



ANNUAL REPORT 2022



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INTRO TO WISH

ABOUT US

The wish centre is a Harrow based charity that prevents self-harm, abuse and exploitation of young people. We have a community-based model that provides open ended psychotherapy and emotional mental health support in person at schools and at our Centre, plus digital therapy, peer support groups, advice and training. The wish centre is a free service for young people ages 12-25 years who live or go to school in Harrow.

WHAT WE DO

The children and young people we support with are incredible. Despite many suffering from domestic or sexual violence and abuse, exploitation and being at risk of serious harm from themselves or others, they will find a resilience and determination to keep going, even if this means self harming as a means of coping.

Children and young people we meet may have undergone trauma and may have been exploited, abused or neglected. Some have suffered physical harm and have mental health issues or are living in poverty or in fear of their safety.

The work of our dedicated team of psychotherapists, outreach and youth workers is vital to ensure that the young people are supported and empowered, and that they not only achieve positive outcomes to overcome the impact of their experiences but also that their voices are heard in terms of shaping the services and help they get from the wish centre and others.

We believe that we are all effective together. From working with partners in social care, education, health and the community to improve aspects of support for young people, to improving awareness of issues and skills through training, together we are making a real difference to children's futures.

effective :together

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Young people who self harm or who are suicidal who come to WISH have often "been through the system" and many have given up hope of being understood or listened to.

They may feel that their problems are uniquely their own. They tell us about the sense of relief and release they have being able to speak without stigma or judgement, and to realise that they are not alone.

Young people's mental health suffered during the pandemic and WISH were busier than ever with an increase in referrals from our partners in Children's services, schools and the community.

We also saw a rise in self referrals from the 16-25 years age group. We offered children and young people the choice of both virtual and in person peer support groups and therapy sessions.

Our long term open ended therapy provided the space and time needed to reduce the need to self harm and to increase positive coping mechanisms.

The peer support groups provide real support and motivation for young people in distress to start to believe that there could be a different future for them, whilst experiencing real empathy and understanding.

Until a young person is motivated to want to even begin to think about stopping self harm, the journey cannot truly begin.

We look forward to continuing our work with young people and are grateful for the funding and support we receive from our many partners, donors and volunteers.

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Rowena Jaber
WISH DIRECTOR

CASE STUDY

For example, 42 young people reported that the only preventative factor for them not committing suicide was fear of hurting their parent/carer/family. At the end of their journey they could all identify a range of opportunities and felt that being alive was more beneficial to them. This included the ability to be better able to tolerate emotional pain. An example of this is the ability to develop healthier relationships and become more accepting of the faults of others, eg "I can't talk to my friends about what's wrong but I can talk to them about music and other stuff and have fun".



WISH'S IMPACT



TRAUMA

Young people whom we have supported in the past year have varying experiences of trauma, abuse and neglect with issues ranging from child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation to physical and emotional abuse.

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SELF HARM

Even with an increase in referrals due to self-harm, wish continued to provide long-term open-ended therapy to young people. A lot of our work involved helping individuals understand the causes and triggers that lead to self-harm and help them enhance their understanding of emotions and feelings. Once young people have been given the opportunity to tell their stories in a safe, trusting relationship can they begin their recovery journey. 94% of our young people stopped or reduced self-harming over the course of the year.



TRAINING

The wish centre provides a range of training for professionals and frontline workers in the fields of mental health, social care, education, charities and community groups who support young people who self-harm and their families. Over the pandemic, Wish delivered online training session for a range of professionals and front line workers.

SERVICE DELIVERY

SAFE TO SPEAK

1 TO 1 THERAPY

Our team of dedicated psychotherapists continued to offer young people long term open ended therapy as part of our clinical model and quickly adjusted to work around the ever changing guidelines around Covid-19. Working digitally and providing outdoor therapy over the Lockdown period suited a lot of young people. A gradual move to face-to-face sessions was needed in some instances but we were also able to provide a hybrid model. This was one of the benefits of working digitally and something we continue to offer. We saw a rise in young people being referred for both self harm and disordered eating. These issues were compounded by living and surviving through such experiences in a global pandemic. Their resilience was tested and most of our young people bravely persevered through the adversities they were facing. The young people we work with are incredible despite many suffering from sexual or domestic violence and abuse, exploitation and being at risk of serious harm from themselves or others. They will find a resilience and determination to keep going, even if this means self-harming as a means of coping.

OUTREACH

Throughout the pandemic, the Wish team engaged with young people in more ways than ever before. We provided digital support to young people who were not able to be seen in our centre and kept young people and referrers on our waiting list informed. Wish also supported young people by making self-care boxes around the Christmas period, a time that can be very unsettling for many.



PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

Peer Support has always been one of our most effective offers here at wish and something that we are very passionate about as part of our model. Over the course of the pandemic, we ran a variety of groups both digitally, outdoors and in person at our centre in Harrow. We supported a wide range of young people aged 12-25 through our groups and build a small community of support.

SUPPORT NETWORK

Our Support Network is a pathway for the young people who use our services to access ongoing peer support online. This gives young people a place to also get involved with various activities at Wish like fundraising, volunteering, speaking to the press or progress to joining the board of Trustees. Having a space to talk to other peers promotes long term recovery from self harm and enables young people to connect with those who have experienced similar difficulties, showing them that they are not alone in their struggle.

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YOUTH ADVISORY GROUP

To help improve services for young people, wish would like to set up a Youth Advisory Group. The advisory group will work to encourage young people ages 13-25 with lived experience of mental health issues and services to come forward to inform and shape decisions, subsequently making wish a better place for young people.



LIVED EXPERIENCE

Working with both ex-service users and young people with lived experience is important and ensures that we listen to their voices whilst also creating opportunities for new ideas, knowledge and experience. In turn, this will give our team the opportunity to engage with young people in all their diversity around the improvement of our services.

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FUTURE PLANS

We are firm believers in listening to feedback from the young people that we support and implementing change to improve our services and outcomes. Over the course of the year, young people asked for various things that we were able to change and implement.

YOUNG PEOPLE ASKED FOR

Outdoor face to face sessions.

Support in school through the pandemic.

Additional self-care support at home

WHAT WE DID

Provided walking 1 to 1 therapy and outdoor group sessions

Provided digital support to Young People via MS Teams in School.

A small group of young people worked with our Youth Worker to design and make self care boxes.

OUR OUTCOMES

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87%

Improved
Depression/
Sadness

94%

Stopped or
Reduced Self
Harm

73%

Recovered from
the Impact of
Abuse

90%

Stopped or
Reduced
Trauma

87%

Improved
Emotional
Resilience

88%

No Longer at Risk
from Child Sexual
Exploitation

85%

Stopped
Feeling
Suicidal

87%

Reduced
Anxiety/
Stress

Wish uses the Evidenced based Tool Young Person's Core which provides a baseline assessment of self harm at the beginning of the young persons support, which is then reviewed every 4-6 weeks. The clinical database then provides statistical analysis of their improvement journey. Notably we are proud to evidence a 94% rate in the reduction or stopping of self harm.

POSITIVE CHANGE

Young people said that while they still had periods of feeling distressing symptoms such as anxiety, depression or urges to self-harm, they felt that they could cope with these better. They recognised that this period of feeling unwell would pass and had identified strategies to cope with the feelings.

90% of young people that we worked with now feel optimistic about their future compared to 100% who used to wonder if they would be better off dead and had thought about killing themselves.

CASE STUDY

"Shekya" was referred by social care after being a target for bullying in school and after an incident of online sexual exploitation. She had a history of low self esteem and self harm and was seen by the outreach worker at the end of 2019. At this time Shekya was victim of another sexual assault by a peer in school. When joining the group, Shekya was struggling to deal with the sexual assault that had taken place and said her peers had blamed her for the exclusion of the perpetrator and suffered a backlash from this in school through bullying and name calling. Shortly after, she had nightmares triggered by peers talking about the perpetrator or seeing his picture. These were the triggers for her self harming and suicidal ideation. In sessions, Shekya explored/dealt with issues around feeling isolated and lonely and began to discuss new relationships with boys. Shekya's self harm reduced from daily to every few months and feels she has a lot more support around her including new healthier ways of coping. She is less vulnerable to sexual exploitation, abusive relationships and risk of serious harm from herself and others.

OUR FUNDING

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Wish are funded through a mix of grants from Trusts and Foundations, commissioning by statutory sector bodies and through donations and income generated by events or training. We are grateful to all of our funding partners and a special thanks goes to those who "stepped up" during the pandemic to increase grant allocations such as City Bridge Trust and BBC Children in Need, and those who joined forces to rapidly respond to the needs of the pandemic. We would also like to recognise John Lyon's Charity who responded to the increase need and demand for our services by supporting us through the Recovery Fund which has allowed us to be sustainable going forward.

There have been many individuals and local organisations who have raised much needed funds during this period through special events such as Bakery Boy Music Radio Shows, sponsored HotPod Yoga thons and community events such as Whitmore Road sponsored Christmas Lights. We were lucky to have Corporate Fundraising events such as the CBRE 50:50 Challenge, and donations from a range of local businesses and schools.



OUR PARTNERS

Young Harrow Foundation have been a huge source of creativity and leadership, both in terms of identifying local needs of young people and bringing a range of charities and local organisations together to meet those needs whilst generating access to new funding opportunities. Heads Up Youth Mental Health Consortium is a valued partner who provide targeted work together with the five specialist charities involved : MIND in Harrow; MOSAIC LGBTQ; PAIWAND; CASS. This partnership will continue to flourish beyond its initial funding by Comic Relief and City Bridge Trust. New Pathways multi-agency Youth Crime Prevention Partnership has been successful in creating a joined up approach to tackling Youth Violence and Child Sexual Exploitation, and we are proud to have run a targeted programme for CSE prevention in Black and Minoritised Ethnic Young Women and to be a key partner in the Harrow Black Lives Matters Group.



JOHN LYON'S CHARITY



CITY
BRIDGE
TRUST

youngharrow
foundation



BBC
Children
in Need

COMIC
RELIEF



OBJECTIVE 1

FOCUSED DELIVERY IN HARROW
FOR AN INITIAL 12-18 MONTHS,
ENSURING HIGH QUALITY SERVICES
SHAPED BY YOUTH VOICE

Many young people in Harrow that self-harm, feel suicidal or experience sexual exploitation (CSE) or the early signs of mental illness do not have access to the right support at the right time. We will work with children and young people in Harrow to deliver support to them when and how they need it.

STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-25

PRIORITIES

1 Focus on delivery for young people who live, work or attend school/college in Harrow.

2 Build the service model and offer for young people to include a wide range of activities and interventions, including therapeutic, peer-to-peer support and creative options.

3 Create a stable funding base to underpin all delivery.

4 Promote and raise awareness of the cause through community engagement.

OBJECTIVE 2 OBJECTIVE 3

PRIORITISE PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION TO INCREASE THE REACH OF THE WISH CENTRE AND THE IMPACT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

ENSURE ORGANISATIONAL STABILITY FOR THE FUTURE

Young people have a range of needs which cannot be met by one organisation alone. Collaboration will be at the heart of our work. We will work in partnership with organisations and individuals to best meet young people's needs.

The wish centre is a small charity reliant on largely restricted income from a small number of funders to support young people. Our objective is to stabilise and grow our income to create stability for the future.

PRIORITIES

- 1 Consolidate current partnership arrangements.
- 2 Develop a partnership engagement plan.
- 3 Develop impact measurement tools to evidence success.
- 4 Complete a website review and marketing & comms plan.

PRIORITIES

- 1 Sustain/ increase our revenue by 20% year on year.
- 2 Review governance and increase trustee representation from individuals who are LGBTQ+, ethnically diverse, have lived experience and young people.
- 3 Review our fundraising strategy to diversify our sources of income.
- 4 Create a Youth Voice strategy that can be embedded into governance, comms and service development.