

ANNUAL REVIEW & IMPACT SUMMARY

Reporting period: 1st October 2014 – 30th September 2015

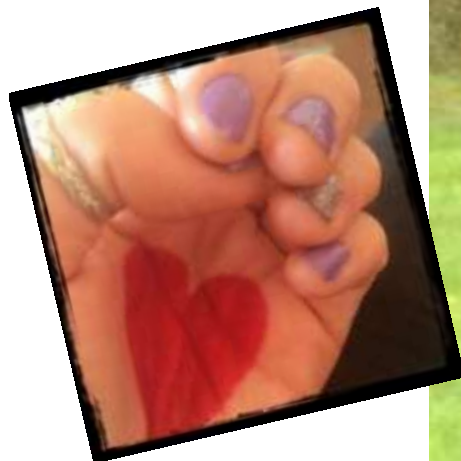


The Project is hosted by East Devon Volunteer Support Agency (EDVSA), Registered Charity No. 1134611



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MISSION

To increase young people's self-awareness and confidence, as well as build emotional resilience, to enable them to make the most of life and its opportunities.

To promote a wider understanding and awareness of mental illness, to reduce the fear, stigma and discrimination that goes along with it.

VISION

That all young people affected by emotional and mental health issues have access to the support they need, when they need it, free from the fear of others' opinions.

OUTCOMES

Young people will have increased confidence and self-esteem.

Young people will have improved aspirations for the future.

Young people, and parents, will have greater emotional resilience, tools, information and resources to cope with stressful life events.

Young people, and parents, will feel less isolated by mental and emotional health issues.

Young people, parents and the wider community will have increased understanding and awareness of mental health issues.

BACKGROUND

The Project was founded in September 2013 by Debbie Humberstone, whose daughter, Jess, developed severe mental health issues at the age of 15. At the time, as a family, they felt they were the only ones going through such difficulties – because no one talks about mental illness! Having subsequently found out just how common mental health issues are amongst young people, and based on the value Jess placed on the peer support she found when she was admitted to an adolescent inpatient unit, Debbie set about creating a network of support for young people and their families, as well as working with schools and communities to raise awareness around mental illness.

Now 22, Jess is living a happy, fulfilling and fully independent life – proof that recovery is achievable!



WELCOME TO THE PROJECT

The Project's second year has proved to be both highly successful, but also hugely challenging. The rise in demand for our services, high numbers of referrals and the introduction of our mental health training saw a dramatic increase in workload, at a time when members of The Project's team, including myself, were dealing with some very difficult challenges in our personal lives.

Keeping everything going on limited staff hours in such circumstances tested The Project's team, but to simply say that we survived would not do the team justice! The Project has come through stronger, and has grown and expanded – testimony to our team's determination and commitment, but also to the fact that The Project is now well known, highly respected and achieving outstanding results for our young people.

So, this report is a few months late in being produced! In the circumstances, we hope we will be forgiven for this, and we hope that, on reading this report, you will see the amazing progress The Project has made this year, despite everything that has been thrown at us. The team of staff and volunteers have shown extraordinary commitment and passion for the work we do, and for all their hard work and support, I am so grateful – on a professional, but also personal level.

The Project continues to be part of East Devon Volunteer Support Agency (EDVSA), who run and support a number of projects and services aimed at improving quality of life in East Devon. The practical support we get from EDVSA saves us time and money so we can focus our efforts on supporting those who need us most. We are also grateful to every individual, group, organisation and grant funder who has supported The Project over this period, both financially but also with expertise, time and experience donated to us. Every single one of you has helped to make The Project the success it is today, and on behalf of everyone who has benefitted from our service, a huge thank you.

I hope this report captures and does justice to everything we have achieved in our second year, not only demonstrating the positive benefits The Project produces for our young people, parents, communities, but also the cost benefits to Commissioners and Service Providers.

Debbie Humberstone
Project Founder & Manager



Part of EDVSA for a happier, healthier East Devon



WHAT WE DO

Based in Axminster, The Project commits to support and improve the emotional wellbeing and mental health of young people aged 13-24, from across East Devon, South Somerset and West Dorset through:

1. Fortnightly facilitated **peer support groups for young people**, in 2 age groups – 13-18s and 18-24s. These sessions offer: an opportunity for young people to meet others experiencing similar issues in a safe, non-clinical and relaxed environment; a programme of activities and workshops that give tools and techniques for supporting emotional wellbeing, improving resilience and building confidence and self-esteem; one-to-one support.
2. A monthly **support group for the parents and carers** of young people affected by mental health issues. This group space offers: an opportunity for parents to meet with others, to share experiences, give and receive support; talks and workshops on relevant mental health issues, for building emotional resilience and teaching relaxation techniques.
3. **Mental health awareness talks and workshops** to break down the stigma and discrimination surrounding mental illness, working with schools and the wider community.
4. Providing relevant **mental health information and signposting** to young people and their families, via our website, social media, telephone and face-to-face.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

This is The Project's second annual review and impact summary report, which sets out the key activities and developments that have taken place between 1st October 2014 and 30th September 2015. We have continued to learn and develop The Project's model, making small changes to our service delivery, operating practice and evaluation processes. We also highlighted a number of recommendations for ourselves at the end of our first year, and report our progress against these.



During this, our second full year in operation:

- ♥ We supported a further **29** young people through our peer support sessions during the year, bringing the total number of those whom we have successfully supported since The Project was launched to **68**. Furthermore, the total number of parents and carers who attended our parent/carer support group meetings rose to **64**
- ♥ In total, we delivered **106** hours of direct session time for young people, and **22 hours** of session support for parents. In addition, there have been many hours of support offered to young people and families outside of our session hours
- ♥ **14** volunteers dedicated over **600** hours of their time to The Project
- ♥ We continued to receive extremely positive feedback from young people, parents, local and regional healthcare providers and healthcare commissioners



- ♥ We developed our model for replication, and began initial discussions regarding a partnership agreement with Yarlington Housing Group to launch a new support group in Chard, Somerset in January 2016. We are currently exploring the potential for groups in Exmouth and Bridport going forward
- ♥ The Founder of the Project, Debbie Humberstone was presented with the Deputy Prime Minister's Mental Health Hero Award for the South West, receiving national recognition for her work. The Project was also shortlisted for a national award from Mental Health First Aid England for outstanding achievement in raising awareness around mental health issues. Debbie also successfully graduated from the School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) programme
- ♥ We created an Advisory Group, made up of individuals from the fields of mental health, education, health policy and marketing, to help steer The Project's future development

“ I am proud to be able to support the valuable work The Project undertakes. The emotional well-being of our young adults is a key focus for my colleagues and me.”

- Glenn Smith, Principal at Honiton Community College and Advisory Group Member

- ♥ The Project was featured on local television and radio on a number of occasions, including BBC Spotlight, ITV West Country and Radio Devon. We were also filmed by BBC's 'Inside Out' programme and Channel 4 'Dispatches'. One of our young people was selected to represent the South West in [ITV Westcountry's 'Breaking Into News' initiative](#) by making a short film of her mental health experiences and appearing on national television
- ♥ We enabled parents and carers who attend our support group to share their views and experience to help inform the Self Harm Health Needs Assessment for Devon; our parents and young people also fed into the Government's Mental Health Task Force review of children and young people's mental health services, and the Devon County Council consultations for the Emotional Health & Wellbeing service

- ♥ We successfully launched our Self Harm Awareness Workshop aimed at parents, professionals and organisations. We have also increased the range of Mental Health Awareness workshops we are running and offering to schools and community
- ♥ We have developed further mental health training opportunities. This has included forming a partnership with an experienced trainer from Mental Health First Aid England, who now delivers Youth Mental Health First Aid training alongside The Project at a range of locations across the South West; we have also built strong links with ATL, the Teachers Union, to deliver mental health training to their members
- ♥ Through EDVSA's successful bid for Impact Readiness Funding, we took part in a 3 month piece of work, collaborating with Young Devon and Community Housing Aid, to assess, review and develop our methods and tools used for measuring outcomes, monitoring and evaluation, including the creation of a Theory of Change model. Our findings and learning from this work were shared through a successful Impact Assessment event for VCS organisations (see page 16).
- ♥ We were successful in our bid to Comic Relief and secured just under £90,000 funding over the next 3 years, starting October 2015. This grant will provide us with just over half our funding for our Axminster group for this period, and we see this success as a real endorsement of our work. We still need to find ongoing match funding for this period.
- ♥ We implemented our Peer Mentoring programme, offering young people from our older group the opportunity to train to support members of the younger group. We offered further training to all our volunteers
- ♥ We continued to revise our Safeguarding and Escalation procedures, and consulted with CAMHS regarding individual Risk Assessments for young people
- ♥ We began the process of building relationships with Dorset and Somerset CAMHS, and adult mental health services, to ensure we have pathways of support in place for those young people attending sessions from these counties



“ I would recommend The Project to anyone who is facing any kind of mental health problems as they can make you feel at ease with talking about it in the group and hearing what others have to say about their problems.

– young person who attends sessions

OUR ADVISORY GROUP

The Advisory Group is made up of six professionals from the mental health, education, communication, health policy and voluntary sectors. They bring their considerable knowledge and experience to help steer the work of The Project forward and offer the benefit of their advice to further its aims and objectives.

Current members are: Dr Clive Britten, Consultant Psychiatrist, Tier 4 CAMHS (retired); Marc Kastner, Inclusions Officer – DCC; Sheena Asthana, Professor of Health Policy – Plymouth University; Glenn Smith – Principal, Honiton Community College; Hilary Burr, Operations Manager – EDVSA and Jenny Vince, IAG Consultant.

The Advisory Group, which met for the first time in March 2015, provides an opportunity to be accountable to a wider group of stakeholder interests and involve them in shaping our work. The focus is on providing an independent view of the work of The Project that is external to the day-to-day running of the organisation, and providing strategic guidance and support to The Project's manager and team.

The role of the Advisory Group, which aims to meet on a quarterly basis, is to:

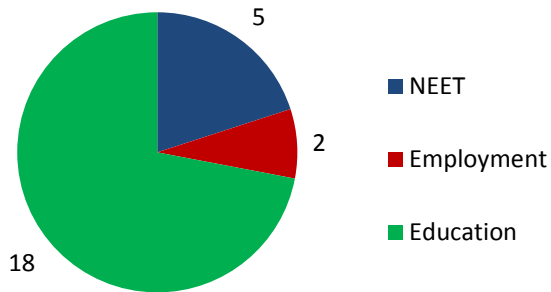
- ♥ Provide a forum for discussion of progress
- ♥ Be a sounding board for ideas
- ♥ Suggest ideas for new areas of work and ways to improve current work
- ♥ Contribute to service planning and the prioritisation of objectives
- ♥ Act as a critical friend to the project coordinator, staff and volunteers
- ♥ Offer practical advice and support
- ♥ Help advance the work of The Project

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

We have continued to actively promote The Project, locally throughout Devon, Somerset and other neighbouring counties, by way of meetings with professionals in Health and Education, presentations delivered to a range of organisations and through local press releases and social media campaigns.

The total number of young people, who had attended sessions since the Project opened in 2013, grew from **39** at the start of the year, to **68** by the end of the year. **32** of those had attended the sessions aimed at 18-24 year olds and **36** had attended the sessions aimed at the younger age group, 13 – 18 year olds.

During this reporting period, 18 young people moved on from accessing the support of The Project, one of whom went on to join our team of volunteers.

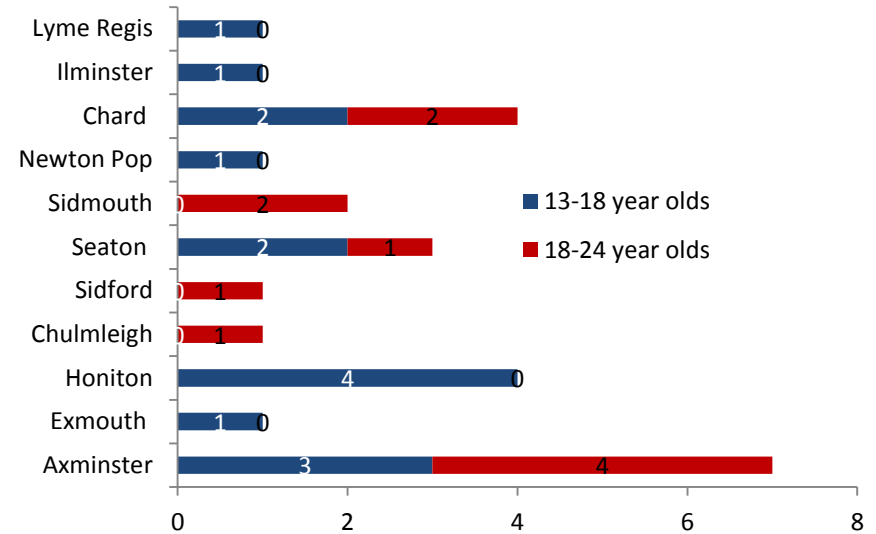


By the end of this reporting year, there were **15** young people attending our 13–18 year old sessions and **11** attending the older session, for 18–24 year olds. The majority of session attendees were in education, a fifth of attendees were not in education, employment or training and 2 attendees were in work.

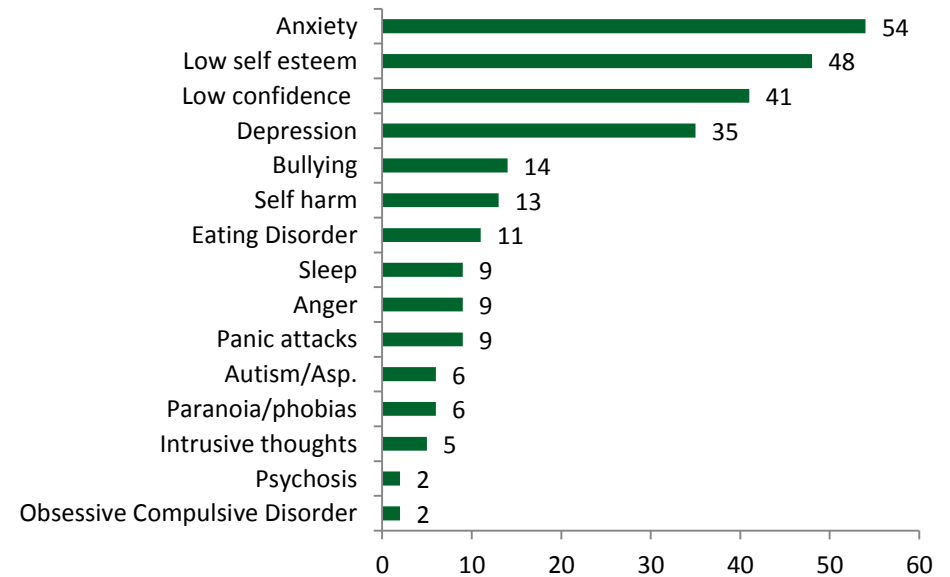
Transition from CAMHS to Adult Mental Health Services at 17/18 continues to be a particularly difficult time for our young people, with many reporting deterioration in their symptoms due to disruption to ongoing support, and in many cases, the complete withdrawal of any support when young people fall below the criteria for referral to adult services. The continuity provided by The Project at this time is vital.



It has helped me learn how to de-stress and that taking 'me time' is important.



Reason for referral to The Project



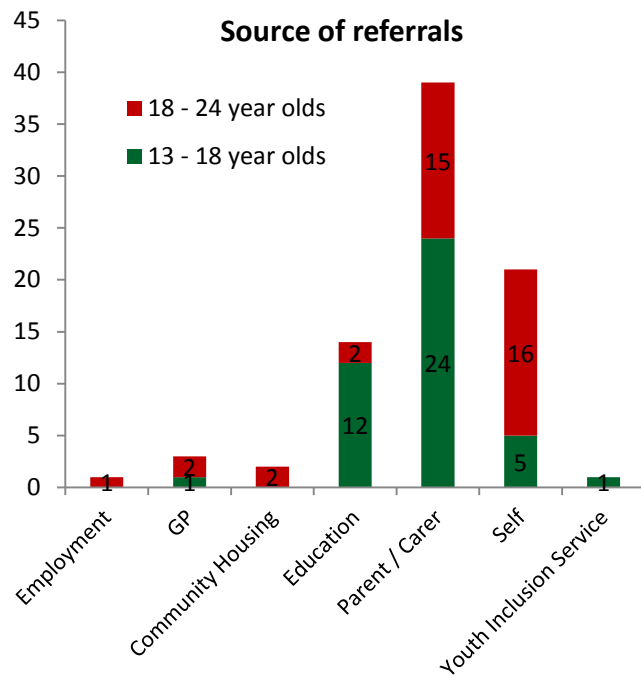
REFERRALS TO THE PROJECT

During the year we continued to receive referrals via a range of sources, but most referrals came directly from young people themselves, through parents or from schools.

There are a wide range of reasons why young people are referred to The Project and some young people are experiencing a number of issues at the time of a referral (see graph on previous page). 15 of the referrals we received during the year did not go on to attend sessions, for reasons such as too far to travel, not being ready to accept help and individuals having issues too serious for the session environment.

In addition to the referrals received, there have been 40+ enquiries from parents, young people and other agencies (including CAMHS, DPT, Social Services, Young Devon, care homes, foster carers, GPs and schools) which have not led to a referral. Some enquiries come from other parts of the country, including Manchester, Newcastle, Bristol, Plymouth and Bournemouth.

During this period, 18 young people moved on from The Project. One of these young people had been through our peer support training (see page 9), and subsequently joined the team as a volunteer.



It has made me feel more comfortable to talk about my difficulties and it helped hearing what other people have to say

WHAT WE'VE CHANGED

- ♥ We have increased the number of young people registered at any one time for each group from 15 to 20. We have found that all the young people registered will rarely, if ever, attend every session. This can be due to a number of reasons – outside commitments, including family/social events; deterioration or improvement in symptoms; transport issues; pressures of school work, exams and/or revision for exams
- ♥ Promotion of The Project in schools has increased awareness about the support we can offer, and this has resulted in more referrals through schools, as well as self-referrals
- ♥ We began looking at ways in which feedback could be obtained from professionals making referrals to The Project. We have created a Referrers Feedback Form, which will be implemented in the coming year



SUPPORT SESSIONS

During this period, staffing support for our young people's sessions was subject to a number of changes due to reorganisation, and also a number of challenges.

From May 2015 onwards, sessions began to be led by two staff plus volunteers, when the Project Coordinator stepped back from direct session delivery to focus on the strategic development of The Project. In July 2015, our Session Coordinator left The Project following her qualification as a Social Worker, leaving sessions to be run by our Mental Health Support Worker, with increased input from volunteers. Following an unsuccessful recruitment campaign, and the award of Comic Relief funding, we reviewed all staff role descriptions, and at the end of this reporting period, we are in the process of recruiting two new members of staff – Session Worker and Information & Administration Support Officer.

The programme has involved activities aimed at teamwork, confidence building and social interaction, as well as the sessions offering young people the chance to try out a range of tools and coping strategies to support their mental wellbeing.

Activities have included, for example:

- ♥ Games for mental health – how humour helps!
- ♥ Building resilience
- ♥ Mental health and physical health – how they are linked
- ♥ Sharing mental health experiences
- ♥ Art for self-expression
- ♥ Finance and jobs
- ♥ Drumming
- ♥ Bush Craft & Shelter Building Day at Trill Farm
- ♥ Team Building Day at Magdalen Farm

These have been provided by members of The Project's staff and volunteer team, as well as by other professionals who have delivered workshops and activities for our young people.



The session structure has remained largely unchanged from last year, having made a number of changes during our first year. The more structured session format has worked well, with young people quickly becoming familiar with, and comfortable in the group space as a consequence.

Food preparation and social eating are an important part of every session. With a number of our young people experiencing issues with food (including, on the one hand, anorexia and other eating disorders, alongside young people with difficulties eating in front of their peers) modelling a relaxed attitude to food, and making healthy choices around food has proved to be a valuable, and popular part of our sessions.

Session content continued to be informed by our young people, with feedback from them being gathered on a regular basis. Feedback from young people included what they liked best/least about sessions, and how they felt being a part of The Project had helped them, both within sessions as well as in the context of their lives outside.

Peer Support

The importance of peer support is increasingly being recognised, not only in the value it brings to those being supported, but also to the peer mentors themselves and for mental health services. They include better mental health, an increased sense of wellbeing, increased confidence and learning skills, greater social connectedness, improved recovery and coping skills and fewer hospital admissions. We have a number of peer volunteers, who play a crucial role in supporting young people attending sessions.

Our volunteers range in age from teenagers through to retirees, and are key to the success of The Project, bringing a wealth and variety of experience and knowledge. All volunteers have either a lived experience of mental illness, and/or have worked professionally with children and young people, or in mental health, and are selected based on the skills and experience they can bring to The Project.

Young people attending our sessions value the fact they are being supported by people who understand, and who have experienced what they are going through. In particular, our young peer volunteers provide hope and inspiration to our young people, demonstrating that recovery is possible.

Peer-to-Peer Training

Having seen how much our young volunteers gained from acting as peer mentors, last year we spent some time considering whether offering peer mentoring training would be of benefit to young people reaching the stage when they no longer felt the need to attend The Project. We found that some of our young people were asking if they would be told they had to leave the sessions, if they started to feel better, which created some anxiety.

In order to encourage progression and recovery, we created a peer support programme that would enable any young people from our older group, who had attended sessions for at least 6 months, to learn the skills necessary to assist the younger group in a similar role to our volunteers. We also felt that the training would be a great way of helping our young people to be more employable in future, providing them with a certificate of attendance so that it could be added to their CVs and included in relevant job applications.

Between November 2014 and January 2015, we carried out our first Peer Mentoring training programme with one third of our older group. From this, 3 went on to become regular peer supporters within our younger group. The feedback from the training was very positive and attendees felt that they would be much more comfortable communicating with others than they were before the course. The young people that went on to be peer supporters said that it felt amazing to be able to use their own experiences to be of support to others, who may be slightly earlier on the journey of recovery. One of those young people also went on to stop using the support sessions altogether and became an active member off our volunteer team.

The training was facilitated by our Mental Health Support Worker, working alongside an experienced and qualified member of our volunteer team, who has been delivering similar training over many years in a professional capacity. The training focused on the key skills required to take on this role.

- ♥ Active listening
- ♥ Empathy
- ♥ Safeguarding
- ♥ Confidentiality
- ♥ Self care

The training also included a one-day Youth Mental Health First Aid training course, which was delivered by an experienced MHFA England registered trainer. This training is provided to all staff and volunteers at The Project, and we felt it important to treat our peer supporters in the same way.

Due to the success of this first course, we are looking at running the course again in both Axminster, and eventually our new group in Chard.

WHAT WE'VE CHANGED

- ♥ We have reviewed the staffing structure and role descriptions for both young people's sessions, and The Project as a whole
- ♥ We have listened to and liaised with our young people to include activities which interest them, and which they have found in the past to be most beneficial
- ♥ We have encouraged young people to share positive coping strategies with each other, and to bring ideas for sessions and/or supported them to lead activities
- ♥ We have encouraged volunteers to plan and run activities as part of the session to make fuller use of the diverse skills of the volunteer team
- ♥ We introduced our peer-to-peer training to increase skills and provide an additional pathway for young people who are approaching our upper age limit, or getting ready to move on



"I've found better friends and feel safe here, unlike other places"

DEMONSTRATING OUR IMPACT

During the year the feedback that we have collected from people who come into contact with The Project has been overwhelmingly positive and continues to provide reassurance to us and our supporters that the work we are doing is making a difference to people's lives.

Feedback from young people

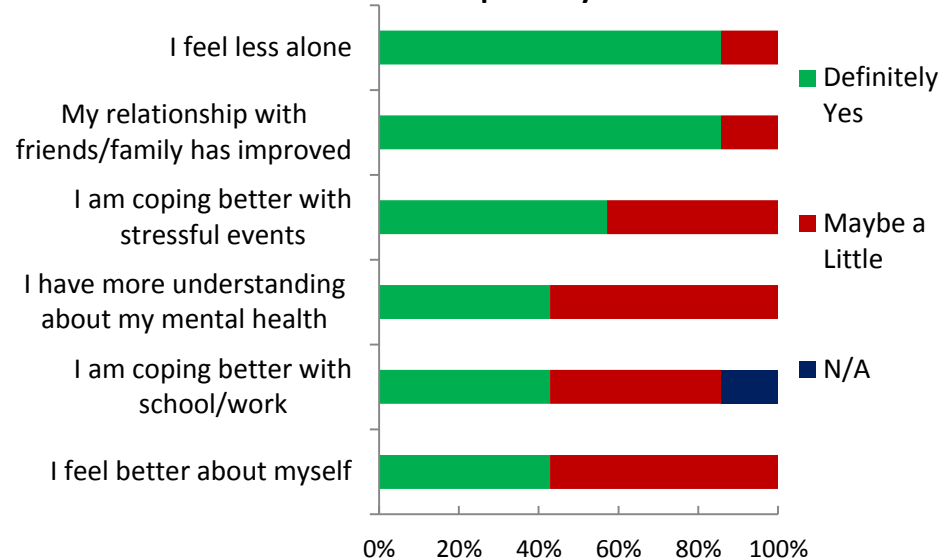
We collected feedback from **86%** of the young people who have attended sessions during the year. The key findings are:

- ♥ **86%** of those from the older group said they definitely felt less alone and that their relationships with friends and family had definitely improved
- ♥ **92%** of those attending the younger sessions felt that they definitely had more understanding of their mental health, the rest felt they had a little more understanding
- ♥ Half of the younger group said they definitely felt less alone and the remaining half said they felt a little less alone
- ♥ Not one person from the older group felt no benefit at all from attending sessions – almost everyone experienced a little or definite improvements to their lives following attendance at sessions
- ♥ Overall, the results show that session attendance has had more of a positive impact on the older group than the younger age group – it would be useful for us to find out why this seems to be the case
- ♥ **53%** of young people told us they are now more involved in learning and / or other activities outside of the group sessions

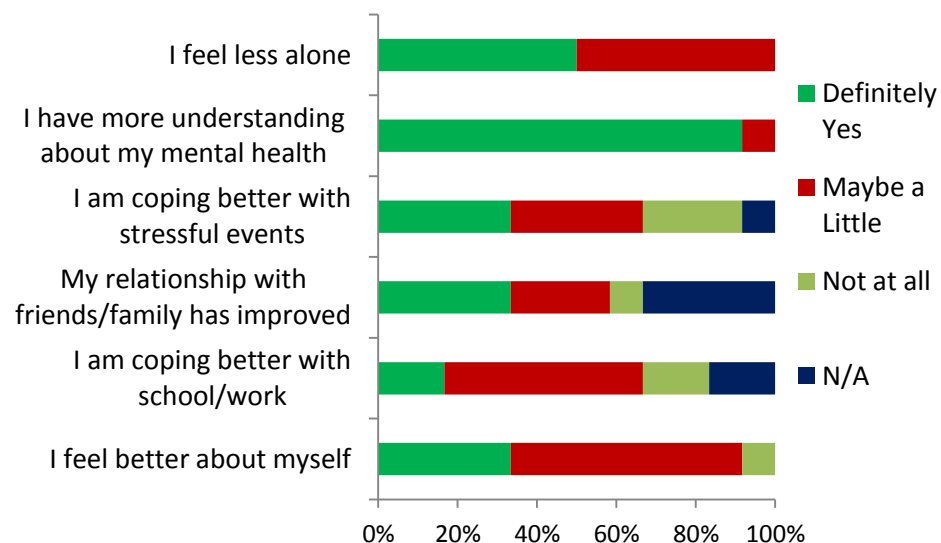


It has helped me with my social skills so much that I can raise my hand in a lesson.

Older Group Survey Results



Younger Group Survey Results



Exit Surveys

- ♥ All young people who completed an exit survey said that they found the sessions helpful
- ♥ Three quarters of those who completed the survey had attended five or more sessions
- ♥ The main reasons for leaving include; difficulty getting there, the session time clashes with something else, or it is too far to travel
- ♥ Half of the young people felt the sessions had helped them to cope better with school / work and made them feel better about themselves.

"I still have issues and anxieties but the project helped me until my appointment came from CAMHS and I was not just forgotten about. They were so kind and I was always talking about what we did to my mum"

"I feel I am worth something now. I feel I can cope better in stressful situations, I also feel I get on better with my mum now than I previously did"

Feedback from parents of the young people who attend sessions

Parents of young people attending the sessions have shared with us what they feel their loved one has gained; which includes:

- ♥ Increased confidence
- ♥ Coping strategies
- ♥ Feeling valued
- ♥ Feeling listened to
- ♥ Helping to overcome fears and challenges

"I would like to say a big THANK YOU to Debbie and all the staff for their amazing work - The Project has definitely helped my daughter to cope with the challenges she faces every day!"

Feedback from volunteers

We asked volunteers what skills they had developed from volunteering at The Project;

- ♥ **76%** said working with young people
- ♥ **67%** gained an increased understanding of mental health issues in general
- ♥ **61%** had developed their skills in working as a team
- ♥ **57%** reported an increase in confidence

Between them, our volunteer team brings a wide range of skills and experience to The Project, such as;

- ♥ working with young people
- ♥ listening
- ♥ professional mental health training
- ♥ Cooking
- ♥ Fundraising and event planning
- ♥ Music
- ♥ Art

Of the volunteers who have lived experience of mental health issues, nearly all of them say that volunteering at The Project has helped them to know that their experience is helping others.

"The core team have been very supportive and welcoming, and this has helped me to get into the role and feel like a part of the team"

"I think that the project is amazing how it is and I can't think of any improvements for it."

CASE STUDY:

One young person was referred to us with severe anxiety, unable to attend school or go anywhere without the care of their parents, and even then it was a struggle. They had no support from statutory services and had been on a waiting list for over 6 months.

Since attending The Project they have progressed to the point where they now have a social life, have finished school and were even able to find the confidence to apply for a job and get it!

EVALUATION AND MONITORING

We recognise that it is vitally important to collect information from people who come into contact with our services in a timely and meaningful manner. The information we collect enables us to monitor The Project's reach and growth and we use this information to provide statistical reports to our funders on a regular basis.

We are also required by our funders to demonstrate the impact that the services we provide has on our direct and indirect beneficiaries. To enable us to do this we systematically request feedback from those who come into contact with our services, so that we evidence what works well and where the services could be improved.

We use a range of tools for collecting information from our young people, parents, carers and referrers, these include:

- ♥ Referral Form - provides basic information about why a young person is being referred, and where relevant, gives a contact link back to parents or other referral agency (GP, school, social services).
- ♥ Registration Form - provides basic demographic information, as well as information on ethnicity and disability. It is completed by every young person's during their initial assessment.
- ♥ One-to One Assessment Form – provides specific information relating to the young persons' emotional wellbeing and is worked through during the initial one to one meeting and again at regular intervals going forward
- ♥ Service Evaluation Surveys – we have a number of online surveys to gather feedback from volunteers, parents of young people attending our peer support sessions, parents/carers attending the Parent/Carers Support Group, referrer's feedback survey. These are sent out periodically to those attending sessions within a six month period
- ♥ Exit survey for young people – sent out via an online link or where possible, carried out on the phone when a young person leaves.
- ♥ Young people's evaluation – carried out within sessions on a quarterly basis, provides qualitative data.
- ♥ Training/workshop feedback forms – carried out after every mental health training/workshop event
- ♥ Suggestion box – available at every session.
- ♥ Observations made by staff/volunteers/peer supporters – recorded during session debriefs, which happen after every session
- ♥ Anecdotal – ad hoc feedback from young people, parents and referrers through emails, phone calls, social media, conversations, blog posts.

The Impact Readiness Funding work which The Project was involved in from April – June 2015 provided an opportunity to review all our evaluation and monitoring tools, and a number of changes were made in response to this (see page 16).

WHAT WE'VE CHANGED

During the year we reviewed the tools that we use to collect information from people who come into contact with The Project.

- ♥ Through the IRF work programme, we reviewed the data being gathered through a range of evaluation tools, to ensure we were collating evidence against our outcomes
- ♥ We created a Theory of Change model for The Project's various strands of work
- ♥ We introduced the Warwick Edinburgh Measure of Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS) – on joining The Project, every young person has a one-to-one meeting with our Mental Health Support Worker during which WEMWBS will be completed to provide a benchmark, and then repeated quarterly (or as near to quarterly as time and resources allows).
- ♥ We recognise that seeking service user evaluation and feedback on a regular basis is something that requires regular resources to ensure it is carried out systematically.
- ♥ This year has proved challenging in terms of having capacity to seek feedback from our direct and wider beneficiaries, so we identified the need to recruit a new member of staff to manage the information we collect, to enable us to extend our research, monitoring and evaluation capacity and ensure the evidence we collect is robust and reliable

As we have developed, we have also identified the need to introduce a suitable and reliable information management system that meets not only our day to day operational needs, but also our increased reporting requirements for data collection. This will be a priority for the next reporting period.

SAFEGUARDING

We continue to take our safeguarding commitments very seriously, both to protect our young people, and our staff and volunteer team. During the year, we have continued to develop and refine our Safeguarding Policies and Procedures. All staff and volunteers working at The Project are DBS checked.

The roles of the two staff facilitating our young people's sessions were reviewed during this period. We redefined our Mental Health Support Worker's role and put her focus on being the main contact between The Project and our young people. Within this role she looks after all of our young people, from the referral process right the way through to when they decide to move on. In order to support this process, she attended training and completed her Level 3 Child Protection Certificate. We used the information from this training to make sure that our policies and procedures were up to date and being enforced correctly. In the coming year we will also be implementing an individual risk assessment form for our new young people.

Escalation procedure

We have reviewed our escalation procedures to ensure we have protocols in place to deal with any issues arising with our young people's mental health issues. This has included discussions with CAMHS and with our Clinical Supervisor. We have built good relations with Devon CAMHS, so that we are now able to raise any concerns about a young person with them. As a non-clinical, early intervention service, it is important for The Project to build links with statutory services, and other clinical services, so we are able to flag up issues and refer on if necessary.

Supervision

The clinical supervision being provided to The Project's staff and volunteers has continued, and forms an important part of the support given to the team. The three staff receive individual monthly clinical supervision with an independent Clinical Psychologist, whose professional expertise is bought in to provide invaluable support. A group-based clinical supervision session is arranged for volunteers every quarter, which they are encouraged to attend.

Team Meetings & Debrief

We continue with the team debrief which follows each young people's support session, and which everyone covering the session is expected to attend. Pre-session briefings are also held every week, to flag up and inform the team of any issues and other relevant matters.

In addition to quarterly supervision, team meetings have been introduced, also on a quarterly basis. These are an opportunity for team building, training and information sharing.

WHAT WE'VE CHANGED

- ♥ Our Mental Health Support Worker's role was redefined to make her the first point of contact for all young people joining the group
- ♥ In response to requests from volunteers, we added in regular team meetings as well as continuing with the group-based clinical supervision being provided to volunteers
- ♥ We have begun looking at introducing individual Risk Assessment for every young person attending sessions, following discussions with CAMHS. This is important when considering suitability for the group and also the safety of our other members. Our Mental Health worker will be creating a bespoke form, and this will be implemented as soon as possible



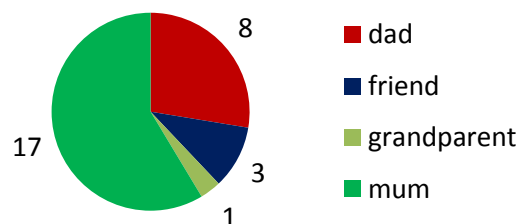
"I found the sessions really helpful because they offer a safe space to just feel 'normal' again"

PARENT AND CARER GROUP

Our Parent/Carer Group meets monthly, and provides an informal drop-in space for anyone supporting a young person experiencing mental distress. The group offers both an open space for sharing, plus ad hoc mental health related workshops. Workshops are provided in response to requests from parents, or with a view to offering some coping strategies which can be used both by them and their young people.

During the year, in total **29** individual parents and carers were provided with support by attending our monthly parent and carer support group sessions. 20 came from East Devon and 9 from South Somerset. The ages of the young people that they support range from 10 through to 26. Not all those who attended were parents of young people who attend the sessions.

Breakdown of who attended parent / carer support groups



“ When talking, you are not judged about your parenting style ”

Talks and workshops that took place over the year

We welcomed 3 guest speakers to this group over the course of the year:

- ♥ Dr Clive Britten – retired Consultant Psychiatrist, CAMHS Tier 4 Inpatient Unit
- ♥ Jerry Fox – CAMHS CPN – Introduction to Mindfulness workshop
- ♥ Lucy O’Loughlin, DCC Public Health – consultation with parents re self-harm

We also ran sessions on active listening and trialled our Self Harm & Young People workshop with parents to gather feedback.

Concerns raised by parents and carers

Common issues affecting our parents, and their families, include: waiting times; transition from child to adult services; unclear/non-existent pathways to care; lack of communication/involvement with parents; lack of support for parents.

Additional support provided outside of sessions

Our feedback shows us that those who attend the sessions would recommend our support group to friends and family.

In addition to the support provided by the group, the staff at The Project have also given upwards of **50** hours support to parents over the phone and by email. These include parents seeking help for a young person, those looking for advice of how and where to access mental health services and parents with concerns about a young person attending our sessions.

We have also signposted parents to other services or support, including NHS Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) Healthwatch Devon, Depression and Anxiety Service (DAS) and to Job Centre Plus.

Feedback from those attending parent / carer sessions

We have developed a survey to find out what people think about our parent and carer support groups. This has enabled us to not only learn what impact the sessions have had on those attending, but also to help us improve how we run the meetings going forward.

When asked what impact coming to the group has had on their lives, the top three responses are:

- ♥ I feel less alone
- ♥ I feel less anxious about my child’s mental health issues
- ♥ I have an increased understanding of mental health issues

Parents and carers have also told us how much they value the workshops that we have introduced as part of our support meetings and the attendance of guest speakers, who can provide them with relevant information to help them in their daily lives.

MENTAL HEALTH TRAINING



Self-harm and Young People Workshops

The end of this reporting period saw the launch of our self-harm awareness workshops aimed at anyone working with, caring for or supporting a young person affected by self-harm, both in professional and/or personal situations. Our pilot for this workshop was to teaching and support staff through the ATL Teachers Union, and feedback received has been extremely positive.

Going forward we are looking for more opportunities to run this training in community groups and organisations across the South West, both to increase awareness around this emotive issue, and also as a means of generating income to help make our support groups more sustainable.

Here is a sample of comments from the self-harm evaluation forms:

- ♥ *A very concise, thoughtful and instructive two hours. I found it really worthwhile and informative*
- ♥ *Made me reconsider my own perspective on self-harm, which I thought was open-minded. Thank you*
- ♥ *Very helpful and from the heart*
- ♥ *I self-harmed between the ages of 12 and 19 so was fairly well informed. This is such an excellent project, I wish it had been around when I was a teenager*
- ♥ *Massively engaging - Thank you for taking positive steps to remove the stigma of mental health illness*

Youth Mental Health First Aid

In partnership with an experienced Mental Health First Aid England trainer, The Project has delivered 7 Youth MHFA training events in Tiverton, Taunton and Exeter. These have been attended by over 70 professionals from schools,

health settings, police and fire services, local authorities, youth workers, foster carers and counsellors,

These one and two-day courses have proved to be extremely popular, with enquiries being received from across the South West and beyond. We will roll out further dates early in 2016.

- ♥ *Really helpful and thought provoking day. I think the confidence and knowledge will continue to grow as things get put into practice at work.*
- ♥ *Amazing how much info can be learnt in one day in not too overwhelming a way.*
- ♥ *A lot of information, well presented in formats that are easy to understand. Would recommend this course.*
- ♥ *I am so pleased I attended this course, I feel so much more confident, more importantly less alone in dealing with mental illness within my family. Thank you*

Working with schools - Mental Health Awareness Workshops

During the year we delivered mental health awareness workshops at Axe Valley Community College and Sidmouth College for students age 13 – 18 through PSHE lessons and assemblies.

We received very positive feedback from the students following the sessions:

- ♥ *Really good, learned a lot*
- ♥ *Very interesting, lots of information*
- ♥ *Gave me more knowledge and other ways to help people*
- ♥ *Very interesting, engaging and informative*
- ♥ *Interesting and changed my views on mental illness completely*
- ♥ *Really good, the kind of thing my school should have more of*
- ♥ *It was excellent, it made me think about my problems and that I should seek help*



COMMUNICATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Partnership working

During this period, we began talks with three different groups and organisations with a view to forming new partnerships to expand The Project's support groups into other areas – Chard, Bridport and Exmouth. We have formed a successful partnership with Yarlinton Housing Group to bring the group to Chard in the near future. The other two are still in the early stages of discussion, but we hope to progress these in the coming year.

Impact Readiness Fund – Cabinet Office - Round 1

Social investors and commissioners are interested in the social impact ventures achieve, but demonstrating this impact can be difficult. Many social ventures struggle to quantify their achievements without the right systems and expertise.

This fund offered grants and support to social ventures to understand and improve their social impact and demonstrate improvements to investors and commissioners.

Grants were available to help ventures build infrastructure and skills required to manage their performance, increase their social impact, and attract social investment / win contracts.

Following a successful grant application by EDVSA, and working in partnership with South West Forum, Learning South West's Regional Youth Work Unit, Young Devon and Nightstop Devon, we embarked on a 3-month programme of work to review the ways in which we monitored and evidenced our work against our outcomes. The funding also provided us with one-to-one and group support to create a Theory of Change model for The Project.

Working alongside Young Devon and Nightstop Devon in group training and workshop settings, we learned a lot from the ways in which each of us were already collecting data and service user feedback, and were able to share examples of best practice.



At the end of the three months, The Project's staff took part in a regional presentation event, alongside the other project partners, to present our findings and learnings to other CVS groups.

DCC Emotional Health & Wellbeing Tender

The Project/EDVSA was invited by Mind Exeter & East Devon to form a partnership to bid for the Devon County Council Emotional Health & Wellbeing Service tender. Other delivery partners involved were Cosmic IT, The Intercom Trust and South West Forum. The partnership was shortlisted, and commended on their presentation. Ultimately, the partnership was unsuccessful in winning the tender, which was awarded to Virgin Care, but the process provided us with the experience and confidence to consider future tendering opportunities that arise.

Engagement and consultation

We promoted opportunities for people to share their views and experiences to help shape mental health services for young people, both locally and nationally. Our young people and parents also gave their views via surveys as well as through discussions within our group sessions. In addition to many smaller opportunities shared, we were directly approached to seek the views of our parents and young people for:

- ♥ DCC Emotional Health & Wellbeing Service consultation
- ♥ DCC Self Harm Needs Assessment consultation
- ♥ Government's Children & Young People's Mental Health Task Force review of national CAMHS services

One of our young people volunteered to be part of Devon & Cornwall Police consultation around experiences of being held in a police cell because of mental ill health.

research
in practice

We were approached by Research In Practice, which provides professionals with a range of resources and learning opportunities to support their efforts to improve the lives of children and families, by taking part in a photoshoot with our young people, to create a series of positive images of young people with mental health issues. These images have since been used in a number of their publications.

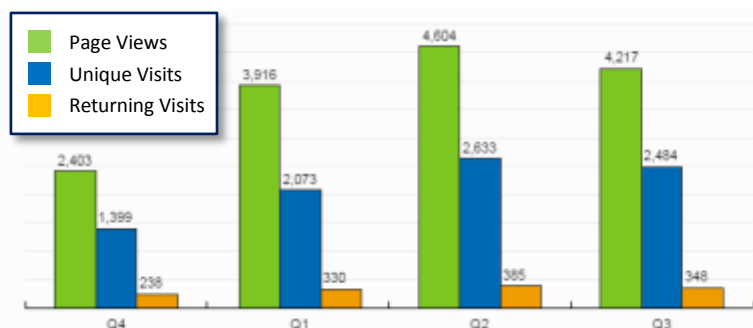
Media

Members of The Project's team and our young people have been interviewed and featured in television and radio programmes including BBC Inside Out, Channel 4 Dispatches. Radio Devon, BBC Spotlight and ITV West Country's 'Breaking Into News' Initiative [ITV West country Feature and Kate's film](#)

The Project also featured regularly in local newspapers and was also promoted as the Devonshire Magazine's chosen charity for 2015.

Website

Since The Project's website launched in July 2013, over **13,000** visitors have accessed the site, with over **8,500** in this reporting period. The table below gives an overview of traffic to our website over this time:



Social Media & Blog



We currently have **900+** followers on Twitter, a growth of around **80%** compared to last year. Our Facebook 'likes' total for both pages grew to just under **900** – an increase of around **28%**.

We continued to share stories and celebrate success through our blog, with young people, volunteers and staff writing posts.

#heartonthehand campaign

Our #heartonthehand campaign continued to raise awareness and engage young people in conversations about mental health, at events and through our social media. Our #heartonthehand wristbands are given out in schools to

students attending our mental health awareness workshops, and also at talks and events.

Talks and Presentations

We were invited to talk at:

Honiton Surgery Patient Participation Group meeting
Dartington SSE steering group meeting
Secondary School Head's meetings in Exeter & East Devon
Devon Eating Disorder Conference – Exeter University
ATL Teachers Union Conference – Bristol
East & Mid Devon Local Action Group meetings
Dartington SSE Media Workshop – Plymouth
Devon County WI Mood Matters Conference – Exeter
Axminster Parish Council meeting
Dalwood Church Concert

We continue to seek opportunities to give talks, to raise The Project's profile in the local community and to increase understanding and awareness around mental illness, and the needs of those affected by it.

Awards

In February 2015, the Project Coordinator was awarded the **Deputy Prime Minister's Mental Health Hero Award for the South West**. The regional winners were chosen by an expert panel who were looking for those who were leading the way in changing lives through one or more of the following:

- ♥ helping to break the stigma around mental health
- ♥ inspiring others in addressing or overcoming mental health problems
- ♥ making it easier for people to access mental health support and advice
- ♥ supporting people experiencing mental health problems to stay in or return to work
- ♥ pioneering new or innovative ways of supporting people with mental health problems and/or their families

The Project was also shortlisted for an award for its 'exemplary work in the field of mental health' in the **Mental Health First Aid England Awards 2015**. The Project Coordinator attended the awards ceremony at the House of Lords, also in February 2015.



FUNDING & FUNDRAISING

Our funders

Our thanks go to our funders and to the many groups, organisations and individuals who have given grants or donations to The Project. These include, but are not limited to:

- ♥ All Saints & District WI
- ♥ Axe Valley Community College
- ♥ Axminster Care Service
- ♥ Axminster Carnival Committee
- ♥ Axminster Hospital League of Friends
- ♥ Axminster National Citizenship Service
- ♥ Dalwood Fair Committee
- ♥ Dartington School for Social Entrepreneurs
- ♥ David Gibbons Family Trust
- ♥ Devon and Cornwall Police
- ♥ EDDC Parishes Together Fund
- ♥ Jack Riley Trust
- ♥ Kroft Originals Singing Group
- ♥ Lyme Valley Scout Group
- ♥ Tuckers Arms Raft Club
- ♥ Philanthropic donation - T Gammage



We are also grateful to those organisations and individuals who have offered 'in-kind' support, donating time, expertise, workshops and resources for free, or at reduced cost.

Comic Relief



In August 2015, we found out that our grant application to Comic Relief had been successful. This grant, which will start in October 2015, will provide just over half the funding needed for our young people's support group in Axminster for the next 3 years. In total, we were awarded just under £90,000 over 3 years – a real endorsement for the work we are doing in supporting young people with mental health issues, and a huge step in providing more security for the group's future. It

will also allow for The Project to structure itself for future expansion and development.

Yarlington Housing Group

yarlington building communities Yarlington Housing Group, a Yeovil-based social housing organisation, approached The Project to look at forming a partnership to open a second young people's support group in Chard, South Somerset, in response to huge need and demand for support in this area. Yarlington have generously provided funding for a one-year pilot for this group, which will launch in December 2015, and open to young people in January 2016.

Big Fundraisers!

We have undertaken a number of fundraising events during this year, as have many other people, who have taken on all sorts of challenges to raise money on our behalf. Our biggest fundraisers during this period were:

Summer Spectacular

In June 2015, The Project held a 'Summer Spectacular' at the Axminster Guildhall to celebrate its second birthday and to raise much needed funds. Over hundred people attended, and enjoyed an evening of music and entertainment provided by our young people, staff, volunteers and supporters of The Project. Local businesses generously provided an array of prizes for the raffle and for an auction, which was run by local celebrity auctioneer, Graham Barton. In total, over £3000 was raised from this event!

London to Paris Cycle Ride

We are very grateful to Matt Lathey, who cycled from London to Paris in July 2015 to raise money for both The Project and The Samaritans. Matt's family were touched by the devastating consequences of mental illness, when a family friend took his own life at the age of just 22, and so this amazing fundraising achievement, which raised over £2000 for The Project, was something very close to his heart.



OBJECTIVES FOR 2015/2016

1. Launch our second young people's support group in Chard, Somerset, in partnership with Yarlinton Housing Group
2. Recruit a replacement Session Worker and to the new post of Information & Administration Support Officer
3. Create a replicable service delivery model, to provide further opportunities for roll-out in other areas
4. Develop and expand our training programme to include a suite of workshops and awareness-raising talks as an income generated service
5. Continue exploring partnerships to expand The Project's support into Exmouth and Bridport
6. Identify and establish an appropriate data management system that can be adapted to meet not only the day to day operational needs of The Project, but can also produce reports to meet the Project's monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements
7. Firmly implement robust mechanisms for outcomes monitoring
8. Increase visibility in FE establishments to engage with more 18-24s
9. Build relationships with services and organisations in Dorset and Somerset
10. Proactively seek feedback from referral organisations, and review information provided to referrers
11. Redevelop website to include online referrals and bookings, as well as exploring the possibility for an online chat facility to increase service reach
12. Produce signposting and information sheets to help people navigate where to go if they need to give feedback about a statutory service
13. Introduce further workshops and guest speakers to the Parent/Carer Group
14. Contribute to national and local service improvement and redesign of children and young people's mental health services
15. Introduce individual risk assessments for all young people attending sessions
16. Explore possibilities to add a 'bolt-on' counselling service to meet demand

"Hearing other people's stories, points of view and coping strategies has been helpful. I like being able to talk to people who have had similar problems"

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Finance Report – 1 October 2014 – 30 September 2015

INCOME

Donations Received	22,674.00
Grants	16,209.00
Training income	7,259.00
Fund Generation and Other	3,453.00

Total **49,595.00**

EXPENDITURE

Salaries	27,274.00
Subcontractors (e.g., workshops)	872.00
Volunteer Travel	82.00
Volunteer Expenses	-
Volunteer/Beneficiary/Staff Training	3,679.00
Volunteer Recruitment	319.00
Events & Activities	1,165.00
Meetings - clients & external agencies	1,226.00
Materials, craft & cooking	311.00
Project Tools & Small Items Equip't	-
Project Misc Costs	-
Fundraising costs	60.00
Marketing	231.00
PR & Branding	183.00
Property Costs	135.00
Staff Travel	1,257.00
Telephone	289.00
Printing & Copying	29.00
Stationery & Office Supplies	1,178.00
Books etc	240.00
Postage	-
Refreshments	13.00
Insurance	-
Management and Administration	5,078.00
Recruitment Costs	-

Total **43,621.00**

Carry Forward **5,974.00**



The Project is part of
East Devon Volunteer Support Agency (EDVSA),
a Company Limited by Guarantee registered
in England (number 07035905) and registered as a
charity in England & Wales (number 1134611)



Part of EDVSA for a happier, healthier East Devon

GET IN TOUCH

If you can help us to reach our vision,
get in touch:

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[Twitter: TheProjectYP](https://twitter.com/TheProjectYP)

[Facebook: theprojectYP](https://www.facebook.com/theprojectYP)

[#heartonthehand](https://www.instagram.com/heartonthehand)