



FIRST STEPS ED



ANNUAL REPORT

2020 - 2021

THE MIDLANDS EATING DISORDER CHARITY,
PROVIDING HOPE, OPPORTUNITIES AND
CHOICES THROUGH RECOVERY.

Charity No. 1185092
info@firststepsed.co.uk





02

OFFERING HOPE, OPPORTUNITY AND CHOICES

It has been a turbulent year for those struggling with their mental health. We have seen a lot of uncertainty and change in the last 12 months but one thing that remains the same is our focus and passion to bring hope and support to those who need our services.

The impact of the pandemic is **unmistakable**. Referrals for our services have increased substantially. Between January to March 2021 we received 476 referrals for our eating disorder services a 69.5% increase on the number of referrals received for the whole of 2019/20.

We have responded by investing more resources to support 48% more children and young people, and 50% more adults reaching out and taking their first step for recovery.

This years annual report will showcase not only who we are and what we do, but also the challenges and achievements we have faced this last year and how our team were able to transition into what became a new 'normal' for our services and support groups.





03

TABLE OF CONTENTS

About Us
Highlights of 2020/21
Who We Support
How to Find Us
Social Impact
PPIE Committee
Marketing and Communications
Core Services
Looking Ahead
Donations and Fundraising
Contact Us





FIRST STEPS ED

ABOUT US

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

REGISTERED OFFICE

Woburn House, Vernon Gate
Derby, DE1 1UL

CHARITY NO. 1185092

This is my first year as Chair of the Board of Trustees and it has been quite a year! April 20 - March 21 has been a difficult and challenging year for all and First Steps ED was no exception.



The board of trustees are incredibly proud of the way our staff and volunteers have responded and gone above and beyond, every day, to ensure that we were able to deliver services albeit in different formats. We are truly grateful for your dedication, innovation and determination in what we acknowledge were very difficult circumstances. Thank You All.

On behalf of the board of trustees I would like to thank our CEO for his leadership and resilience throughout the year and in overseeing the move to our new premises at Woburn House. Our thanks also go to our committed funders and partners for their ongoing support in these challenging times.

CAROLYN GILBY, FIRST STEPS ED CHAIR



"IT'S FANTASTIC WORKING FOR AN ORGANISATION THAT SEEKS TO BE LED BY SERVICE USERS. IF ONLY MORE PLACES LIKE THIS EXISTED."





HIGHLIGHTS OF 2020/21

05



THE INTRODUCTION OF NEW GOVERNMENT GUIDELINES

With the introduction of new government guidelines brought in by the pandemic, our services seamlessly transitioned to online delivery. With an increased service offering online, we were able to support a national audience, reaching thousands of new service users able to join our groups and access our latest resources.

We also moved into our new premises at Woburn House over the last year and following the end of home-working measures, we are excited to re-introduce face-to-face support and a blended approach to services with Woburn House providing more clinic rooms.



A NATIONAL SURVEY AND RESEARCH INTO THE PANDEMIC

Working with partners from BEAT and FEAST, our teams launched a new national survey looking at the impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on those with eating disorders.

The survey received 1124 responses, providing enough data for a significant statistical analysis and reporting. The team's next steps is to review and report findings which will be then shared with NHS England at their request, before the 3 VCSE project partners then report into the public domain.



A NEW RESEARCH-BASED CHILDREN'S BOOK

The team were proud to support a new children's book written by academics from the University of Derby which aimed to help children understand the importance of healthy eating habits, released in time for World Book Day.

A total of 5,000 copies of the book were printed and distributed to local primary schools thanks to a grant awarded by Foundation Derbyshire from the Ashby Family Fund.



Foundation
Derbyshire





WHO WE SUPPORT?

We are passionate about offering a service which is inclusive, empathic, understanding and non-judgmental. Support should be available for all those affected by eating difficulties and disorders regardless of age, disability, race, sex, gender identity, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marriage or civil partnership status.

These principles of equality and diversity underpin our person-centred, service user led approach to mental health, alongside our core values and being passionate about recovery and believing in what we do.

"First Steps have provided an exceptional level of support throughout my journey towards recovery. Their outstanding services have enabled me to become increasingly confident with my relationship with food and life itself. I cannot applaud First Steps enough." **FIRST STEPS ED SERVICE USER**



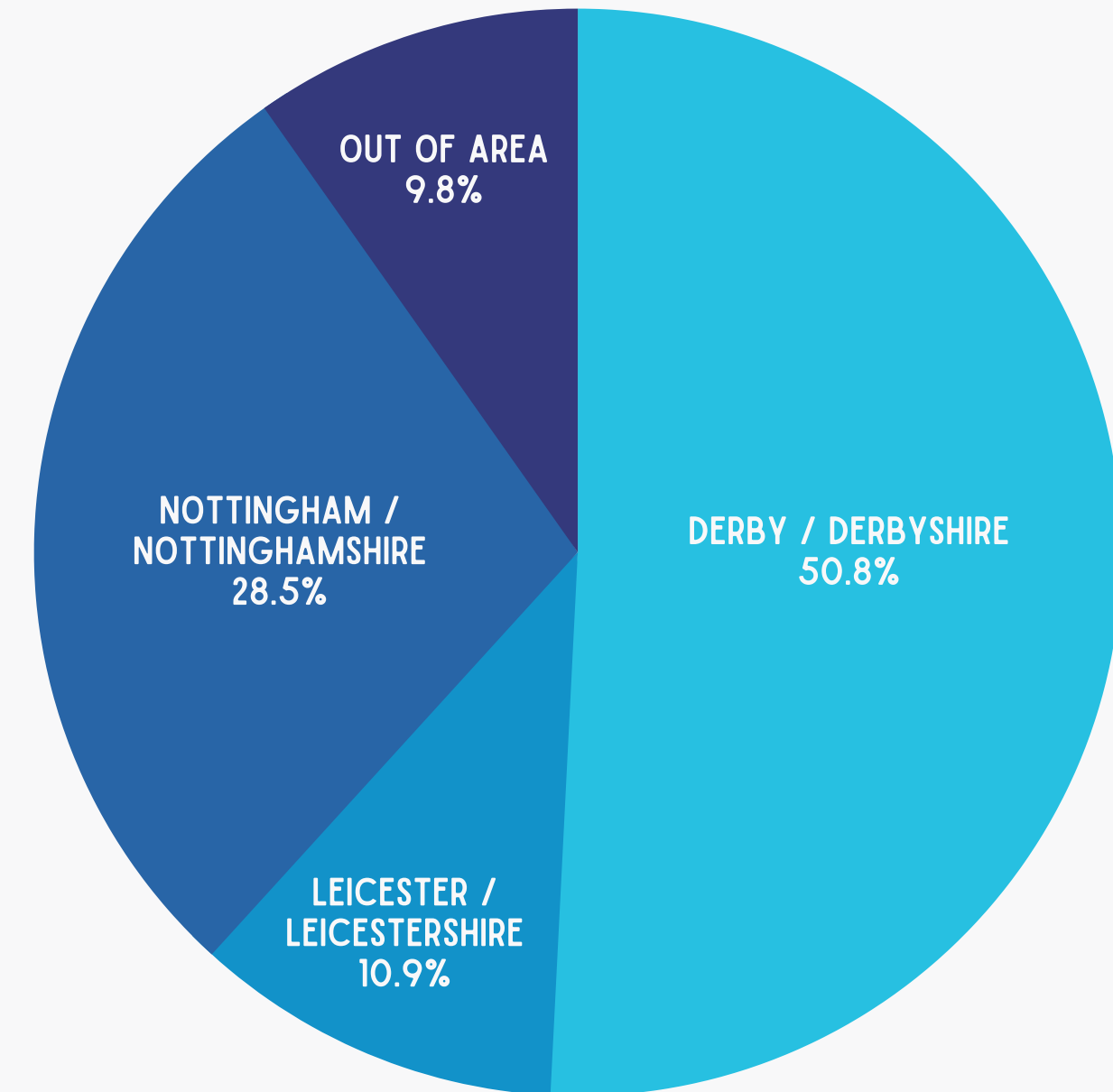


WHO WE SUPPORT?

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

To meet the changing demand for services under lockdown, our team migrated many of our services online to anticipate any disruption caused because of social distancing. This opened up our services to a national audience, benefiting service users who may not have this support regionally or close to their home, in education or at work and those across the Midlands who would have struggled to attend any of in-house services and Recovery self-help groups.

"I would like to express my support to First Steps ED. I have had problems since a teenager on and off with eating and only in the last year sought help at 37 years old. I have to say how comfortable and welcoming staff are. It is not an easy thing to do and they provide an amazing and supportive service to those in need. They play such an important role in my life and I am positive in many other's lives too. They are much needed in the community and a very valued service which I highly recommend to everyone." **FIRST STEPS ED SERVICE USER**



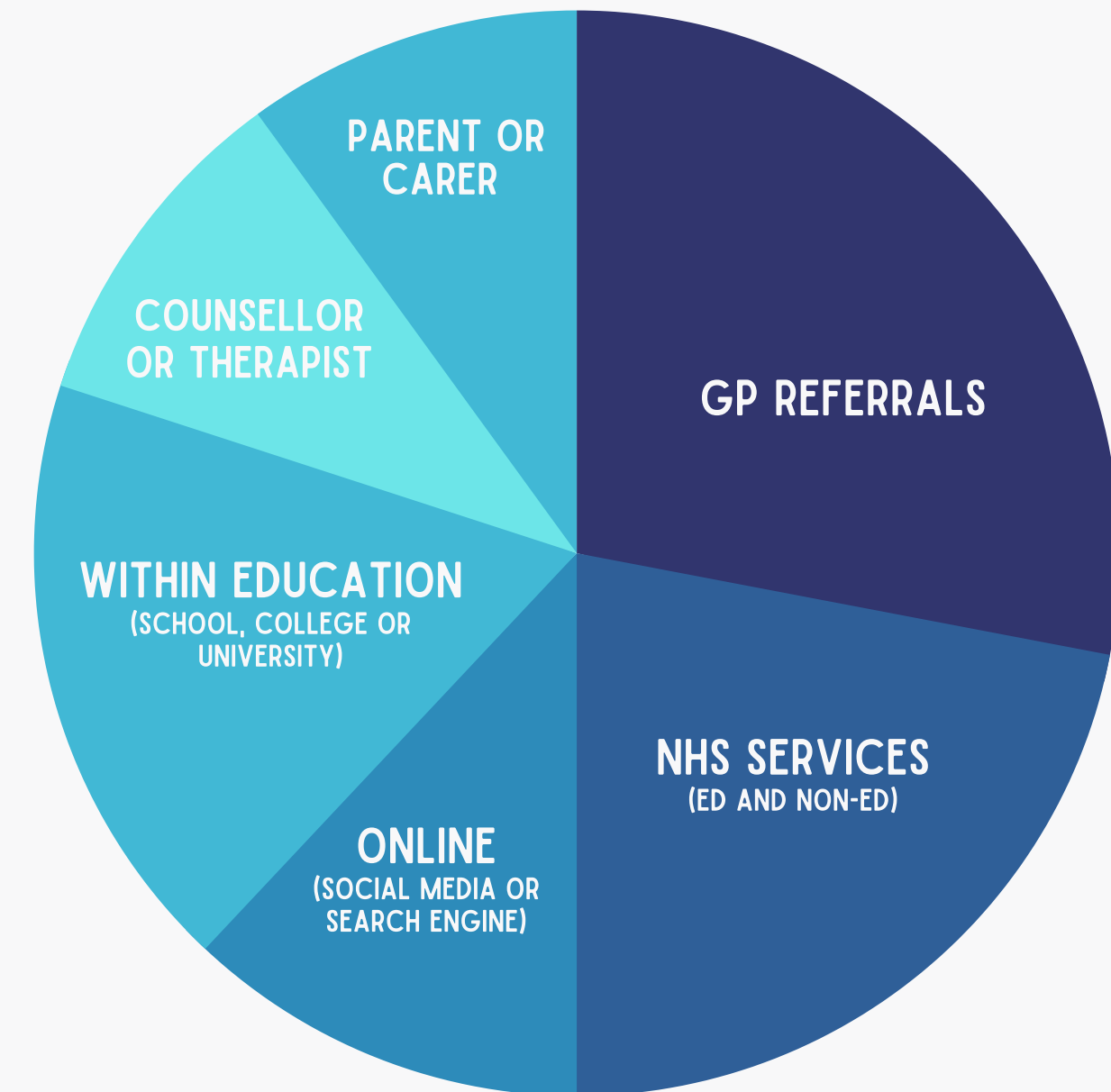


HOW TO FIND US

From January to March this year, we received 476 new referrals into our services, representing a 178% increase against the same period last year.

We believe that support should be available for anyone affected by eating difficulties and disorders, including families, carers and professionals. Unfortunately the pandemic has created additional barriers in accessing support. Because of this, our team work closely with communities and professionals within healthcare and education to ensure people are able to find support and learn more about our services and how we can help.

"It wasn't until I was in my late 30's and that a mental health nurse identified I had an Eating Disorder and referred me to First Steps for support. I did not think you can have an ED when you are overweight. First Steps supported me in identifying and accepting that I had an ED and made feel welcome." **FIRST STEPS ED SERVICE USER**



HERE'S WHERE OUR SERVICE USERS FIRST HEARD ABOUT FIRST STEPS ED.



09



OUR SOCIAL IMPACT

We have all had to engage and work a little differently this year, including our volunteers. Their support over the pandemic has helped us transition smoothly in increasing our online and digital services and ensure our support channels remained open throughout. They have supported us in many roles including befriending, counselling and contributions to our self-help guides and recovery group resources.





OUR SOCIAL IMPACT

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

10

125

active volunteers, befrienders
and student placements from
March 2020 to 2021.

Volunteers continue to play a fundamental role in what we do, supporting both the charity and its service users. The opportunities available to volunteers comes in many forms throughout the year from service delivery to resource and content support.

Our volunteers, befrienders and student counsellors remain one of our most valuable assets and have played a huge role in ensuring our services and support channels remain open and available to those who need us. With a total of **9293** hours given, our volunteered hours this year have a value of £126,859 (based on £13.65 average hourly pay rate in Derby).





OUR SOCIAL IMPACT

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

11

54%

of our befrienders have a lived experience of eating disorders.

We offer our service users the opportunity to support us through volunteering once recovered which can offer accountability and the motivation to keep them on track with their own recovery.

"I thoroughly enjoyed being a volunteer at First Steps. It was great being able to help and support others on their journey of recovery. Being able to turn my experience into something positive was very rewarding, and so too was the very generous feedback. I learned so much from staff, other volunteers and service users." **FIRST STEPS ED VOLUNTEER**





OUR SOCIAL IMPACT

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

FROM SUPPORTED TO **SUPPORTER**



REFERRAL + SUPPORT

A service user journey with us begins with our online referral form, followed by an initial assessment by one of our compassionate qualified team.



PRIORITISING RECOVERY

Once we've learned more about you we will offer and provide services and a support package based on your recovery needs.



BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Over time you will feel better enabled and find confidence in your ability to manage your recovery and mental health.



OPPORTUNITY TO GIVE BACK

Volunteering can be a good opportunity to use your lived experience to help someone with similar difficulties.

12

First Steps ED benefit from the support of previous and current service users in a number of ways. The demand for eating disorder support is always there so we are always happy to hear from people in our community who are looking to make a positive contribution.





OUR SOCIAL IMPACT: GEORGIE'S STORY

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

13

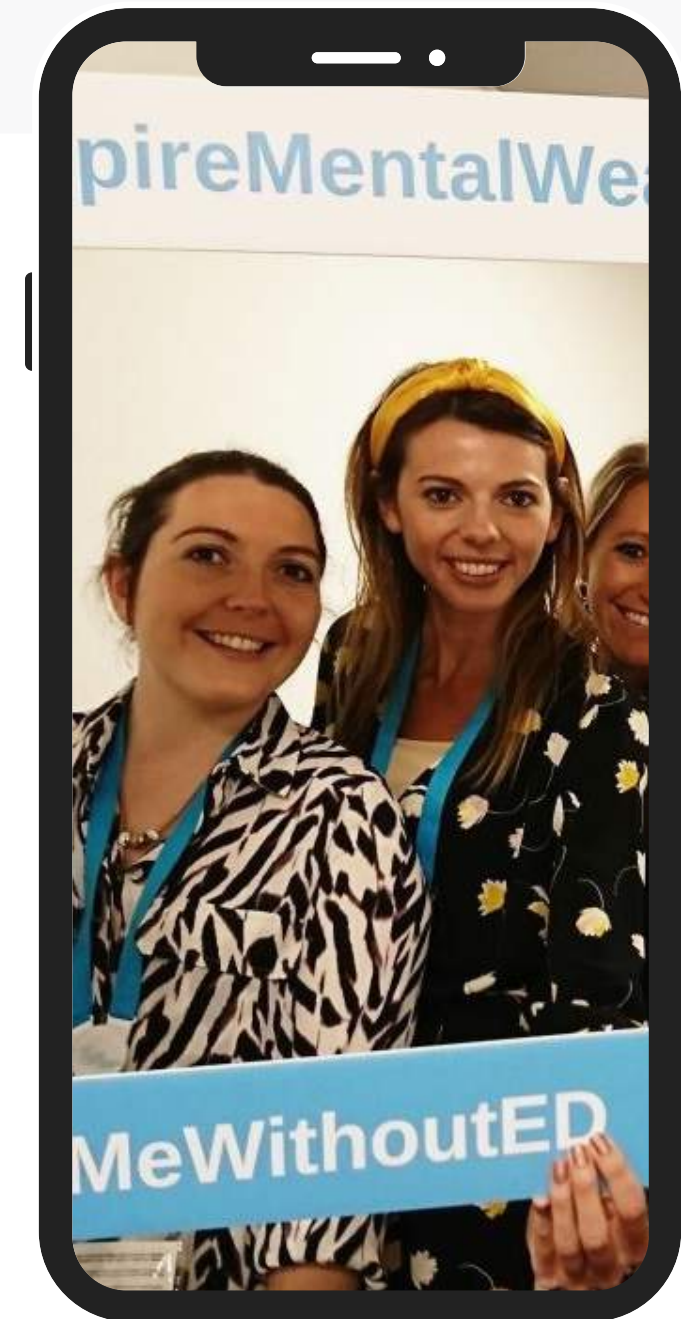
“ Without a doubt, First Steps ED has played a huge role in my journey to recovery. From attending my first support group five years ago to today, I have so much to thank them for and can't imagine where my path would have led without their help. I'm not quite where I need to be yet, but I've come a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

It's this unwavering patience and constant support that inspires me to give something back. I started volunteering for First Steps in 2018 and have enjoyed so many valuable opportunities and experiences during this time from facilitating support groups and media interviews for the organisation, as well as creating educational resources and blogs which is all incredibly rewarding.

My voluntary work has brought me into contact with so many fantastic people, many of whom I now consider my closest friends. Most of First Steps' volunteers have lived experience of an eating disorder or caring for somebody with one meaning we share a strong common bond that's quite unique.

Volunteering really boosts my confidence and self-esteem and has really ignited a passion in me to work in mental health. 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.

”





FROM THE PPIE TEAM

(PATIENT PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT AND ENGAGEMENT COMMITTEE)

The involvement of service users and carers is vitally important in making sure our activities are relevant to our key stakeholder groups and all the people our organisation impacts. Our PPIE committee was created to ensure that our patients and the wider public are involved in the activities we undertake. Patients and the public bring a wealth of experience and provide valuable perspectives on the way that our services are designed and delivered.

14



EMILY ELSON

CHAIR AND ADULT
LEAD



SAM RABY

BOYS AND MEN
LEAD



GEORGIE LAZZARI

MARKETING AND
COMMUNICATIONS LEAD



DANIEL GREEN

PARENT AND CARER
LEAD



TASHA

BLACK ASIAN MINORITY
AND ETHNIC (BAME) LEAD



FROM THE PPIE TEAM

COMMITTEE REVIEW

UNDERSTANDING THE IMPACT OF THE PANDEMIC

Working with representatives from BEAT and FEAST, we were proud to support a new national survey designed to understand how individuals with eating difficulties had been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The survey received over a thousand responses which will provide a significant amount of statistical data for analysis and reporting. The next steps will be to review and report these findings which will be shared with NHS England at their request and before the 3 VCSE project partners place the results and report into the public domain.

INTRODUCTION OF THE HUMMINGBIRD AWARD

The Hummingbird Award symbolises all that we stand for. It is a monthly award which aims to recognise those individuals who have gone above and beyond to live out the First Steps ethos and values to selflessly improve the organisation and lives of others.

Since its introduction, the award has given us the opportunity to reflect and give thanks to our incredible staff and volunteers.



“ This year has been our first full year as a sub-committee under the First Steps ED CIO and what a year it has been. The pandemic presented us with many challenges but the committee quickly transitioned to virtual meetings and digital delivery to keep their service and output running smoothly. This online approach enabled us to recruit speciality leads from further afield giving the committee a boarder range of diverse views, experiences and networks to draw upon. Throughout the year the committee remained focused on their key priority; to represent the needs and requirements of our service users and stakeholders in an ever-changing environment. Committee members worked well together, with staff, partners and the wider community to create some fantastic, well-received projects.



EMILY ELSON, PPIE CHAIR AND TRUSTEE

”



FROM THE PPIE TEAM

'COPING WITH THE FESTIVE SEASON' GUIDEBOOK

Funded by Derby City Council, Covid19 Emergency Grant, our PPIE Committee coproduced a '**How to Cope with the Festive Season**' guidebook, a 'how-to' guide with tips for dealing with food, relationships, loneliness, changes in routine and social activities during the festive period.

The guide was written by our subject leads who were all able to offer a unique perspective for their specialist areas. The resource was printed and couriered to 13,400 primary and secondary school students, with 400 additional copies handed to patients in all NHS East Midlands Mental Health Hospital Trusts before the Christmas holidays.

Following its success, the team continue to work closely with our marketing team to develop relevant resources to share with our growing networks.

RAISE AWARENESS THROUGH THE MEDIA

With a growing audience online this year, our team wanted to create some meaningful campaigns to celebrate and share the unique stories and experiences of our service users and stakeholders. Campaigns included our 'Words From a Wiser Me' series which shared the stories of our service users, as well as our **#SupportNotStigma** campaign for Eating Disorder Awareness Week (EDAW 2021).

As a part of our collaborative work with University of Derby, Tasha and Daniel joined students to film the 'Coping with Christmas' documentary.

We have also had the pleasure of speaking to a number of broadcasters this year, discussing early intervention and better access to treatment for Eating Disorders. Georgie joined teams from Derby Sounds and Gem Radio, as well as Mark Taylor from the Eating Disorder Insight Podcast.

NATIONAL EATING DISORDER INFORMATION APP

The PPIE Committee were delighted to be asked to offer and review content for a new Eating Disorder Information App to benefit those with disordered eating and disorders by developer Dr Knut of Expert Self Care, in partnership with Bristol University, Eating Disorders Health Integration Team (EDHIT) and other VCSE eating disorder charities. First Steps ED collaboration involves promoting the new app through NHS and Student Welfare networks once published in Summer 2021.

CHAPTER CONTRIBUTION TO 'THE PRACTICAL HANDBOOK OF EATING DIFFICULTIES'

Our PPIE committee lead for communications joined forces with Antonia one of our staff to co-write a chapter titled: The role of peer support in helping people with eating disorders to recover. This prestigious practical handbook is comprised of contributions from mental health practitioners, psychologists, campaigners, academics and researchers and we were very proud to be able to produce a chapter for the new book due to be published in Autumn 2021.

ANNUAL STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

The PPIE committee have been busy reviewing the current annual stakeholder survey, making improvements, and ensuring its relevance for the current climate and all stakeholders.





MARKETING AND COMMUNICATIONS

17



FACEBOOK

14,000

people reached per month, now with over 3000 page likes and followers.



INSTAGRAM

10,000

people reached per month, with just under 1400 followers (which has more than doubled in the last year.)



TWITTER

50,000

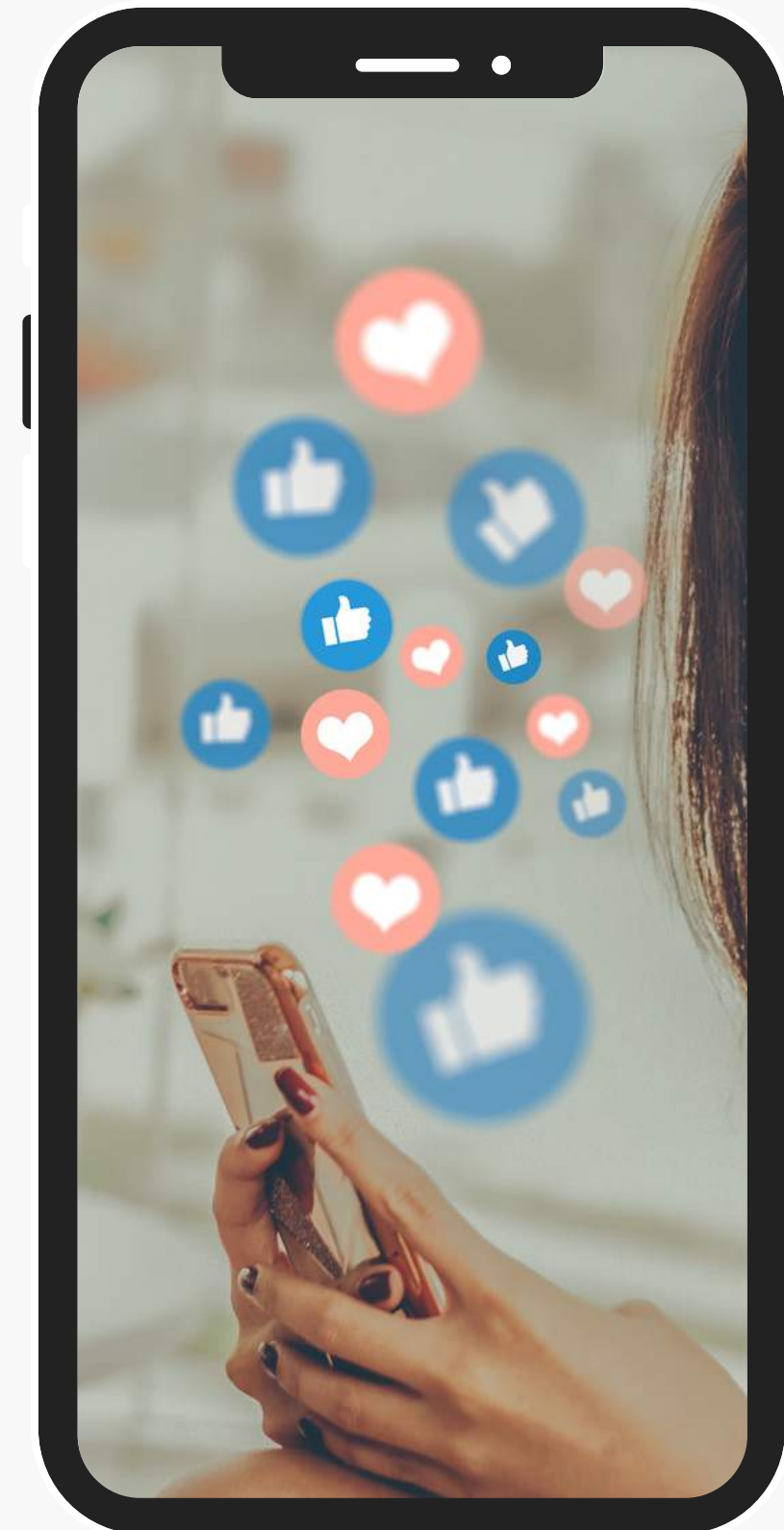
impressions per month, with an engaged community of over 3000 followers.



LINKED IN

638

professionals following and engaging with us on LinkedIn.





A BIG SHIFT TO DIGITAL

To meet the changing demand for services under lockdown, our team introduced a number of new services and support available online to address and anticipate any interruption caused because of social distancing. This is something the team continue to review to ensure our service users are receiving appropriate support, whilst adhering to government guidelines.

MORE ACCESSIBLE

Moving to online platforms, our service users and peers can access more of our services and training opportunities. This has been beneficial to those out-of-area who would have previously struggled to attend in-house events.

INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES

With more focus on our digital channels we have been able to find a new network of partners and collaborators. This has led to an increase in awareness of our services as well as additional creation and sharing of resources.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGNS

Throughout the pandemic our online audience has been increasing month on month. We have been able to offer 24/7 support with self care advice and resources available online and on our website.

“What a year! I'm so proud to be a part of such a hard-working and passionate team. The pandemic presented a number of challenges but it's been an absolute pleasure working on some incredible projects and resources which have had a huge impact on our service users and stakeholders. Having an increased focus on our online presence has also meant we could nurture so many new relationships in the last few months so I'm excited to see what the future holds for the charity and team!”



LUCY ROBINSON, MARKETING MANAGER



WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

19



GEORGE MYCOCK
@MYO_MINDS

“ Working with First Steps ED has been a supportive and encouraging experience. Every idea I have thrown their way has been respected, and help has been offered through their many incredible staff members. First Steps were the first organisation to see the potential for MyoMinds and working with them has helped me nurture my opinions and develop my knowledge further. I am now working on projects and with people that I would have never dreamed of working with and I owe a huge thank you to the support First Steps have provided and still provide me (and MyoMinds) with. Truly an incredible charity ran by equally incredible people. ”



HANNAH HICKINBOTHAM
@THEFOBPODCAST

“ Partnering with First Steps has been an absolute pleasure and has provided me with an excellent platform for the beginning of my career. I have had the opportunity to work with a number of their incredible team and I am always met with excitement, passion, and dedication to the support they provide. Together, we have had several opportunities to brainstorm and develop excellent projects and believe that working together has increased my self-confidence as a result of the supportive response from the team. I am extremely grateful for the support I have received and the belief the team has in me to provide essential support to their service users as demonstrations, lectures, and more. ”



CORE SERVICES

The impact of COVID-19 on those struggling with their mental health and/or eating disorders is unmistakable. The uncertainty and isolation, as well as the barriers created in accessing vital support networks and services meant that many people felt left alone with their struggles.

Many services have reported increased referrals since the start of the pandemic, including First Steps ED. Referrals into our Children and Young People's service (5 to 17 years) has increased by 48%, alongside a 50% increase in adult referrals (18 years+) when compared to the same period last year.

From January to March this year, we have received 476 new referrals which represents a 178% increase against the same period in 2019/2020.



CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE · EATING DISORDER IN STUDENT SERVICES · INTEGRATED COMMUNITY SUPPORT (ICS)
BEFRIENDING · COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY · RECOVERY SELF-HELP GROUPS





CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE



Derby and Derbyshire
Clinical Commissioning Group

Thanks to a range of grants and funders who support our charity, children and young people receive fully-funded support.

21

We've continued our valued work with children and young people (CYP) throughout 2020, supporting 182 young people from both self-referral, parent referral or referrals made by a professional, all of which continue to grow through our targeted communications and engagement initiatives across the Midlands region.

In accessing this service, our Specialist Support Officers screen new referrals within 24 hours and offer a first appointment, with assessments and treatment offered within 28 days (or 7 days if deemed urgent.) Our team offers both one-to-one support or the option to attend weekly self-help groups and psycho-education following referral. Parents and carers providing support for children can access our Maudsley Collaborative Skills workshops at no cost. The team works in partnership across education and healthcare to provide a variety of support for CYP and families.

Following referral and assessment, our Specialist Support Officers provide a 10 week stepped-care plan of one-to-one support. Each 45-minute session is designed to empower and motivate young people to overcome their struggles and take positive strides to improve their mental health, wellbeing and relationship with their body and food.

Young people can also gain valuable life skills and work experience opportunities by becoming one of our valued volunteers with progression to become an ambassador and become involved in coproduction of our services and facilitate our weekly support groups.





CORE SERVICES

506

peer support sessions
delivered

182

new children and young
people service referrals

“The year that has passed us by has seen a range of students who accessed your service. I believe you have met with students from all year groups, genders and with different needs, and never giving up when challenged with Covid restrictions, exclusions and school refusers. Adapting your service to offer wider counselling and support, not just around eating issues and disorders, enabled students to get support they needed quicker and effectively, when need for support reached a new high.

Seeing an increase eating issues ranging from poor diet, change in routine, the need to eat, to extreme concerns, has made life for some of our students very hard indeed. Additionally an increase in negative self image and loathing, self harm and general low mood and poor mental health have often been additional concerns you have supported as you and your colleagues built up trusting relationships with our young folk. Seeing our young people become healthier, more confident and resilient during the last 12 months shows the success of your support.

Working alongside your service has helped staff focus on their skills and knowledge, which has led to a more holistic approach to welfare and our partnership has showed students our commitment to healing and change.

I hope the next few months are kinder to us and thanks again for your continued help for our students. Your service is a great asset and we look forward to working alongside you for many years.”

JULIE WOODS, BUXTON COMMUNITY SCHOOL

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

“I am extremely proud that we still had a presence in schools during the pandemic for those students that needed face-to-face support. It is great to be leading a strong, passionate and dynamic team who have further highlighted their dedication to our service users, shifting support to our secure online channels and ensuring everyone continues to receive exceptional and ongoing support.”



**HOLLY WHITEHEAD, YOUNG PERSONS SERVICE
COORDINATOR**

**PEER SUPPORT · YOUTH CLUB
· SKILLS-BASED WORKSHOPS · VOLUNTEERING ·
SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS**





CORE SERVICES

EATING DISORDER IN STUDENT SERVICES [EDISS]

23

We're leading the way in providing support to students in schools, colleges and universities throughout the Midlands. Our aim is to ensure that the current generation feel supported and able to thrive in their education.

EDISS is a multi-disciplinary team, embedded within university health practices, communicating regularly with primary and secondary care, university mental health teams and sometimes the parents of a student, to ensure that the support being received by the student is appropriate and evidenced-based under NICE Guidelines.

"EDISS is an absolutely essential service which kept me going this year. NHS services are harder and harder to access and this fills a massive gap" **FIRST STEPS ED SERVICE USER**



Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Clinical Commissioning Group



IN THE LAST YEAR WE'VE CONTINUED TO EXPAND OUR EDISS SERVICES...

We are currently supporting students in Nottingham Trent University, Nottingham University, Derby University, Loughborough University, Buxton and Leek College, Derby College and Nottingham College making EDISS available to over 183,535 students.

80%

felt EDISS had a positive impact on their performance at University.

90%

agreed EDISS helped prepare them for difficult times at University.





CORE SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

During the academic year, our EDISS team provided 173 students with our stepped-care peer support or counselling sessions, including access to our weekly 'Student Drop-In' which was the most attended group of our weekly Recovery Self-help support over the last year.

OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

The 2020/2021 term has seen a significant change in the way EDISS operates, making sure the service and support available remained working fully under lockdown conditions for much of the year.

During lockdown, EDISS has seen many students moving away from their university to be closer to home, including international students. The team were quick to mobilise through investment in a new online platforms where the team were able to continue the level of support being offered to all students, regardless of location. The change also maintained the NHS service specification bundle and blended service model to students and professionals in education.

The team continues to work with healthcare professionals, multi-agency teams and on-campus student wellbeing staff with a focus on current research into mental health support for young people and their families through the key transitions between secondary and tertiary education.

THE EDISS IMPACT REPORT

Our EDISS team produced a new 'Impact Report' covering the past year and 5 years of our NHS commissioned service. The report provided strong outcomes and endorsements from university professionals, wellbeing staff and GPs. The report also used case studies from student beneficiaries. By mapping our outcomes against NHS tariffs and waiting times standards, we were able to demonstrate how much our EDISS has saved the NHS;

WITHOUT EDISS...

Students who present as severe would be likely to terminate their studies and require full-time inpatient care. Based on 2020 statistics, this would mean 9 students would be dropping out of university due to their eating disorder with an average cost of £71,500 per inpatient admissions, totalling £643,500.

Students presenting as moderate to at-risk could deteriorate and move to a 'severe' category and require either a day service or inpatient services at an average cost of £71,500 per inpatient admission. Based on 2020 statistics, 10 student would requires a day service (based on 3 days per week during term-time at £181 per day), totalling £195,480. A further 41 students would require outpatient treatment (average of 10 sessions/weeks per student at £220 per session), totalling £90,200.

Our EDISS Impact Review for one academic year (2020) concluded that the total saving to NHS eating disorders services totalled: £929,180.





THE BEFRIENDING SERVICE



Befriending is our multi-award winning support programme, recognised by NHS England's National Integrated Personal Commissioning Team where we match a service user with one of highly trained and supervised befrienders. The service offers long term support, not only to our service users, but to families and carers who might be seeking help and assurance whilst they provide care to their loved one.

Our volunteers and ambassadors are our greatest asset alongside our dedicated staff and in the past year our Befriending team has delivered 600 supervision sessions and 11 training events to ensure that our Technology Enabled Care Services remain of high quality and safe for our Befriendees and Befrienders.

◀ Rose had led our befriending service since 2013 after previously being a volunteer and service user. Her role involves training and supervising the 60 volunteer befrienders who offer 1:1 support to service users.



CORE SERVICES

Befriending can provide a safe space to explore your difficulties and an opportunity to express your thoughts and feelings. Many of our service users say that the service allows them to feel 'heard' and understood, making it easier to work on recovery. Our befrienders are also able to signpost to other services when alternative support may be beneficial.

TECHNOLOGY ENABLED CARE SERVICES

Befriending is available via email, phone or video chat which meant that the service faced very little disruption throughout the pandemic. This service is endorsed by the NHS National Integrated Personal Commissioning Team as a model that can be easily adopted by other mental health services as truly transforming lives. Our service users agree, with many choosing to join our befriending team themselves following a sustained recovery in their eating disorder for over 2 years.

193

the number of SUs
accessing befriending
over the last year.

160

average hours of
support provided by our
befriendees per week.

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

“ FSED has directly helped and improved my mental health in more ways I would of imagined. Firstly with the help of counselling, I have identified past trauma I have never dealt with and how this has manifested into the relationship I have with food. I've learned eating disorders are a symptom of something so much deeper and how getting to the root of the cause can really help.

Secondly with the help of befriending, I feel I have support from someone who is there to listen, inform, be a friend, mentor and be a listening ear when things get tough. This service has really helped as I know I can share my worries, thoughts, struggles and triumphs in a non judgemental and non pressured way. Sometimes we all need that in life and befriending has been a lifetime along my journey of recovery and well being.

Lastly FSED waiting well group, has provided me with access to support in a group setting. Reminding me I'm not alone in my struggles and to not cut myself off and isolate myself from others. This service is available every week and I know if I'm needing extra support I can access it without pressure or expectation.

FIRST STEPS ED SERVICE USER

”



CORE SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

INTEGRATED COMMUNITY SUPPORT (ICS)



27

NHS VCSE EATING DISORDERS PARTNERSHIP



We work as part of a multidisciplinary NHS VCSE team with NHS Derbyshire Adult Community Eating Disorder Service (ACEDS) and Children and Young People (CYP-CEDS) which offers treatment to patients from inpatient and outpatient settings diagnosed with Severe and Enduring Eating Disorders (SEED).



We continue to be there for our patients and professional partners throughout COVID-19, providing support in patients homes, or when at school or college. It is important that anyone coming to First Steps ED for support receives safe and effective care, appropriate for their recovery.



Our integrated service team provides home and community supportive interventions from a variety of options agreed by the NHS Care Co-ordinator. This includes supporting paediatric nurses during ward meal times and being part of discharge plans for inpatients. It may also involve providing social activities, food shopping and preparing meals, supported eating at home or in public and other services that can promote confidence in recovery, focused on maintaining weight restoration and reducing social isolation as service users move back into full time education or employment.

Established in 2009, for 12 years our Integrated Community Support team has delivered Specialist Supportive Clinical Management (SSCM) attending multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings, and through the range of different outreach locations regularly talk to multi-agency teams (MAT), which includes social care staff and teachers. This enables us to provide targeted intensive practical support in the community thus enabling people to access support and progress towards recovery.





CORE SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

HELPING PATIENTS, PARENTS AND FAMILIES

This approach is proven to help people suffering with severe and enduring eating disorders to get better and recover through sub-clinical one-to-one support to regain life skills enabling them to thrive in their interests and passions.

28

A STEPPED-CARE APPROACH TO EATING DISORDERS

We ensure that our stepped care approach is effective for step-up and step-down appropriate to our person-centred approach.

Step up: If our staff feel it is appropriate to step-up a service user into NHS specialist eating disorder services, our embedded pathway processes enables us to respond effectively.

Step down: Our NHS partners also effectively step-down patients into our services as part of their discharge planning process. This ensures that anyone coming to First Steps ED for support receives safe and effective professional support appropriate to their eating disorders requirements.

Where an individual comes to us for support where we may not have an established NHS pathway in place, with consent we will always work with the individuals General Practitioner (GP) requesting medical monitoring is put in place locally to ensure that we can continue to provide safe care whilst they access our services.

“ I heard about support from First Steps (FS) from Dr Steven Linacre at CAMHS. At first I felt nervous about the referral but, after my first meeting with the FS worker, I knew that it would be for the best. The joint care support between CAMHS and First Steps has worked well for me, CAMHS oversee all the medical needs and First Steps helps with the social and educational side of life.

Before the support I used to feel anxious if my mum wasn't around. I would cry if she had to go out and she would have to take time off work to stay with me. Nowadays I do not feel the need to be with my mum all the time which has allowed her to go back to work and in the past few weeks the family mood has lifted. We have also introduced two lovely kittens into the family which makes life interesting and fun.

The most helpful things have been getting me motivated into hobbies such as horse riding and enrolling into Chesterfield college. I am looking forward to starting my courses in September and to making new friends, my OCD is much less rigid because I have been doing different activities. The anxiety has decreased, sleep is much better, and I feel less tired. It feels good to be more motivated which has increased my confidence and self-esteem.

Although I still have a few negative thoughts around body image which I hope to work on through CBT, things are no where near as bad as they use to be, and I am looking forward to trying different things and to making new friends. **FIRST STEPS ED SERVICE USER**

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CORE SERVICES

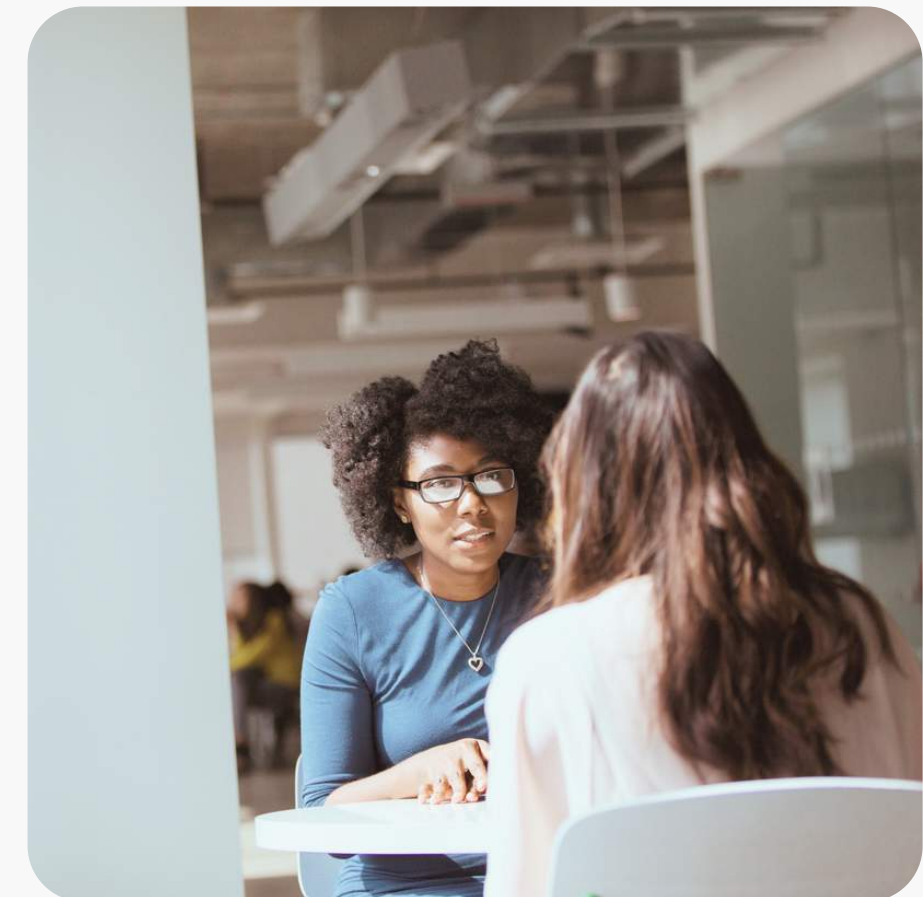
COUNSELLING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY



29

At First Steps ED we employ experienced and qualified Counsellors and Psychotherapists each working against NHS and NICE standards alongside a cadre of trainee Counsellors on placements from our universities and colleges who work to BACP undergraduate training hours under our matched-funded low-cost services. Daytime and evening appointments are available for a series of up to 18 sessions. For some clients our care plan may be extended to offer a series of up to 24 sessions.

Within this service an individual typically talks about issues and problems at hand and learns to identify negative patterns in thinking, emotions, and behaviours. The client and our psychotherapist builds therapeutic rapport and trust agreeing a joint treatment plan to progress forward together as the eating disorder care plan where the client will address and reduce negative behaviours that are associated with the eating disorder with the counsellor providing education and awareness to healthier eating, behaviours and cognitive processes.





CORE SERVICES

133

Service users
accessing this service

1054

counselling hours
delivered

86

adults continued or
extended their support
(with 18 or 24 weekly support sessions.)



30



Person Centred Therapy is a non-directive, humanistic approach. It works on the basis that individuals have a natural innate drive toward their own wellbeing, otherwise known as their self-actualising tendency. Our approach works to gain an understanding of the client's perspective and works with the reality being experienced in that moment. In doing so clients are given the freedom to explore their innermost thoughts in order to better understand their struggles.



Attachment Theory, as a behavioural system, this approach facilitates the individual to develop autonomy, trust, and knowledge to deal with any threats to the self that go together with the identity formation process. As such, the importance of the individuals early years and first relationship with their primary caregivers is explored in psychotherapy to see what impact they have on them in understanding and examining unprocessed feelings within these early relationships, and how they may be playing out in unhelpful ways in adulthood.



Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) is an evidenced-based practice that has been used for decades to treat mental health conditions and more recently eating disorders (CBT-E). Where directly commissioned by the NHS our service offers both short form CBT-E covering 20 sessions and long form providing 40 CBT-E sessions.





CORE SERVICES

RECOVERY SELF-HELP GROUPS

- WAITING WELL · YOUTH CLUB · STUDENT DROP-IN (EDISS) · ALL AGES GROUP ·
- KUNDALINI YOGA · CREATIVE THERAPY ·

NHS
Derby and Derbyshire
Clinical Commissioning Group

NHS
Nottingham and Nottinghamshire
Clinical Commissioning Group

31

Our groups are open to everyone following an initial assessment where our service users then have access to our comprehensive weekly self-help programme which offer a range of options for all ages and conditions, face to face or virtually and co-produced with service users who have the option to elect the psycho-education topic schedule. Our team always aim to make them fun and stress free and long-term attendees are encouraged to lead activities which builds their confidence and often leads to develop further interest in volunteering for First Step ED.

OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

Our support groups adapted to online delivery seamlessly, comprising engaging topics informed by service user feedback. Our online groups became a safe space to alleviate concerns and anxieties and inject some light relief from an ever-changing environment.

SELF-HELP GUIDEBOOKS

In addition, First Steps ED has developed a Digital Hub providing practical advice and open access for our service users to download useful Self-help Guidebooks, and digital CBT sheets as part of their care plan which they can use when in peer support and counselling sessions with their eating disorder practitioner and therapist.





CORE SERVICES

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

ALL AGES SUPPORT GROUP

Attendance for our 'All Ages' group has been consistently high during the past year, with many of our service users saying that they have relied on our sessions as a great source of reassurance, comfort and togetherness in lockdown.

"Without this group I would have found the pandemic even harder to deal with. The mix of topics has helped not only with my eating disorder but some of the other mental health difficulties that are associated with it and I feel like the group has become a second family that I trust and empathise with" **FIRST STEPS ED SERVICE USER**

Alongside our support group, we also run a fortnightly **Kundalini Yoga** which takes a spiritual focus, promoting self-compassion, intuition and body appreciation, making it perfect for those who struggle with unhealthy levels of exercise and weight loss.

Both Yoga and the All Ages group will continue in a blended delivery as restrictions ease, being accessible to those who wish to attend virtually or in-person.

WAITING WELL

'Waiting Well' is one of our newest groups, created to take the pressure off our wait-lists and give our new referrals a service option whilst they wait to start their treatment plan. The group is psychoeducation-based with a different focus each week. Service users can learn about issues surrounding mental health and coping strategies.

We launched the first 'Waiting Well' in February 2021 and numbers steadily increased week on week. By the end of March there had been 37 weekly attendees, many of whom may not have otherwise found support due to increased waiting times for other services due to the pandemic.

Service users have found the sessions helpful and numbers continue to grow, showing its value to our new referrals and existing service users.

"I like the positivity I feel afterwards, knowing I'm not the only one who struggles, knowing there's help out there even during COVID and its free" **FIRST STEPS ED SERVICE USER**

GROUP GUIDELINES

Respect people's differences and opinions – you all struggle with different issues and are here for different reasons. Please do not discuss diets, weight, calories, exercise, or any other triggering topics. Please do not expect a miracle cure – we cannot tell you what to do but can support you to find your own answers. Groups are not just for anyone struggling with body image, disordered eating or an eating disorder, but are open to anyone with an underlying general mental health condition.





CORE SERVICES

WORKSHOPS AND TRAINING

33

We are passionate about early intervention and prevention which is why we have increased training opportunity and skills-based workshops. All of our training and workshop opportunities aim to raise awareness and knowledge around eating disorders and the range of presenting factors which can affect people struggling with their relationship with food and body.

These opportunities are open to everyone and offer a range of support tools that can be adopted in various professional or personal settings.

OUR COVID-19 RESPONSE

The pandemic has had a huge impact on our service users' lives over the past year and within that is the increased barriers in finding and/or accessing supporting for eating disorders. Following the first lockdown our team listened to the concerns of our partners, parents and carers and wanted to develop resources that could help support those who are looking for further support in understanding eating disorders.

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

FOR FAMILIES AND CARERS...

As a family-orientated service, we encourage the involvement of the family in the growing and repairing along the recovery journey together. By engaging in one of our funded 'Skills for Carers' Maudsley Collaborative workshops, parents and carers can gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to support both themselves and their loved ones as active partners in recovery. We are also working on a brand new 'Nutrition and Mood' series to launch Summer 2021.

Over the last year we have delivered five of our four-week New Maudsley Collaborative Care skills training 'Skills for Carers' workshops. Due to its popularity we have recruited 5 parent/carer volunteers and trained 2 new workshop trainers, increasing our Mental Health Nurse trainers to 3.

51

parents & carers attended 'Skills for Carers' funded by The Jones 1986 Charitable Trust 

READ ON FOR OUR PROFESSIONAL TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES...





CORE SERVICES

CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT [CPD]

34

Our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training was developed alongside a number of experts and professionals to offer information and skills across a range of topics and discussions around eating disorders. Our foundation courses aim to raise awareness around eating disorders as well as equip delegates with knowledge and the tools to take an evidenced-based approach to support someone at risk of eating difficulties and disorders.

With the training made available online, the team opened up our workshops so that professionals and students across the UK could benefit from increased awareness and education of eating disorders and how to support someone. We have also had the pleasure of hiring a new team of training facilitators and hope that we can continue to provide training and support to aid professionals working in a range of sectors and environments.

ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

2,390

people attended our weekly mental health training workshops between April and June 2020

808

professionals received our accredited CPD eating disorder training between October and December 2020, funded by NHS Derby and Derbyshire CCG.

"The trainer's knowledge, passion and understanding was incredible and made the discussion so interesting. I thoroughly enjoyed the session and would be very keen to learn even more!" **FIRST STEPS ED CPD DELEGATE**





LOOKING AHEAD

As we look ahead to the future of First Steps ED we will continue offering a service which is inclusive, empathic, understanding and non-judgmental, ensuring we can continue to be there for those suffering from eating difficulties and disorders by providing frontline early intervention services to facilitate the process of recovery. The team continues to build on our award-winning blended service model and care plans for children, young people and adults, extending our reach beyond Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire to become the Midlands eating disorder charity. We are excited to build new stakeholder relationships in Lincolnshire, Staffordshire, Birmingham and further afield.

35



"After 33 years of suffering alone, I discovered First Steps and I've discovered I'm not alone and this has been invaluable in my 'first steps' to recovery'..." **FIRST STEPS ED SERVICE USER**



Over the last year our team have been continually reflective and proactive. Whilst under increasing pressure to support those left behind by other services and support pathways, they continue to lead the way for innovation for eating disorder treatment. We will continue to benchmark ourselves against strong eating disorder service models across the globe. To achieve this, we'll continue to work with our partners, commissioners, and funders, providing a broad range of services that offers hope in recovery.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SERVICE

We are really proud of our partnerships with NHS services and aim to work with more Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) CYP-CEDS providers to offer our highly regarded peer support to children and support their families in the home and their community.

EATING DISORDERS IN STUDENT SERVICE

As EDISS grows, we hope to offer support to students at more universities and colleges throughout England and Wales. Working as a partner with the student wellbeing teams, we will continue to offer our support and service, as well as raise awareness of eating disorders on campus.

FIRST STEPS ED ADULT SERVICES

Our team have achieved so much this year in meeting the demand created by the pandemic. Moving forward we will continue our blended approach to services to ensure our offer continues to be inclusive, effective and accessible to our service users where ever they are in England and the UK.

WORKSHOPS, TRAINING AND RESEARCH

We will continue to offer accredited knowledge and skills training for professionals working with children and adults at risk of developing eating disorders.

We believe everyone should have access to high quality eating disorder information, so we will continue to support students and academics conducting research into eating disorders and difficulties.





FIRST STEPS ED

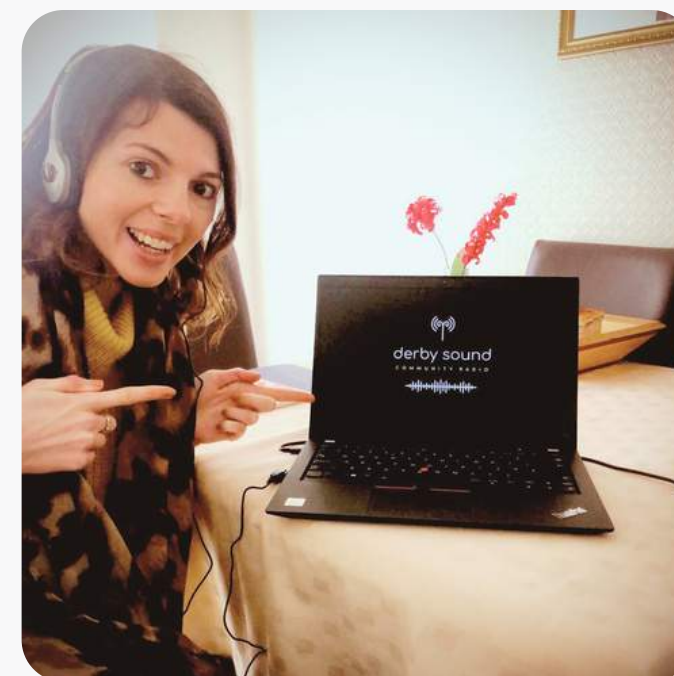
DONATIONS AND FUNDRAISING

37

As a charity, we are funded by the generosity of people whose contributions allow us to provide these services free of charge to children and their families. Adults may contribute to their ongoing support we provide when accessing any of these services to enable us to keep the services available for those in need.

The pandemic has impacted us in a number of ways, including our ability to hold events and fundraise. By making a one-off or regular donation, you can help us continue to provide support to those struggling with an eating disorder or any disordered eating behaviours.

We can also offer training and education to parents, carers and professionals to help support and protect future generations.



"KEEP UP YOUR IMPORTANT WORK. YOU'RE A FANTASTIC GROUP OF PEOPLE AND WE CONTINUE TO BE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR HELP AND SUPPORT."



"I AM RUNNING 75 MILES IN FEBRUARY FOR FIRST STEPS ED BECAUSE IT IS A CHARITY CLOSE TO MY HEART!"





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38

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