



PACSO is a local charity based in Chichester and Arun Districts. We are incredibly fortunate to have been gifted a small parcel of land by the parents of one of our beneficiaries. Our hope is that we can successfully apply for planning permission for ten houses on this land and, in doing so, take this once in a lifetime opportunity to secure the funds to build a fit for purpose headquarters and a better future for our charity. We are a caring charity and have worked hard to put forward a planning proposal that sits well within the local community.

Who are PACSO and what do we do?

At PACSO, we reduce the isolation of disabled children (aged 0-25) and their siblings, through the provision of play and social activities. Beneficiaries may have a physical or learning disability, Autism, behavioural difficulties, or complex health needs that prevent them accessing mainstream services. Our expert staff enable parents and carers to leave their children in our care while they access much needed respite after school, at weekends, and during school holidays.

PACSO was launched in 1999 as a response by a team of health and social professionals to the lack of support available for parents and carers who had a child with a disability. Early on, parents told us that the best way we could support them was to provide respite for them through the provision of fully inclusive play activities. They wanted somewhere they could leave their children, knowing that they were safe and well cared for, whilst they had some time to themselves, or with their partners and other children. Over the years we have consulted closely with parents, children and professionals and have developed our service to meet the needs that they tell us that they have. That has meant us running a wide variety of clubs, most of which are open to able siblings of the disabled child, so providing respite for the whole family.

Between April 2019 and March 2020, PACSO delivered **10,925 hours of play for 325 disabled children** and their siblings in West Sussex. PACSO runs afterschool clubs, Saturday clubs, holiday play days and trips as well as a two-week summer playscheme for children and young people aged 5-25, as well as three specialist play groups for the under 5s, and family events.

PACSO is a Registered Charity No: 1148138 and a Company Limited by guarantee No: 8069488
PACSO, Lavant House, West Lavant, West Sussex, PO18 9AB

Of the total families registered with us, 43% are from the Arun District. This means that PACSO currently supports **163 families in Arun District, and 173 disabled children and young people** aged 0-25. PACSO provides a crucial service in Arun, by bringing free services such as Little PACSO to local communities, by hosting afterschool activities in Bognor, and by picking up children for afterschool clubs from the two main special schools in Chichester which serves Arun District. PACSO is the only organisation in the Chichester and Arun Districts providing specialist afterschool clubs and weekend and holiday respite for young people aged 5-25 with disabilities. It is also the only provider of services for children under 5 with disabilities and their families in Chichester, Bognor Regis and Littlehampton.

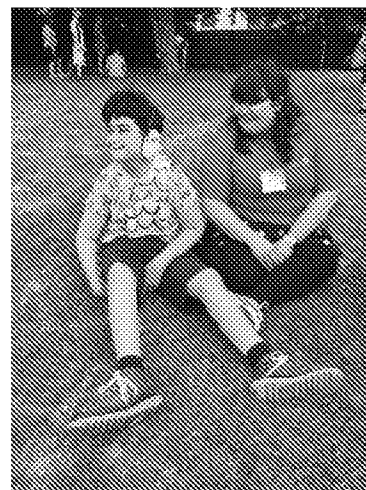
PACSO supports children from all backgrounds and ethnicities and aims to make our services as financially accessible as possible, subsidising the majority of the cost of clubs through fundraising and local authority funding. Some children come from very deprived backgrounds and have experience of family breakdowns and poverty, some are recommended by Social Services or Early Help teams, and others are fostered or adopted. Families with challenging circumstances have access to bursaries to support attending PACSO clubs and help with transport costs.

The difference PACSO makes

As a result of COVID-19, families with a disabled child have become even more isolated. PACSO has continued to support vulnerable families throughout the pandemic, delivering play packs, letters, video messages and online services.

Now meeting in person, we continue to ***"offer opportunities that many children are able to take for granted but for our children these are very special days"*** (Parent carer).

Little PACSO provides a unique Parent and Toddler Group for children with disabilities and their family to play, no diagnosis necessary. This free service is vital, filling the gap where statutory services have been cut or children have been placed on long waiting lists. In April 2019 we launched a free weekly Little PACSO session at the Wickbourne Children and Family Centre in Littlehampton, in addition to our Chichester and Bognor services. Altogether we ran 102 Little PACSO sessions during which we saw 75 different children and their carers, with 13 children attending in more than one location. This valuable service offers continuity and choice to carers who often do not have access to a car, and means that families can access this club on different days, as they often have to negotiate hospital and other appointments in the early stages of a journey with disability. Early intervention with Little PACSO ensures families can make a significant difference to a child's development, as well as family resilience.



PACSO afterschool clubs, trips and playdays offer opportunities to making new friends. Weekly attendance at PACSO clubs leads to an increase in confidence and reduced anxiety; growing independence and social development; and a greater sense of wellbeing. PACSO further reduces the isolation of young carers by helping them to engage with each other and providing a pathway into volunteering that utilises their unique insight and develops their skills. PACSO will not turn any child or young person away, and works with many who have become increasingly isolated, through school exclusion, family breakdown, or the inability to access 'mainstream' leisure activities due to challenges associated with their disabilities.

Our current location and issues around delivering our services

Since December 2019, PACSO has rented an office for the administration of the charity and storage of play equipment on the site of the old Lavant House school near Chichester. Our play activities with children take place in additional rented buildings: Fordwater special school in Chichester, and local children and family centres or community centres in Chichester, Bognor and Littlehampton. Since 1999, our small admin and play delivery team have moved six times due to the insecurity of rented accommodation. The PACSO Play Team move boxes of play equipment from the office daily to the club venues, taking time away from supporting families.

It costs approximately £276,000 a year to run PACSO services (2019-2020). Last year, our income matched this (£279,923) with support from West Sussex County Council, BBC Children in Need and others, as well as local fundraising. However, Covid-19 has affected our plans for 2020 dramatically. PACSO has lost at least £3,000 in fundraising income with cancelled events, and a further **loss of £33,000 in income** from parental contributions to our services since April 2020. We are further hoping to be able to minimise the requirement of parental contributions, recognising and anticipating that the full financial impact of Covid19 on our families will come in the autumn once the furlough scheme closes and significant redundancies take effect across almost every industry. PACSO's services are secure due to its unrestricted reserves, but this gifted parcel of land offers an opportunity to step up support for families, with a permanent HQ for the charity.

What do we want to achieve?

PACSO's ambition is to own a building which would bring all our activities under one roof, with space for parents, carers and young people to drop in for support and advice; for charity administration; storage; and parking. Most importantly, we would love a secure outdoor playground, accessible toilets, and multiple rooms for running all our children's clubs. Crucially, our 'forever home' needs to be in a central location, potentially in Arun, for families with disabled children to be able to access by public transport and on foot. Beneficiaries of this new building would include children and young people with disabilities, their siblings, parents and carers, PACSO volunteers and staff, as well as other charities and community groups.

In Summary

The incredible gift of a parcel of land from Peter and Cherry Gilbard in Aldingbourne, whose son has been a beneficiary of PACSO services, made this dream for our charity one step closer, and provided an opportunity for our small charity which we would otherwise not be able to afford. Our hope is to sell this land with planning permission, and to use the proceeds to fund a new PACSO HQ in central Bognor or Chichester for the benefit of all families with a child or young person with additional needs, and the wider community.



Emma Kennedy, PACSO CEO with Play Lead