



Registered Charity 1185092

First Steps ED

YOUR SCHOOL'S CHARITY OF THE YEAR



FUNDRAISE IN YOUR SCHOOL AND HELP
PROMOTE YOUNG PERSON'S MENTAL HEALTH



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INTRODUCTION

Founded in 2004, it is the unwavering hard work, dedication and passion of our trustees, volunteers, partners, funders and incredible staff which enables us to continue our multi-award-winning and quality-assured support to those struggling with eating disorders, as well as parents, carers and a network of professionals.

The First Steps ED team work across the Midlands and further afield, providing support, training and resources. It is to our team, service users and our stakeholders that we express the greatest and sincerest gratitude that we can grow and continue to be the eating disorder charity in the Midlands.

Founded on experience.

We are proud to be commissioned by NHS organisations, as well as through grants from funders whose objectives align to our aims. Our founding principles are based on the experiences of individuals who have had, are still living with, and have recovered from eating disorders and other mental health conditions.

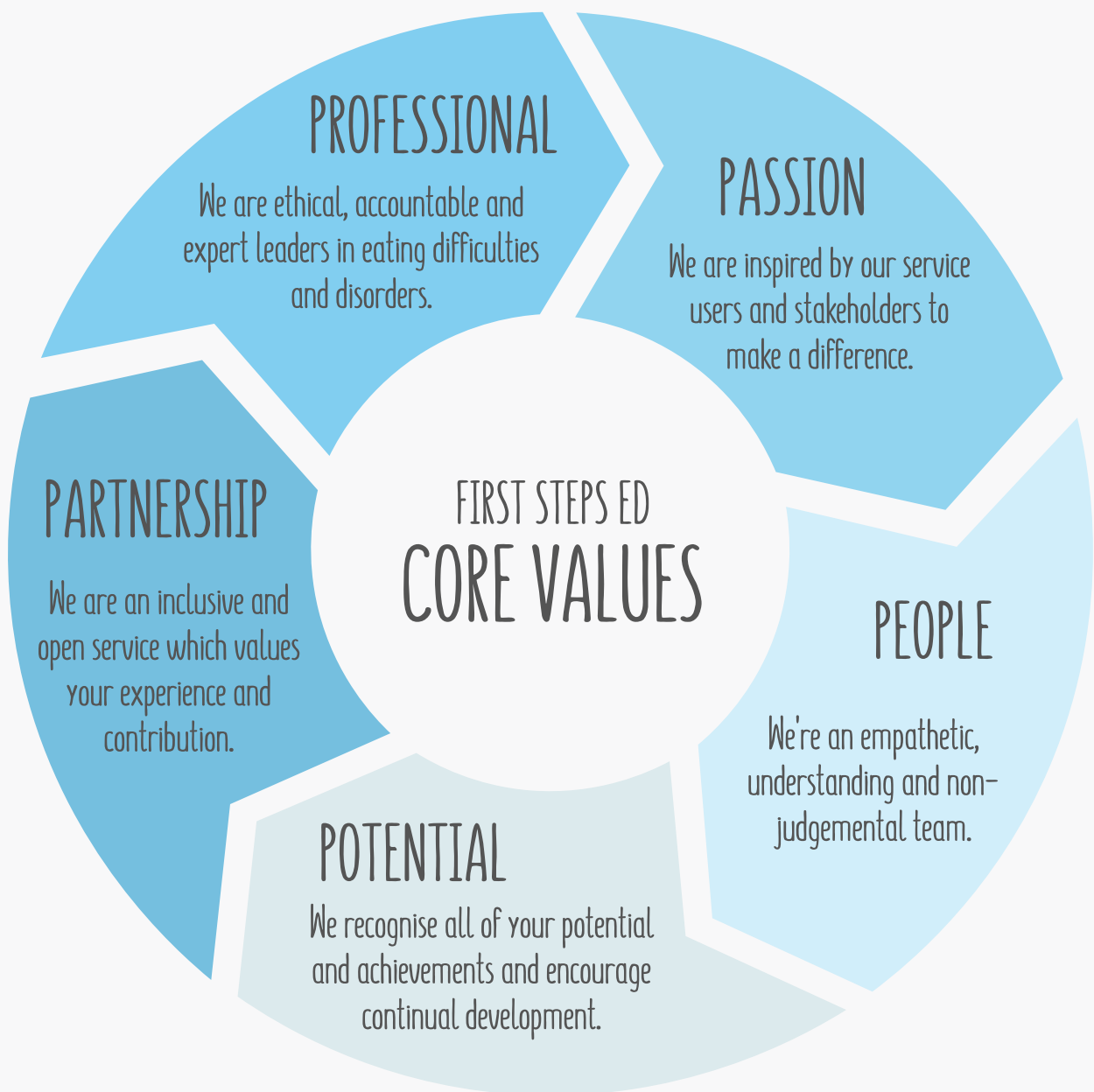
Early intervention and prevention

Developed by people who have lived experience of eating disorders and co-morbid mental health disorders, we provide non-clinical early intervention and prevention services that complement the NHS and Public Health in the community.



We believe that support should be available for all those affected by eating difficulties and disorders, including family, carers, parents and support professionals.

Eating disorders are rarely about food – sufferers often just use this as a way of coping with their underlying emotional difficulties or mental illness in more severe cases. Our values are being passionate about recovery and believing in what we do – we define these as our core 5-P's:



CHARITY OF THE YEAR

Together, we can help break down mental health stigma and create safer spaces in schools for children and young people to talk about their mental health and wellbeing.

Supporting First Steps ED throughout the school year is a great way to engage your students with our work whilst raising vital funds through enjoyable fundraising activities. Whether you've supported us before, or you're still learning more about what we do, we'd love to have you on board.

'Charity of the Year'...

...is an exclusive partnership between your school and your favourite charity, no matter the size or background of your school. By partnering with First Steps ED, you help us ensure we can continue the important work with those who are struggling with food, mood and body image, as well as their families who are looking for support in playing an important role in their loved ones recovery. You are also letting your staff, students and stakeholders know that you are supporting a worthwhile cause, helping to boost morale. Your community knows that their hard work each year contributes to something beyond the school grounds. Your partnership with us is unique to you, and can last one or more years, depending on your own goals and objectives.





"Without a doubt, First Steps ED has played a huge role in my journey to recovery. From attending my first support group five years ago to today, I have so much to thank them for and can't imagine where my path would have led without their help. I'm not quite where I need to be yet, but I've come a long way and First Steps has changed my perspective for the better whilst showing immense compassion. I owe them a lot.

It's this unwavering patience and constant support that inspires me to give something back, so I started volunteering for First Steps in 2018.

When your life is touched by something for such a long time it helps you realise what truly matters to you and for me, it's improving the lives of fellow sufferers. I doubt I would have realised this without First Steps and I am now pursuing a career in this field. Thank you First Steps for supporting me, opening doors, keeping me motivated and always being there."

- Georgie, First Steps ED Service User

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REASONS TO CHOOSE US

According to [NHS Digital](#), one in six children (aged 5-16) were identified as likely having a mental health problem in July 2021, a huge increase from one in nine in 2017. On average, that would amount to five children in every primary and secondary school classroom.

Many children in the UK experience mental health difficulties such as anxiety, eating disorders and depression, as well as issues surrounding self esteem and self worth because of a negative body image. One survey of 11-16-year-olds in the UK by [Be Real](#) found that 79% said how they look is important to them, and over half (52%) often worry about how they look, similar to [Mental Health Foundation's](#) survey of young people (aged 13-19) where 35% said their body image causes them to 'often' or 'always' worry.

Mental health problems affect people of all ages, genders and backgrounds, and it might be an issue which has affected your staff, students and other families. **By choosing us as your charity of the year, we can offer a range of benefits to your school**, to educate and inform teachers and assistants, as well as produce new resources for pupils and their families to boost engagements and personal development around mental health and body image.





Encourage student development through fundraising

Fundraising encourages creative and personal development in your pupils. Not only does it allow them to come together and work towards a common goal, it also provides an opportunity to understand leadership, learn about the importance of charity and community and also be a part of something which will get them talking about mental health.



Exclusive access to visits, workshops and speakers

A big part of what we do is education and early intervention, and we believe that having open conversations with students helps to break down stigma and misconceptions around body image and our mental health.

Often body dissatisfaction in young people is linked to risk-taking behaviours and mental health problems. One survey of UK adolescents by [Be Real](#) found that 36% agreed they would do 'whatever it took' to look good, with 57% saying they had considered going on a diet, and 10% saying they had considered cosmetic surgery.

Our team will be happy to join you to provide workshops and talks to students and staff to offer education around body image and eating disorders in the hope to promote a healthier relationship with food and body (as well as explain a little more about what we do.)



Positive local and national PR

We have a number of links to local and national organisations who are often happy to share stories and fundraising initiatives. We are also happy to support you in sharing information with your own connections. We also have our own social media pages, website and blog so we can share all your fundraising efforts to our extended community.



Dedicated support from our fundraising team

We have a dedicated team to help you with any fundraising events, initiatives and resources. We want to make sure you have the tools and expertise to bring your staff and students fundraising ideas to life, from planning, promotion and support on the day!





CPD-accredited training for professionals

Your team will have access to the First Steps ED CPD training packages which includes either our full-day training course or the option to attend any of our 90-minute CPD modules. Each of our courses aim to raise awareness and knowledge about eating disorders and disordered eating, and demonstrates a range of information and support tools that can be adopted in various professional settings.



A clear display of commitment to an important cause

Choosing us as your **Charity of the Year** highlights a clear passion for promoting mental health, early intervention and prevention. By partnering with us and benefiting from all of the opportunities available to you, not only can you play an active role in protecting young mental health, you will be showcasing your school's commitment to protecting your student's wellbeing.

According to updated NHS Digital data for England, there were 4,962 admissions for eating disorders for children aged 18 and under in 2019-20, a 19% increase from the 4,160 admissions seen in 2017-18. Teenagers (aged 13-18) accounted for 4,348 of the admissions in 2019-20.

Your team will be able to offer confidence to those students who are struggling with their body image or relationship with food before more serious intervention is needed.



Updating you every step of the way!

Our team can talk you through our services and help you set your own fundraising target for the year. When your school donates, we'll keep you updated on the difference you're making and highlight new service innovations, increased awareness and any recent case studies to help highlight how your school is helping lives impacted by poor body image and difficulties around food.

BODY IMAGE WORKSHOPS

First Steps ED recognises that prevention and early intervention is vital to the long-term wellbeing of young people who may be at risk of developing mental health difficulties. With this being one of our core values, our team decided to develop our school 'Body Image Workshops', since body dissatisfaction is not only a risk factor for or symptom of an eating disorder, but can also be a risk factor for depression, anxiety, and low self-esteem.

According to [Mental Health Foundation](#), young people believe that body image is a substantial concern, with 16–25-year-olds identifying it as **the third biggest challenge currently causing harm to young people** (with lack of employment opportunities and failure to succeed within the education system being the first two.)

The information our team provides students with in our workshops can be essential in helping them to manage their wellbeing and emotions, which may otherwise affect their day-to-day life. Studies have shown that poor body image can often prevent young people from engaging in some beneficial activities and behaviours, evidenced by survey data from [Be Real](#) which found that 36% of girls and 24% of boys reported to be avoiding taking part in activities like physical education due to worries about their appearance.



"I am so proud to now be leading the children and young people body image and self esteem workshops. It gives our team a chance to get into schools providing that much needed early intervention. Encourage that healthy body image and allow the young people to explore their whole self-worth."

- Zoe Burnett, Specialist Support Officer

Our eating-disorder informed team are specialists in body image, with experience working in schools. On every visit, our support officers provide warmth, empathy and understanding which allows students to participate and engage with confidence whilst they explore their thoughts and feelings around body image and their relationships with food.

We provide information and activities to encourage pupils to look at what self worth and 'body image' means and the impact it has on self esteem, followed by information around the ways we can develop a more neutral or positive body image.

Mental Health Foundation (with YouGov in March 2019) conducted a survey of 1,118 GB teenagers aged 13–19, and found that 40% felt worried, 37% felt upset, and 31% felt ashamed in relation to their body image, with 40% (26% of boys and 54% of girls) believing that social media has caused them to worry in relation to their body image.

Our workshops spend time on body appreciation and understanding what our bodies do for you, away from image and appearance. Together we explore the impact diet culture, media representation and our genetics can have, as well as how to manage any other societal pressures relating to body image and perception.

Our intentions are to inform, educate and inspire students to be more compassionate to themselves and each other, as well as help bring an end to the stigma around body image. We hope that by engaging in these workshops, they will feel more comfortable with their bodies and be able to thoughtfully communicate their thoughts and feelings, with the knowledge and tools to seek the necessary support, if they need to.

Please note: Workshops are also available to schools who do not participate in our 'Charity of the Year' programme, and can contact our team for pricing and more information.



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CPD TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

First Steps ED's CPD accredited foundation courses aim to raise awareness and knowledge about eating disorders and disordered eating, as well as demonstrate a range of information and support tools that can be adopted in various professional settings.

The 90-minute modules are aimed at professionals who may encounter vulnerable adults or children who could be at risk of developing disordered eating thoughts or behaviours.

Our team understands what it takes to support someone struggling with an eating disorder, and it all starts with the right knowledge and training. We believe in early intervention and trust that better education around disordered eating behaviours can play an important role in protecting those who are at risk of developing an eating disorder, as well as offer effective support to those who are struggling with their relationship with food.

Each one of our trainers have experience in delivering our CPD modules both online and in-person, providing confidence in organisations and individuals who choose our 'Skills for Eating Disorder Support' training programme.

Your teachers and support staff can access any of our training modules free of charge when you choose us as your 'Charity of the Year'. If you have chosen not to partner with us this year, teachers and students are still able to access our public CPD modules which are available throughout the year and cost from £25 per module. Schools can also work directly with our training team to book private training sessions at a time that suits them. To learn more you can contact us at training@firststepsed.co.uk

For more information about our current modules, please keep reading.



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Eating Disorder: All Ages and Genders

This is our most popular module and offers delegates a greater understanding of eating disorders, signs and symptoms, and the effects they have on an individual.



Body Image and Perception

Research has shown that body image issues can develop from a young age, and with the rapid growth of online activity and material it is important we offer pupils more accurate information about our bodies and break down the misinformation they might be reading online.



Eating Disorders in Boys and Men

This course recognises that eating disorders affect people of all ages, genders and backgrounds and offers a deeper understanding into the male experience of eating disorders. We explore stigma, muscle dysmorphia and support tools which can be useful to adopt in your setting.



Eating Disorders and Exercise Addiction

Understanding the connection between eating disorders and compulsive exercise can be important in recognising the signs of deteriorating mental health. This course offers a greater understanding of the impact of gym culture on our mental health, body dissatisfaction and the signs and symptoms of muscle dysmorphia.



Nutrition and Mood

This module explores what is meant by 'normal eating' and the principles of healthy eating, as well as considering nutrition in the context of eating disorders.



More Modules Coming Soon

Being one of our partners, you will be the first to hear of any new and upcoming modules - and be the first to train with us!

The First Steps ED training modules offered a broad range of topics which were thought provoking. It was a nice mix of being talked to; then interaction with trainer and peers; videos etc. I am definitely taking away some great tools for myself and to bring to the work I do with students.

It was eye opening to receive as much information as we did about the concept of eating disorders, and extremely useful to be given the knowledge of how to talk to someone who is suffering from one. I was amazed at many different types of eating disorders are out there, and their impact on children and young people.



HOW YOUR MONEY HELPS

By working with us to build awareness, raise funds and start a conversation around mental health, your team and pupils will help transform lives affected by eating disorders and poor body image.

One-to-One Support

- Peer support for children, young people and students
- Award-winning befriending service
- Counselling and Psychotherapy

Donations can contribute to resources and journals for our service users so they can follow their own progress through recovery and recognise the small wins and achievements they make during this time. It can also be a lifeline to service users with financial hardships who need assistance in accessing counselling and psychotherapy which will help them towards a more sustainable recovery.

Skills-Based Workshops & Support Groups

- Young Person's Wellbeing Workshop
- Body Image Workshop
- Finding Peace with Food Workshop
- Athlete's Workshop for students
- Waiting Well Group
- Student Support Group

We are frequently reviewing and developing our workshops and group support which are our legacy services here at First Steps ED. Your fundraising will go towards our facilitated group sessions which provide education and a safe environment for service users to share their struggles and experiences. It can also contribute to new innovations and the development of future groups and workshops.



Complementary Therapies

- Kundalini Yoga
- Reiki

It is important to First Steps ED that we are able to offer choice and opportunity throughout recovery, and this includes our service options. We are proud to offer our award-winning kundalini yoga series twice per month to service

users who are looking for a service which focuses on breathing and mindfulness. We are also working with a trained Reiki practitioner who offers this form of energy healing to promote wellbeing and rebalancing the mind, body, and soul.

Your fundraising will help us continue our research and seek out new service options.



Carers Support Pathway

- Skills for Carers
- Befriending service

Our team recognises the role of family and carers within recovery, as well as the impact a supportive role can have on parents, partners and siblings during this time. Your donations can help us continue the support we offer to those in a carers role, including our skills-based workshop 'Skills for Carers' which with your funding we can offer for free. We are also able to offer an extension of our befriending service to parents and carers who need a safe space to talk about their experiences and difficulties in supporting their loved one.

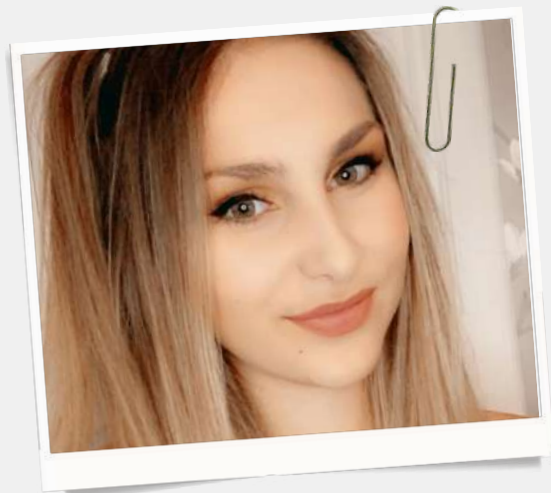
Awareness, Training and Research

- Support in school and workplaces
- CPD training (public and private)
- Investing and working collaborative with other organisations and charities to develop existing knowledge of eating disorders through innovative and national research opportunities.

By getting involved with our charity, whether it be through volunteering, donations, fundraising or simply sharing one of our posts online, you are helping us campaign for better eating disorder awareness. Together we can make sure more people get the support they need, as soon as they need it.

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HERE'S HOW WE'VE HELPED MEGAN



"I can honestly say that I don't know where I would be today if First Steps hadn't been there. Their team didn't need me to tick any criteria to offer support, just knowing I needed it and asking for help was all I needed to do.

I started off having one-to-one sessions, talking about my difficulties with food and body image and went to the young persons support group. It was great to feel like I wasn't the only one who was struggling with this and have someone fully understand where I was coming from.

First Steps even helped me with an emergency referral to CAMHS-ED. Through the medical help from CAMHS and support from First Steps ED I was able to restore the weight I had lost, but recovery is not straight forward. It didn't happen overnight. It certainly wasn't easy. Recovery is very up and down and some days you will feel like waking up and slipping back to old habits, but fighting the urge is the only thing that will truly make you better.

For me having someone understand the way my brain was thinking made recovery so much easier. My parents went to the 'Skills for Carers' group at First Steps, for me this was the best thing in my recovery journey.

I felt less guilty for my anorexia as I knew that they had a better understanding of how to help me and had a group of people they could talk to who all were going through the same.

I don't know when I'll say that I'm fully recovered, but thanks to First Steps ED I have the tools and understanding to fight back against the thoughts that I have when they arise. I still have my days when I struggle and feel like I don't deserve to eat and hate the way my body looks, but I now have enough respect for my body to make sure it has the right nutrients that it needs to function.

If I had to give any advice for someone who is at the beginning of their recovery journey it would be don't be afraid to speak out and say you need help, don't accept no as an answer and focus on your own journey. Every recovery journey is different, just because your journey may be different to someone else it doesn't make you any less deserving of help."

- Megan, First Steps ED Service User



START FUNDRAISING

If you've chosen to make First Steps ED your **Charity of the Year**, you can enjoy fantastic fundraising opportunities that will bring you, your team, and your students closer together, all alongside our dedicated fundraising team.

Here are just some of the most popular school fundraiser ideas to get you started:



Hold a Raffle

This one is for everyone! Sell tickets to teachers, pupils and parents for the chance to win donated prizes. This is one of the easiest school fundraising ideas and fun for staff, stakeholders and families!



A Sweet Treat

Schools often love a foodie fundraiser. Get everyone involved to contribute cakes, buns and biscuits with all proceeds going to your fundraiser pot. You could even have a bake off event where teachers & parents show off their best bake and people vote for their favourite - £1 per vote perhaps!



Dress Your Best

Whether you want to dress up, dress down or try some fancy dress, ask pupils and teachers to ditch their uniforms for the day in aid of a good cause.



Get Crafty

Invite students and staff to unleash their creative sides and hold a school art show. Charge a small entrance fee and go one step further and hold an auction and let parents, family and friends bid to buy the art!



Pay-to-Play!

Invite students and their families to a pay-to-play night. Choose a game (bingo, quiz night or why not try a beetle drive!), and charge a small entry fee for anyone who'd like to join. Contact parents or local businesses to donate a prize for the event.



Teacher Charity Match

When the weather warms up, organise a 'friendly' game of football or rounders between teams of teachers. Student will love the chance to watch their favourite teachers compete, either against other teachers or maybe hold your own teacher-student throwdown! Sell tickets for the event, or have buckets around on the day.

Raising funds for a good cause, or even coming up with quick fundraising ideas for school is a great way to show children the value of doing things for others, creating or strengthening ties with their peers, fellow pupils and the local community. It is also a great opportunity to bring the school together for some fun.

With so many primary and secondary school fundraising ideas to choose from, we can't wait to join you on your fundraising journey and help you create your own 'school fundraising calendar' to help inspire and engage children, parents, teachers and even the wider community to come together and make a real difference.



Check out the First Steps ED website and blog for more ideas & inspiration!

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Contact Us:

Contact us today about making First Steps ED your charity partner of the year, and together we can promote early intervention, prevention and supportive spaces for young people and their mental health. Our dedicated fundraising team are waiting to hear from you and help get you started!

First Steps ED

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Thank you! We hope you can join us in providing hope, choice and opportunities to lives affected by eating disorders.



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