



# Impact Report 2020-21

How we responded to increased  
need and new challenges between  
April 2020 and March 2021



# A very warm welcome to the Devon Mind Impact Report 2020–21!

**Robin accessed our counselling service during 2021. His name has been changed to protect his identity.**

“ I approached Devon Mind because I thought I was broken beyond repair. After my girlfriend left me and was quite abusive to me after the relationship ended, I thought the only solution was ending everything. **I was angry and upset.** I had a lot of emotions which a guy like me has never really had before...

My counsellor helped me channel my approach to my feelings. I was seeing a lot of negatives and they were telling me the positive side of things; they helped guide me in the right direction and **it really made my future feel better.** Each time I had a call with my counsellor, I felt myself coming back out. It did take a few sessions, but I got there in the end. I'm in a much better thinking state now.

**Thanks for everything — my journey has come to an end.** ”

Photos of models are used throughout this report to protect identities.

## Prioritising support in a year full of challenges.

**At the start of 2020–21, a gradual expansion of our services into new areas of Devon was at the forefront of our Business Plan, following our rebranding and repositioning from Plymouth & District Mind to Devon Mind during the previous year.**

However, with the truly novel challenges brought on by the COVID–19 pandemic, we had to rethink our plans and put the safety and wellbeing of our staff and service users first, in the face of a whole new uncertainty. We knew that the pandemic would bring about **higher levels of mental health need** than we'd ever seen before, and that we would have to find new ways of meeting those needs for as many people as possible.

Over a short period of time, the demand for our services increased exponentially. In the six months following the first national lockdown, we received **1,740 contacts** from people looking for help. By thinking on our feet, we were able to meet this demand by expanding our phone support, offering brand new ways for service users to connect with us online, and increasing our presence on digital channels such as social media. We secured COVID grant funding to enable us to invest in new hardware, software, and staff training.

There is no doubt that 2020–21 was one of the **hardest years** in Devon Mind's history. But with the incredible support of people across Devon who donated, fundraised, shared, contributed, and volunteered their time, we are in an extremely strong position, both financially and strategically, going into 2021–22.

During 2020–21,  
we provided  
support for

**3,123**

people across  
Devon who needed  
help with their  
mental health.

This included

**2,427**  
new people.

# Our vision, mission and values.

## Our vision

Our vision is of a society that promotes and protects **good mental health** for all and treats people with experience of mental ill health **fairly, positively, and with respect.**

## Our mission

To ensure that Devon is a place where people can enjoy good mental health and have the opportunity to **reach their potential.**

## Our values

**Open:** We reach out to anyone who needs us • **Together:** We're stronger in partnership • **Responsive:** We listen, we act • **Independent:** We speak out fearlessly • **Unstoppable: We never give up.**

# Reflections from Woodside.

## Paula, Mental Health Practitioner

“ April 2020 marked the beginning of working from home during the COVID-19 pandemic. Prior to this, I had been working face-to-face with clients at Devon Mind and a local GP surgery. With no break in service, I began providing telephone support from home.

I support an average of 60 people per week over the phone, working four days a week. Initially, the transition from working in teams to working in isolation was difficult, but it has been a huge privilege to support so many people in Plymouth and wider Devon through these unprecedented times.

In many cases, a regular 30-minute phone call has provided the time and space for clients to talk about their fears and losses. Many refer to these calls as a lifeline, without which they doubt they could have managed. ”



## Adapting our Recovery College.

**We supported 2,427 new people (aged 18 years and above) across a broad spectrum of mental health needs in 2020–21. Alongside this, we continued to provide ongoing support to an additional 705 people.**

Our support offer changed from face-to-face to telephone, online platforms, and email as our staff and volunteers moved to remote working. We continued to offer 1:1 emotional support, counselling, psychoeducation courses, support groups, and general advice, guidance and signposting – albeit in a virtual space.

To support our community with as much capacity as we could, we recruited an additional 5 volunteer counsellors and secured funding from the National Lottery COVID-19 Emergency Fund to widen our digital support offer across Devon, including out-of-hours phone support/counselling for people most impacted by the pandemic.

**“I was so happy to see that this training exists at all – and for free! I think there is a huge gap in support that this workshop can help to fill.”**

– Feedback from Devon Mind 2021 workshop attendee

**“2020 was devastating for me. I was lost to depression when I reached out [to Devon Mind]. Working with [my counsellor] has been amazing and everything I was hoping for in reaching out for help and support.”**

– Feedback from Devon Mind 2021 counselling client

# Feedback on our counselling service.

**100%** of counselling clients strongly agreed that their counsellor listened to them effectively.

**100%** of counselling clients agreed or strongly agreed that their counsellor focused on what was important to them as the client.

**94%** of counselling clients agreed or strongly agreed that counselling helped them with whatever had originally led them to seek it.



# Reflections from Woodside.

## Richard, Mental Health Training Manager

“2020–21 was a momentous year! As COVID showed little inclination to release its suffocating grip on the world, initially our training programme was suspended completely. Instead of travelling widely and meeting many amazing people, in the spring and early summer I was furloughed and spent much time tending my garden and walking my dog! In late summer, demand for training slowly returned.

While some companies asked for a resumption of face-to-face deliveries, observing social distancing guidance, other companies asked for online delivery. Zoom and Microsoft Teams emerged from relative obscurity to become familiar venues for safe training delivery.

But what difference does our training make? It helps those who are prepared to challenge stigma about mental health; staff or clients who might have suffered in silence and may recover, emerging stronger and more resilient people. For companies and services, a reputation of care for staff can be enhanced. People with a history of mental health issues who are supported and valued in their workplaces may deliver as much as people who have never had them. Both pastorally and financially, it makes sense to work with us! ”



## Expert training for local organisations.

In previous years, we were fully engaged in the delivery of a portfolio of mental health training courses and workshops to organisations across the UK, both as Devon Mind and as associate trainers for National Mind.

The demand for training of this nature was significantly impacted by the pandemic. However, we were able to deliver online training to **18 organisations** over the course of the year, reaching a total of **270 participants**.

In March 2021, we were commissioned by the Devon Partnership Trust to deliver a suite of online Mental Health First Aid training to staff and volunteers in the VCSE sector across Devon, as part of the Winter Discharge Initiative.

**“Thank you for the training session yesterday. It was a really good session and all the team commented on your brilliant delivery skills, which kept us engaged throughout. We are all looking forward to the next one!”**

– Feedback from Devon Mind 2021 training course attendee





## Supporting our VCSE colleagues.

In early 2021, it was acknowledged that the VCSE (voluntary, community and social enterprise) sector in Plymouth had gone above and beyond what they normally provided to ensure there was an appropriate support response for the most vulnerable in the city.

Not surprisingly, staff and volunteers of organisations within this sector were experiencing higher levels of stress and emotional fatigue than they had before. Plymouth City Council commissioned Devon Mind to provide an emotional support listening service, mindfulness courses, and a dedicated support group for anyone within the sector who felt they were in need of additional support and guidance.

**1:1**  
listening  
service

**Dedicated  
peer support  
groups**

**4-week  
mindfulness  
course**

# Reflections from Woodside.

## Charlotte, Volunteer Counsellor

“Wow, what a year it’s been! With the pandemic having had such a huge impact on how we work and feel as human beings, as well as seeing how much it has affected people’s mental health, the past 12 months have definitely been a major rollercoaster ride.

I feel that I myself, and Devon Mind as an organisation, have adapted really well to an ever-changing environment to be able to continue providing support to our clients. This has been so crucial – being able to be there for people who have either had to isolate, were very cautious about leaving their home, or did not have the mental capacity to cope with the scary outside that we were all faced with for what feels like an eternity!

Our support hasn’t waned – that includes even just being there on the end of the phone for people to be able to offload and seek that person who will lend them that ear to enable them to feel lighter. For me personally, I’m really proud of my own personal contribution in being able to support my clients through such a turbulent period, as well as the management of my own mental health and self-care. ”





## Helping students with their Next Steps.

**In January 2021, we entered the final year of our five-year National Lottery Next Steps project. Our focus for the final year has been on consolidating the learning and resources developed since the project's inception.**

A significant part of this project involves in-school activity and workshops, which has been impacted by the pandemic. Schools were unable to participate due to their own internal pressures in keeping their students and staff safe and well.

In consultation with the schools, we have begun the development of a Train the Trainer resources that will form a key legacy of the project to be used by teachers.

**3,148**  
adults supported with signposting, advice, and community work

**191**  
young people engaged through our in-school course in Plymouth

**49**  
volunteers provided with opportunities to support their mental health

# EU-funded projects continued strong.

During 2020–21, we continued to be involved with both Erasmus+ and Interreg-funded projects.



PONToon project delivery was completed at the end of February 2021, with over 1,600 disadvantaged women supported to access employment, training, and self-development opportunities since the beginning of the project four years earlier.

We also played a central role on the SPEED-You-UP project through the development of bespoke workshops and courses that support the mental health and wellbeing of young people at risk of becoming, or already identified as, NEETs.



On the HAIRE project, we were involved in developing training for beneficiaries in England, France, Belgium and the Netherlands, to upskill local communities to better support and engage with their older residents.

# EU-funded projects continued strong.

During 2020–21, we continued to be involved with both Erasmus+ and Interreg-funded projects.

The PATH project continued to focus on the development of resources to support positive perinatal mental health, with the Devon Mind team playing an integral role in the development and delivery of training resources for professionals and families.



Through the Erasmus+-funded TRAFFIR and PAFYP projects, the partnership delivered 48 presentations on trauma awareness and parenting awareness for young people, respectively, across a series of 12 webinars. Participants from across the EU attended the webinars, which were a significant success.



# Reflections from Woodside.

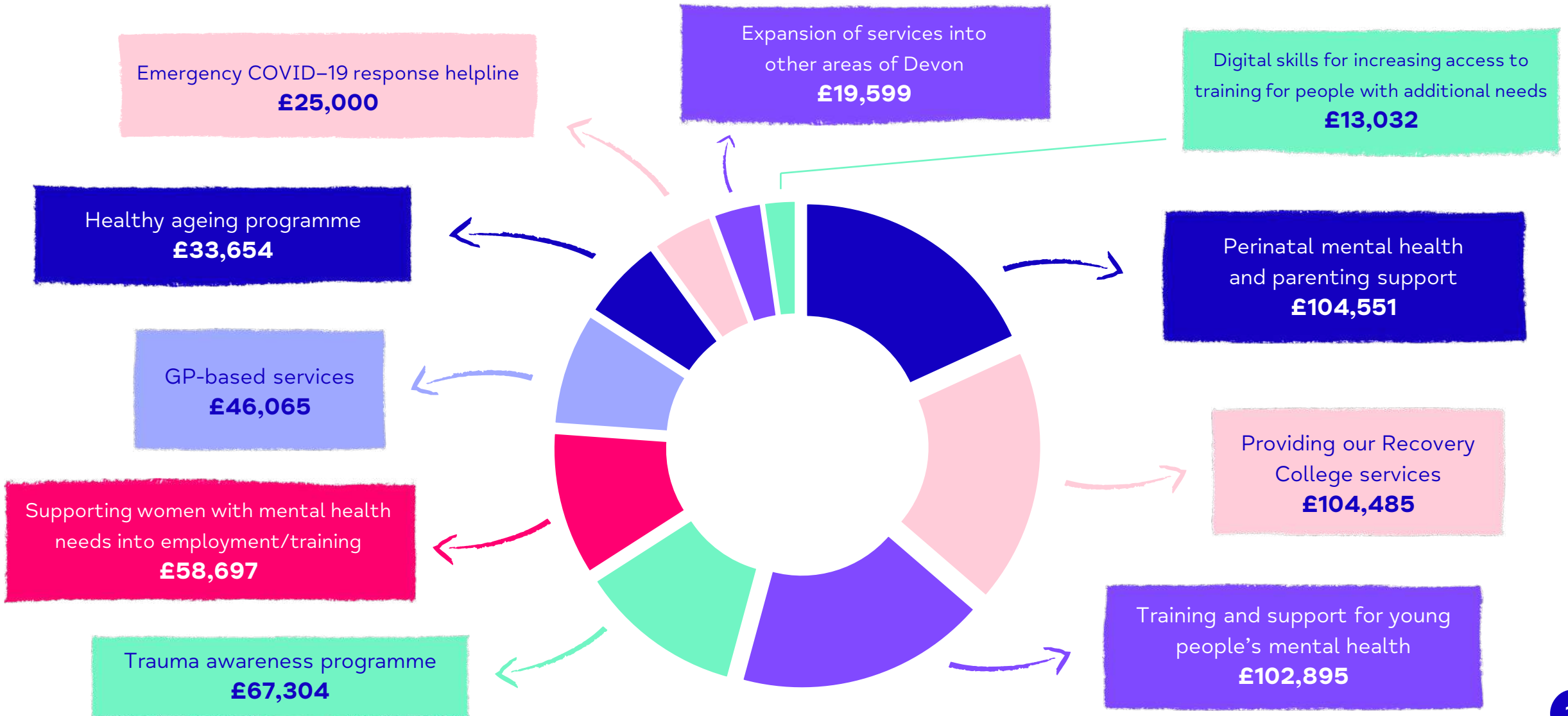
## Andre, Marketing & Fundraising Officer

“What this year has proven to me, above anything else, is that adversity is able to bring out the absolute best in people. From Captain Tom’s record-breaking fundraising walk to the frankly unbelievable resilience of frontline workers in the NHS and beyond, it’s been awe-inspiring.

I joined Devon Mind during the pandemic, tasked with rebuilding our marketing and fundraising functions in a brand new landscape. Immediately, I was blown away by the generosity and selflessness of so many people across Devon. From head-shaving in Exeter, to ice water swimming on Dartmoor, to sports club challenges in North Devon, we’ve seen it all in 2020–21.

If each piece of marketing we’ve put out has helped just one person to reflect on their wellbeing or ask for help, then I’m overjoyed. We just want people across Devon to know that they are not alone. There are options. ”

Last year, we spent a total of **£575,282** supporting people with mental health problems and increasing the awareness and understanding of mental health challenges. We spent **£3,946** on staff training and support.





# Every donation has a huge impact.

If you've ever donated to Devon Mind, you have had a direct impact on the growth of the organisation and our ability to help more people across Devon living with mental health problems. Thank you.

£5

could pay one of our **volunteer's expenses** for a day

£10

could cover the **printing of leaflets** for a GP surgery

£25

could ensure we have our phone lines **open for an hour**

£50

could cover the costs of one of our **peer support groups**

£100

could pay for a **half-day workshop** on managing anxiety



# We couldn't have done it without you!

Sorry if we've missed you out – we definitely still appreciate you!



We would like to extend our sincere gratitude to the following groups and organisations for supporting our work:

Andrew Hill Salon  
Atlas Translations  
Brewin Dolphin  
Club Focus  
Cornwall Mind  
D&M's Disco  
Eastbury Avenue  
Enterprise Rent-A-Car Plymouth  
Howden Joinery  
The Jack Leslie Campaign  
Mercedes-Benz South West  
Nexus  
North Devon Cricket Club

Oxygen House  
Patients Voluntary Welfare Fund  
Plymouth City Council  
Plymstock School  
Rightway Environmental  
River Island Barnstaple  
Rotary Club of Dawlish Water  
Rotary Club of Ivybridge  
Rotary Club of Kingsbridge Estuary  
Rotary Club of Plympton  
Rotary Club of Roborough  
Rotary Club of Saltash  
Rotary Club of Saltram

Rotary Club of Teignmouth  
Rotary Club of Tiverton  
Seaton Court  
Sidmouth Hotels and Inns  
Skydive Buzz  
Soul Singers CIC  
Spinnaker International  
Talk Action  
TSB Devon Branches  
University of Plymouth SU  
The Village Idiots  
Western Power Distribution  
Woodbury Park Golf Club



...and all the incredible individuals who raised thousands to help the fight for mental health in Devon!



**Leading the fight for better mental health across Devon!**



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**“Devon Mind has changed my life. I feel you have given me the tools to help me move forward in a positive direction.”**

– Counselling service user

Devon Mind is a registered charity (no. 1181767) and a registered company (no. 10281020) in England and Wales

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