



Case study: Regal Respite

August 2021

Regal Respite Limited is a registered charity, based within a Jewish Orthodox Community in North East England. They help families who have experienced trauma such as bereavement or medical issues, or who are experiencing other challenging circumstances, to get respite by organising short getaways, sending them to a hotel or a holiday cottage for a few nights for example.

Regal Respite received £9,500 through the Coronavirus Community Support Fund (CCSF). The CCSF is a funding programme supported by a grant of £200 million from Government, distributed by The National Lottery Community Fund, to help organisations in England respond to the COVID-19 crisis and increase community support to people affected by the pandemic.

How was the CCSF grant used?

The COVID-19 pandemic affected Regal Respite in two key ways. Firstly, the demand and need for its services grew significantly, as many families saw themselves faced with financial hardship or challenging circumstances due to bereavement for example. In addition, many parents were home-schooling and children were at home with limited entertainment opportunities, placing additional burden on family life. Secondly, the pandemic meant that Regal Respite's usual offer of providing short getaways was no longer possible, so they had to identify new ways to support families.



We needed to stop and think, instead of taking people to respite, we need to think of bringing respite to people. That's really what we did. And that's really what we focused on. – Grantholder

Regal Respite therefore pivoted to delivering 'quarantine packs' with toys and games to low-income families with special needs children or families dealing with illness or bereavement. The charity also delivered food packages to families who were unable to cook due to illness and launched a 'Bake in a Box' activity. Open to the entire community of approximately 600 families (approx. 3,000 individuals), Regal Respite sent a box with all the necessary ingredients to bake cookies to all who requested one. This provided a fun activity for both

young and old. In addition to families, Regal Respite also sent activity packages with books to older community members to help alleviate feelings of social isolation.

Regal Respite used the CCSF grant to fund these activities. As the organisation is purely volunteer-run, the full grant was used to buy the different items for packages and to cover delivery costs.

Quick facts:

600+ people supported during the COVID-19 pandemic (up until January 2021)
320+ activity and food packages delivered
20 volunteers

Three key messages:

- 1 Regal Respite successfully adapted their delivery to support people at home when respite getaways were not possible.
- 2 Approaching people the right way – through personal connections and framing the support offer sensitively – was effective in ensuring the offer was well received.
- 3 Regal Respite's support helped families and individuals get through difficult times, alleviating stress, social isolation and also covering basic needs through its food offer.

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What difference did the CCSF grant make?

For people and communities

The activities delivered by Regal Respite helped the families it was supporting in a number of ways.

The quarantine packs provided entertainment and activities for children who were at home due to school closures. This helped parents keep children active and busy, which in turn reduced tension and stress within the family, and supported the mental wellbeing of both parents and children. Some of the packs delivered to larger families included substantial items such as a table tennis table. This helped children engage in physical activity, which had become more challenging during the pandemic.

An important factor that made Regal Respite's support offers successful with families was that they tailored each offering to the respective family. The charity spoke to community leaders, doctors and therapists to identify a range of beneficial toys and games, and then also spoke to families individually to discover their particular needs and circumstances. This helped ensure the contents of the package addressed their needs. The fact that Regal Respite was deeply anchored within the community was a key facilitator to this, as the volunteers knew the different members of the community that needed support and were able to reach out to them.



The help we received was just amazing. It was tailored to our family. You could see that there was a lot of thought and planning gone into the package received. We felt very, very cared for. [...] it was very helpful" – Beneficiary

For example, one family was having a difficult time with all their children at home and little to do, leading to severe tensions. Regal Respite organised a trampoline for that family and this gave the children the necessary outlet for their energy.

Another additional benefit was that people felt cared for. For some families, Regal Respite was one of the few external points of contact, which helped them feel less isolated. This was particularly important when families were self-isolating for two weeks.

While there were other organisations in the community helping people deal with the various ways in which the pandemic affected their lives (such as help with food shopping), Regal Respite was unique by providing support packages tailored to address specific challenges encountered by families.

For volunteers

Regal Respite is volunteer-run and they recruited more volunteers to adapt their delivery and help put together and deliver toy packs. It was 'all hands on deck' with trustees and family members of volunteers helping out. Volunteering with Regal Respite gave people in the community the chance to help out and to contribute to the community's response to the pandemic. One volunteer for example expressed great satisfaction from having helped an older person in their community.



We're not really able to directly remove challenges, but we can certainly help people face their challenges, and pamper them a bit, and give them a bit of a break from their challenge so that they're able to face their challenges with renewed energy." – Trustee

For the organisation

The CCSF grant enabled Regal Respite to introduce a new type of support they previously had not offered and which allowed them to reach more beneficiaries. Whereas in previous years Regal Respite supported around 150 families, this increased manifold during the pandemic. This was possible in part because of the CCSF and the support was less time and cost intensive than usual.

An unexpected but positive consequence was that there was more publicity about Regal Respite, which raised its profile in the area. Regal Respite expects this to help both with recruitment of volunteers as well as with fundraising in the future.



I think the whole profile of the charity has been increased, and on that basis recruiting volunteers will be easier, and raising funds will be easier." – Trustee

Key legacy from the experience:

Regal Respite was able to widen the scope and scale of the activities it delivers, which raised the organisation's profile. This will enable Regal Respite to attract more volunteers and more funding in the future, and thus grow as an organisation.

Want to know more?

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