

# Case Study



## VOYC & CHICKS



'CHICKS' is a registered charity that provides free respite breaks for disadvantaged children from across the UK. Children are referred to CHICKS for many reasons and situations; from being young carers to those who are living in poverty, subject to abuse, and any other situation that causes the child to have a tough time at home. A CHICKS break inspires new confidence and gives these children the chance to have fun, try new things and form positive childhood memories

### How VOYC can help your group

We can help you to create, grow and run your group, whether you are a faith, uniform, theatre, sport, adventure or inclusive project. We share our knowledge, experience and expertise to help you run safely.

### How VOYC helped CHICKS

CHICKS has been a member of VOYC Devon since January 2011 and during its 5 years of membership, VOYC have helped deliver some bespoke Child Protection Training and have audited operating policies and procedures for safety and compliancy.

VOYC has helped them:

- Raise the standard of their work with particularly vulnerable children and young people
- Access information, advice and support to equip staff with knowledge, skills and resources they need to support the work of their organisation
- Remain fully updated around safeguarding through annual staff safeguarding updates

*"By being a part of VOYC membership it has ensured our charity and our services towards vulnerable children within the UK are represented well on a practical and strategic level. We have taken advantages of the training opportunities offered to us, which has also given us the chance to meet and network with local organisations and share good practice"*

### CHICKS locally

Children enjoy the beautiful Moorland Retreat in Brentor, near Tavistock where there is plenty of space to run about. They have converted barns full of trampolines, basketball nets, pool tables and table tennis. Inside the house there are more games, a music centre and art & craft areas where face painting, baking and other fun things take place. Children also have a chance to go horse-riding, kayaking, climbing to name a few, and will always experience lots of fun team games and tasty home-cooked dinners.

### What makes CHICKS special

Every child goes home with a Memory Bag full of photos from their break – these photos can sometimes be the only ones the child has and they are truly treasured! They also leave with treats and a freepost envelope so they can write to the people that they met. Every child's letter is always responded to with a hand written letter and another freepost envelope; this contact can go on as long as the child wants it and can sometimes be the only support and listening ear the child has. Every child that visits CHICKS within that year also receives a birthday card, and a card and present at Christmas. CHICKS organises return visits for as many children as possible.

## True Stories & Real Benefits

### Laura aged 11 from Exeter

Laura lives with her Mother, and younger brother who has extreme behavioural issues. Laura shares a bedroom with her younger brother, and often tries to help when he is displaying angry or violent behaviour, but this results with her being caught in the cross-fire. Laura's Mother suffers from mental health issues, which can result in Laura needing to provide care for both her Mother and her younger brother, an exhausting task for a child so young. Laura was referred to CHICKS by her social worker, who could see she was in desperate need of a break away.

### Seb

Seb has had a very tough childhood. His mother suffers from anxiety and depression as a result of on-going, severe domestic violence at the hands of Seb's father. There have been many occasions when Seb has witnessed these traumatic incidents, leaving him incredibly frightened and vulnerable. He is introverted and insecure, he struggles to form friendships. The family live in poverty with no spare money for activities, which is why Seb was referred to CHICKS by his family support officer who said it will "give him the opportunity to be a child and not have to worry about mum." When Seb went to Moorland retreat he was quiet on his first day but quickly came out of his shell and made lots of new friends by the end of the week! He positively interacted with his peers, telling them stories and using his imagination to create games to play; he even invented a game called 'hugby' where you ran up to someone and gave them a hug, instead of tackling them (like rugby!)



### How to Refer a Child:

Referrals must be made through a professional person or organisation that works with the child or family. Organisations that currently refer to them include social services, schools, youth groups, family support teams and numerous other charities.

How to refer: the 2016 Child Referral Form must be completed. Once this form is submitted a member of the Coordination Team will then call you to assess the child's case in more detail. At this point a reservation can be made and you will need to ensure that the 2016 Consent and Medical Form is completed and signed by the parent in order to finalise the booking.

### Donate:

There are several ways you can support CHICKS and help them to achieve their goal. You can become a Memory Maker, Give in Celebration, make a one-off donation or leave a gift in your will.

- £5 could buy ice creams for two children to enjoy after a fun-filled day out
- £15 could help improve a child's confidence and self-esteem by sending them rock climbing
- £30 could pay for a child to ride a horse for the first time: a wonderful experience that they will remember forever
- £55 could provide a child with delicious home cooked meals at CHICKS for a week

[www.chicks.org.uk/support-us](http://www.chicks.org.uk/support-us)