

STEP

2

young people's
health

Annual Report 2023

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Last year was a significant year for Step 2, as we celebrated 30 years of supporting young people. It was great to reflect on some of the achievements of the charity during that time.

Following a review of our strategic plan in 2022, our target for the year was to 'strengthen and develop' rather than grow. Rapid growth over the Covid years, particularly for our counselling service, has meant stability is our current focus.

There have been times over the past year when our services have felt anything but stable, and some services have had to reduce (I will tell you more about that later).

But we have ended the year in a better place than predicted and we are feeling positive about the future, despite the significant challenges we continue to face.

Our staff team is our key strength, and we are incredibly grateful for their hard work and commitment over the uncertainties the last 12 months have presented.

We have two strong teams: the relationship and well-being team and the counselling team, both delivering excellent and complementary services to young people, supporting in total 18,730 young people over the last year.





Our Vision

Young people will be healthy in every way, supported by quality services and each other.

Our Mission

Our mission is to enable children and young people to live healthy lives by providing information and delivering services to them, to their families or to other professionals who work with them.



Specialist RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) Programme

The contract, which was initially due to end in March 2023, has been extended until July 2024 and we expect a further extension until July 2025 which is great news.

A further commission is likely to follow. We continue to deliver on this contract in partnership with HALE (Health Action Local Engagement) and JAMES (Joint Activities & Motor Education Service).

Since the start of the contract, we have delivered to 14,325 children and young people in years 7-10, and a further 3,200 in years 11-13. Over 2,100 staff CPD (Continuing Professional Development) sessions have now been delivered to equip staff with the skills to facilitate RSE lessons themselves.

One of the priority schools has asked us to conduct their statutory parent consultation. We have attended three parent events so far, with another four in the diary. This has allowed us to gain feedback for the school with regard to their RSE curriculum. This has also enabled us to gather general feedback about how confident parents feel in delivering RSE to their own children. Many of the parents we have spoken to feel confident in some discussions with their child or young person but would not want to discuss intimate sexual relationships with them, preferring this to be delivered by the school.

"I don't know where to start with my gratitude. The RSE Team are amazing. your advice and guidance throughout the year while developing our curriculum and lessons means we are always confident and secure in our PSHE delivery. I say it every time you visit, but I don't know what we would do without you all."



Targetted RSE (Relationships and Sex Education) Programme

This service offers bespoke RSE provision to settings with a high number of young people looked after, including alternative education providers, specialist educational settings and children's homes. Last year we delivered 122 sessions to 259 different young people.

We also offer training to people that work and care for these young people, including foster carers, children's home staff and staff in the settings they attend for education, delivering 13 sessions attended by 55 parents and carers, and 43 professionals. Both students and staff overwhelmingly engage well with the subject matter.



Gambling Harms sessions

We have continued to deliver Gambling Harms sessions as part of our partnership with "Gambling with Lives". Students are given questionnaires at the start of the session. They will answer the questions with a score of 1-5 (1 = little/ no knowledge, 5 = well established knowledge). All students are then asked to score themselves again at the end of the session. The graphs show how the majority of students moved from scores of 1 or 2, to scores of 4 or 5.



SAFE (Supportive and Friendly Environment) Group.

39 individual young people have attended this year. The young people we work with in this group often feel judged and isolated from society due to their gender/identity. They have brought a range of issues to the group which they wanted to discuss and have further education on. These include alcohol, vaping, knife crime, emotional wellbeing, and sex and relationships.

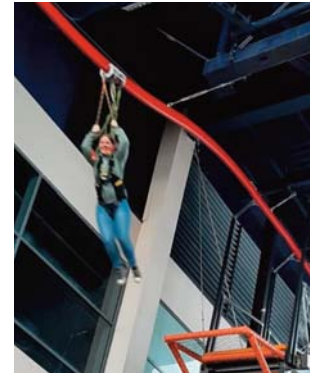
A highlight was the trip to Xscape, which we were able to do thanks to a grant from the Bentley Foundation. The activities took young people out of their comfort zone. Several were nervous about taking part in some of the activities, particularly the aerial adventures, but following observation of others in the group and staff participation, they managed to overcome their fears and discover they could achieve more than they thought. The day provided them with an opportunity to meet outside of the youth club and strengthen their friendships. The visit also helped them to build their confidence and self-esteem by setting themselves small achievable challenges.

Sadly, our involvement with this group ended in December 2023 due to the funding ending.

Learning Disabilities Work

Bradford Council have continued to fund our work with young adults with learning disabilities. The work allows us to support adults with their capacity to make decisions about healthy relationships and sexual health, and to understand these matters better.

This work is delivered individually and tailored to needs and learning styles. We use a variety of specialist resources to ensure the best learning outcomes are achieved.



This year we delivered a total of 93 sessions to 17 individuals.

As well as continuing this work, we have received an additional grant to offer some health-focussed work with adults with learning disabilities, which will allow us to work with more young people next year.

"It was really nice working with you and thank you for all the help and support. Even I learned something new." -support worker who attended a session

C-Card Scheme

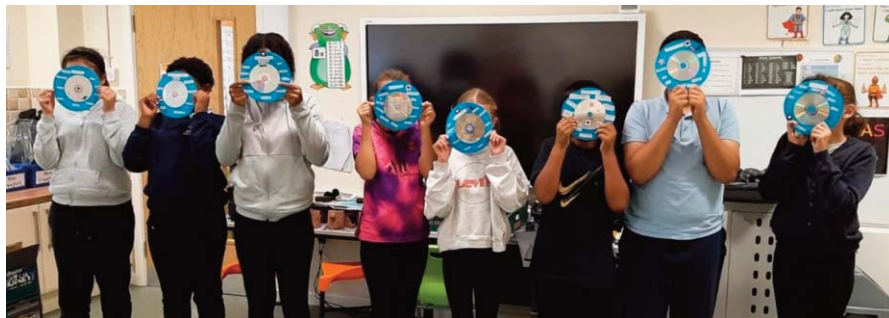
Our commissioned relationship with Locala, in partnership with HALE, ended last year following their recommission and a change in priorities. We still partner them as a C-Card delivery service but no longer do any outreach or training for them, so this service has reduced significantly.

Insight (Emotional Resilience) Course

We entered the second year of the Garfield Weston Grant which funded our Insight programmes in schools. This year we delivered 24 programmes attended by 208 young people. These have happened in secondary schools, primary schools and alternative education settings.

The course works with groups of 6-10 young people for 6 sessions, supporting them to identify their feelings and look at how they can manage their emotions and get support where needed. Our quantitative feedback reports allow learners to give themselves a score out of ten on a range of measures, before and after delivery.

Last year these showed young people made the most progress in "Are you able to stay calm and in control of your feelings?" (the average progress was a 3.7-point increase on the 0-10 scale) and "How easy do you find it to stay calm when you are angry?" (with an average increase of 2.6 on 0-10 scale)



Impact (Boys and Young Men's Work)

The course consists of 6 sessions covering:

- Challenging myths about being a man in society – the pressure to be strong, etc
- Gender stereotypes – how we are taught what it means to be a man from an early age, exploring the influence of toys, media, advertising, roles, etc. and how this impacts both men and women
- Healthy relationships – what makes a good relationship, understanding abuse in relationships and understanding consent
- Impacts of pornography on men and the potential negative effects on relationships
- Sexual bullying and harassment, banter, challenging negative banter in peer attitudes towards women, and other forms of harassment
- Role models and men - what/who makes good examples for young men, what should we aspire to be

9 groups were delivered to 53 boys and young men.

The boys made good progress in all areas, with an average increase of 2.5 on the 0-10 scale. Most progress was made on "I understand the impact of pornography on men in society" and "I can recognise the positive qualities in a male role model."



Counselling

Our counselling service continues to thrive, despite challenges with funding this year. We have continued to deliver counselling to children and young people aged between 5-25yrs as follows:

- Counselling for 5–11yrs in 8 primary schools
- Counselling for 11–18yrs in 8 secondary schools
- Counselling service for 11–18yrs based in the community and funded by Children in Need, Bradford Counselling Collaborative, Morrisons and the Garfield Weston Foundation (reduced due to the ending of funding from Children in Need, Morrisons and Bradford Counselling Collaborative - funding from Garfield Weston will also end shortly.
- Counselling for 16–25yrs, offered remotely through the GP Enhanced Access Service
- The CALM Service (in partnership with Relate Bradford and Family Action), which offers play therapy/counselling for children aged 5-11 years who have been particularly impacted by trauma and Adverse Childhood Experiences, ended this year. We continued to support this age group of children in partnership with Relate Bradford and Leeds and Early Help, with support from the Integrated Care Board (ICB)

In addition, we have delivered:

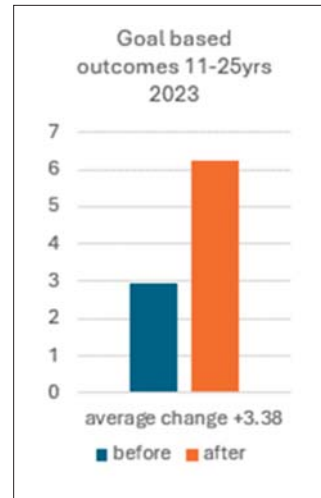
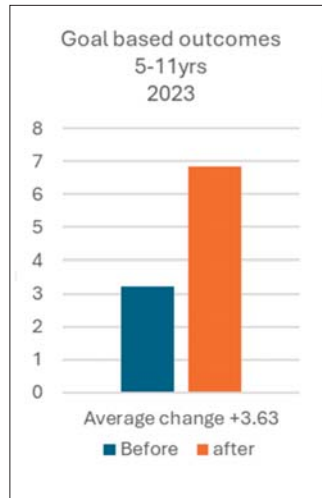
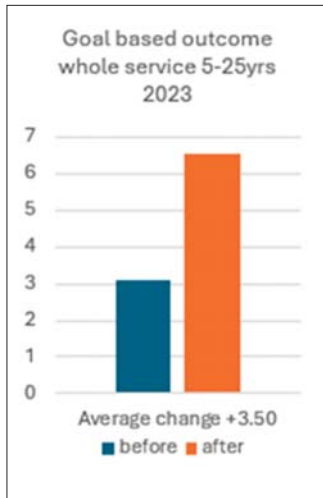
- Counselling for staff and supervision for safeguarding leads at St Stephen's Primary School, Beckfoot Thornton and One in A Million.
- A series of therapeutic groups, offering psycho-educative work.
- Support with parenting teenagers for parents in small groups, funded by the Bartlett Foundation.
- Individual counselling sessions for parents, also funded by the Bartlett Foundation.

Referrals have continued to come from school nursing teams, social workers, children's services, GP surgeries, Early Help, schools, families and individual young people themselves.

However, we had to close our waiting list and referral pathway for our community-based counselling in August 2023 due to the funding cuts mentioned above.

We are continuing to endeavour to source new grants and funding to be able to respond to the continued high demand for this service.

- 961 Referrals received
- 880 CYP (Children and Young People) attended counselling
- 7154 counselling sessions were offered
- 5456 counselling sessions were attended
- Attendance 76%



The reliable change index (RCI) indicates that change greater than 2.82 points represents reliable change on GBO's

The Team

Our counselling team has comprised of 22 counsellors this year who have continued to work with deep compassion and commitment throughout another incredibly challenging year. All our counsellors are qualified to a minimum of Diploma level and are all members of a professional body, usually the BACP (British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists) or PTUK (Play Therapy UK). To quality assure and safeguard their work, they all attend independent monthly clinical supervision in addition to monthly internal supervision at Step 2.

We have been grateful for the support of and partnership with schools receiving a counselling service from Step 2. These have included Merlin Top Primary School, St Oswald's Primary School, Atlas Primary School, Green Lane Primary School, Margaret McMillan Primary School, Westbourne Primary School, St Stephen's Primary School, Hill Top Primary, Corpus Christi Catholic College, Coop Grange Academy, Buttershaw Business and Enterprise College, Beckfoot Thornton School, Bronte Girls Academy, Feversham Academy, Eden Boys and South Craven School.

Case Study

Names have been changed to protect anonymity in this case study.

Helen (15) presented as confident and secure in herself as she described frequent angry outbursts at school. She shared how she reacted quickly and aggressively to her teachers at school when faced with change, things she didn't agree with or felt overwhelmed. Helen felt her anger was a justified response. She was fatalistic in her attitude to her anger, often mentioning her suspected ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) and how anger ran in the family.

In the initial sessions, I empathised with Helen about the pressures of school, the constraints and how sometimes things didn't run in the way she would like. We explored the anger outbursts together, what caused them, how they felt and the impact on her. I continued to build the therapeutic relationship accepting Helen as she was, without judgement or collusion as to whether her behaviour was appropriate or not.



In the middle sessions, Helen started to disclose feelings of anxiety and talked about being bullied earlier in her school life. She was more comfortable voicing her angry perspective on her situation over her worries, so it was important to hold and accept all of these feelings equally. Helen's current anxiety centred on her upcoming exams. We explored what things helped and didn't help her. Helen identified that routine was very important to her, and that she worked better and was less anxious with a clear plan in place. This led to a further understanding that sudden change or unexpected events were challenging for Helen, and often resulted in an angry response.

Towards the last sessions, Helen had a clearer sense of empowerment, and she shifted as she found a purpose in her school work. She was able to revise clearly as she had a clear plan and had also spoken to teachers about needing a clear plan to follow. She had become less defensive. Her acceptance of her needs meant she was able to take steps to meeting those needs which helped her to feel more in control and as a result less likely to get angry. This was clearly demonstrated when she told me that she had been told 'out of the blue' that her food technology exam was the following week. She told me how she had reacted calmly at school and was clear about her own plan in practising over the weekend. She went on to complete her exam calmly and confidently.

"I feel I have become more of myself, who I am and not having a cover on my face."

***"My anger got more in control and I have got more sleep. I know if I get more sleep
I will be calmer and happy."***

"I've been able to get things off my chest and think about strategies to control my anger."

***"I feel more happy and content because I know how to deal with a situation. If I am calm
I know my day is going to be calm."***

The most notable change over the last year was the departure of Kirsty Ferguson. Kirsty had been with us for close to 11 years and had led our Relationships and Wellbeing Team in recent times. We cannot thank Kirsty enough for her input over the years, and the legacy she leaves remains with us.

Another significant loss to us was Fiona Meneghello. Fiona had been with us since she started as a student, six years ago, and developed into the role of one of our Counselling Coordinators. Before that she had spent time as a trustee.

We also said goodbye to four other counsellors: Izzy, Alan, Bradley and Alison.

We are extremely grateful for all they have contributed to the organisation over the years. We miss them all and wish them all well in the future.

Additions to our team:

- Chloe Love joined us in August, replacing Kirsty as Service Lead for the Relationships and Wellbeing team
- Andy Gibbs joined in March, replacing Benny who had left at the end of 2022. He is employed as Boys' and Young Men's Worker
- Tina joined us on an intern programme, in partnership with Bradford College. Tina is working on business administration as well as helping with delivery
- We were recently joined by a further 2 part-time counsellors: Surji Cair and Debs Blue, who are settling in well
- We benefitted from 3 social work placement students: Coral, Ruth and Elizabeth





Staff development:

- We have continued to hold two whole staff team training sessions per year. Two of these sessions have taken place, bringing our remote team of counsellors together and allowing them to meet one another and the wider Step 2 team
- Chloe is taking part in a leadership programme with Common Purpose.
- Pauline is shortly due to complete a leadership programme delivered by Community Action Bradford and District (CABAD)
- Sue is currently training to become a counselling supervisor, adding capacity to that area of the team next year

Fundraising

It has been a challenging year for funding but with the help of a Grants and Trusts Consultant, and the strengthening of several great partnerships, the end of the year saw positive news. We were successful in receiving grants from: The Violence Reduction Unit; Pilgrim Trust; Bingley Bubble Community Partnership; Sovereign Health Care and St James's Place, as well as receiving two small funding pots via the VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector) alliance. Prior to that, small grants from Charles and Elsie Sykes, Onside Community Foundation, Bentley Advancing Life Chances Foundation and Yorkshire Building Society have helped keep several services running.

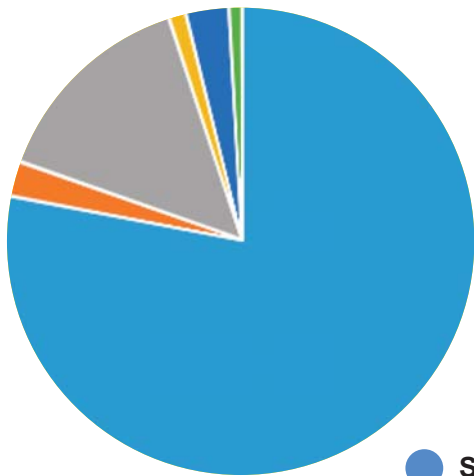
Some of the funding we have secured involves partnership work and will mean strengthening partnerships with other valued organisations, in particular HALE, Emerge and All Star Ents. We look forward to collaborating more closely with them all. Much of this work will be delivered by the Relationships and Wellbeing team.

A large number of staff and trustees took part in a challenge to walk 30 miles in 30 days, which we did in September, as a celebration of our 30th birthday which happened last year. This raised around £2.5k, and we are grateful for all their efforts and for those that sponsored us.

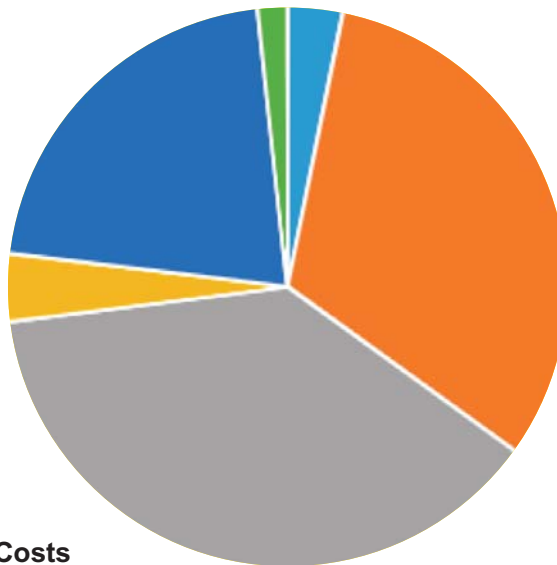


Income Sources

Expenditure



- Staffing Costs
- Premises Cost
- Programme Costs
- Consumables
- Professional Fees
- Other



- Health & Well Being Fund
- Schools
- Ongoing contracts
- Short-term commissions
- Other grants
- Other Income



Future Plans

We have just started a programme in partnership with All Star Ents. This programme will see us work together to deliver an Online Harms prevention programme in Appleton Academy. Another new programme is giving us the opportunity to develop work in Bingley primary schools, working with young people on emotional resilience as they prepare for transition to secondary school. A further new piece of work will see us partner with Emerge to offer support to young women aged 16-25 who are struggling with emotional wellbeing. The offer will include counselling, mentoring and a drop-in. Despite no longer having funding for our community play therapy service from the ICB, the grant from St James's Place is allowing us to continue that work until the end of the year. Funding from Sovereign Health Care is allowing us to further develop our work with boys and young men this year, and we are confident of further grant funding to allow us to develop further.

Note from the Chair of Trustees

As usual, the staff at Step 2 delivered an enormous amount in 2023, supporting many young people, professionals, and parents/carers. The trustees are immensely proud of the impact Step 2 has and count it a privilege to serve on the board. Like it has been for so many charities, this year has been a difficult one from a funding and commissioning perspective which is disappointing and unsettling for everyone, but particularly the staff. As in previous years, the trustees thank them all for their tenacity and commitment – there will be exciting developments in 2024 and the trustees are confident Step 2 will continue to have a huge impact.

We would like to offer special thanks and appreciation for Pippa Jones, our chair of trustees, who last year completed 21 years as a trustee, much of the time either as treasurer or chair. We are incredibly grateful for the commitment and expertise she has brought over so many years.

“We had some changes to our board of trustees, Lesley Bartlett resigned in July, after eight years on the board. Helen Hodgson resigned in January after five years, and Rachel Stanton resigned in December after six months. We are very grateful to them all for all they contributed during their time with us. We recruited three new trustees. Jayne Clarke returned after a few years break, Abiodun Unegbu and Abigail Mitchell also joined the board. All three are proving very valuable additions to the board.”



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