carbon emissions across all our services



**Ofsted** is a regulatory body that cares for children and young people. Imago's Shorts Breaks Service has been inspected on consecutive years since 2016 and has been consistently rated **Good** in all areas



**The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service** is the highest award given to volunteer groups across the UK and recognises the outstanding work Imago has achieved in the local community

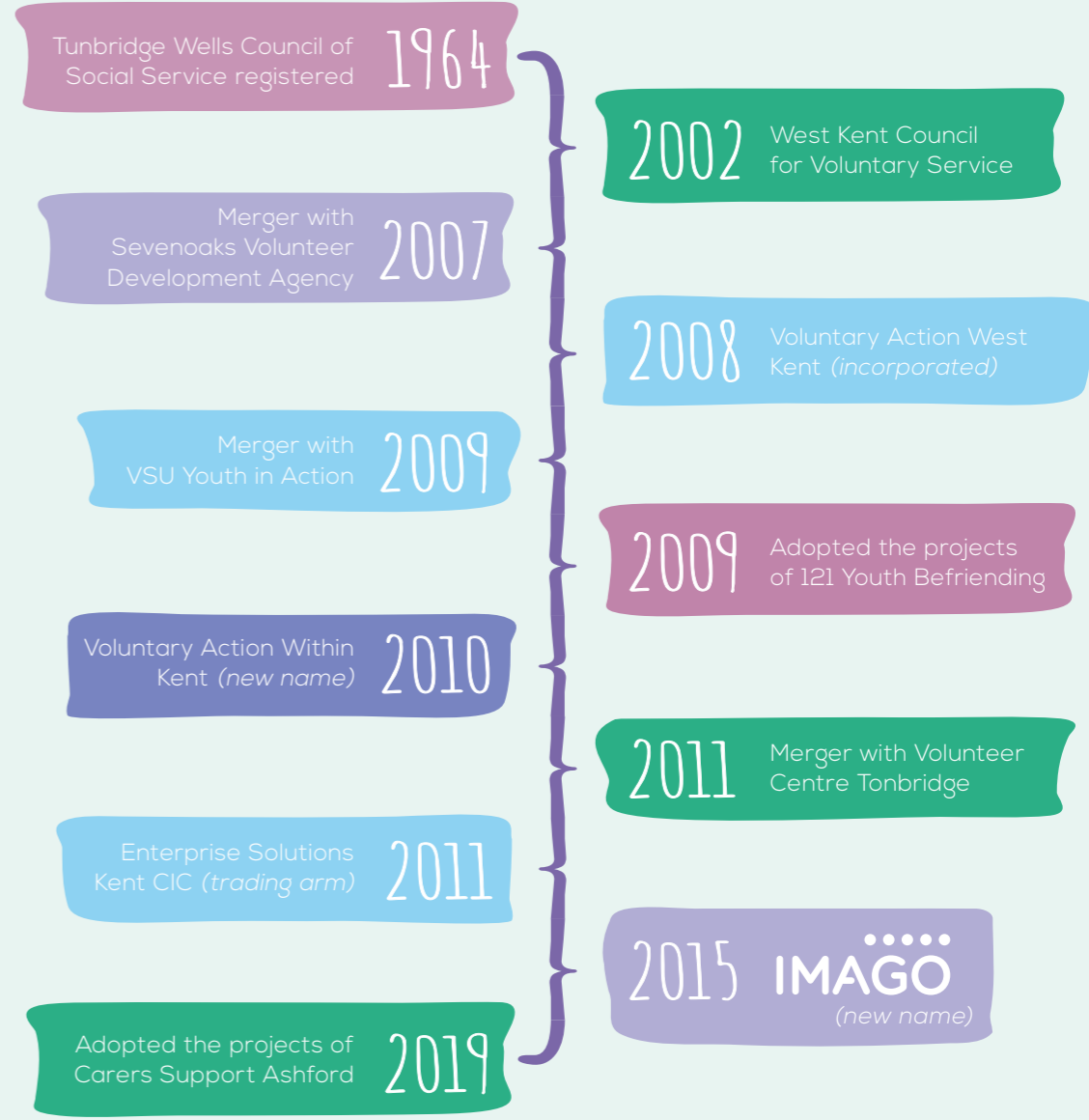


**Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation** provides assurance to all stakeholders that Imago is providing a high quality and effective service through this quality mark for Volunteer Centres



**Safer Bexley** awarded by the Bexley Safeguarding Children Board, is an accreditation of good practice in safeguarding children and young people, demonstrating to service users that their safety is of the highest priority

## Our History



## Supporting Imago Community through your Organisation

We know that businesses, schools and groups support local charities so they can **make a difference** to people in their own community.

If you choose to support Imago, you can be assured that your donation is **making an impact**. We will provide updates, and in some cases are able to invite you to see first-hand the difference being made. We always recognise our supporters and include their donation on our website, newsletter and on social media. You will receive a certificate of thanks for your wall or noticeboard, and love to see pictures of them displayed!

Being considered for your **Charity of the Year** would be an honour and helps raise awareness of services offered by Imago, reaching more people who may not otherwise know we are here for them.

**Gifts in kind** are a popular choice during the year, such as presents at Christmas and chocolate eggs at Easter. These are appreciated by families who may not otherwise be able to provide them for their children.

**Match funding** is a brilliant way that businesses can show their support. If an employee takes on a challenge, hosts an event or otherwise raises funds, their employer can match their efforts.

**Pro bono support** such as offering venues, parking and other resources for use by the Imago team, means that precious funds are then able to be redirected to vital services.

If you would like to have a chat about any ideas, please get in touch at [supportus@imago.community](mailto:supportus@imago.community). Any donation big or small is always welcome.

### CAF Bank

Business Account Name: **Imago Community**

Sort Code: **40 52 40** Account Number: **00019788**



Thank you, your support makes a real difference!



Imago is supported by numerous individuals, organisations, businesses and trusts. Thank you all. If you would like a copy of Imago's latest Audited Accounts, please email [hello@imago.community](mailto:hello@imago.community)



## Imago Community

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Imago provides services  
across Kent, Medway,  
East Sussex and London

  
**IMAGO**



@imagocommunityuk

Registered charity number: 1108388. Registered company number: 5354482

Registered with



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