



Charity No. 1185092
www.firststepsed.co.uk



ANNUAL REPORT

2022

The all-ages eating disorders charity, passionate about providing hope, opportunities, and choices to lives affected by eating difficulties and disorders.





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Offering hope, opportunities and choices.

First Steps ED is an evidence-based specialist Eating Disorder charity, offering person-centred individual and group therapeutic services to people of all ages, genders and backgrounds. Our programme of psychotherapy, peer support, guided self-help groups and creative recoveries helps everyone with all eating disorder presentations, including body dissatisfaction, compulsive exercise and other disordered eating behaviours.

Alongside our specialist eating disorder services is our community engagement, including our psycho-educational workshops in schools and other organisations within the community. Our teams are passionate about providing support to children, young people and adults, as well as parents/carers, to change their body image perception and relationship with food.





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As a registered charity (1185092) we have charitable objectives, which are:

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1

The relief of individuals of all ages (and their families) whose lives are affected by diagnosed and undiagnosed eating difficulties and disorders and other mental health issues by providing information, advice, and support.

2

The preservation and protection of the physical and mental health of families and carers of those suffering from eating disorders and other mental health issues by providing information and support.

3

To advance education for the public benefit by providing training for carers, professionals, and the public, of people suffering from eating disorders, and other mental health issues.

Our annual report showcases who we are and what we do, as well as any achievements and challenges we have faced this last year.



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Our views on the key developments, achievements of the last year, and a look to the future.





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Chair's Report



Carolyn Gilby
First Steps ED Chair

It has been another year of growth and development for our service teams and volunteers and as a board of trustees we are delighted that we continue to support children, young people and adults as well as parents and carers from more areas across England.

As you will see from the report we are supporting more people and whilst this is evidence of our success it does stretch our services and we continue to look at innovative ways to reach and support individuals who reach out to us.

The board are very proud of the initiatives and partnership working that takes place across our charity as we strive to increase our offer and support to all.

On behalf of the board of trustees I would like to thank everyone involved in supporting so many through their eating disorder recovery journey. Our thanks also go to our committed funders, commissioners, and partners for their ongoing support in these challenging times enabling First Steps ED to be there when you needed us.



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Our staff, volunteers and service users continue to drive our co-production approach to developing new services which during this annual report period has seen the charity implement new individual and group therapy pathways for Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorders (ARFID) where we have also been supporting a range of NHS Integrated Commissioning Boards (ICB's) to design their own pathways.

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Where we are commissioned by the NHS the numbers of children and young people accessing this new support continues to increase and across one ICB at least 50% of 5 to 17 year old referrals are for ARFID.

Last year we reported on a new grant awarded by the Association of Mental of Providers where we focused our year on developing a new pilot service for people with eating disorders and high body weight which we know from our work often co-occur, sharing many underlying factors, and may adversely affect emotional and physical health. Both can also be challenging to treat in clinical settings.

This work has resulted in our charity working closely with the NHS Complications for Excess Weight Clinics (CEW) which effects 1 in 4 children living with obesity and in the next 12 months through this integrated pilot pathway our staff will be supporting 50 children from Derby City on this admitted pathway as part of a new Joined Up Care approach.

CEO's Report



Kevin Parkinson
First Steps ED CEO



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We have continued to invest and expand our digital services road map, launching the first eating disorder app commissioned by the NHS as a pilot to support early intervention and prevention for marginalised individuals and communities which demonstrated its utility and effectiveness and has resulted in being commissioned as a full service.

Although NHS waiting times for eating disorder treatments continue to improve, between January and March 2023 21% of those under the age of 19 still waited longer than a week to start treatment after an urgent referral, with 18% waiting longer than four weeks after a routine referral for an eating disorder - considerably higher than the target that no more than 5% of patients should wait longer than those periods. The number of children attending A&E for eating disorders also continues to be greater than adult A&E attendances for eating disorders.

Through our engagement with NHS Regional eating disorder clinical networks, and directly with NHS specialist CAMHS and adult eating disorder services, we continue to increase our commissioned and funded services working as an integrated pathway partner delivering our respected shared care and step-up and step-down services across the East and West Midlands, the Home Counties.

As I look forward into 2023 with our team, I want to pay a tribute to Paula Blight, CEO and her team at Somerset and Wessex Eating Disorder Association (SWEDA) for chairing our Regional Eating Disorder Charity Alliance/Network this year which is being handed over to myself and First Steps ED to continue our joint objectives of bringing expert-by-experience charity eating disorders care services closer to home across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.



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About us

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First Steps ED (FSED) has been at the forefront of improving the lives of people from all ages, genders and backgrounds impacted by eating disorders since 2004 and has built a reputation as an evidence-based Eating Disorder charity in the UK.

Our team are experts-by-experience and professionals adopting a person-centred, quality-assured, research-based approach. We are passionate about partnership and working as an integrated partner in the health and education environments, promoting continuity of care and prompt access to care, as well as comprehensiveness and care coordination.

These values are at our heart of what we do, helping us to ensure that the people who approach us for help, receive appropriate care and support, and the real possibility that recovery is achievable and they no longer are defined by their illness.

As an organisation we have a collaborative and progressive culture and a floor-to-board value-led team of autonomous staff, volunteers and placement students who help curate our stakeholder-led co-production in disordered eating and disorders.

Our foundations are built in engaged leadership, data-driven improvement, empanelment, and team-based care, with our service users underpinning our culture and behaviours with many becoming befrienders, volunteers, and future employees.



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We are passionate about offering a service which is inclusive, empathic, understanding and non-judgmental.

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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 equity, diversity and inclusion 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.





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Demographics of our patients and service users

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First Steps ED securely captures data and information through a suite of digital forms designed to measure paired outcomes and impact, as well as assess a service user's experiences of support delivered by our Specialist Support Officers, Psychotherapists, and Nutritionists.

We received 1,946 referrals into our all-ages services and support pathways, with our eldest patient being 81 years old.

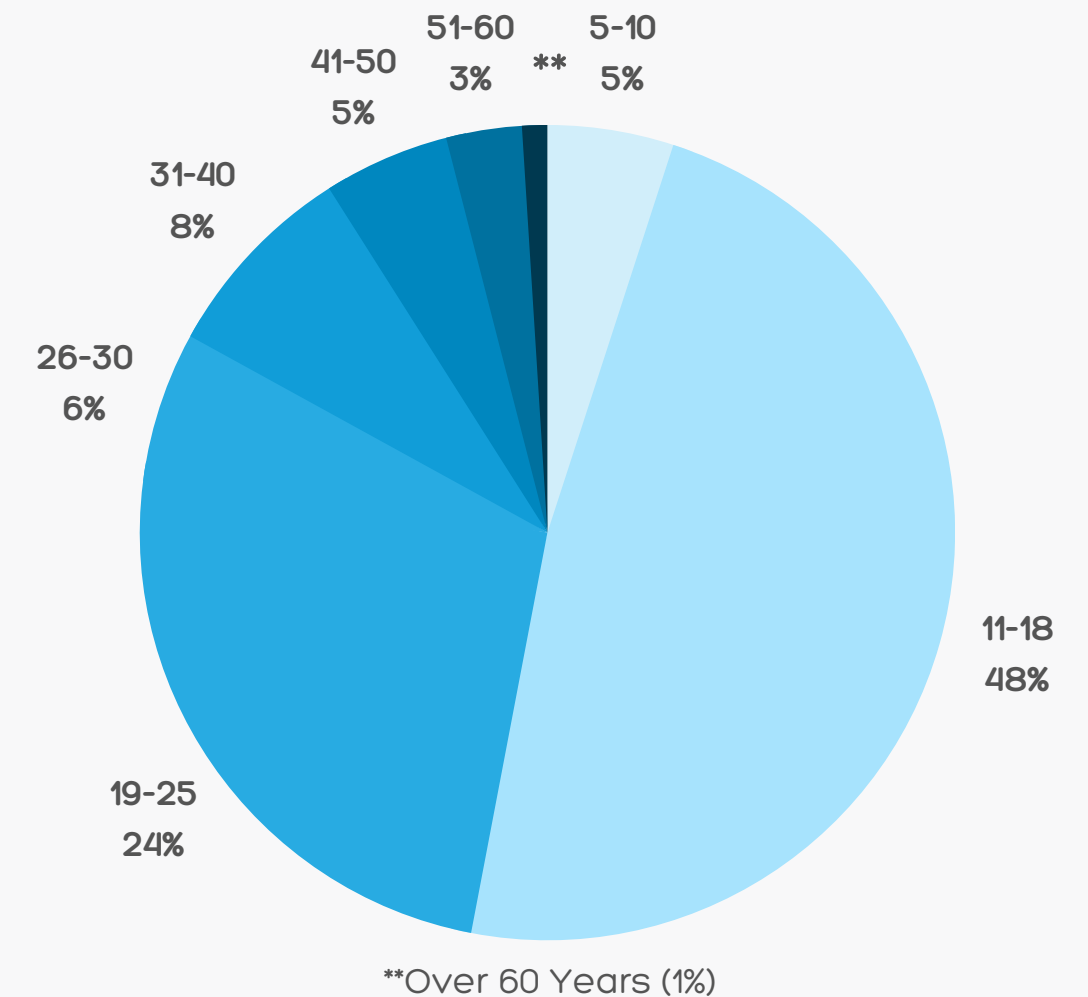
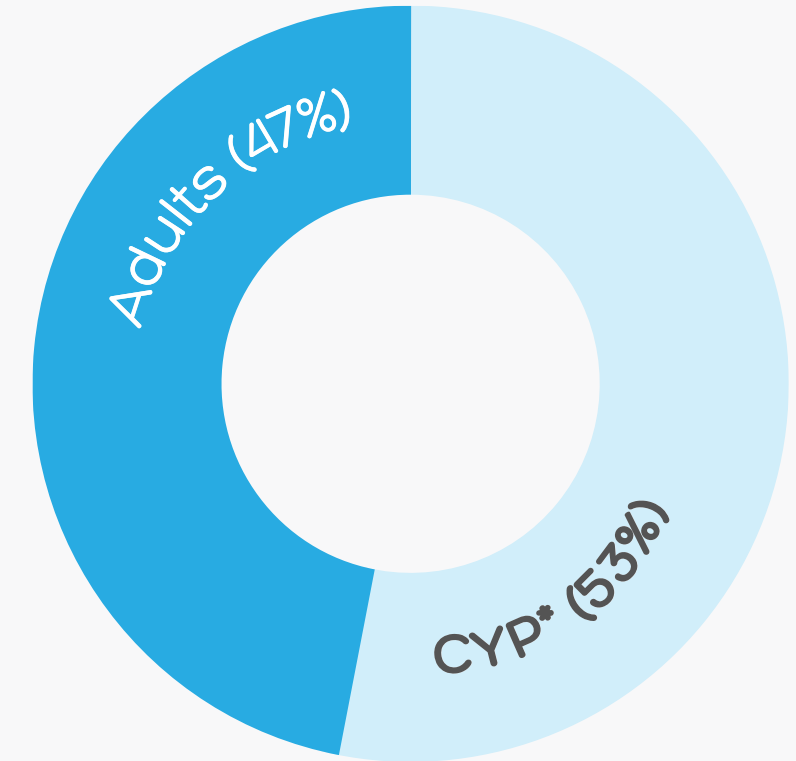
NHS Adults, CAMHS eating disorders services, GPs, school professionals, and parents/ carers can make referrals into First Steps ED eating disorder services, with support delivered face-to-face in local community settings, in schools and online via video clinic. Individuals can also self-refer into our services.

1,658

non-direct referrals April 2022 to March 2023

288

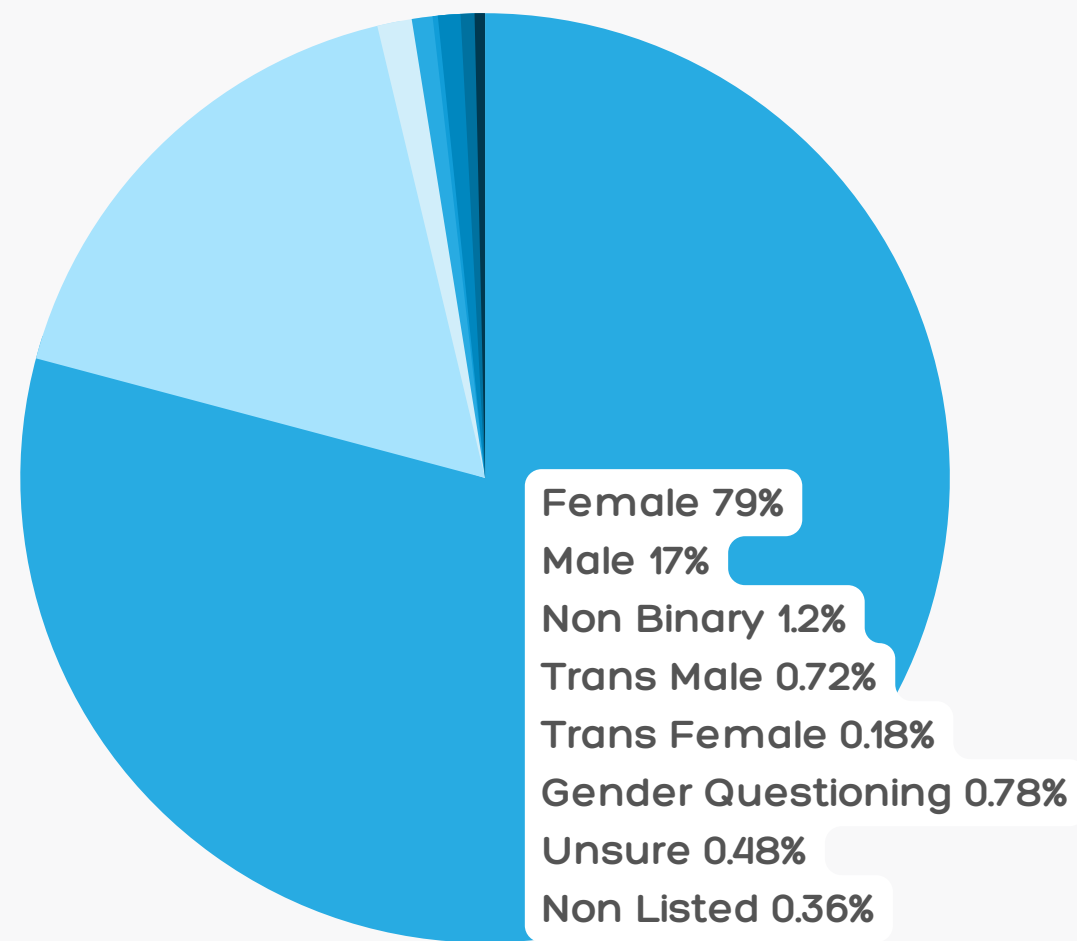
direct referrals April 2022 to March 2023



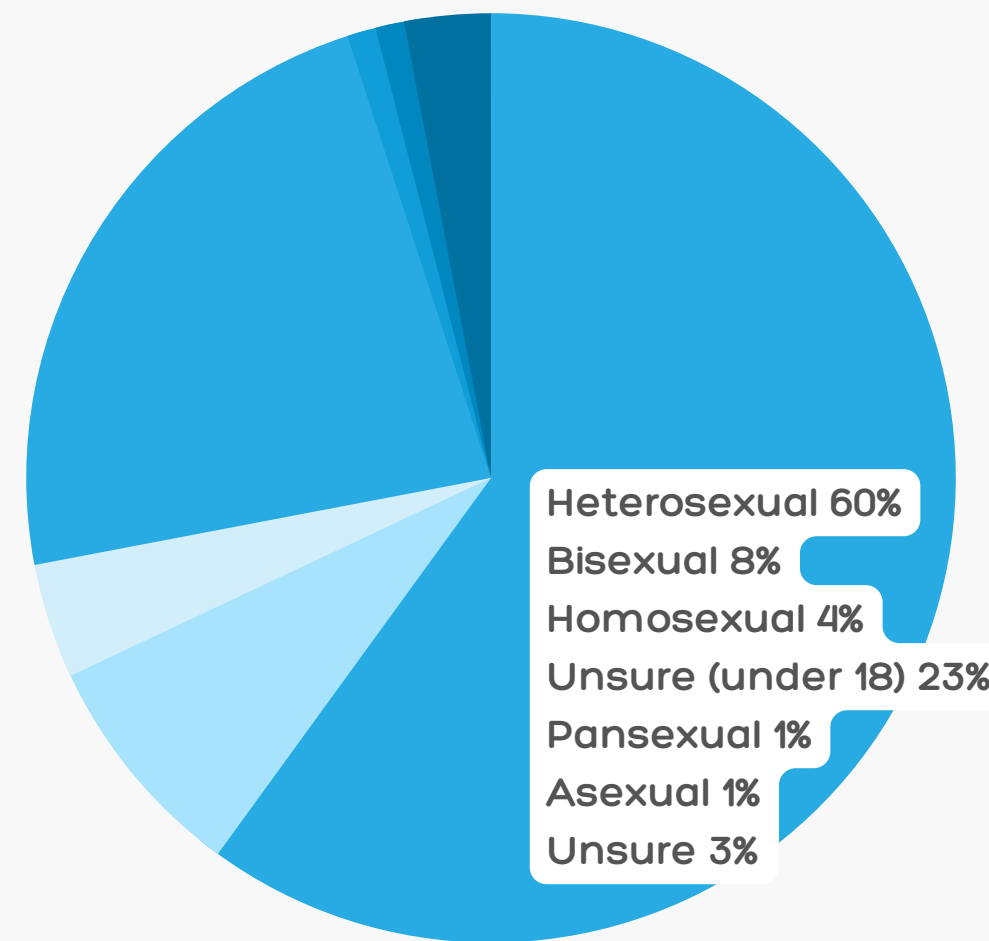


According to the data we captured, the majority of new referrals identify as female, with 4% of our service users not identifying as either male or female. Our digital forms also capture information around sexual orientation, and highlight that more than half are heterosexual, 23% percent of young people are 'unsure' of their sexual orientation and a high percentage of those accessing our service are white.

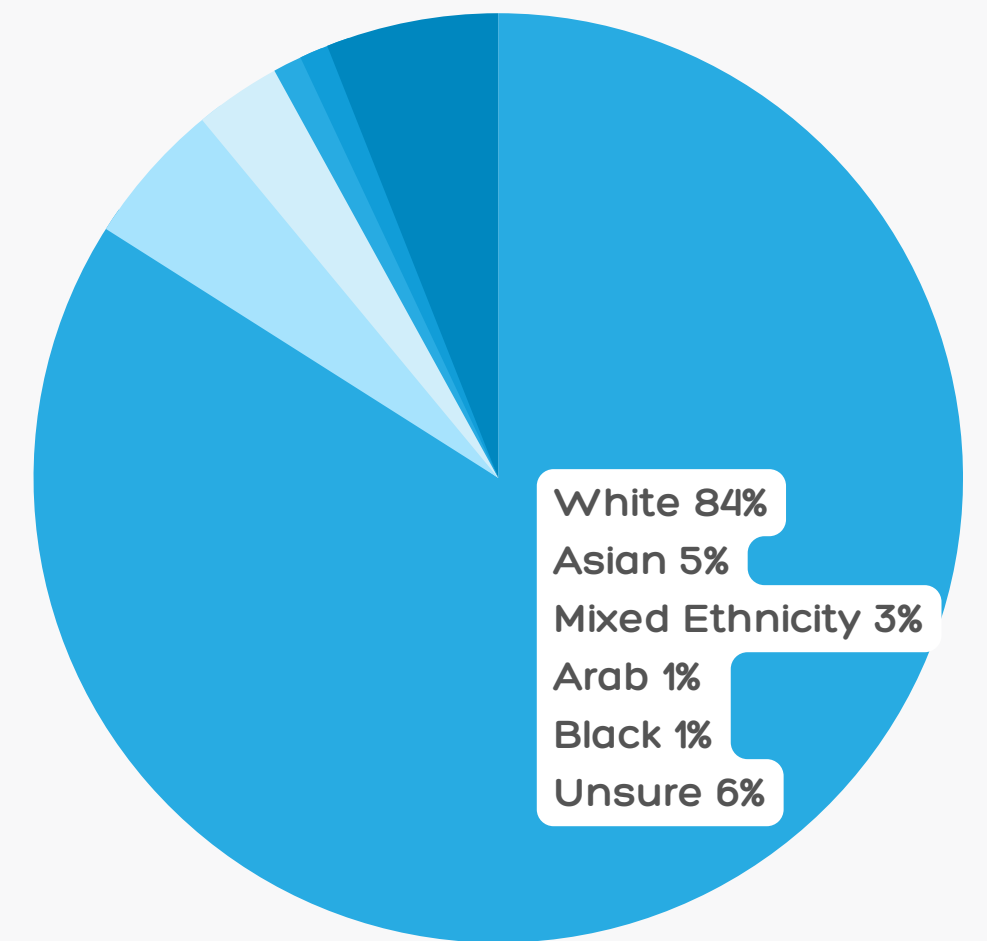
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GENDER



SEXUAL ORIENTATION



ETHNICITY

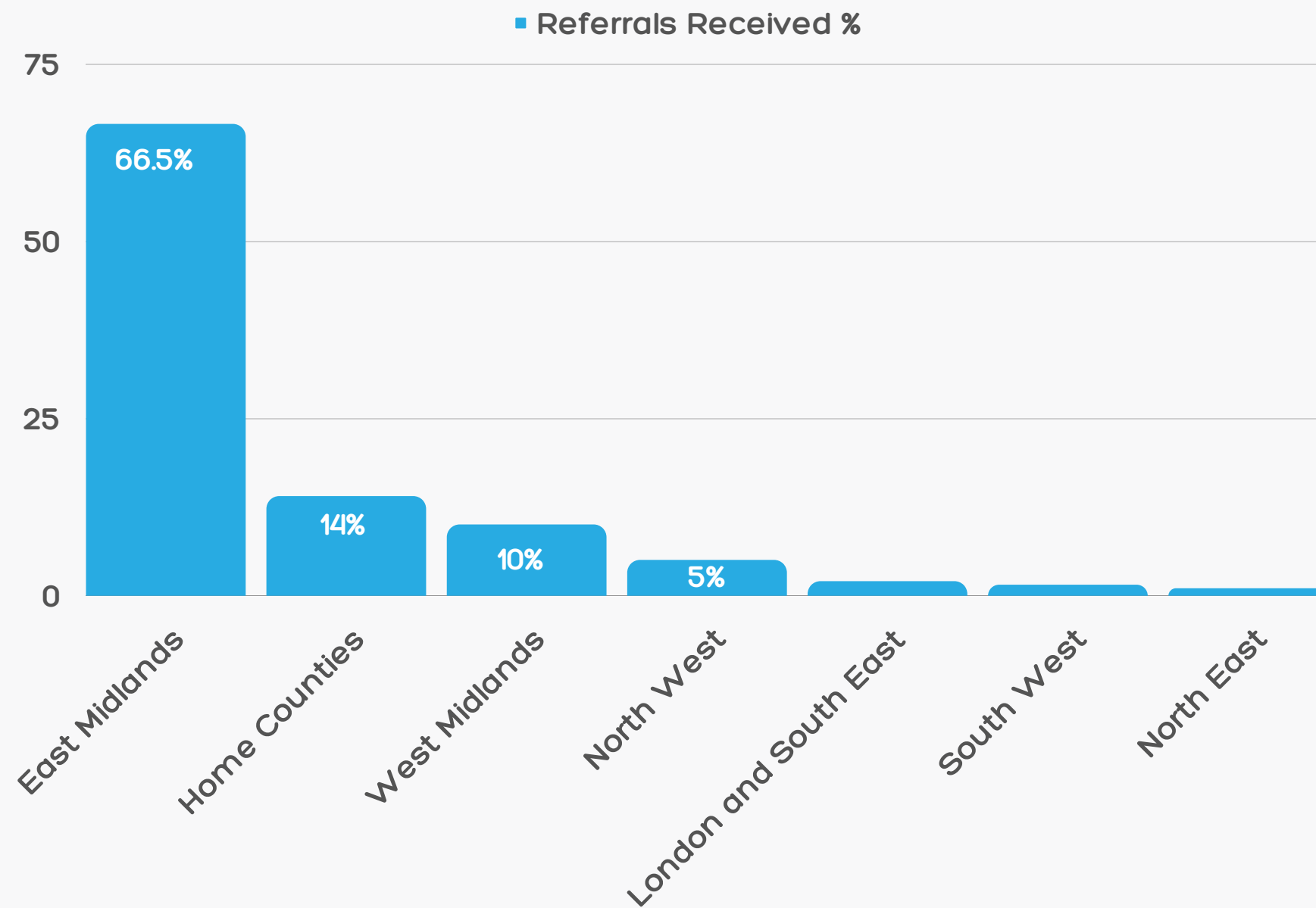


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Our referral data, helps us identify where we direct our resources.

66.5% of our services were accessed from across the East Midlands and following successful funding in the West Midlands and Home Counties we are supporting more people and their carers.

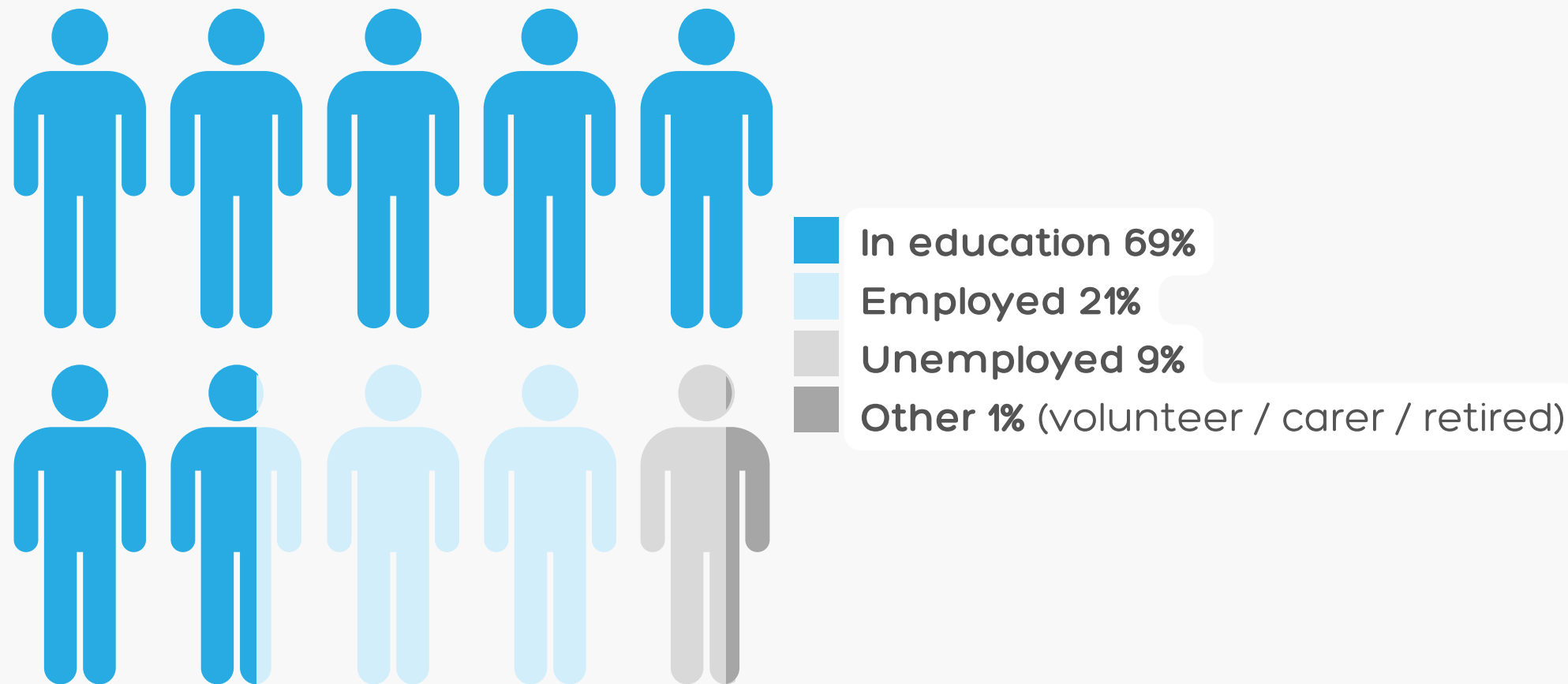
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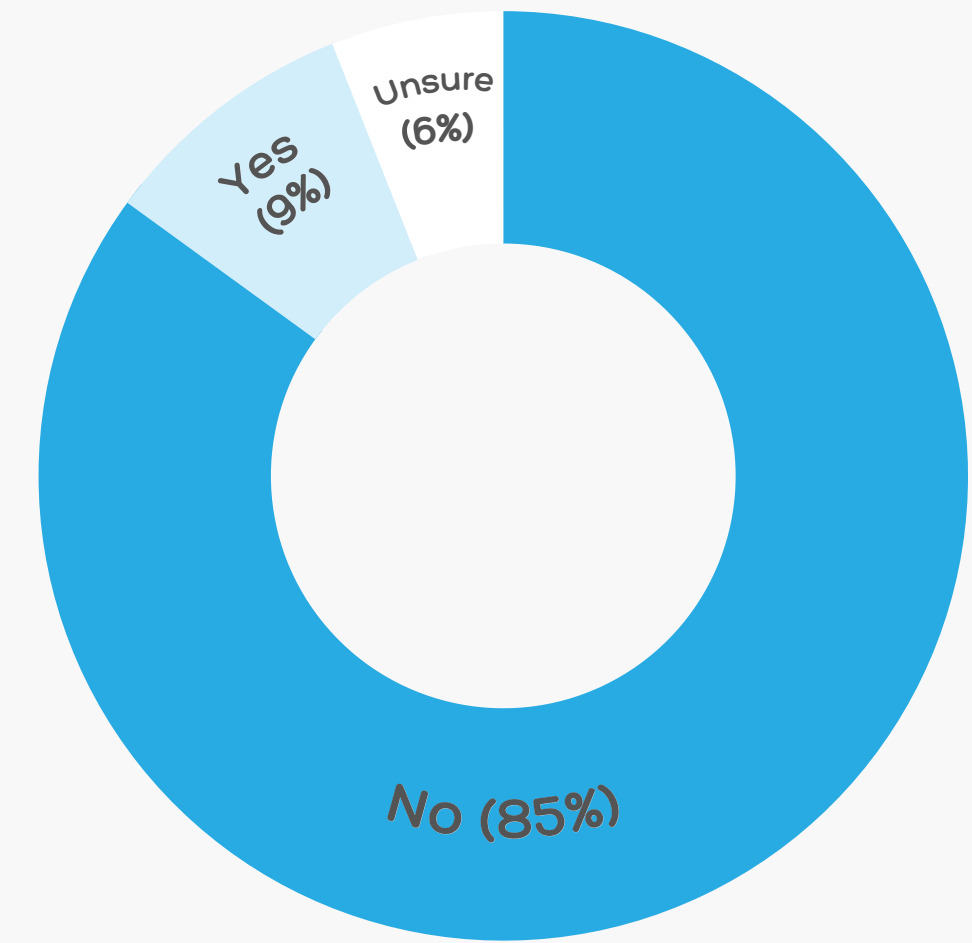


The majority of individuals referred into our services (69%) are in education (school, college or university), with 21% in employment and 10% disclosing that they are either unemployed or 'other'. 85% of referrals did not declare any disability.

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EMPLOYMENT / EDUCATION



DISABILITIES



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A co-occurring condition is often defined as two or more physical or mental health problems, and those experiencing eating disorders are at an increased risk of experiencing co-occurring mental or physical conditions.

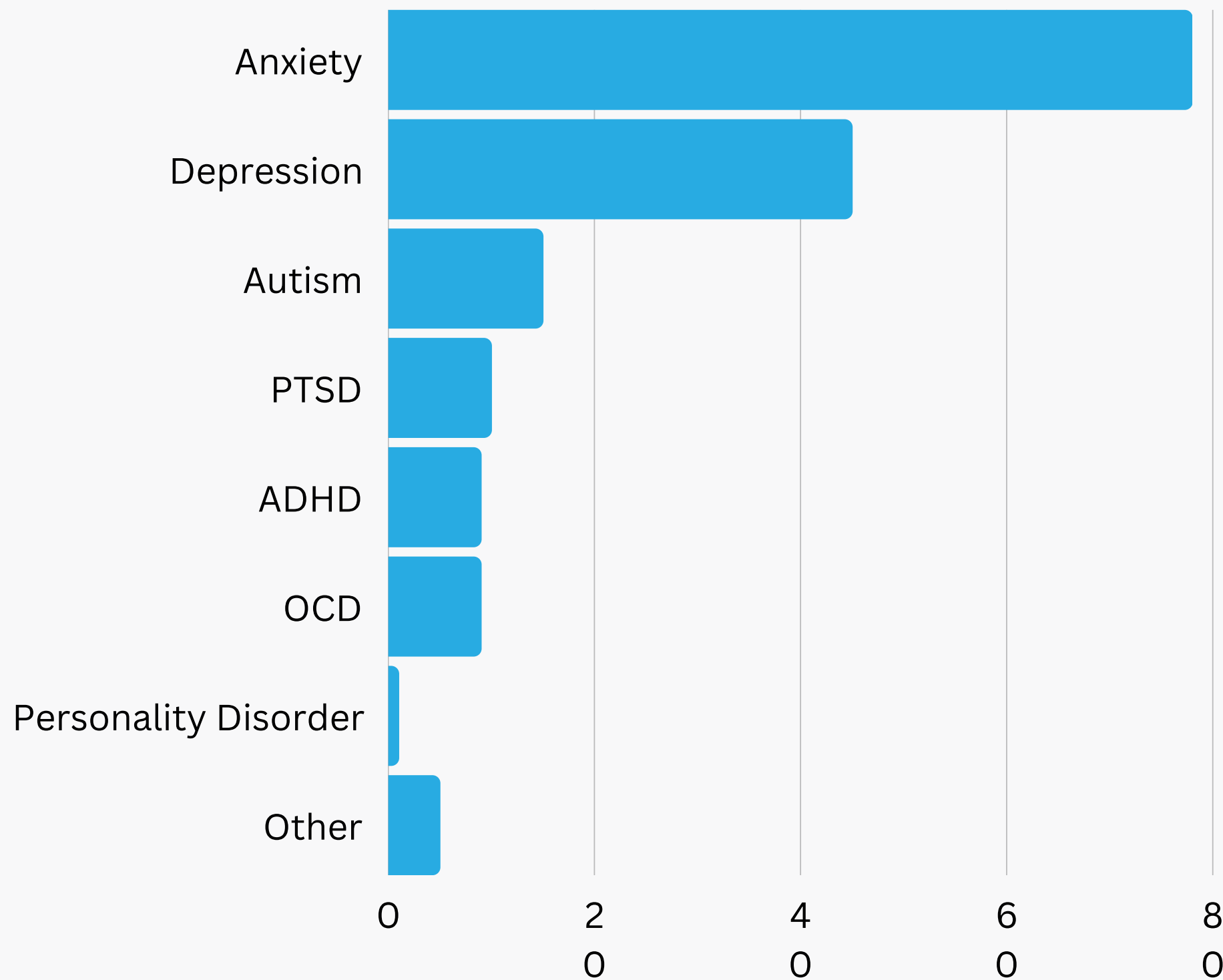
15

This information is captured within our suite of digital forms to help assess a service user's experiences and support and further signposting.

The most common co-occurring condition of those referring into our services was anxiety at 78%, with just under half those asked presenting with depression (45%).

Where in previous years we would have seen c36% of young people with co-occurring autism, we have supported a significant increase in younger people accessing our Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder (ARFID) pathways.

Reported co-occurring conditions





Performance and **Service** **Impact**

Reflecting on what we have achieved in the last year within our core services.





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Adult Services

At the end of March 2023 we have been supporting **143 adults** with **12 to 24 weeks** psychotherapy sessions having delivered **1512 sessions**.

We also supported an additional **112 adults** who accessed our **Befriending Service** receiving **26 to 39 weekly email or video support sessions** from our Befrienders who provided **4702 hours** and a Social Return on Investment (SIRO) of **£74,527**

Ref: £13.70 + 15.7% (SIRO volunteers in healthcare)



Counselling and Psychotherapy

Eating disorder psychotherapy at First Steps ED is one of our core services and one which recognises the unique experiences of all clients, with or without a formal diagnosis.

The aim is to provide a safe, non-judgemental, and understanding space to give our clients the time and freedom to talk.

All of our therapists take a person-led approach. They understand the values of many backgrounds, communities and cultures and factors which can play a role in our relationship to food and body.

Our adult pathway offers 12 to 24 sessions which can be extended to 36 or 48 weeks if the therapeutic relationship agreed between the parties will be positive for recovery.





Befriending Service

Befriending is our multi-award-winning 6-to-9-month weekly support programme, recognised by NHS England’s National Integrated Personal Commissioning Team.



We match a service user with one of our highly trained and supervised befrienders who volunteer to provide ongoing support throughout the contract.

The service is offered in a range of formats including, email up to twice a week and video clinic/telephone calls once a week. Befriending can provide flexibility and a level of anonymity, giving you the control of your own recovery.

Eating Disorders in Student Services

Loughborough University commissioned our Eating Disorder in Student Services (EDISS) programme to deliver peer support for students at Loughborough University presenting with mild-to-moderate disordered eating and disorders. The contract also funded weekly psychoeducation workshops specially for students in the academic environment.

30

students received one-to-one peer support from September until March 2023

525

students throughout England attended our EDISS support Group

8

students were stepped-down into our befriending service to receive continuity of care as part of our stepped care approach



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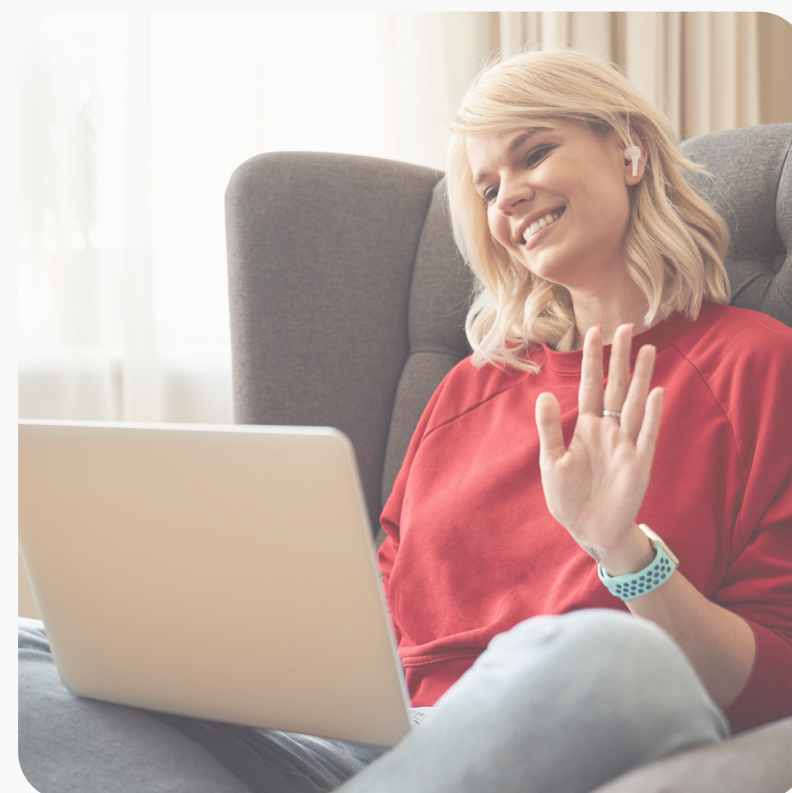
Guided self-help groups and **psycho-education** **workshops**

19

We always have a variety of topics in our support groups and we always aim to make them fun and stress-free.

Service users of all ages have access to our comprehensive weekly Recovery Self-help programme a range of age appropriate and presenting conditions weekly workshops attended face to face or virtually and co-produced with service users who elect the psychoeducation topic schedule.

Longer term attendees are encouraged to co-lead activities which builds their confidence and often leads to develop further interest in volunteering for First Steps ED.





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Our team delivered over 372 weekly groups to 2068 children, young people and adults...

Waiting Well

Designed to combat growing wait times for eating disorder services, Waiting Well offers weekly psycho-education to those awaiting our one-to-one support or on a local NHS waiting list.

This group runs every Monday and is free to attend. It is also commissioned by a number of NHS providers to ensure patients can access support in their local areas whilst they await focused intervention from their NHS specialist eating disorder service (ACEDS).

Young Person's Wellbeing Workshop

A workshop designed by and for our young service users who want to gain a greater insight into their behaviours, body image and managing recovery.

Each group offers a positive guided peer group environment, where individuals can share their own experiences. By the end of the four sessions, attendees will have gained new tools and coping mechanisms which can help them manage difficult situations and any setbacks within recovery.



New pathway developed for 2022 - ARFID for individual and group therapy

ARFID Awareness Support Group

Avoidant Restrictive Food Intake Disorder, more commonly known as ARFID, is difficult for many people and has only become a diagnosable disorder in recent years. It is a condition characterised by individuals who avoid certain foods or food groups either entirely or is restricted in quantity (eating small amounts).

Our research-informed four-week ARFID support group is peer-led, developed by staff and volunteers with first-hand experience. We'll look at the symptoms, it's impact, as well as distractions, coping strategies and setting personal goals.

ARFID can occur in children, teenagers and adults which is why our support is open to all ages, with both options for adults as well as children and young people who are struggling.



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Children and Young People (CYP) Service

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Our eating disorder peer support is available to 5 to 17 years and delivers 10 sessions of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT-T) over 8 weeks with two follow up sessions after one month and three months.

Children and Young People (CYP) are also offered the opportunity to attend our four-week psychoeducation 'Wellbeing Workshop' programme and join our CYP assembly where they work alongside our staff team in coproduction against our continuous service improvements.



Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT-T)

CBT-T (10) is an evidence-based treatment, focused on addressing the key factors that we know maintain eating disorders for individuals who are not underweight who are asked to attend weekly sessions and complete homework tasks between sessions.

Enhanced Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT-E)

CBT-E is recommended as a first-line treatment for people of low weight focused on addressing the key factors that we know maintain eating disorders. Individuals are asked to attend 20-40 weekly sessions where weigh ins are utilised as a way to challenge ED mindset, as well as homework tasks between sessions.



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687 children and young people received 2403 one-to-one support sessions.

Each weekly 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.

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1639 pupils attended our in-school body image workshops in the last year.

Recognising the importance of prevention and early intervention, our team also attended **21 schools** to deliver our body image workshop awareness raising sessions, attended by **1629 pupils** in the past 12 months.





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NHS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) Digital Eating Disorders Pilot Programme

The unique digital and real-world pathway offered an exclusive service provision for children and young people in Leicestershire and Rutland, and has been successful in reaching and exceeding the pilot contract KPIs; as well as developing integrated pathways across the City and County NHS and VCSE services. During the project we **supported 300 children and young people (CYP) in the LLR area** and found evidence that the service had a positive effect on wellbeing as well as a potential reduction in use of other services.



Campaign one: Compliment Cards

24

128

CYP accessed the First Steps ED in-person CBT-T support service.

172

CYP accessed the Tellmi digital service and eating disorder app.

During this time, the teams designed four engagement campaigns, creating digital and physical assets and resources which were circulated through schools and the CYP Mental Health Provider Network in the LLR region. Following the success of the pilot, the team have now secured a 2+2 service contract with NHS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board (NHS LLRICB),



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Skills for Carers: Our Family and Partner (including older siblings) Services

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- Four-Week Maudsley Collaborative 'Skills for Carers' Workshops (monthly/online)
- Monthly Carers Support Group (accessed in-person or online)
- Counselling and Psychotherapy for carers up to 12 sessions based on New Maudsley Method
- Befriending (matched to Parent/Carer as 6 to 9 months via email/video)

Parents/Carers access our services whilst their loved one could be accessing First Steps ED one-to-one service, and/or as NHS inpatients and outpatients.

336

parents/carers and older siblings (18+) have been referred or self-referred

26

Parent/Carers have accessed counselling (Maudsley approach) offering one-to-one's psychotherapy sessions up to 12 weeks which can be accessed after attending 'Skills for Carers' workshops.





Skills For Carers (New Maudsley Method)

These workshops are full of practical tips, real life scenarios and case studies designed to help carers develop self-reflective care giving skills to model confidence, compassion, and courage so they can be more helpful to their loved one.

Attendees receive research-informed information and training on supporting their loved one from Professor Janet Treasure's Skills-based Learning for Caring for a Loved One with an eating disorder: The New Maudsley Method, for becoming a 'Change Coach' for your loved one.

Monthly Carers Support Group

The First Steps ED team also host a monthly carers support group and drop-in to give attendees the opportunity to meet like-minded parents and carers, as well as speak to our team giving carers the opportunity to discuss any issues following their attendance at Skills for Carers and revisit any strategies from the workshops.

The Carers Support Group is facilitated by one of our trainers plus a parent volunteer. The support group is available both in-person where commissioned and online on a Saturday morning.

Carers one-to-one Support (counselling and befriending)

Befriending is our multi-award winning 6 to 9 month weekly 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 befriendees.

Carers who access our Skills for Carers programme will be offered the opportunity to benefit from 6 to 9 months Befriending at First Steps ED at no further cost to commissioners funding the workshops and monthly peer groups.



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"Just brilliant! Great to have trainers who have actually been there as a parent themselves and therefore know what it is like from our perspective and equally to have the trust that these methods do work. Thank you!"

"This service has taught me a lot, listening to other people who are in the same situation has helped me realise we are not the only ones. Please keep up the wonderful work you are doing"

"There is nothing else like it that provides support for parents of children with ARFID. There was useful advice provided about considering what type of parenting styles are beneficial for us to consider using around our children when they are already likely to be anxious around food. Listening to advice from other parents who have found useful links and techniques they have discovered. The whole sharing of information as a group was heartening."



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"Hi. I just wanted to make contact and say thank you for everything that your charity has done for us as a family. My daughter developed an eating disorder during this year's lockdown in January. Luckily our GP quickly referred us to CAMHS. We still have weekly appointments with them, but I know that she wouldn't have made the fantastic progress that she has without her email befriender. She truly appreciates the support and suggestions provided, particularly as she knows that her befriender has had similar experiences. I also completed your 4-week parents / carers' course in the summer. This was excellent; not only for learning about EDs, but also to know that we are not alone. I genuinely cannot thank you enough."



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NHS VCSE Eating Disorders Partnership: Integrated Community Service (ICS)

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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).

Established in 2010, our Integrated Community Support team works under the NHS Care Programme Approach and attends multi-disciplinary team (MDT) meetings, and through the range of different outreach locations where we work, regularly with multi-agency teams (MAT), which includes social care staff and teachers.

This enables us to provide targeted intensive practical support in the community and patient's home thus enabling people to access supported meals, confidence to return to education or employment and progress towards recovery from their eating disorder.





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Our joint service provides home and community supportive interventions from a variety of options agreed by the NHS Care Co-ordinator and may include for inpatients, supporting paediatric nurses during ward meal times, and being part of discharge plans, provide social activities, for example going to the cinema or for a walk, confidence building (person centred), food shopping, preparing meals, supported eating at home or in public, volunteering all focused on maintaining weight restoration and reducing social isolation to move back into full time education or employment.

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



Step down: Our NHS partners also effectively step-down patients as part of their discharge planning process. This ensures that anyone coming to First Steps ED 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.



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11,210 home and community ICS support sessions were delivered

The sessions can be face to face or virtual where, typically, our ICS Specialist Support Officers offer company and assistance during mealtimes.

This can range from one to five sessions a week either at home, in school or in public (such as restaurants or cafes.)

This year the team also introduced a new 'Breakfast Club' taking place every weekday morning and an additional opportunity for patients to check-in each day.

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Company

Mealtimes can be a daunting, isolating and/or intense experience, so being joined by someone can relieve the pressure in the moment and take the focus away from food.



Goals

Our team can help individuals work through setting and achieving goals, from eating out in public, or challenging themselves around food trigger foods.



A Confidant

Our team can give individuals the time to discuss their thoughts and feelings with someone they have rapport with, often making difficult conversation easier.



Motivation

Some benefit from motivation during mealtimes, including words of encouragement, having bites in synchronicity or a celebration after their meal to enjoy their wins.



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Skills for Professionals: Accredited eating disorder training

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We continue to deliver our accredited Continued Professional Development (CPD) training for professionals. Our trainers have delivered **92 training events** over the last 12 months to teachers, therapists, University students, carers, health professionals and others, across England.

50% of the 90-minute CPD modules we offered this year were made available publicly through Eventbrite to professionals throughout the UK. This ensures that our teams can increasingly reach out to professionals who can then refer into our services, where appropriate, as well as provide early and effective interventions.



Integrated Care System
Nottingham & Nottinghamshire

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CPD sessions were delivered exclusively for Nottinghamshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust professionals, commissioned by Nottingham and Nottinghamshire ICS





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"I liked the fact although it was a short period of time within the training session it went into the depth of eating disorders and gave me ideas of how to support individuals with eating disorders."

"The experience, the knowledge and the passion that the First Steps ED trainers have is UNMATCHED by any other service I've worked with. If you're looking for eating disorder training, look no further."

996

professionals have attended our CPD modules, from healthcare professionals to teachers and other school staff (April 2022-March 2023)

96%

of those who attended that the training met their expectations.

94%

of attendees agreed that they were well engaged during the training.





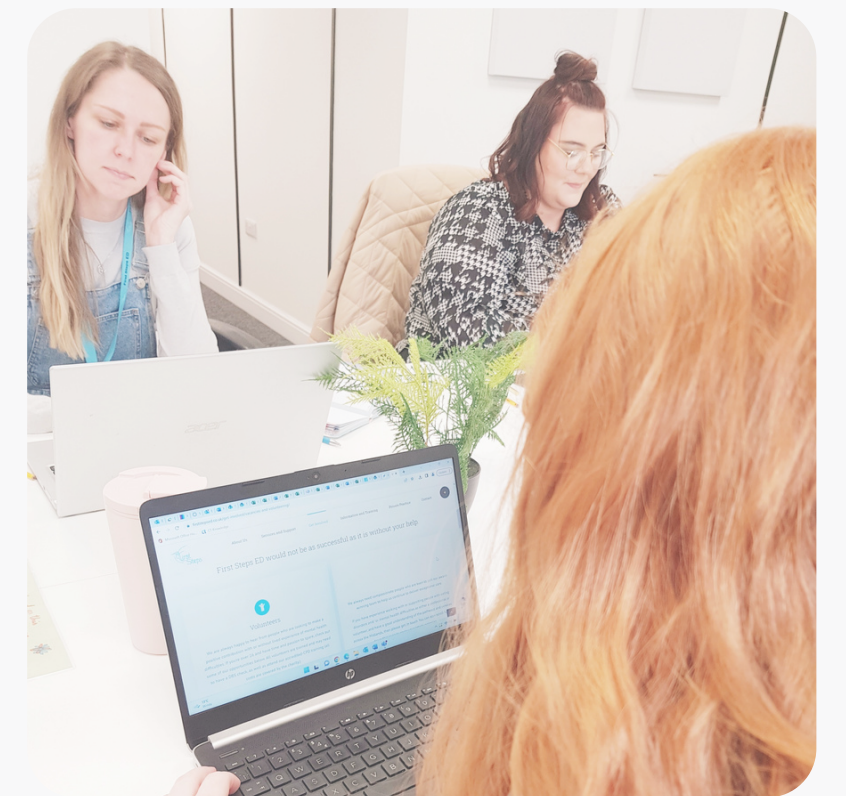
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Our social impact

Volunteers continue to play an important role in helping us to keep our doors open to those struggling with eating difficulties and disorders. Many of our volunteers are experts-by-experience, with an empathetic and knowledgeable approach to the challenges patients and families face through recovery.

The opportunity to become a volunteer following a sustained period of recovery can be a strong motivating factor for recovery, with some individuals with enduring eating disorders finding that volunteer opportunities with First Steps ED can enable them to thrive.

Opportunities with us come in many forms, from peer support and facilitating any of our group workshops, raising awareness and getting involved with our communications team and resource development, as well as utilising their lived experience to co-deliver our accredited training to professionals.





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I had a number of counselling sessions through First Steps ED, and during these sessions I agreed to 'let go' of the desperate need to pretend to everyone that all was well.

After this period of counselling and time out, I finally found a way to live my life without the eating disorders which had controlled me for so very long (31 long years in fact). Despite still being morbidly obese, I also started to develop some peace with my body, I started to wear the bright clothes I'd always craved to, I dyed my hair crazy colours and I held my head up high and became the person I was always hiding from becoming.

Now at the age 52, I have not only found peace with both my disordered eating and with the body I have been battling with for most of my life; I have also found a career working with individuals with severe and enduring eating disorders. As a Peer Support Worker, I hope that my own experience of eating disorders, and my recovery, will be beneficial to those I support through this - which is a wonderful outcome to my story, and something I could never have believed possible in the past.



Shirley Peacock, NHS Peer Support Worker



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Our Patient Public Involvement and Engagement Committee

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The involvement of experts-by-experience, our service users and stakeholder is crucial in making sure our operations remain consistent and relevant to our community, and all the people our organisation impacts.

Our Patient, Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) committee ensures 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.





Eating Disorders Awareness Week 2022

The First Steps ED Eating Disorder Awareness Week campaign in 2022 focused on Early Intervention and Equity for eating disorder support.

Our teams 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. We work with and support professionals across a range of sectors who, with appropriate training, can now recognise the early signs and symptoms of an eating disorder so it felt like an opportune time to promote this area of our advocacy.

The PPIE committee supported content development, media appearances, and helped our communications team navigate language and key concepts for the campaign materials.



Identifying cultural barriers

The committee wanted to develop a new social media strategy which targets diverse groups and communities which could help target new service users. New 'short guides' were designed and launched in March 2023 to better understand our external audiences and the appetite for more targeted content, including our Ramadan Guide and easter resources.

The 'Ramadan and Eating Disorders' received more than 700 reads/downloads over the month-long event, and was well received on social media, compared to our Easter resource which received under 300 reads/downloads.

For the year ahead, the committee's objectives are:

- to understand why these individuals are not referring into our service,
- to offer guidance as to how we can be more supportive and approachable to new communities and demographics,
- to design new resources and/or signpost staff teams to additional training opportunities





Supporting a new working project - Perinatal issues

A new working group has been launched through the PPIE Committee supported and led by our committee's Vice-Chair, Perinatal Lead and Staff Lead and supported by members of the First Steps ED employed team and external experts.

The objective of the group is to prioritising effective care around preconception, prenatal, perinatal, and postnatal issues around eating disorders and, in the future, be on the frontline for policy change when it comes to training requirements. The group will inform on research opportunities new resources and training, as well as future awareness campaigns,

Some initial planning has begun for May 2023 Maternal Mental Health Week Campaign, with volunteers and those with lived experience sharing their stories for the First Steps ED blog.

NEW BLOG POST



Pregnant with an Eating Disorder: My Story



I never expected to become pregnant. I'd had my eating disorder for 23 years before receiving an official diagnosis of 'Anorexia Nervosa.' My last period was a year previous. Having a baby was something I'd longed for, but which I'd resigned myself to never happening.

Hannah Ball
4-5 min read

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Social media performance

Our growing communications team continue to develop our virtual community, with increased engagement on our blog and social media channels and strong collaborative communications strategy with key stakeholders and other non-profit / healthcare professionals working in the eating disorder community across the globe.

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Facebook

32000*

people reached, with
3707 followers.



Instagram

18200*

people reached, with
2223 followers.



Twitter

3862

engaged followers.



LinkedIn

1183

followers and growing
professional community.

*The number of unique accounts that saw any of our posts or stories at least once. Reach is different from impressions, which may include multiple views of your posts by the same accounts. This metric is estimated.





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Our principles of equity and diversity underpin our person-centred, service-user led approach and a big part of the reason we decided to launch our blog space.

41

4492

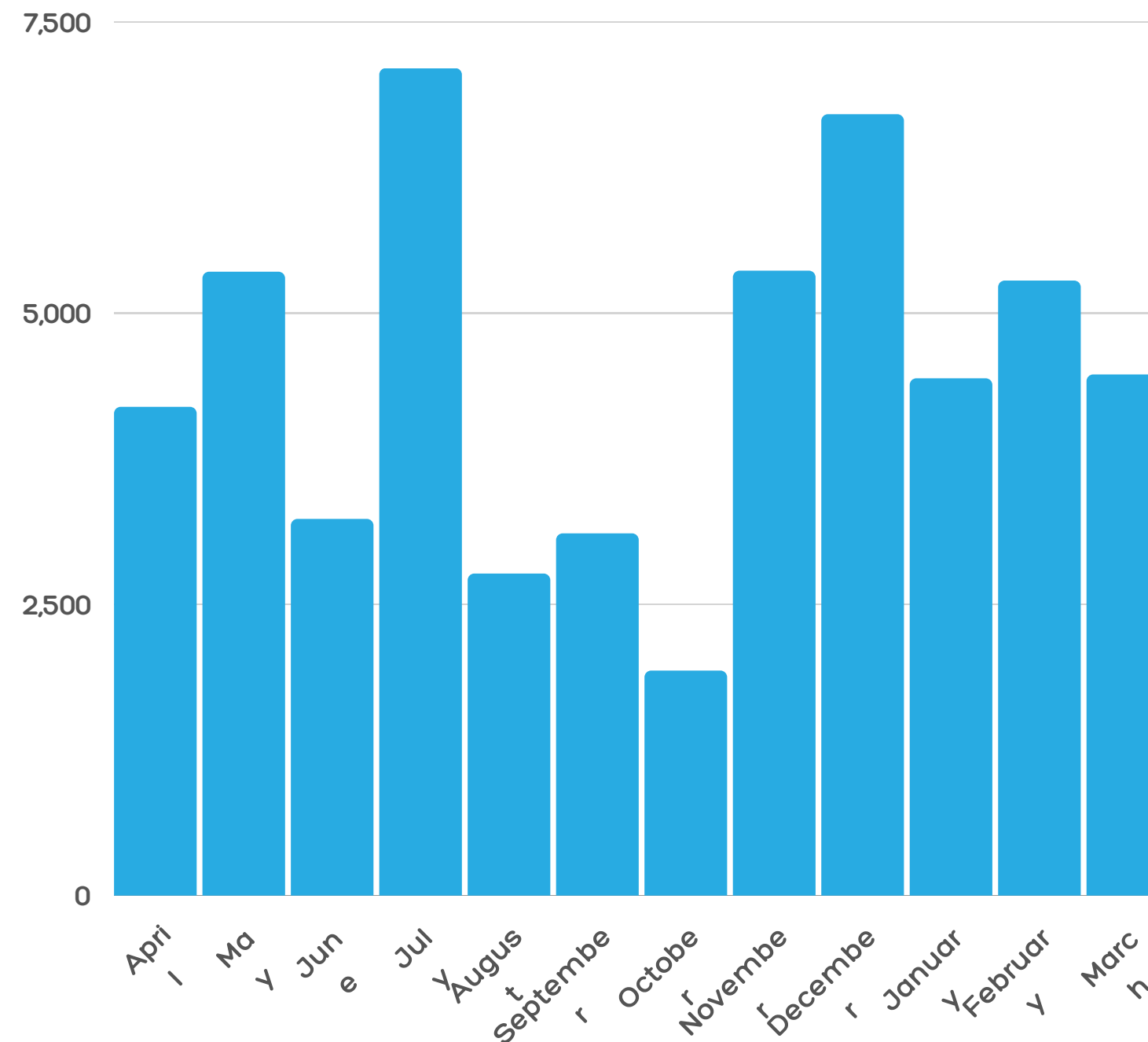
average blog reads per month (based on First Steps ED posts)

82

new blogs published from March 2022 to April 2023 with 43 new writers.

The communications team ensures a consistent flow of new content is published on the blog.

The peaks in monthly readership highlight times where we increase the availability of blogs and resources, particularly during holiday seasons where access to services can become more difficult (e.g Summer beak, Christmas period etc.).



Data based on readership from the top ten performing blogs per month from April 2022 to March 2023.





My Anorexia Story

"It wasn't like I just woke up one morning and thought from now on I'm going to start restricting my eating and counting calories. It felt like it was very slow and almost felt 'natural' in a very weird and twisted way..."



4995 Reads



Finding Hope: A Parent's Story

"We had been through many years with anorexia before we found First Steps ED.. We wish we had found them earlier and had that knowledge, toolset and support earlier. They are absolutely amazing - understanding, caring and insightful."



2843 Reads



The Grinch Didn't Steal Christmas, Diet Culture Did

"Diet Culture impacted me in a number of ways and still does. I hope that we become wiser to the fake news that we absorb and recognise that these people are making money from our insecurities..."



2723 Reads





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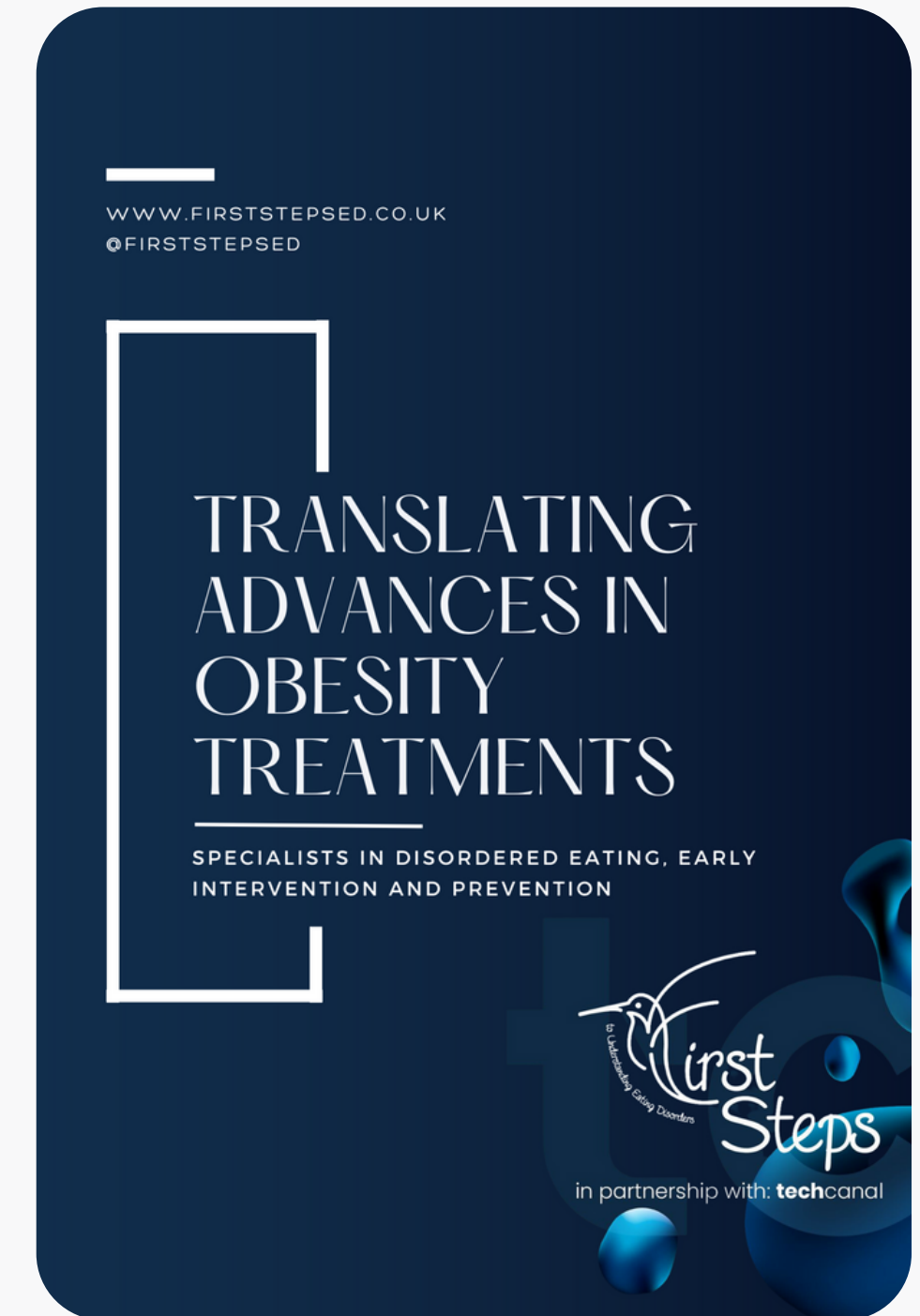
Translating advances in obesity treatments

Access to evidence-based mental health treatment is a necessary first step towards health equity for individuals of healthy weight and living in larger bodies or with obesity. Additional work is needed to dismantle systemic inequities that contribute to disparities in wrong diagnosis and access to care and support.

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Having received a grant from the Association of Mental Health Providers (awarded under their Enterprise Development Programme) First Steps ED have developed a comprehensive understanding of obesity and weight management programmes, and it's relationship to eating disorder presentations and therapeutic services.

The work has informed a new pilot pathway with NHS Complications from Excess Weight (CEW) clinics for children and will support 50 children during 2023 through the Public Health and CYP commissioning team at Derby City Council and Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Commissioning Board (Joined Up Care Derbyshire).





Psychoeducation and Therapeutic Intervention in the Treatment of Obesity (Webinar)

First Steps ED joined Shirley Adu-Ntiamoah, a senior registered dietician currently undertaking a doctoral degree in digital family weight management interventions, to explore the impact of therapeutic interventions in the prevention and treatment of obesity, either as an alternative or supplement to clinical intervention.

Scan the QR code to catch up! Or visit <https://bit.ly/42Zi3Kr>



Learning from lived experience to overcome long-standing barriers and stigma.

In conversation with Shirley, employed by First Steps ED as an NHS Peer Support Worker working with our NHS clinical colleagues in Specialist Adult Eating Disorders. Shirley discusses her lived experience living with obesity and disordered eating, and her journey through recovery.

Scan the QR code or visit <https://bit.ly/3nwV4aA>



Working on the front line for service development and innovation.

First Steps ED holds several NHS Standard Contracts as the primary care Tier 1 and Tier 2 mild-to-moderate eating disorder service on behalf of Integrated Commissioning Boards and where directly commissioned by NHS secondary care services employs a specialist integrated NHS/VCSE team working with Tier 3 specialist outpatient services supporting patients in the home and community.





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About how we spent **our funds**

The National Lottery Community Fund

The National Lottery Community Fund and Awards For All is spent on additional staff costs towards coordinating our services for adults including befriending and to deliver our weekly groups, our highly regarded Skills for Carers programme workshops and provide bursaries to attend our accredited eating disorder training for professionals and students.

Our counselling and psychotherapy sessions are also funded to ensure that no adult in financial hardship is prevented from receiving support for their disordered eating or eating disorder.

Each year over 350 adults will demonstrate the same benefits as with our Children in Need funding, and 125 families/carers will report an enhanced ability to support a loved one with their ongoing recovery journey in their home environments. This funding is also spent on a different cadre of volunteers and ambassadors covering costs for recruitment, induction, safeguarding, and ongoing training and development.

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Children in Need

Children in Need funding is spent on additional staff costs towards coordinating our services for Children and Young People under the age of 17 years and our weekly groups, body image awareness workshops, our steering groups and volunteering opportunities.

Each year over 250 children and young people benefit from this project and report an increased knowledge and ability to manage their eating disorder and mental health, report reduced feelings of isolation and felt less stigmatised about their mental health with positive improvements in self-confidence and self-esteem.



NHS Derby and Derbyshire Integrated Care Board

This funding is spent on our staff costs towards coordinating working with children, young people, and their families between the ages of 5 and 17 years old through our children and young people's peer support service and staff costs towards coordinating our counselling and psychotherapy service supporting adults, 18 years plus.

These services supported a minimum of 180 children and young people and 69 adults registered with a GP in Derby and Derbyshire.



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Derbyshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

This funding is spent on our staff costs towards coordinating our NHS VCSE Integrated Community Support (ICS) Service team focused on hospital admission avoidance, discharge planning and recovery.



NHS Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Integrated Care Board

Our pilot funding is spent on our trailblazing eating disorder app partnership with Tellmi with a focus on engaging 11 to 18 year old BAME and LGBTQ+ people and communities to improve access to early intervention and prevention healthcare services.



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Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board

Our Hertfordshire funding is spent on staff costs towards coordinating our Early Help Eating Disorders Service, available to 5 to 18 years, and Early Help Parent/carer support programme.

Referrals have direct access to face-to-face CBT-T professional support delivered in local therapy rooms, in schools and online via video clinic and our Parent and carers (New Maudsley Method) Skills for Carers programme is available to any parent/carer whether supporting a loved one in recovery or as a first line education and advocacy service.



Enterprise Development Programme

The grant from the Association of Mental Health Providers (awarded under their Enterprise Development Programme) supported the research and development of a comprehensive weight management programme for eating disorder presentations.

The grant also contributed to work which has informed a new pilot pathway that has the potential to be scalable across the emerging NHS England Complications from Excess Weight (CEW) clinics for children and adults.



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And thank you to our **Small Grant Funders...**

Our generous funders continue to enable our charity and services to extend the number of psycho-education groups and workshops, parent and carer skills workshops, accredited eating disorders training for professionals, and our printed research informed guide self-help resources to reach many more individuals, families/carers and professionals in locations throughout England to ensure that we can bring our support and services to people close to home.

We are grateful to our commissioners, funders and supporters fundraising vital funds for the charity which year on year ensures our resources become more accessible to individuals, their families and multi-agency professionals seeking help and support for disordered eating and disorders.



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First Steps ED is a registered Charity No. 1185092