

A Brief History of Off the Record Twickenham

Off The Record originally opened in 1992 to meet a gap in services for young people. A co-ordinator, administrator, and 9 volunteer counsellors were recruited at the start. The counselling team rapidly grew to meet demand, and a sexual health clinic also started up in 1993.

Over the years, we have expanded to provide a range of services to 11-24 year olds who live, work or study within LBRUT:

- counselling, at the Church Street premises, and schools in the borough, employing over 30 counsellors
- a drop-in supported information service (run alongside the counselling)
- a sexual health clinic on Mondays
- crisis counselling sessions on Monday and Wednesday evenings
- mental health workshops in schools
- satellite counselling services across the borough, including online counselling
- a parent phone-line providing support for parents.

In the past we have also provided a Life Skills Programme in schools, and a legal advice service.

In 2006 OTR merged to form a bigger charity, the Richmond Youth Partnership, which also ran other projects. However, this charity closed down in 2013 and Off The Record moved forward once again to form a separate charity, now officially named 'Off The Record Twickenham'.

In 2022 the focus at OTR is still on providing counselling, information and sexual health advice. The SH clinic is run in partnership with CLCH – Central London Community Healthcare Trust. OTR has been successful in receiving grants from local grant-making trusts and winning CCG tenders since July '14 to provide an expanded counselling services in youth service and satellite venues. These are currently at The Greenwood Centre in Hampton Hill, The White House in Hampton, Whitton Youth Zone, Orange Tree Clinic Teddington, Parkshot Medical Centre Richmond, Ham Library, Essex House in Barnes, ETNA in East Twickenham, and Heatham House Youth Centre, Twickenham.

We also run a counselling service in partnership with the Skylarks Charity which provides counselling for children and young people with disabilities. In March 2020, our face-to-face and drop-in services went on hold in response to the pandemic and the counselling team began offering counselling remotely, mainly through online and phone contact. While this was successful, many young people expressed a preference to wait for face-to-face services to resume, and now that we are mostly offering face-to-face services again there is only a small number favouring online counselling. We have retained some online sessions in order to meet this need.

Off The Record employs a full-time Manager and an Assistant Manager (part-time), a part-time Business Manager, two part-time Administrative Assistants and a Financial Administrator. The staff team manage the service, run the drop-in service alongside the volunteer counsellors' appointments, and line-manage the team of 30 counsellors. The counsellors' clinical supervision is provided by a team of external counselling supervisors.

OTR is registered as a charitable company with a skilled and experienced Board of Directors who support the strategic and operational direction of its work, and oversee its financial sustainability through a strategic fundraising programme.