

OTR

APRIL 2024-MARCH 2025 IMPACT REPORT



STATEMENT FROM OUR CEO



Young people continue to find themselves navigating a complex world which, for many, is having an impact on their wellbeing. We know the likelihood of a young person experiencing poor mental health has increased by 50% since 2022 (The Health Foundation 2025), and we are seeing this borne out through year-on-year growth in demand for our services, as well as through increases in complexity of needs.

As a social movement working to amplify the voices of young people, we pride ourselves on listening to young people to understand the impact of these challenges, but also what support services they want to access, and how. We also know the effects of these challenges are not felt equally. And, for some young people, accessing services - particularly mental health support - is a significant challenge in itself.

During the period April 2024 to March 2025, we continued to offer a range of services for children and young people aged 11 to 25 across Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire (BNSSG). We delivered these mostly in person, but with online support also available - enabling young people to, importantly, be supported in their preferred way.

This has included talking therapies such as low intensity Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) with our therapists and children's wellbeing practitioners (CWPs); more intensive interventions through our NHS partnerships team; a range of support in schools through our Mental Health Support Team (MHST) service delivered in partnership with Avon and Wiltshire NHS Mental Health Partnership (AWP); as well as in the community with projects such as our arts, sports and nature work, Resilience Lab (self-care workshops), and our flagship identity-led programmes Project Zazi and Freedom, to name a few.

In this report, we are pleased to share an overview of services provided and their impact; as well as our ambitious plans for the future, informed by continuous learning and guided by our engagement with young people. I would like to express sincere thanks to our incredible staff and volunteers, our supporters, funders, and partners, without whom we couldn't be there for young people at a time when they need us most.

Amanda Edwards, February 2026



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HEADLINE STATS

14,058

children and young people from across the Bristol region (BNSSG) accessed support



6,603

received structured support interventions (1:1 therapy or group sessions)



1,731

attended drop-in hubs



1,191

benefitted from mental health workshops



632

were supported by our Children's Wellbeing Practitioners (CWPs)

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT: COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

207

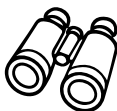
marginalised young people offered sports, arts, and nature-based wellbeing activities and experiences, in collaboration with 11 community partners, through projects including:



climbing sessions for care-experienced young people



community-based gardening and food growing for young refugees and people seeking asylum



bird-watching for over-18s

“

I have been coming every week, it helps me feel happier. I have learnt so much...the best bit has been digging with friends and watching the flowers grow. I want to be a camp volunteer...it's given me lots of ideas for my future career.

Participant feedback - Action for Conversation collaboration

”



Arts-led groups such as Creative Drop-in and Next Gen Sounds provided regular support combined with creative outlets.

PROJECT SPOTLIGHT:

PROJECT ZAZI

1,157

support sessions for Black and Brown young people, including 1:1 therapy, group sessions, and youth-led projects



1-year programme of empowering workshops for a group of young people in two Bristol schools included sessions with Black and Brown entrepreneurs and artists. Participants showcased their experiences by planning and leading a reflective celebratory community event, with parents, peers, and other community members in attendance.

The team also contributed to the wider eco-system through impactful community engagement:



equipped professionals working with young people through best-practice training, including at University of Bristol



supported parents and carers to better understand and advocate for their children



maintained a steady, trusted presence in community centres (e.g. Easton Community Centre, St Paul's Learning Centre, and Docklands)



contributed to systems-change discussions with key role players, such as inner-city funding, youth violence, crime prevention, and healthy living.



PROJECT SPOTLIGHT:

FREEDOM

1,176

sessions for LGBTQIA+ young people, delivered all year round, including:



regular groups, 1:1 support, and advocacy



393 connections made with young people at Bristol Pride, through the march and a stall



cultural excursions to explore LGBTQIA+ history and culture (including museums, the theatre, and Aardman studios)

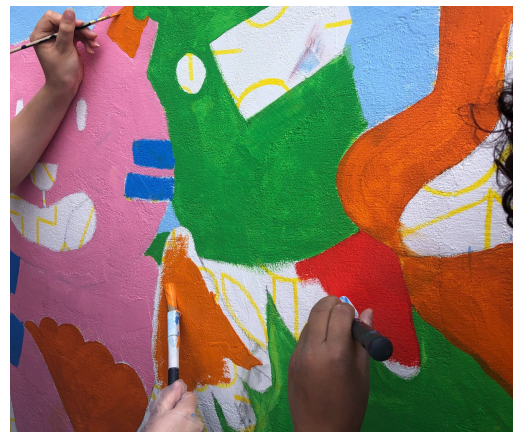
Freedom played an important role in the Bristol Hate Crime and Discrimination Service (BHCDS); a long-term partnership with organisations across the city, with Stand Against Racism and Inequality (SARI) leading the partners. Our team provide invaluable direct support for young people who have survived hate or discrimination due to their gender or sexuality. This includes safe 1-1 sessions with our specialist case worker, signposting into other partners and agencies, and advice and support accessing other services. As part of this service, we represented and advocated for young people in spaces such as the Public Transport Equality Group and LGBTQ+ Task & Finish Group with Avon & Somerset Police.

“

Living as an out queer person in this city for the first time in my life has been a wonderful experience because of you all! I went to my first Pride with OTR, I've made friends and learned new skills. I am extremely grateful!!

Participant of Freedom's 18-25 Group

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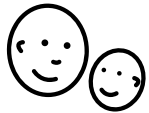


AREA SPOTLIGHT: NORTH SOMERSET

611

times young people attended Hubs, in four locations across the county

The raft of support on offer for young people included a presence in schools, 1:1 therapy at OTR's North Somerset HQ, year-round Community Hubs, and varied community events.



The team opened a new community hub in Portishead to increase accessibility through broader presence across the county.



Virtual and in-person wellbeing workshops, support, and training were delivered tailored to empower young people of all ages with self-support skills. This included a re-thinking of core workshop series to increase their accessibility.



“ I now have lots of coping strategies
Young person attending Mind Aid in North Somerset ”



Working across widely spread and rural locations makes collaboration, networking, and partnership with other local organisations important levers to maximise impact and create positive change. Examples of this from 2024-25 include North Somerset's Mental Health Strategy Launch, North Somerset Parent Carers Working Together Day of SEND, and Voluntary Action North Somerset's Annual General Meeting.



AREA SPOTLIGHT:

SOUTH GLOS

520

times young people attended Hubs in Yate,
supported through Local Authority partnership

2024-25 saw the development of pioneering new specialist programmes to support neurodivergent young people across South Gloucestershire, in addition to the team's broad offer for young people in schools and in the community.

'all around' is a neuro-affirmative service developed to provide holistic support to young people and their families. In its first iteration, the programme included making flatbreads, finding quartz, and making a stress volcano,

all around

'cope' is a three-session interactive workshop to increase understanding and literacy around emotions, thoughts, and feelings. This was supportively designed in response to the needs of a cohort of Autistic, ADHD, and AuDHD students.

cope



“

The understanding you
already have of young
people's challenges are streets
ahead of any professional
we've worked with and that
means so much

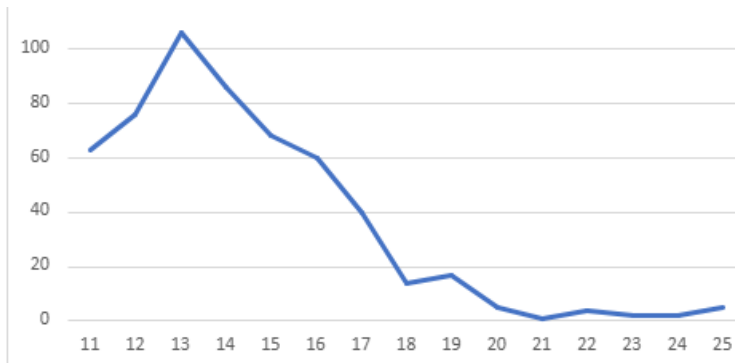
Family of young person attending
allaround

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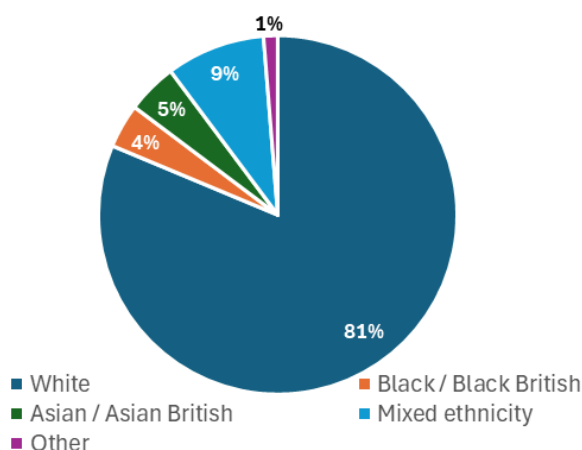
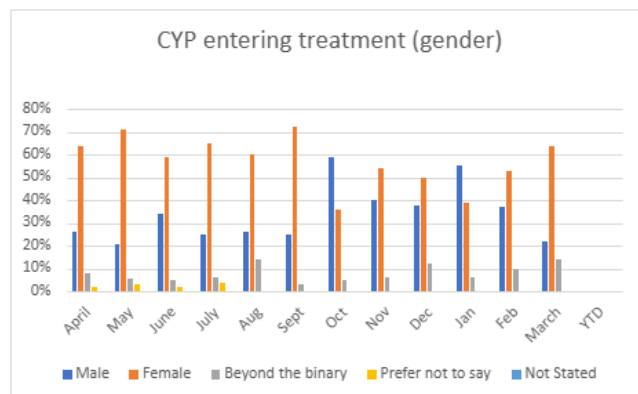
PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS OF OUR THERAPIES SERVICE USERS

We collect demographic data for age, gender and ethnicity, to track patterns and trends and get a clear picture of who we're reaching. These graphs show age, gender, and ethnicity of the young people who accessed our structured and therapeutic interventions over the year.



The majority of children and young people we support therapeutically sit within the age 11 to 16 age bracket, which is largely influenced by our work in schools.

Across the year, 60% of therapies service users identified as female, 30% as male, and 9% beyond the gender binary. Patterns shifted over time: the first six months saw a higher proportion of female young people, while the latter half of the year reflected a more balanced mix. Throughout, we consistently supported an ongoing proportion of young people identifying beyond the binary, underscoring the importance of holding space for diverse identities across our services.



Ethnicity data shows that the largest group accessing our structured therapies are White, followed by Mixed Ethnicity, Asian/Asian British, and Black/Black British. Project Zazi is our programme-level response to entrenched ethnicity-based access inequities in mental health support. This includes ensuring that Black and Brown young people are supported by therapists with Black or Brown ethnic identities. At an organisation level, we strive for racialised young people to be fully represented and supported across all our services.

COMMISSIONED PARTNERSHIPS



OTR's long-standing partnership with AWP and wider NHS partners provides embedded OTR support for young people in schools, within the CAMHS Intensive Outreach Service, and throughout their transition from Children's to Adult Services. OTR offer their uniquely youth-led and relational approach to young people accessing these services.



1,116

young people supported by MHST as part of OTR's partnership with AWP

1,747

hours of Whole School Mental Health activities and planning e.g. assemblies, pop ups, parent events, psych-educational groups

158

schools receiving EMHP support across Bristol, North Somerset, and South Glos



Adult Mental Health Services (AMHS)

In partnership with AWP, OTR's transitions service has expanded into North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, ensuring equitable support for young people across BNSSG. The new model aims to provide transitions-to-adulthood support to 75% of young people in CAMHS as they turn 18. Within the Early Interventions for Psychosis service, we also established a successful walking group at Westonbirt Arboretum to help people connect with nature after a first episode of psychosis.

Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

The team have been delivering intensive outreach to young people in crisis across Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire, meeting them in the community and working closely with AWP partners to improve their experience of support.

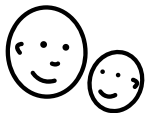
STRENGTHENING ENVIRONMENTS AROUND YOUNG PEOPLE

OTR recognises that a young person's mental health is shaped by their environment and the relationships around them. Through our training offer, Diffusion, we work to support and equip the adults in young people's lives — parents, carers, and professionals — to better understand and respond to their needs.



207

Professionals participated in one of Diffusion's best practice training sessions.



95%

Of participants agreed that the training provided practical skills, strategies and tools that they could use in their work.

“

Incredibly informative, non threatening and equipped attendees to talk about gender and sexuality in a way that supports individuals

Course Attendee

”

DIF_FUSI^ON

Elsewhere, other parts of OTR directly support and engage with parents of young people:

375

engagement interactions between the Engagement and Participation team and a parent or carer, including through our enquiry line, at hubs, or out in the community

BUILDING A BETTER SYSTEM FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

OTR believes in positively disrupting the ecosystem that surrounds young people. This means working closely with organisations across the community - providing training, engaging in mentoring programmes, facilitating knowledge-exchange, receiving project support, and more. In 2024-25, we worked with a diverse range of brilliant delivery partners, including:



FOUNDATIONS FOR SUCCESS

OTR's work with young people is only possible thanks to the dedication of our wonderful community of staff and volunteers. Our volunteers play a key role across the organisation, from offering therapeutic support as volunteer therapists to contributing their skills in a wide range of other areas that enrich our work with young people.

PEER REPRESENTATIVES AND PEER NAVIGATORS

The support of our volunteer peer 'reps' and peer 'navs' is vital in centring young people's voices across every aspect of our service delivery.

30

Peer Rep and Peer Navs supported our work in 2024-25

This year we established a mentoring partnership with Burges Salmon, providing Peer Reps with one-to-one career mentoring from their Business Mentors as part of the placement.

“ Volunteering at OTR feels like magic (OTR Peer Nav) ”



OTR ONLINE REACH

OTR's online presence is an important part of our work. During 2024-25 our reach included:



6,783

E-newsletter subscribers



6,142

Instagram followers



3,160

Connections on LinkedIn

FINANCES & FUNDING



2024-25 income: **£3,477,339**

2024-25 expenditure: **£3,521,570**

Our work would not have been possible without the support of our funding partners and supporters. We want to say a huge and heartfelt thank you from all of the team here at OTR.

Together, we enabled thousands of young people across Bristol, North Somerset, and South Gloucestershire to look after their wellbeing mental health, in a challenging world.



FUNDRAISING IN OUR COMMUNITIES



Our loyal supporter base never ceases to amaze us, spanning individual and workplace giving, events and community fundraising, and corporate sponsorship. We are always humbled by the lengths individuals, businesses, and volunteer groups go to, to help us bring our services free to any young person across BNSSG who needs us.



“

I'm running the 10K for OTR because I have used their services and I want to give back.

OTR supporter

”

GRANTS - TRUSTS & FOUNDATIONS

We are delighted to have partnered with a wide range of local and national grant-makers. Across 2024-2025 we received funding from the following:

Aquila Family Trust - Big Lottery - Bristol City Council - Children in Need - Co-op Foundation - Garfield Weston Foundation - Health Education England - Missing Link - North Somerset Council - Nisbet Trust - Prudence Trust - WeSport - Yate Town Council

NEXT STEPS

Our OTR25 strategy centres around five priorities which are guiding how we deliver and develop our work with young people, providing greater choice and control over the wellbeing and mental health support they receive.



PRIORITY 1: MAGNIFY YOUNG PEOPLE'S PARTICIPATION AND VOICE

What this looks like in 2025-26:

- Build on our existing youth participation work by further developing our peer representatives and peer navigators.
- Explore new, additional ways to ensure young people are at the heart of key decision making – including feeding into the senior leadership team and board, and committees such as our Race and Equity Steering Group.
- Provide young people with educational opportunities around their rights, activism, and other ways to use their voices outside of OTR.



PRIORITY 2: CREATE A RICH AND WIDE MENTAL HEALTH OFFER

What this looks like in 2025-26:

- In partnership with AWP, continue to make progress towards 100% coverage in schools across the whole of BNSSG, rebuild our Children's Wellbeing Practitioner (CWP) service, further develop our communities work particularly arts, sports, and nature.
- Embed a regional structure enabling us to replicate successful projects from one area across all three.
- Relaunch our Hubs service.
- Explore opportunities for collaboration with a wide range of youth service providers, engage proactively and consistently with our extensive networks, and explore ways of developing our Resilience Lab workshop delivery.



PRIORITY 3: REACH YOUNG PEOPLE EXPERIENCING INEQUALITY

What this looks like in 2025-26:

- Celebrate 30 years of our Freedom project and reflect with young people and partners on how we can further develop this service in the context of the current challenges the community is sadly facing.
- Work within our CWP service to target emotionally-based school non-attending and / or excluded young people across BNSSG, who have a high likelihood of being from lower socio-economic communities or care-experienced.
- Continue our journey to becoming an anti-racist organisation, tackling racial inequality, and evolve our Project Zazi offer by launching weekly Hubs. Develop our understanding of the issue of Anti-Muslim hate and the impact of this on young people, our communities and colleagues.
- Redesign our Race and Equity Steering Group to generate more action.



PRIORITY 4: BUILD SUPPORTIVE COMMUNITIES

What this looks like in 2025-26:

- Build on our Diffusion service, providing expertise and training for professionals.
- Deliver our families, parents and carers sessions and support, to help equip young people's support networks.



PRIORITY 5: POSITIVELY DISRUPT THE LOCAL MENTAL HEALTH ECOSYSTEM

What this looks like in 2025-26:

- Ensure we have “a seat at the table” within key networks and collaboratives such as VCSE groups.
- Demonstrate and build the case for preventative, early, community-based interventions for young people through the delivery of our services, shaped by young people.
- Positively support change from within the ecosystem.



THANK YOU!

We would not be able to achieve this impact without the continued support and generosity of our volunteers, funding partners, supporters, fundraisers and delivery partners.

Thank you to all those who support OTR's work!

OTR