



## ANNUAL REPORT 2021

Along with the rest of the country, NOMAD has had an unprecedented year. Since March 2020 much of our regular work had to change due to the COVID restrictions, but our staff team have been as busy as ever in reaching out to a much larger and varied group within our community.

The Food Bank which is usually a very small part of our work became a catalyst between March and August 2020 as we concentrated our focus on that aspect. Delivering food parcels enabled us to stay in contact with many individuals and families as we dropped the bags on the doorstep and stood back. It was a good way to find out how people were doing, to encourage them and offer any further assistance.

Further contact. Mentoring and family support was maintained via telephone, messaging and social media platforms. Zoom meetings became the norm and as we were out and about delivering, we were able to drop into different parts of the town for some detached work.

Various activities were developed through weekly NOMAD lockdown challenges, which included delivering flapjack making ingredients, chicken curry packs, spaghetti tower making, craft activities and the delivery of Easter Eggs to 60 children and young people across the area. In addition, we were able to deliver free pizzas to young people and families each week courtesy of the Pirate Pizza Man. This was much appreciated and became a highlight of the week for many.

One activity that we were able to deliver safely and socially distanced, proved extremely popular. An investment in some stand-up paddle boards enabled us to take individual young people on the river to enjoy a local amenity and get fresh air and exercise. Making use of our mountain bikes was also another way of engaging safely with young people.

From September onwards with the students back in school, we were able to continue our mentoring programme and re-engage with many young people through face-to-face contact. The weekly football sessions also re started and were extremely popular with up to 20 young people attending each week. Individual young people were also able to attend the centre for support.

With children at home for such long periods during this time, many parents were also struggling to cope, and NOMAD staff were able to support a number of these with parenting advice and in some cases practical support.

Since the second lock down started after Christmas, we have adjusted our work once again to meet the needs that have risen. The number of food parcel deliveries each week has settled to a more manageable number, yet still more than double pre lockdown figures. We are grateful to many volunteers for helping with sorting out and storing the food donations and making deliveries, whilst staff have been able to support a growing number of young people and parents as they grapple with challenging issues compounded by the complexities of the pandemic. The mental and emotional health of many has clearly suffered.

The NOMAD weekly challenges continued through January and February and included, bubble gum challenge, chubby bunnies, pancake making and other creative and baking tasks. Feedback from children, young people and parents has been very positive and has been well worth the effort in providing them.

When possible and weather permitting, we have also continued with detached youth work sessions, visiting local parks and areas where young people are known to visit. Our impression is that whilst there have been small groups of youngsters meeting together, they have been respectful and not given us any cause for concern. We have encouraged them to follow the guidelines.

To sum up our work in this last twelve-month period we have delivered the following:

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- Packed and delivered 1084 food parcels (2705 bags of food), a 300% increase on the 297 delivered in 2019
- Distributed food vouchers to many in need
- Engaged specifically with at least 65 individual young people through, mentoring, detached youthwork and outdoor activities
- Provided intensive support for individual parents

In response to the specific needs presented by the COVID pandemic, we have seen an amazing response from the local community. A constant supply of food from individuals, community groups, street collections and local businesses, along with donations and offers of help from volunteers has enabled us to sustain our work throughout this very difficult year. The Town Council support has been a big part of that, and we are enormously grateful to all. It has been a privilege to act as a channel for all the good will expressed in supporting those who have been less fortunate, and we look forward to continuing our work in another landmark year as 2021 marks 25 years of working in the local community

**Tim Prior | Nomad Project Manager | March 2021**

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