



# IMPACT REPORT 2021

Off The Record B&NES

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# Impact Report 2021

Off The Record B&NES

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Charity Number: 1072322

Company Number: 3643586



Registered with  
**FUNDRAISING  
REGULATOR**

# WHO ARE WE?

**Off The Record B&NES** is a **charity** dedicated to improving the lives of young people age 10-25 in **Bath and North East Somerset**.

Every year **we help thousands of young people**.

We want every young person in Bath and North East Somerset and beyond to be **emotionally healthy, confident** and **empowered** in themselves.

What do young people use our charity for?

**I WANT TO  
IMPROVE MY  
CONFIDENCE**

**I WANT TO  
MEET PEOPLE  
LIKE ME**

**I WANT  
TO GAIN SOME  
NEW SKILLS**

**I WANT TO  
VOLUNTEER FOR  
MY COMMUNITY**

**I WANT  
SOMEONE TO  
LISTEN**

At Off The Record B&NES, we are here for every young person, no matter what.

# IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

In 2020-21, we saw the highest ever demand for our services.

Now more than ever, the public recognises that 'home' feels like an unsafe or unhappy place for too many young people. For these young people, being unable to spend time away from home has been detrimental to their mental health.

All young people, regardless of their home situation have been impacted by anxiety stemming from academic and social upheaval, worries about the future, and seeing the toll taken on their loved ones.



## 40% INCREASE IN REFERRALS

Particularly in relation to worries about self-harm, suicide, and breakdown in family relationships.

# WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH

Thanks to the dedication of our staff and volunteers, the support of our local community, and the generosity of our funders and donors, during the pandemic we managed to sustain our services.

In 2021 we helped over **2,100** young people across the range of our services.

We recorded over **30,000** contacts\* with young people accessing our service.

\*This could be a phonecall, a text, attending a counselling session, coming to our LGBT+ youth group, getting a cake at Okay Café (any engagement with our charity)

# LISTENING SERVICES

## Listening Support

This is often a young person's first point of access to our charity. During these sessions our trained staff provide young people with undivided attention, and a space to talk. Our staff tailor the session to the needs of the young person through supportive questioning, in order to learn about them and what further support they might benefit from.

Listening Support might be a young person's first experience of mental health support, so we prioritise making a warm, welcoming, and positive impression so they feel comfortable accessing mental health support in future.

## Counselling

Counselling is provided in a six-week block, one session per week. If deemed appropriate this can be extended for further sessions.

Young people meet with a counsellor one-to-one. These sessions are a chance to explore issues in depth and to make connections between past and present experiences in a way that can empower and improve current and future choices.

## Impact 2021

- Between September 2020 and September 2021 we delivered 7,014 hours of counselling and listening support, working with 1,827 different young people.
- 752 of those young people became ready to be discharged from the service over the course of the year.
- The average Core 10 score (a method of assessing psychological distress and monitoring progress) reduced in the first quarter of 2021 from 16.39 to 11.16; the highest quarterly average reduction in the last 2 years.
- On average, patients reduced five points in their Core 10 score, representing a significant drop in how far their mental health impacted on their daily lives.



# LISTENING IN SCHOOLS

## Impact 2021

- This year, we have delivered 3,615 hours of listening support and counselling to 19 different schools, colleges, and universities across BANES, representing 51.5% of our total hours.
- The schools we have worked with are represented below by their respective logos and motifs.
- 62% of education-based young people who gave feedback on our listening services in 2021 reported that they felt more positive about themselves, with 94% saying they would recommend us to a friend.
- In total, the Listening Service exceeded the target hours set by 140 hours.



**FOSSE WAY  
SCHOOL**  
A SPECIALIST SCHOOL

  
**LANSDOWN PARK  
ACADEMY**



BEECHEN CLIFF





# THE OKAY CAFE

The Okay Café is a free, social space for all young people between 10 and 25. The café is set up a safe space for young people providing opportunities for them to meet up, relax, make new friends, share experiences, and if needed, develop new ways of talking and coping. It offers hot/cold drinks and snacks, there is often a big group activity going on, can be arts & crafts, games or just a big group discussion. We also have some areas that are more sectioned off for those that don't want to partake in the group stuff yet. The Café is staffed by OTR listening support workers, youth workers, and volunteers, meaning we can also offer 1:1 personal support if there's anything anyone needs to talk about.

In spite of the challenges of Covid-19, our Okay Café team have risen to the occasion spectacularly. We have run 48 different sessions throughout the year, including virtual ones during the January-March lockdown. We have clocked up a grand total of 300 attendances by 47 young people.

The Café continues one of our most popular and visible social spaces, and we are looking forward to taking it further in the next five years.



# ADVOCACY

## Advocacy's Impact 2021

*Note: The below figures (except the total figures on numbers of service users), are taken from a group of 154 young people from whom we have been able to gain feedback, representing 68% of the young people with whom we have worked over the last year.*

- Our aim is for young people to have the self-worth and be empowered to speak up for themselves, to improve their relationship with their carers, and to have confidence in their abilities to control their own lives.
- A total of 226 young people chose to engage with our Shout Out advocacy services in 2021, representing 54% of all those who were offered them.
- In addition to this, 69 young people used the SEND advocacy service, of whom 50 were first-time users.

## What is Advocacy?

Children who have many professionals in their lives making decisions about and for them can feel as though they do not have a voice or the power to change things. This can develop into a mistrust of social care and other adults in their lives, and a belief their views do not count.

Other children are not able to express themselves. If no-one understands how they feel or what is happening for them, then key decisions that make a big difference to their lives are not made.

Advocacy helps children navigate through systems and ensure their voices are heard.



# ADVOCACY

## Advocacy's Impact 2021

- 39% of service users felt more able to advocate for themselves over their time with the service.
- We have represented or engaged 71 young people in Child Protection Conferences.
- 40% of service users reported reduced stress, anxiety, feelings of frustration, and anger.
- 37% said that they felt decisions were made which meet their needs now and their plans for their future.
- Only 5% said that they felt that there was no change whatsoever in their situation, whilst 14% considered their complaints to have been resolved entirely.



# PARTICIPATION

## What do we mean by participation?

Off the Record is a youth-centred organisation. We empower young people to engage for themselves in social and public discourse, to spread their ideas and improve their own lives.

Our **Youth Forum** gives young people a voice and a chance to develop the ideas they want to see implemented.

Our **In Care Council** provides social opportunities and advocacy for young people in care, about to leave care, or having recently left care.

**Your OTR** is the group dedicated to ensuring we remain youth-centred. They are young people who we have worked with before who have decided to help us make sure OTR works for everyone.

## Youth Forum

We facilitate a series of community projects to be led by a group of talented young people called Youth Forum.

With our guidance and funds, they are able to deliver complex projects, tackling issues in their communities that matter to them. Young people are given roles they can champion as part of a team, developing their professional and leadership skills, and helping them be the change they want to see in society.

## What has Youth Forum achieved this year?

The Youth Forum took part in the BANES community safety conference, challenging the panel with questions relating to safeguarding young people. Lucas, one of our Forum participants, did a great job of coming up with questions;

- Given recent disruptions to school mental health referral infrastructure, what adjustments have been made to ensure young people don't slip through the cracks?
- What is being done to ensure local charities and youth clubs survive the economic impact of the pandemic?

The group was invited to take part in an event led by BANES Council spokesperson for Young People, Dine Romero. Dine wants to support young people getting involved in local decision making, give them a flavour of council life, and help them learn how they can have a voice and make a difference.

We are very proud that BANES Council has included a Youth Forum representative in all Council strategy meetings relating to young people.



# PARTICIPATION

## In Care Council

We work with young people in care in Bath & North East Somerset, and facilitate their involvement in guiding the development of services aimed at those in care. We have both Junior and Senior versions, as well as a further group for the care experienced.

## What have we been up to this year?

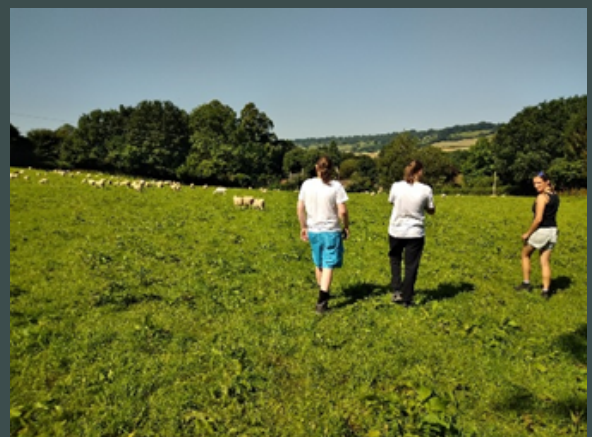
With a relaxation in the Covid rules and the improvement of the pandemic, we have been able to do many more face-to-face events.

Our events for the In Care Council this year have included:

- A circus party
- Playing crazy golf in Victoria Park.
- Making pancakes with the young people.
- Plenty of craft sessions, including making picture frames, memory boxes, and masks.
- Creating an In Care Cookbook.
- Two trips to Jamie's Farm. This was easily our most popular event, particularly among the care experienced, and it is the event that our young people have said they would most like to do again.

We have also worked closely with the BANES Young Ambassadors, Care experienced staff that work directly with us and our groups to improve the experience of young people in care.

In spite of the successes and positive feedback we have received about the In Care Council, it is important that we keep working to engage more young people who are care experienced, to continue improving the experiences of young people in the care of BANES.



# PARTICIPATION

## Your OTR

This group of young people help to guide Off The Record's decision making, ensuring we remain youth-led in our approach. They meet every other month to discuss important issues for young people that OTR is serving, and guide our decision-making processes.

## Developing our 5-year strategy

This year young people played a big part in developing our strategy for the next 5 years. Here are some pieces of their feedback that have influenced our organisation, and what we will do to put these suggestions in place:

- Greater presence in schools and associated educational establishments such as the universities
- 13-17 year olds were considered by Your OTR to need OTR's services the most, followed by 18-21 year olds. We will start to signpost parents and younger children towards services better equipped to serve them.
- We are committed to working in new, and more efficient ways to maximise our resources in response to the increased demand.

## Recruitment

OTR believes firmly that young people should get a say in our recruitment processes, as they are the people on whom our decision will impact the most. In 2021, no fewer than 7 interviews for new members of staff in OTR were conducted by members of Your OTR, service users and young people that volunteer with us.



# LGBT+ SERVICES

OTR has been running its LGBT+ youth service since 2012.

## SPACE

A youth group in central Bath, where young people can get information and support on LGBT+ issues. Friends are made through sharing experiences, and enjoying the variety of activities offered by the LGBT+ team.

## SPACE to be

This is a safe environment for children under 13, who may be LGBT+, gender non-conforming, trans or questioning or unsure of their identity. Parents of these children are also welcome to come and meet other parents.

## 1:1 LGBT+ Counselling

Counselling with a specialism in LGBT+ issues to better understand and support those requiring LGBT+ specific support, for example around homophobic or transphobic body, gender dysphoria, or help in living as an openly LGBT+ young person.

LGBT+ young people are disproportionately impacted by mental health difficulties, particularly related to loneliness or social pressures. Stonewall reports that LGBT+ young people are more than twice as likely to experience depression or anxiety as non-LGBT+ young people.

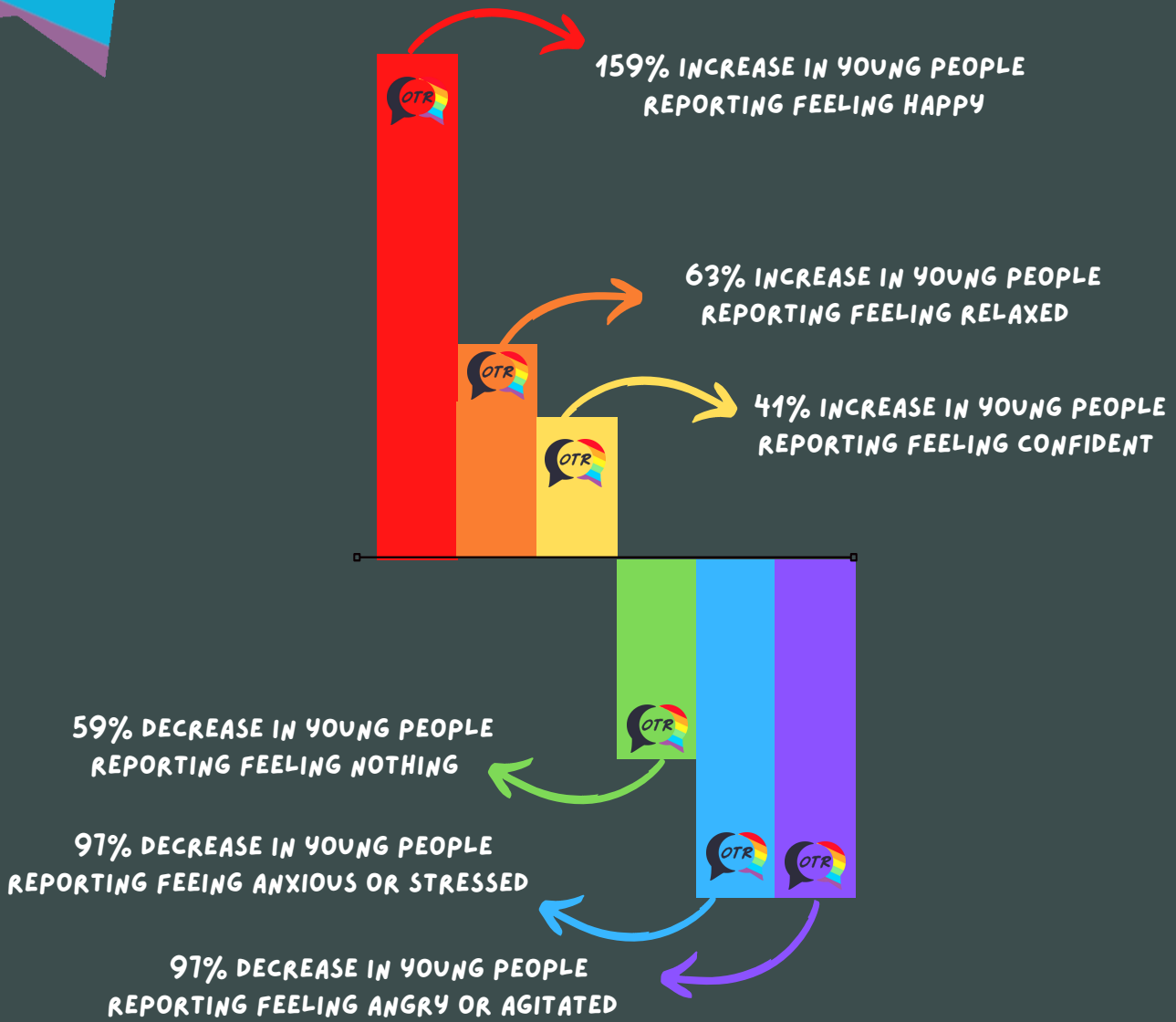
Off the Record is proud to have provided services for LGBT+ young people since 2012. We work with young people between 10 and 25 who are questioning their sexual or gender identity, or people between those ages who are openly LGBT+ who want support in a safe and supportive environment.

We offer resources, advice, and a community when young LGBT+ people often lack these things.





# LGBT+ SERVICES



WHAT IS THE APPROXIMATE NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES FOR THE LAST YEAR AND THE YEAR AHEAD?

450

LGBTQ+ YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 10-25:

WE ARE REACHING AND BENEFITING 591 YOUNG PEOPLE WHO FOLLOW OUR INSTAGRAM

200

PARENTS/ PROFESSIONALS:



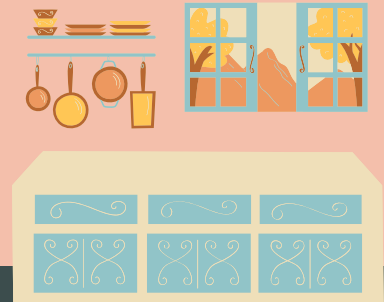
WE ASKED 158 YOUNG PEOPLE WHAT THEY THOUGHT ABOUT SPACE...  
HERE'S WHAT THEY SAID:



HOW WOULD YOU RATE THIS SPACE SESSION OUT OF 10?



8/10



HOW WELCOMING AND FRIENDLY DID YOU FIND THE SPACE TEAM?

9.5/10



HOW DID YOU FEEL BEFORE THE SPACE SESSION?





# WHAT IS THE BEST THING ABOUT SPACE? ONE THING KEPT COMING UP...

TALKING TO FRIENDS

NEW FRIENDS

CHATTING TO PEOPLE

TALKING TO PEOPLE

THE PEOPLE

FRIENDLY PEOPLE

FRIENDS AND THE STAFF

PEOPLE AND FRIENDS

COOL PEOPLE



# THE FUTURE

## OUR RESEARCH SUGGESTS

1. Demand for our services is expected to increase hugely, with as many as 96% of our young people reporting in one of our participation surveys that they believe the issues currently faced by young people will continue or get worse.
2. Poverty and socio-economic inequality are issues in Bath and North East Somerset. The latest Council estimates state that 19% of all young people in BANES live below the poverty line.
3. We work with significantly more girls and young women than boys and young men, with only 21.8% of the young people registered with us self-identifying as "male".



## ADVOCACY

We will continue to provide specialist advocacy support for young people in the care of or being supported by BANES Children's Social Care, ensuring young people's voices are heard, and they're empowered in themselves.



## LISTENING SERVICES

We will pursue outreach work in areas where young people have more barriers to accessing mental health and wellbeing support, such as rural and isolated areas.



## PARTICIPATION

With the Youth Forum, we will create an Off The Record YouTube channel. We will strengthen our participation with schools. We will continue to be a youth-centred charity, involving young people in our decision-making.

# THE FUTURE

## EXPANSION



We will engage with more young people from areas of socio-economic poverty, given the multiple challenges facing them and their families.

We will increase our work among boys and young men, who are currently significantly underrepresented in our work.

We will strengthen our local partnerships - new and existing - to increase our impact and reach, particularly within schools.

We will consider expanding our work to neighbouring counties.

## ORGANISATION



We will work in new ways to maximise our resources as demand increases.

We will move away from working with younger children and parents, signposting them to services that are better placed to support them.

We will develop target outcomes and a detailed work plan to measure our progress and objectives.

We will use data to monitor how much and how well we are doing.

We will ensure senior staff and trustees check on progress regularly and adjust the plans where necessary.

## LGBT+



### Peer Mentoring Project

The team will continue to work hard to keep offering diverse and exciting for young people. This will include training young people to run their own support groups, and getting them involved in planning excursions.

# TRAINING

In 2022 we will be expanding our programme of training to develop resilient communities where young people can feel safe and supported by the professionals and adults in their life.

## Mental Health

Workshops provided to parents, schools (both staff and students), Youth Groups, and guest lectures at University.

Topics include anxiety, exam stress, depression, circle of influence, self care, communications with your child.

## LGBT+

We provide advice and information documents for parents and professionals, and deliver training and PSHE sessions and assemblies in school and colleges.

To find out more about any of our training & education, contact [office@offtherecord-banes.co.uk](mailto:office@offtherecord-banes.co.uk)

**“All staff should have this training”  
– GP receptionist**

**“The training filled gaps in knowledge and gave practical examples as to how we can be more inclusive as an organisation.”  
– Advocacy coordinator**

Words from a young person  
who found themselves in crisis,  
and accessed our free  
counselling services.

“

Now I love my family  
more, I'm less scared to  
express myself, and  
**I realise that life is  
worth living.**

”



Words from young person who benefitted from a range of our services, and subsequently became a volunteer at OTR.

I think the biggest change is on my outlook...

Before going to OTR I knew what I wanted to do but I never thought I'd be able to do it...

**I didn't think I was going to make it through school...** I was convinced I was going to drop out...

Since going, there's been such **an abundance of encouragement and so much support and help**, that I've got very clear plans for getting where I want to go.



Words from one young person  
who benefitted from our free  
mental health services.

“

I'm a lot calmer,  
emotionally more  
organised. I no longer  
find every new problem  
a giant crisis, because  
**I've got stronger  
foundations.**

”



In 2020, Off The Record provided **over 30,000** sessions of free, confidential mental health and wellbeing support to young people in crisis.

# THANK YOU!

A HUGE THANK YOU TO ALL OF  
OUR SUPPORTERS AND FUNDERS  
FOR EQUIPPING & EMPOWERING  
US TO CONTINUE OUR WORK!  
AND THANK YOU TO OUR AMAZING  
STAFF & VOLUNTEERS, WITHOUT  
WHOM WE COULDN'T SUPPORT SO  
MANY YOUNG PEOPLE.



# WANT TO SUPPORT THE WORK WE DO?

You can find out how on our website:

[www.offtherecord-banes.co.uk](http://www.offtherecord-banes.co.uk)

Email us at [office@offtherecord-banes.co.uk](mailto:office@offtherecord-banes.co.uk)

Call us at **01225 312481**

Talk to us & tag us on social media:



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