

Off The Record Twickenham

Counselling and information for young people in Richmond borough

Annual Report - summary 2020-2021

About Off The Record

Off The Record (OTR) supports young people aged 11 to 24, who live, study or work in Richmond Borough, by providing counselling, information and a sexual health clinic. Our aim is to provide a place where all young people feel welcome when they are in need of support. The services are free and confidential, always so important to young people.



OTR is a relaxed and non-clinical centre with counselling rooms and a small waiting area with leaflets and information. The wellbeing of young people is at the heart of our work, and our services support them to develop resilience and make informed life choices.

We hold the *NHS England Data Security and Protection quality mark*, for which we are assessed annually. The sexual health clinic is staffed by specialist NHS nurses.

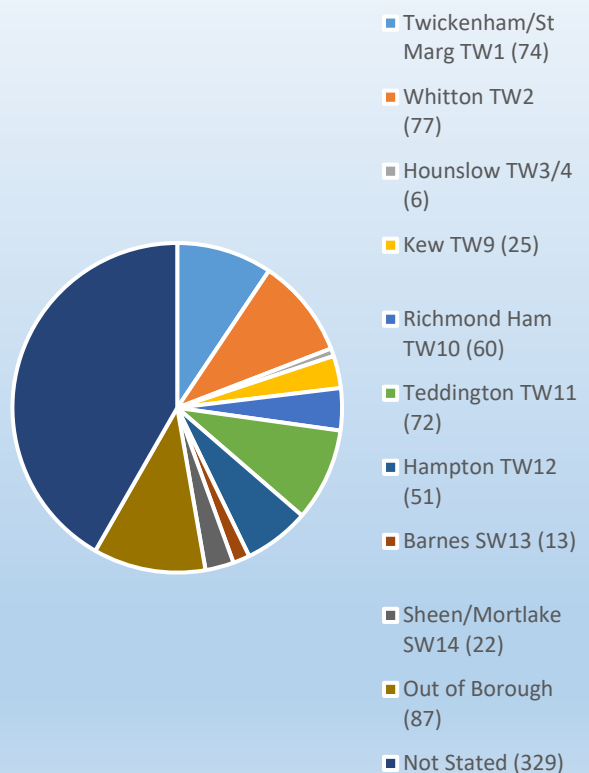
Many young people who come to us are desperately seeking help, and are often reluctant to talk to parents or to visit statutory services. They bring a wide variety of issues, and as we have no cut-off threshold everyone can come here for early help when problems are just developing, and this helps prevent a lot of suffering further down the line.

As with many other local organisations, our services had to respond to the impact of the pandemic, and a series of lockdowns. As an essential service in supporting vulnerable young people's emotional health and wellbeing, Off The Record worked swiftly to adapt its delivery and support systems within guidelines on safety, to ensure support continued to be available through a variety of means.

Extent of Service 2020-2021

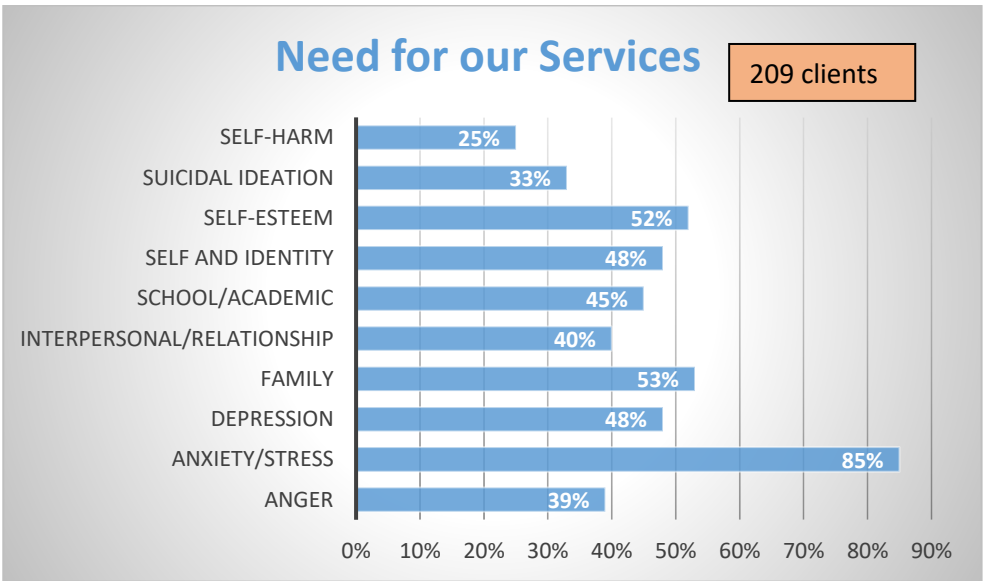
	<p>816 young people came to us for help for the first time and we delivered 3087 sessions</p>
	<p>38% Healthcare referrals Vital service directly supporting statutory healthcare agencies</p>

Geographical Area - 2020-21 (new clients)



471
advice and
info sessions

In March 2020 our whole counselling service moved online in response to the Covid Pandemic and OTR adapted well to the challenges, with office staff also moving to online systems. The drop-in sexual health clinic continued to run, but with a temporary upper age limit of 18, rather than 21. The counselling began to re-open some face-to-face services in July 2020, and all our services are now face-to-face, though we are also maintaining some online counselling support for those who need it. Our drop-in service has also re-opened.



Whilst the chart above shows the principal issues identified at assessment stage, young people come to us with very wide-ranging issues, and many more issues emerge when they start their course of regular counselling sessions. Self-harm remains the most frequently identified issue during counselling – 32% based on ending forms completed by 162 clients – but three further issues also featured highly as follows:

- 31% of clients had parents who were separated / divorced / new family
- 28% of clients suffered panic attacks
- 25% of clients lived with a single parent

A small but significant number this year also presented with emetophobia, a symptom no doubt of the stress of lockdown and the high number of challenges that young people are trying to manage and control.

2020-21 Highlights

- **Facts and Statistics:**

We saw **816** NEW young people, and **217** REPEAT clients from previous years.

105 new (+ **147** repeat) young people accessed **976** counselling sessions at OTR

104 new (+ **38** repeat) clients accessed **1,367** counselling sessions at our satellites/Skylarks Charity/in school

398 new (+ **32** repeat) clients accessed **471** information or crisis support sessions

209 new young people accessed **209** sexual health sessions

3 mental health workshops were attended by **8** people (24 client/sessions)

We also supported **118** parents and carers of young people

That's a massive 3,087 sessions in total, with 1,033 different young people.

- **Online counselling:** our whole counselling service moved online in April 2020 when we went into lockdown, so we were able to continue offering ongoing counselling sessions throughout the pandemic. Most counselling was by zoom but we also offered phone and occasionally text and email sessions in order to support young people in challenging situations. Now that most of our counselling has returned to face-to-face services again we have retained some online counselling to support those who struggle to attend in person
- **Satellites Services:** we are currently running 12 satellite services in 9 different area hubs, providing 36 counselling sessions per week. These are small counselling hubs across the borough, covering Hampton, Hampton Hill, Whitton, Teddington, Richmond and Barnes, enabling young people to access counselling close to home
- **Skylarks Charity:** we are also working in partnership with Skylarks Charity to provide 6 weekly sessions of counselling support to young people with disabilities and additional needs
- **Crisis Interventions:** We have continued to run 6 bookable one-off sessions per week online which provided immediate support to over 150 young people in crisis
- **Young People's Advisory Group (YPAG):** YPAG provides a vital first-hand experience of the issues affecting young people in our Borough. Members of the group met with us and talked about their experience of the pandemic, and also with Munira Wilson, MP to answer her questions on young people's mental health and what support was needed for them, especially during the pandemic
- **Community Fundraising:** Although our own fundraising activities were severely cut back this year we were very fortunate to receive over £25,000 through the generous donations of various local groups and individuals, and we've been able to secure gift aid to boost this by another £6,250.

Our Impact

I understand myself better	96%
I feel more able to overcome life's challenges	90%
My relationships with others have improved	81%
I feel more positive about the future	93%
Counselling has definitely helped me	98%

based on 42 feedback questionnaires

Service Feedback

Client Drop-in feedback

You're humans that I can talk to! (17)

Extremely friendly, safe environment, comforting staff (16)

Anonymous and free (15)

Friendly staff, very simple and nice, overall great (16)

Client Counselling feedback – what helped

Being able to speak to someone without judgement and learning coping strategies (age 17)

It's helped me become more aware of myself and the people around me (14)

My counsellor was amazing. He listened and made me feel safe and heard and accepted (22)

being praised for progress no-one else recognized. It motivated me and made me feel a lot more positive (16)

Talking to someone who had time to listen to me (12)

it massively helped me during one of the toughest times I have experienced in my life. (23)

Parent feedback

Parent 1: "You are doing fabulous work as a team. Honestly from the time my daughter went through counselling, I could feel the change, the immense benefit for her emotional status.

I also wanted to say a big thank you for talking with my son. That session helped him more than anything to see through his fears more and he decided to stay at school for his secondary stage. He felt really comfortable with you, and it will be highly appreciated if he could wait for counselling in the future!"

Parent 2: "Thank you all for the fantastic support you gave to my daughter over the past year. It was so wonderful that she could get counselling in a safe and understanding place designed especially for her age group. She got so much from it and was very grateful for the time and care that her wonderful counsellor gave her. It's so hard for young people going through exams and university entrance but particularly through these unprecedented Covid times. It has been a very special and precious thing that my daughter could get support from Off The Record at this time. Thank you!

We are all very lucky that you run such a rigorous and caring service that puts young people first – and we are very grateful to you."

Young people's feedback on their relationship with their counsellor is extremely positive (the % who agree with the statements) is shown below:

My counsellor is supportive	98%
I feel listened to and understood	98%
I feel safe to talk about anything I want to	96%
My views and worries are taken seriously	98%

Client feedback

"It was really empowering - after each session I had much more self-belief in my abilities. I sensed true listening and interest from my counsellor and I really enjoyed growing with her. She was working actively with me and engaging fully with rich responses - this felt like a relationship of understanding, a safe place to go to, and knowing that she would be interested in me meant the world. My counsellor was a blessing when I felt unheard by everyone. She helped me realise my capabilities, and made my problems seem not so big. She has enriched my life and given me so much more confidence and validation in what I'm going through. I am so thankful for her" (age 24)

Case History (disguised)

Lucy, age 16

Brief history:

Lucy's background was very chaotic. Her mother had been an alcoholic for many years, her absent father made little contact. A mugging, at age 11, left her very traumatised and led to her being home-schooled as school felt too challenging. She rarely left home and never saw friends so her life was very limited. At 16 she gave up on a college course as she was too anxious to leave the house.

How the counselling helped:

She talked a lot about the intense anxiety she'd always had. Her mother was very unpredictable in her behaviour, and her housing situation had been very unstable – often nearly homeless. Her counsellor empathised with these challenges and gave some psychological context (psychoeducation) on fear and anxiety, fight/flight/freeze, etc. and the impact this can have.

She had an 'internal voice' saying what a scary place the world was. They used creative play to explore this, using 2 characters – good and bad, and she worked on strengthening the character that knew how to protect her and give her what she needed. This helped balance out her life and made it more manageable, not so fearful.

They also used 'exposure' techniques - spending weeks building her confidence to go out on her own, setting little tasks to do in shops etc., and increasing the challenges as her confidence developed, until she was able to go out and stay out. In the end she was able to go out and follow a plan, and stay out. They also set out a 6 month goal with the aim of getting a part time job or voluntary work.

This all involved a lot of work on finding self-compassion and not judging herself during this period of struggle, as it wasn't easy facing all her fears.

She realised that she had also withdrawn from her mum emotionally and found it very difficult to feel her vulnerability and ask for help. She saw how her toughness had caused her struggle at school, and got in the way of building relationships. She worked on allowing her vulnerability as she saw this was very important for any relationship.

Finishing therapy:

When she left therapy she was well on the way to achieving her goals and had a possible job lined up. She felt more confident, more self-compassion, more able to be vulnerable and had a high level of self-awareness about her own life journey and her current behaviours. She could go out into the world alone in a way she had been completely unable to do and was keen to expand her horizons further and

Chair's Report: 2020-2021

Creating a safe place where someone listens and does not judge is the essence of what we do.

OTR continues to remain the only free and confidential drop-in counselling, information and sexual health service for young people aged 11-24 living, working or studying in the borough of Richmond. Our services have been needed more than ever during the pandemic and the lockdowns which have especially affected young people.

We may be based in a green and leafy borough but our young people are among the highest in London for self harming and demonstrating risky behaviours. Thankfully, our service is well publicised but that has meant an increased demand which puts pressure on our OTR team. I must take this opportunity to thank Deborah Kerpner along with her amazing team of staff and counsellors for how they themselves have coped and adapted during these extraordinary times.

Across the course of the last year, 1,033 young people were supported by our services, attending a total of 3,087 sessions. 816 of these were new clients in addition to 217 returning clients. We supported 118 parents with queries and support with their children, and were delighted to launch a parent helpline that will enable us to help more parents support their children in times of difficulty over the coming year.

These numbers reflected only a slight drop compared to the previous year as a result of the initial Covid-19 lockdown when the service had to temporarily close whilst training and guidelines were prepared and issued, and the service and counsellors migrated to an online service. Initially, many of our clients, in or waiting to start counselling, chose to postpone their sessions until we were able to resume face to face support. However, as the year progressed, their willingness and confidence in taking up online sessions increased.

Our successful satellite model ensures we are able to reach young people from across the borough who might struggle to come to our main centre in Twickenham. Within 2019 we extended this model further by opening five additional satellite hubs bringing the total number of OTR hubs to nine across the borough in Hampton, Hampton Hill, Teddington, Richmond, St. Margaret's, Whitton, Ham, Barnes and Twickenham.

We now have the capacity to deliver 36 counselling sessions across the hubs per week, in addition to 55 sessions delivered per week at Church Street. We also offer six counselling sessions per week in partnership with Skylarks at the Heatham House hub, Twickenham, for young people with disabilities.

Over the course of the last year the responsive and proactive approach of the entire OTR team of management, admin, counselling and IT staff was critical to the swift mobilisation of the new service delivery model meeting the needs of young people in the community during the pandemic and beyond.

We are proud of how well and professionally our team adapted to working from home and created solutions for remote ways of working, enabling us to continue to support the service delivery. We efficiently modified our systems and trained our counselling team to be able to provide online counselling in less than two months from the start of the first national lockdown.

Online counselling was mainly by zoom video sessions, but we also offered sessions on the telephone and occasionally by text or email, to meet the various needs of young people in challenging situations. We reopened the satellites in Barnes as early as June 2020 and some onsite counselling sessions in Church Street

as swiftly as was possible in September. We then continued to provide a combined service, moving some slots back online as governmental guidelines changed and back to face-to-face when possible.

Support during the year

In order to support our young people during this challenging time, the charity needs to be on a firm financial footing and this would not have been possible without the continued support of our amazing local funders, Barnes Fund, Hampton Fund and Richmond Parish Lands Charity. We would also like to acknowledge the vital contributions we received from Richmond Clinical Commissioning Group, Nexen and the National Lottery as well as the enormous generosity of St Mary's Church in providing our premises in Church Street. We were thrilled to be selected as a Global Make Some Noise charity for 2020-2022. The scheme funds and empowers small charities, helping disadvantaged children, young people and their families across the UK. They raise money and awareness, providing training to boost skills and build sustainability.

The Richmond upon Thames Voluntary Fund, a charitable trust set up to give residents the opportunity to donate to local organisations that make a difference to the lives of vulnerable residents within the borough, selected OTR, along with Richmond Borough Mind, to be the beneficiaries of the charity during 2020-21. The Fund launched in February 2020, at the start of Children's Mental Health Week, to mark the selected 2020 charity beneficiaries. We are exceptionally grateful to the Trustees of the Voluntary Fund and to the local community for the overwhelming support we received for the year. Earlier this year we were delighted to be named again as beneficiaries for 2021-2, along with Richmond Borough Mind, Dose of Nature and Marble Hill Playcentres.

It has become increasingly clear to me, during this year as Chair that, after twenty nine years, we are a local charity which is really valued and supported in many different ways by individuals in the community. In the last year we have received donations in memory of a former Trustee, Adrian Sumption, and a young man, Tarun Ray, who loved helping others. In lockdown, others have been innovative in their approach from raising £262 by playing 26 famous guitar rock riffs in 26 minutes to sharing the contents of their cellar with friends and offering a Fine Wine and Cheese tasting event on zoom. Twickenham Rotary Club donated £600 of their personal expenses, and students at Hampton School raised £2,710 from their "1557 Challenge". In a year where we have not been able to run our usual fundraising events, these and other donations, large and small have been much appreciated.

I would like to express my grateful thanks to all my fellow Trustees for their support and hard work. We have been extremely fortunate to recruit three new Trustees in the last year with experience in marketing, human resources and working with vulnerable young people. Due to restrictions, followed by some well deserved late holidays, we have not yet been able to all meet face-to-face. We look forward to doing that shortly.

Finally I would like to give a special mention to Cath Challands who is standing down as a Trustee at our AGM. Cath has been involved with OTR since its early beginnings in 1992. Cath will continue to sit on our Management sub-committee and be part of our ever growing group of Friends of Off the Record. Many thanks to Cath for her outstanding contribution.

Sarah Simpson MBE

Chair of Trustees

Extract from OTR's Report and Accounts for the Year Ended 31 March 2021

OFF THE RECORD TWICKENHAM			Charity No	1152097	
			Company No.	8466382	
Annual Accounts for the Period:					
Period Start Date	01/04/2020		To	Period End Date	31/03/2021

Statement of Financial activities for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Note	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds £	Total Funds 2021 £	Total Funds 2020 £
Income and Endowment from:					
Grants		227,400	4,500	231,900	112,814
Fees for Charitable Services		17,098	26,713	43,811	40,755
Donations		-	11,884	11,884	42,940
Donated Services & Facilities		-	-	-	-
Investment income:					
Interest		-	647	647	650
Total Income	2	244,498	43,744	288,242	197,159
Resources Expended					
Charitable expenditure		189,989	9,861	199,850	194,367
Management and Administration		-	-	-	600
Exceptional cost		-	-	-	9,920
Total Expenditure	3	189,989	9,861	199,850	204,887
Net Income		54,508	33,883	88,392	(7,728)
Total funds brought forward		41,852	144,091	185,943	193,671
Total funds carried forward		96,360	177,974	274,335	185,943

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

Acknowledgments

THANKS to everyone for so generously supporting our work:

Barnes Fund
Global's Make Some Noise
Hampton Fund
Harlequins Foundation
London Borough of Richmond upon Thames Civic Pride Fund
Masonic Charitable Foundation
Mrs Smith & Mount Trust
National Lottery Community Fund
Norman Trust
OneRichmond
Richmond Parish Lands Charity
Richmond Voluntary Fund
South West London Clinical Commissioning Group
St Mary's Twickenham Parochial Church Council

BP International
Hampton School
Surbiton High School
Twickenham Rotary Club
WG&S Employee Fundraising Donation

We are extremely grateful to local organisations who have provided accommodation for our satellite services at a charitable rate:


The Greenwood Centre
ETNA
Essex House Surgery
The Orange Tree Clinic
Whitton Youth Club

And all those who have given donations or time, including friends, clients, parents and volunteer counsellors.



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