

Managing Home Support Volunteers During a Pandemic



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Two years ago, CHAS launched a volunteer service providing home support to families with children requiring palliative care. In March 2020, all CHAS volunteers were stood down because of the Covid-19 pandemic. Many families needed increased support during this time. New, safe and innovative ways of providing home support were introduced and implemented. This report highlights the changes made to working practices.

Related publications:

- McLaughlin T, Marosi D, Robb S, *Children in Scotland requiring Palliative Care: identifying numbers and needs (The ChiSP Study) 3*, Public Health Scotland, (2020)
- CHAS, *Reaching every family in Scotland – Our strategic plan for 2020-2023*, (2020)



Children's Hospices Across Scotland

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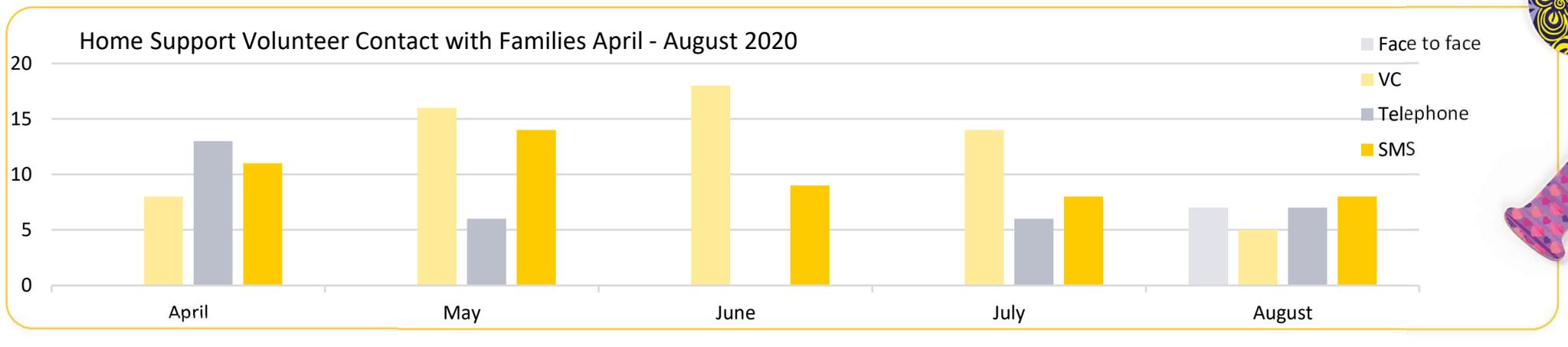


The Challenges

- Scotland on lockdown
- All CHAS volunteers stood down
- Most CHAS families shielding
- Staff working from home or furloughed
- Financial pressures
- Increased pressure on families

The Solutions

- Clear communication
- Families supported by telephone and video call
- Volunteers supported using Zoom in groups and 1:1
- Covid-19 risk assessments and guidance notes
- Roles adapted to comply with restrictions

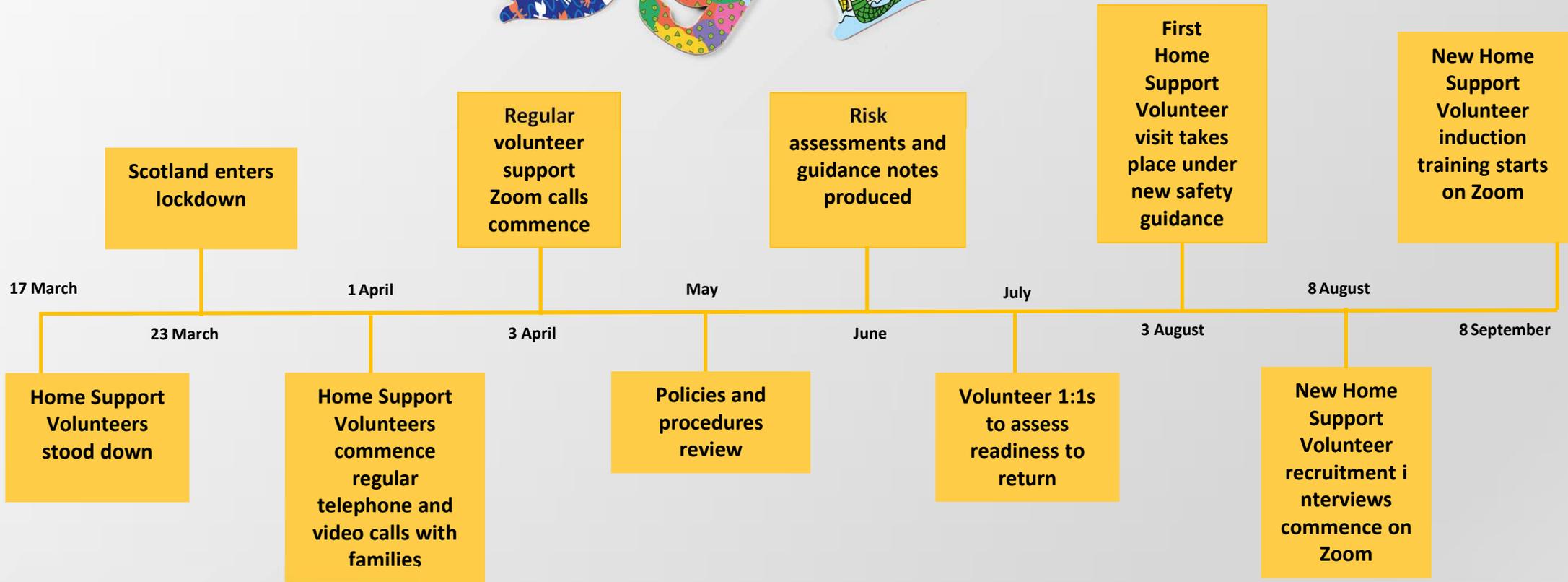


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Timeline



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The Way Forward... Adaptation

According to The ChiSP Study 3, the number of children living with a life-shortening condition has increased over time; complete prevalence has risen from **92 children per 10,000 in 2009/10** to **130 in 2018/19**. This equates to **16,742** children across Scotland in **2018/19**. Of these, **5,789** had one or more inpatient stays in hospital during the year.

"It has been a real struggle during lockdown, with no help, no carers and no school. Having [our volunteer] checking in on us each week has been such a lifeline for us."

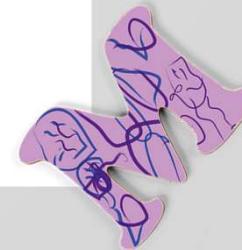
The families we already support tell us that they want volunteers to be involved in their children's care and that they see no difference between staff and volunteers.

Following the successful introduction of remote volunteer support, recruitment and training, it has been shown that the management of Home Support Volunteers can be adapted, allowing this service to become **more accessible** to volunteers and **reach more families** across the whole of Scotland without significant infrastructure costs.



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