

# Press release

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## Herculean growth that helps children

By Richard Curtis

16<sup>th</sup> May 2014

Southampton, Hampshire – One year ago today Richard Curtis was facing an uncertain future. He had left the local authority he worked for and started a company called The Root Of It. With no money to set it up, he had arranged to work part time in a Worthing school to make sure the bills were paid.

Since 2010 local authorities and schools have seen cuts to their budgets and the skilled professionals who helped vulnerable and traumatised children were being lost. Seeing this as unacceptable Richard resigned and set about forming the basis of a team to unpick the causes of children's difficulties in schools and address them.

Richard, known to parents who he works with as The Kid Calmer, is a behaviour expert, having worked for many years as a teacher with troubled and damaged children. He jokes that in one of his jobs he had to wear a cricket box in order to stop children kicking him to distract the staff and allow the other children to climb out of the window. When the special unit he ran in Southampton closed, Richard went to work for a local authority as an advisor for the 0.1% of most challenging children in the county. He gained his Masters in 2013, based on his qualifications and research he undertook in this role.

In his first month, Richard managed to drum up four hours paid work through The Root Of It, however he was busy building the foundations for the team. He devoted hundreds of hours to recruiting the most dynamic, experienced and specialist local professionals to work together in a way that people have only ever dreamed of before. Parents will be familiar with waiting lists for accessing services for children and increasingly hard to meet referral thresholds for services that were available for children. Richard decided to throw away the rule book and build a team with professionals from all of these different services, so that there would be no barriers to accessing the support that a vulnerable child needs.

Headteacher, Mandy Williams says "It's about offering unique solutions that mean things happening earlier. The biggest thing is that you make one phone call, describe the situation and The Root Of It send someone in. The speed, the impact on the child, the family and the staff member is significant."

Fast forward one year and Richard's team has grown to 18 professionals, who have provided services to nearly 100 schools. They regularly meet together and work collaboratively to help the children referred to them. This has resulted in 92.7% successful outcomes for children and families they have worked with.

Elizabeth Freeman, the team's Behaviour Consultant says that being part of the team is "stimulating, motivating, varied and a fantastic opportunity to spread the word and promote greater awareness and for children's needs."

Richard says "Our team's journey over the past year has been unbelievable, but this is only the start of our journey, I believe that children across the UK should experience this level of support." He is currently seeking like-minded professionals to set up The Root Of It services in other parts of the UK. Information on The Root Of It can be found at [www.rootofit.com](http://www.rootofit.com), Richard's parenting website is [www.thekidcalmer.com](http://www.thekidcalmer.com).

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### **About The Root Of It**

The Root Of It was founded in April 2013 to help children with complex needs and disabilities succeed. Richard Curtis has brought together a team of professionals to provide a wrap-round service that includes Clinical Psychology, behaviour advice, Social Work, family support work, Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Play Therapy, Counselling and support for low attenders. Richard says “Poor behaviour is a symptom of an underlying difficulty, just like good behaviour is a symptom that a child's needs are being met. The Root Of It work as a team to address the underlying difficulties.” The Root Of It provide support to schools, families, early years settings and organisations. For more information, please visit <http://www.rootofit.com>.

### **Images**

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### **Ends**

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