

THE MENTAL HEALTH FOUNDATION

2021



2022



Mental Health
Foundation





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Left: Mark Rowland, Chief Executive Officer, Mental Health Foundation

Introduction



BY AISHA SHEIKH-ANENE, **Chair of Trustees**
& MARK ROWLAND, **Chief Executive**

I am so proud of the vital work you have helped us to deliver in 2021.

While through much of 2021, we all had to deal with more pandemic lockdowns, our work and focus on prevention in mental health was needed more than ever.

Despite these restrictions, we continued to commission new research, develop new community programmes and made sure that mental health remained a UK-wide priority through our policy and public awareness work.

We continued our ongoing Coronavirus: Mental Health in the Pandemic study, which made sure that mental health was a key consideration in the public health response to the pandemic.

Our subsidiary, Mental Health at Work has continued to expand its work and reach with a range of employers across the UK and internationally.

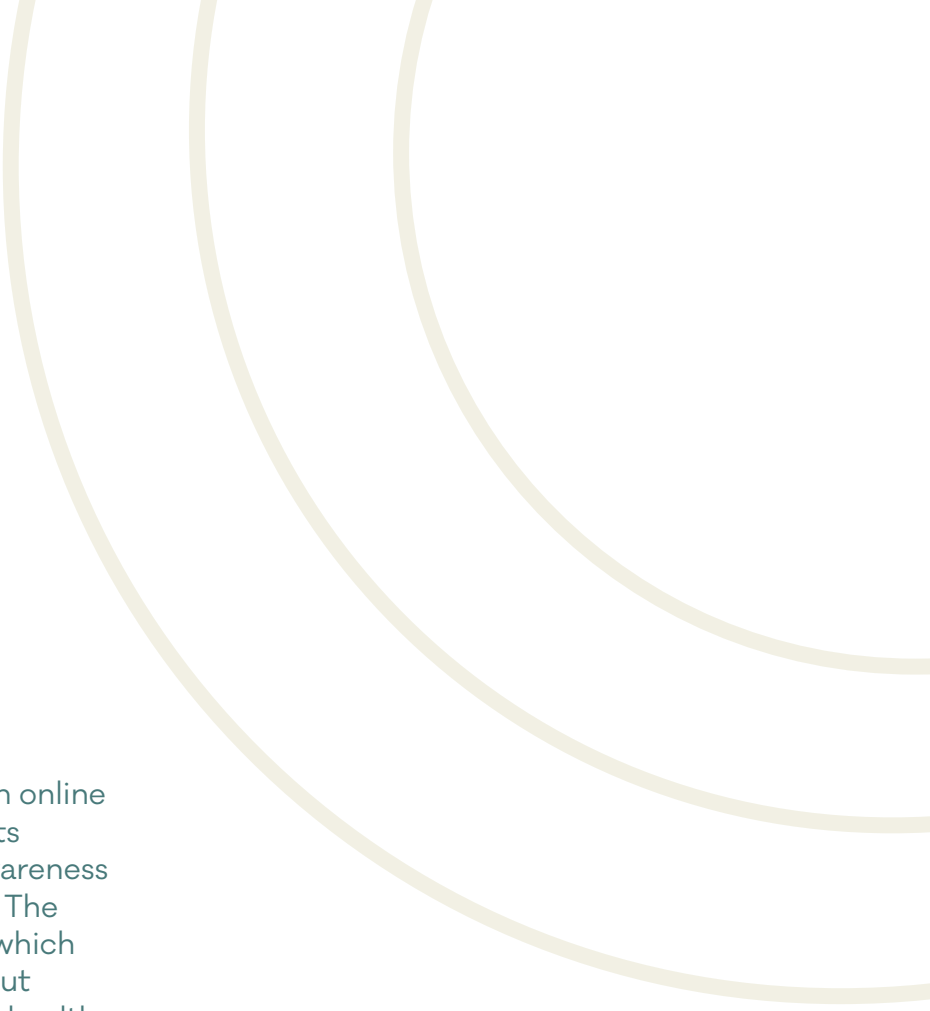
Together with the London School of Economics and Political Science, we also carried out 'The Economic Case for the Prevention of Mental Health Conditions in the UK' study. This estimated the cost of poor mental health for the UK and gave the latest evidence of what works to prevent poor mental health. In Scotland, 15,000 students from nineteen universities participated in

our Thriving Learners project, with data now being used to develop university education provision.

In the community, we worked with key groups at risk of poor mental health to launch our Covid Response Programme with eight separate partners across the UK. We invested in programmes like Living Well in Scotland, which gives emotional support to those living with long-term physical conditions, and in Wales, working alongside the Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board, we trialled ways of supporting the mental health of people affected by long Covid. In England, our Young Mums Connect work continues to support the mental health of young mothers and their families.

We had promising results from the first year of our highly acclaimed trial, Becoming a Man programme, which showed 75% of the young people involved had increased empathy and 59 % reported improved relationships.

Our wonderful supporters gave over £1.68m through Facebook last year, and £215,000 from our tireless and inspiring London Marathon runners, who were determined to run, despite the disruptions of Covid. We were also delighted to continue our successful partnerships with Neom, Simplyhealth, Lloyds, Knight Frank, Zizzi and raised a fantastic £300,000 with Jingle Jam.



Lastly but certainly not least, we ran an online version of our annual mental health arts festival and the 21st Mental Health Awareness Week 2021, with the theme of Nature. The week reached millions across the UK, which kicked off a vital public discussion about nature's positive effects on our mental health. We saw strong political engagement, including a parliamentary event and a meeting with the Secretary of State for Health.

We continue to work to be an anti-racist organisation, becoming more diverse in the staff we attract and inclusive in our messaging and research approaches.

With the establishment of our presence in Northern Ireland, we are excited to now make the Foundation a truly UK-wide organisation.

Thank you for standing with us and for all your support.

Who we are



Our vision

Our vision is good mental health for all.

Our mission

We work to prevent mental health problems, helping people to understand, protect and sustain their mental health.

We drive change towards a mentally healthy society for all, and support communities, families and individuals to live mentally healthier lives, with a focus on those at greatest risk.

We are also the home of Mental Health Awareness Week.

The practical things we do



1. Tell the world - why prevention is the foundation for effectively addressing the ongoing mental health crisis.



3. Inform and empower - enable mentally healthier lives through public information and engagement.



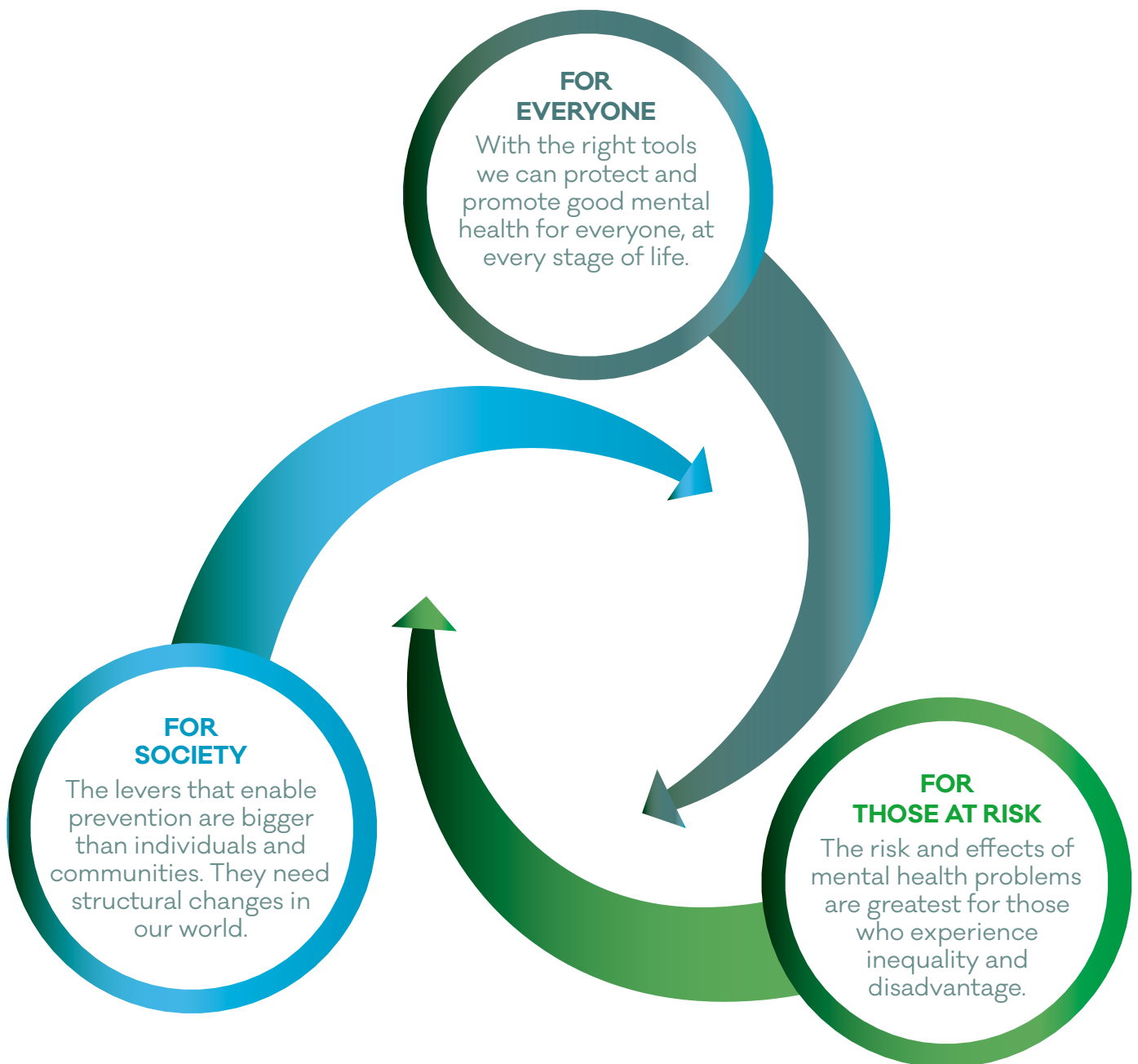
2. Find solutions - innovate universal and targeted evidence-based community programmes for large numbers of people. Generate and share evidence of practical solutions that prevent mental health problems entrenched in the lived experience.



4. Change policy and practice - build partnerships and champion prevention in policies. Influence the societal changes that are adopted by Government and organisations.

Our approach to prevention

Our strategy commits us to the development of practical prevention solutions – informed by the best evidence available. We’re placing this search for solutions in three key frames:



Our values

To make sure we stay true to our mission and vision we work together to define our values – Side by side, Determined pioneers, Making a difference and Walking our talk.

Our values are who we strive to be. Working together, our values inspire us to be the best we can be and help us to make good decisions while building the foundations for a mentally healthier future.

And in everything we do we aim to bring these values to life, to create a world where good mental health is achievable for everyone.

Side by side

We achieve this through working together. We pursue connections and a shared understanding. We embrace difference and the lived experience. We trust our people and our partners, and create space for reflection, fun and personal growth. We recognise and own our power and privilege, and act with humility.

Determined Pioneers

We are passionate and committed. We strive for excellence and rigour. We deal with hard issues and topics and are willing to hold tension and complexity. We search for new approaches, challenge conventions and push boundaries.

Making a difference

We are passionate about the role we play in achieving positive change. We look for outcomes, not glory. We generate and share evidence of what works. We are creative and action-focused.

Walking our talk

We embrace diversity and work with openness, prioritising the mental health of our staff and supporters. We recognise and learn from our mistakes and welcome honest feedback, without spin. We recognise the need to keep listening and acting with authenticity.

Side by side



Determined
pioneers



Our
values



Making a
difference



Walking our talk

Tell the world

Prevention is fundamental to effectively dealing with the ongoing mental health crisis

Objectives & achievements

We continued leading on our UK-wide **Coronavirus: Mental Health in the Pandemic** study with the University of Cambridge, De Montfort University, Swansea University, University of Strathclyde, and Queen's University Belfast. The study has led to considerable research and policy impact.

We launched our **Personal Experience Network (OPEN)**. OPEN members have been engaged 25 times in the work of five departments and in cross-organisational strategic work. This included hypothesis generation through to project evaluation and media/parliamentary work. OPEN's involvement continues to enhance our work by deepening our insights and engaging new audiences.

With funding from Jingle Jam, we used a creative research approach to gain a better understanding of how **gaming relates to mental health**, through the words and experiences of players themselves. Based on our findings, we co-produced suggestions for the industry to support the mental wellbeing of players and reflective resources for players themselves. We explored new ways of sharing our outputs, with our YouTube film gaining over 55,000 views.

Our 2021 Mental Health Awareness Week **Policy Briefing on Nature and Mental Health** was included in The Nature Connection Handbook as an exemplary case study. The handbook was funded by Natural England, the government's main advisory body on England's natural environment.

The Scottish Mental Illness Stigma Study (SMISS) in partnership with **See Me** was completed in March 2022. The study provided unprecedented insight into the effects of stigma on people living with mental illness, and recommended actions to tackle stigma.

More than 15,000 students from all 19 Scottish universities participated in our **Thriving Learners** Higher Education Student Mental Health and Wellbeing study. The findings were published in November 2021 and have already begun to inform positive changes in the sector.

Plans for the coming year

We will continue to communicate our findings from the **Mental Health in the Pandemic** study with stakeholders, researchers and the public, and explore what our evidence means for the nation's mental health in the future.

We will conduct new research on **loneliness and mental health**, focused on the core finding that many experiences of loneliness are not recognised.

Continuing **SMISS**, a national qualitative study will be completed and will help us to understand stigma in more depth and to inform how we tackle this from the perspectives of people living with mental illness.

We will continue the **Thriving Learners** study with a focus on further education colleges.

Following the publication of **'The economic case for investing in the prevention of mental health conditions in the UK'**, we will complete a follow-up study that will explore the best methods for evaluating the cost-effectiveness of preventative mental health interventions for asylum-seekers and refugees, and for young people at higher risk.

Objectives & achievements

We published '**The economic case for investing in the prevention of mental health conditions in the UK**', in partnership with the London School of Economics, which found that mental health problems cost the UK economy £118 billion per year. This report has been shared widely among decision-makers in the four nations to inform public mental health policy.

We developed a research proposal in partnership with the Poverty Alliance, the University of West of Scotland, and the University of Strathclyde to address gaps in knowledge about the relationship between **poverty stigma** and mental health using a new measurement tool that can be quickly applied in real-world settings.

In June 2021, three years into our seven-year partnership with **Barnardo's**, we published our baseline evaluation for its Core Priority Programme in Northern England, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This research provided valuable insight into child and youth mental health and is helping to shape the future of the programme.

Plans for the coming year

We will complete and publish our collaborative research on **poverty stigma** and shame, and ensure these findings influence local and national policy.

In the next stage of our work with **Barnardo's** we will publish a methodology paper in the 'Evaluation' journal, focusing on a Theory of Change approach to understanding systems change.

This will include a peer research strand to increase our insight into young people's views on systems change for child and youth mental health.

Find solutions

Innovate universal and targeted evidence-based community and peer programmes

Objectives & achievements

We increased our peer-delivered Further and Higher Education transition programme, “**U OK?**” into seven universities and twelve **Further Education (FE) colleges across England** including Birmingham, Manchester, Bolton, and Durham. This led to the development of a new strand of work by, and for, FE students through our partnership with the **Association of Colleges**, developing an innovative peer wellbeing role in three FE colleges in London and the Southeast.

We continued to successfully deliver our **Becoming A Man (BAM)** programme in three London Borough of Lambeth schools. Interim evaluation results after the first year showed **75%** of young people had an increased empathy score, **59%** showed improved relationships with adults, and **55%** reported improved academic motivation.

We created a new partnership with the **City of Sanctuary** to empower their wellbeing work with refugees and asylum seekers.

Alongside **Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board** and the **Bevan Commission**, we have been trialling ways of running peer support for people experiencing **Long Covid**.

We worked with a large **police** force in **South Wales** to help it understand the effect it is having on the mental health of the people it serves.

As part of the **Covid Response Programme, in partnership with The ALLIANCE**, we launched the **Living Well: Emotional Support Matters** programmes with eight delivery partner organisations to provide mental health support to people living with long-term health conditions across Scotland.

During summer 2021, we trained 72 staff from community organisations across Edinburgh with the **StressLess resource**. They supported **2,400 disadvantaged young people** with self-management tools and strategies using the StressLess resource. It was embedded in a range of summer programmes featuring over 50 different activities including sports and the arts.

Plans for the coming year

We will continue running our **Peer Education Project** in secondary schools and continue developing digital delivery.

As part of the innovative ‘**Young Black Men and Mental Health**’ initiative, we will expand **BAM** to three schools in the London Borough of Islington.

We will launch a new ‘**People Seeking Sanctuary**’ Research Consortium with **Cardiff Metropolitan University** to support students who are refugees.

We will commission an external evaluation of the **UK Covid Response Programme** focusing on implementation and quality.

We will **launch new work** that continues to make community mental health support available for **single parents and their families** across **Wales**.

In addition to the **Living Well** programme, we are joining six organisations working with Black and minority ethnic groups together with lone parents in **Scotland**.

In **Northern Ireland** we will develop a programme with community health centres to support people living with **long term health conditions**.

Objectives & achievements

We worked in partnership with **Edinburgh City Council, East Lothian CAMHS (Meadows), and Cyrenians** to co-produce a training programme on cultural humility and trauma-informed care to support a new programme for unaccompanied **young asylum seekers and refugees**. The group took part in a **Photovoice** project to share their views of connection, community and identity.

We worked closely with Parents Councils and **identified 'buddies' who were paired up with refugee and asylum-seeking communities**. We exceeded our target to include seven people from refugee and asylum-seeking backgrounds in different Parents Councils across Glasgow.

Further work with refugee and asylum-seeking communities included creating learning resources about mental wellbeing and a poster exhibition called **'This is What Hope Looks Like...'**. This exhibition highlights what gave people from asylum-seeking communities a sense of hope when they first arrived in Scotland.

We also supported **17 people** through an accredited 40-week course on community development.

Plans for the coming year

Further staff training informed by the **Photovoice** project with **young unaccompanied asylum seekers and refugees**. This will take place in the summer of 2022 for Edinburgh City Council, East Lothian CAMHS (Meadows) and Cyrenians.

Our work with refugee and asylum-seeking communities will continue as we support people to be more visible and active in their new neighbourhoods.

We will make sure that mental health information and support is tailored to be relevant and appropriate for communities.

Inform and empower

Enable mentally healthier lives through public information and engagement

Objectives & achievements

We maintained a **COVID Resource Hub** for over two years that gave advice to the public on how to look after their mental health during the various stages of the pandemic. **Over 3 million** visitors visited our pages.

Working with **Nottingham University** and Oscar-winning **Aardman Animations**, we co-produced a series of animated shorts to increase students' mental health literacy. They are hosted by the Foundation at whatsupwitheveryone.com

We ran a seminar series in **Oxford** exploring issues not typically associated with public mental health but critical to ensuring a prevention approach maximises its potential. Topics this year included: **racism as a public mental health concern** and **public mental health approaches to psychosis**.

We contributed content and research to a regular feature in **Psychologies magazine** aimed at improving the understanding of a range of mental health concerns - including self-help.

We co-produced an online mental health training resource with **Looseheadz** for the sporting world.

We hosted **VOX** and substantially increased its core funding and the national team from three to five staff. **VOX** has been key in influencing change on a number of national developments in **Scotland**, including the mental health law review, creating national standards within adult secondary mental health services. Its members have had a voice in a number of areas such as the National Care Service and the effects of COVID.

We successfully launched a digital **Professional Learning Resource**, freely available to all school staff across Scotland. This resource was developed with Digital Bricks, Children's Health Scotland and the Scottish Government. It provides both knowledge and practical advice for all school staff on how to promote a whole school approach to mental health and wellbeing.

Plans for the coming year

We will continue running seminars on neglected public mental health topics alongside strong partnerships.

We will update and redesign our core **'How to look after your mental health'** advice based on our own research.

We will run the **Green Ribbon Arts Festival** in Newport, Wales, focusing on showcasing arts-based innovations about working with those with trauma.

VOX will work with the **Scottish Recovery Network** to develop engagement with people who have a diagnosis of personality disorder to capture what is needed to improve lives and drive positive change across Scotland.



Change policy and practice

Build alliances and champion prevention in policies and changes to society that are adopted by the Government and organisations

Objectives & achievements

Following years of lobbying and influencing, the Government is now in the process of developing a new **10-year cross-government Mental Health and Wellbeing Plan**. We worked closely with the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) to advise on the contents of the discussion paper for the plan.

We worked extensively with parliamentarians and policy makers to bring about changes to the **Health and Care Bill** that will help to secure good mental health for all. We took a leading role in coordinating the mental health sector and members of the House of Lords to secure a government amendment that puts 'knowledge and experience' of mental illness, including its prevention, on Integrated Care Boards.

We have worked closely with the Government to influence the national public health arrangements in England following the abolition of Public Health England. This resulted in important structural changes that retain public mental health functions within a distinct Office of Health Improvement and Disparities within the **Department of Health and Social Care**.

In April, the UK Parliament's **Women and Equalities Committee** published the final report of its inquiry into body image, which drew extensively on our written and oral evidence.

In Wales, we gave oral evidence to the **Senedd's Health & Social Care Committee's** inquiry into mental health inequalities.

Our influencing work led to changes to the way the Welsh mental health strategy, **Together for Mental Health**, will be evaluated. It will now specifically include a clear assessment of outcomes for those experiencing inequalities.

As chair of Scotland's Mental Health Partnership (a collective of 17 mental health charities and professional bodies in Scotland) we helped lead the publication of the '**Promote, Prevent, Provide**' manifesto for the Scottish Parliamentary elections and met the Minister for Mental Wellbeing & Social Care twice.

Plans for the coming year

We will continue to influence legislation and plans for better mental health, including key areas across national and local government, including body image, online harm and the structure of **Integrated Care Boards**.

We will remain an **influential independent voice** for public mental health during the country's transition to a new Prime Minister and beyond.

We will continue to Chair **Scotland's Mental Health Partnership** to collectively influence policy. The Partnership will produce a submission to the review of Scotland's Mental Health Strategy 2017-2027.

We will run a **Scottish Councils Election** campaign to put mental health prevention on the agenda at local level.

We will lead the **Diverse Experiences Advisory Panel (DEAP)** in Scotland and support it to advise on Scotland's mental health policy.

Objectives & achievements

.Our **#WellbeingSociety** campaign for the Scottish Parliamentary elections successfully influenced the manifestos of all five main Scottish political parties. This was followed by our work influencing the new Programme for Government which resulted in an additional investment of £21 million in a Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund.

Our submission to **Northern Ireland's 10-year Mental Health Strategy** consultation was supported by the NI Mental Health Champion. The published strategy included our recommendations, together with a commitment to a **Prevention & Early Intervention Action Plan** and cross-departmental action to address the social determinants of mental health.

We secured funding from the Scottish Government to develop and deliver a **Diverse Experiences Advisory Panel (DEAP)** comprising citizens from diverse backgrounds, who will shape Scottish policy.

We published a report and academic paper on the mental health effects of Universal Basic Income (**Universal Basic Income – Scotland | Mental Health Foundation**) and shared it with policymakers.

We have a leadership role in **Scotland's National Suicide Prevention Leadership Group (NSPLG)**, leading the oversight of the new pilot service for people bereaved by suicide.

During **COP26** in November 2021, we held a virtual community participation event on climate change and mental health. More than 70 attendees joined from across each of the four nations in the UK. Participants heard from leading national and international experts on the topics of climate change, a just transition and their implications for mental health.

Plans for the coming year

We will continue to advocate for mental health to be considered in Scottish plans for a **Minimum Income Guarantee**.

We will produce a report on the mental health effects of **Zero Hours Contracts** and share it with roundtable attendees and policymakers.

As part of the new **Scottish Mental Health Strategy**, we will advocate for the roll-out and mainstreaming of evidence-based support for all **families bereaved by suicide**.

We will publish the report on the Foundation's **COP26** community participation event and share it with policymakers.

Spotlight on...



Pandemic resources

Context

In March 2020, The WHO declared the coronavirus a global pandemic, and the UK Government published its first coronavirus action plan. It soon became clear that the pandemic was likely to have a significant and lasting impact on the mental health of the UK population. In fact, we were the first to write to the British Medical Journal recognising this significant risk.

In response to this risk, we started to develop some essential advice to help people look after their own and each other's mental health. We also started a significant research project that helped identify the people whose mental health was most at risk due to the pandemic.

The online resource hub

Our research and others' identified several key groups that were particularly badly affected. As evidence emerged, we developed evidence-based advice to inform and empower people and help with some compounding concerns that were increasing the psychological impact. This led to the development of resources for a range of groups and themes, including the following: older people, young people, people with existing mental health problems, parents, teachers, schools and pupils, managing relationships, dealing with loss and bereavement, abusive relationships, managing your finances and more.

Developing and maintaining the hub

The resources were initially published in English and Welsh. Still, as the pandemic developed, it became clear from various studies that refugee and migrant populations were amongst those experiencing disproportionate disadvantage. With this in mind, we secured funding to develop key resources in six additional languages: Arabic, French, Farsi, Somali, Tigrinya, and Urdu. These languages were identified as likely to reach the broadest range of immigrants whose first language is not English. These resources were often printed and distributed by partner organisations that had greater reach within these communities.

As the pandemic ran through different phases, further challenges arose, and we developed new resources to meet them. These included: support for key workers, managing uncertainty, returning to work as lockdown eases, and uncertainty associated with new variants.

Working across four nations

One challenge that emerged over time was the range of approaches taken by each of the four UK nations. It became clear that we needed to adapt the advice to make sure that it complied with laws and guidance that increasingly varied initially between UK nations, but also sometimes within nations where some areas fell under special measures. To ensure our resources were

both helpful and complied with all possible regulations, we created a four nations page that linked people directly to summary guidelines and laws for where they lived. We reviewed all resources at least monthly, with additional reviews whenever a significant change to guidelines or legislation was made.

Access and reach

Our Coronavirus Hub has been a critical resource for the UK public with over three million unique visitors in the first two years of the pandemic. Half a million people read our advice on looking after their mental health during the new pandemic in the first six months since March 2020. Over 22,000 people read our Farsi translated content, 30,000 parents took our advice about supporting the mental health of their babies and children, and over 100,000 read our pages about returning to school after lockdown during the transitions of 2020 and 2021.

Conclusion

Our Coronavirus resource hub provided reliable, accessible and helpful advice when many people were confused, vulnerable and had difficulty making sense of a complicated and rapidly changing environment. People needed advice they could understand from a source they could trust, and at the Foundation we remained true to our mission of empowering people with life-saving information.





Fundraising and communications



2021 - 2022

Public Fundraising

Challenge events

2021 was a record-breaking year for the London Marathon, with a whopping **£215,000** raised from our wonderful 56 runners.

Despite charities still feeling the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2021, through to early 2022, overall, our income from challenge events was healthy, as we saw many supporters organising their own DIY events across the UK in support of the Foundation.

Digital

Whilst income raised via the Facebook platform has declined across the sector, in November 2021, we ran our first Facebook challenge event, '12,000 Steps a Day in November,' which was popular with our supporters and proved to be a successful model of fundraising with **£37,828** raised in total.

Face to face fundraising

A new face-to-face fundraising model was tested in September 2021, beginning with street fundraising in London. We then tested Private sites in Northern England, largely in shopping centers and train stations.

By March 2022 the campaign recruited 1,244 donors.

Welcome calling conducted by our partner agency 160 reflects positive feedback on the interactions with our fundraisers:

New supporter, Julie:

"Its affected people close to me. It was clear that the fundraisers understood the issues around mental health... somebody is trying to do something."

Fundraising & communications



Corporate partnerships

The team continued to work with partners across all disciplines of corporate fundraising; from employee fundraising and events with **Knight Frank** as part of its Day of Giving, to direct project support from **Simplyhealth** and **Lloyd's**, to cause related promotions with **Neom Organics** and **Floward**, and customer and brand-based fundraising with **Zizzi**.

We were pleased to be involved in the world's biggest charity gaming event, **Jingle Jam**. This year the event raised almost **£300,000** which we will use to develop a digital platform for our secondary school **Peer Education Project**. The platform will help more young people and teachers to use our evidence-based resources, supporting them to protect their mental health.

Because of the success of Jingle Jam, we were also able to increase our commitment to providing online courses aimed at professionals in the education and health sectors, sharing our expertise and building capacity within these professions. We are grateful to all the UK companies who have supported us this year and look forward to continuing to make a difference to people's mental health with the support of our partners.

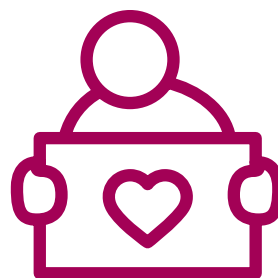
Corporate supporters we would like to thank include: BMS; Christian Dior Couture UK; Floward UK; Hearst UK; Hoxton Hotels; Jingle Jam; Knight Frank; Lloyd's; NEOM Ltd; Simplyhealth; and Zizzi Restaurants Ltd.

Affiliates

We have continued our partnerships with affiliate fundraising platforms such as **AmazonSmile** and **Paypal**.

AmazonSmile, through which supporters select the Foundation from a list of eligible charities and Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases, allows people to donate to the charity at no additional cost to themselves. In 2021/22, the Foundation raised **£42,449** in income through this partnership.

Supporters also donated through the Paypal Giving Fund, and **£115,002** income was raised through this method in 2021/22.



£300k

**RAISED THROUGH
JINGLE JAM**

Spotlight on...



Simplyhealth

Working with the **Wildfowl and Wetlands Trust**, we secured funding of **£109,000** from **Simplyhealth** to support lone parents and people with long-term health conditions from diverse backgrounds, through a wetland health programme.

'**Blue Prescribing**' promotes a range of mental and physical health benefits through facilitated wetland nature engagement at the London Wetland Centre. A co-designed self-management course is then delivered by the Mental Health Foundation.

The aim of the programme is to improve mental health by providing access to blue and green spaces whilst participating in a six week course. Working with peer group participants will build on their learning week by week, building knowledge and resources which will help them manage their mental health.

Those taking part are encouraged to split their time between face to face nature based activities on site at the wetlands centre and online learning.



Mental Health at Work

Our subsidiary **Mental Health at Work CIC** has experienced an unprecedented demand from clients over the past 12 months. Over this period, we reached **7,677** employees, which represents an 11 per cent increase over the previous 12 months, working with 58 clients. Our work had increasingly become more globalised as several clients have requested an international rollout of our programmes. This has enabled greater understanding of stigma and readiness across different regions, cultures and workplace environments.

In addition to the **UK**, we delivered workshops in the **USA, Australia, Asia** and mainland **Europe**. Listening to the needs of our clients we developed and delivered an increasingly diverse range of workshops including **MHaW Mental Health Allies[®], Psychological Health and Safety, Burnout** and **Situational Anxiety**. We have supported organisations with a modular approach offering flexibility in terms of content. We were also able to offer our clients the choice of virtual or face-to-face delivery of our facilitated workshops. As a result, we are increasing the opportunity for people to connect at work and have natural conversations about mental health.

Ongoing relationships continued to strengthen with clients such as **WPP, Anglian Water, Mizuho, Nandos, Unicef and Central England Co-Operative**.

New clients to come on board over the past 12 months include **Starbucks, Philips, Catapult Sports, ICAS** and **Clyde & Co**.



“Together with my family, we chose the Mental Health Foundation due to its overall focus on the prevention of mental ill-health and the fantastic work it does in research and applying research to help make a real difference in the lives of so many people.”

BEN HAYES (pictured right)

Ben's story



We would like to shine a light on the story of one of our fantastic supporters, Ben Hayes, who raised over £20,000 for the Foundation back in March 2022.

Trigger warning: This story discusses suicide.

Following the tragic loss of his mother, Gill Hayes, to suicide at the start of 2021, Ben wanted to raise both awareness and money for mental health to help prevent other families having to go through what his family did.

Ben, alongside two friends, Jamie Khan and Charlie Fanous, decided to take on a challenge of epic proportions and walk for 120 km in under 40 hours. The guys (together now known as the Pennsylvania Plodders) followed the Thames Path from Pangbourne to the Old Ship pub in Hammersmith, a favourite of Gills.

They wanted to take on an exciting challenge that would test them both mentally and physically. As they anticipated finding themselves questioning both their mental strength and physical capabilities along the walk, they thought it might draw an appropriate comparison to people out there struggling with mental health issues. By simply putting one foot in front of another, it may provide a bit of hope and inspiration to those that need it most.

The challenge was a huge success, and the guys surpassed their target of walking 120 km and actually managed 132 km in 36 and a half hours! They were blessed with some fantastic weather. Although their feet took a bit of a battering, it didn't dampen their spirits too much and they remained positive for most of the walk.

Some friends met them along the way which kept the momentum up. When tiredness hit the group at about 2:30 am, Ben's dad, Rob Hayes, helped them get through this tough part of the walk, with his entertaining phone calls and overall great moral support.

As the sun began to rise, the group saw Jamie's grandparents in the support vehicle and had a quick respite before setting off again for the final stage. Adrenaline and the promise of a pint carried them through to the end, before they were straight off to bed!

The Mental Health Foundation cannot thank Ben, Jamie and Charlie enough for the extraordinary courage and determination they showed throughout this challenge.

They raised an incredible amount of money which will help us greatly with our work.

Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW) 2021



This was the 21st year we have run Mental Health Awareness Week. The week has grown over the last few years and is the event the charity is best known for among the public.

The week continues to be highly influential in setting the UK-wide narrative around mental health and is also fundamental to growing the understanding of prevention amongst the public and policy makers while driving policy. It has performed consistently-strongly for the last five years and is a moment each year where MHF is confident it will be able to raise our public profile for its interventions, fundraising, policy and programmatic activity and engage with an audience of millions of people.





The Foundation secured over 25% share of voice for MHAW which is up by 3.3% compared with 2020.

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There were 1,654 unique media mentions of the Mental Health Foundation during MHAW reaching an estimated 58.2m people (according to the Foundation’s media monitoring Cision), a slight increase in mentions compared to 2020 (1,410 mentions and 181.4m reach).

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The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge engaged with MHAW by holding Mental Health Minute on Friday 14th May 2021. This activity significantly boosted coverage alongside a widely covered mid-week visit by the Duke and Duchess to Wolverhampton. The Royal Foundation also provided a graphic of the Duchess of Cambridge and a quote for the Foundation to use specifically on the Foundation’s social channels.

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A very wide and eclectic range of celebrities and public figures engaged with the week. Some of the highlights included a Letter to Editors from Julie Walters, Gail Porter talking about mental health on C4’s Steph’s Packed Lunch and insights from Dr Radha.

This year for the first time Wales secured extensive quality coverage across all media types during the week. ITV News Wales at 6pm interviewed Jenny Burns - Associate Director (Wales) live, whilst also featuring a pre-recorded interview with a case study of Ruth Knight from Standing Together Cymru as well as Natalie Sadler.

For the first time ever, both of the Foundation’s hashtags, #MentalHealthAwarenessWeek and #ConnectWithNature, were trending in the UK on Twitter at #1 and #2 on the first day of the Week.

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Secretary of State for Health, Matt Hancock, recorded a mental health video with CEO Mark Rowland. They discussed the scale of the mental health problem and the evidenced-based preventive solutions that could be actioned to tackle this growing concern.

.....

Prime Minister Boris Johnson referred to MHAW during his Coronavirus Press Conference to the nation at the very start of the week.

.....

Minister for Mental Health Nadine Dorries, Shadow Minister for Mental Health Rosena Allin-Khan and Liberal Democrat Spokesperson for Health and Social Care Munira Wilson MP were all speaking at the Foundation’s virtual Westminster Parliamentary event.





Mental Health Awareness Week (continued)

The Foundation's Programmes were heavily featured during MHAW this year. Standing Together Cymru attracted a lot of media attention including ITV Main News Wales

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Our joint project with WWT London Wetlands Centre to assist hundreds of people gain access to nature through Blue Prescriptions Programme. This was featured on the front page of The Guardian.

.....

Over 6,000 school packs were download showing the importance that nature plays on children's mental health. Plus, The Week Junior puts us on the front page (circulation of 240,000 targeted at young people).

Over 1.1 million page views on the Foundation website, around 80% of which was from new visitors. Nature Top Tips received over 80,000 page views.

Engagement on Facebook grew from 2020 to 2021, even though there was a decrease in followers.

.....

The Direct Mail Appeal raised £10, 838, exceeding its income target of £9,000. The appeal focussed on the Nature Peer Education Programme for Schools and young children.



Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival (SMHAF) 2021



The fifteenth Scottish Mental Health Arts Festival (SMHAF) took place between 3 - 23 May 2021 and featured 180 online and outdoor events across Scotland. It reached audiences of approximately 10,500 people. Led by the Mental Health Foundation and supported by partner organisations from across Scotland, the annual festival aims to support the arts, explore how engagement in the arts can help prevent mental ill- health and challenge mental health stigma.

The theme for 2021 was 'Normality', chosen because of a widespread desire among our national network of artists, mental health activists, and community groups to question the value judgements associated with a word that has appeared frequently in the media in the wake of the COVID-19 crisis.

The programme set out to explore what 'normality' means to people experiencing mental ill- health, whether getting back to 'normal' is considered desirable after the pandemic, and how a new 'normality' might better support our mental health as a society. It was a theme that resonated strongly with artists, people with lived experience of mental ill- health, and audiences.

The festival was originally planned as a live events programme, complemented by online activity to enhance accessibility and reach. With the announcement of the second lockdown early in the year, it became clear that it would not be possible for many events to take place in person, even with the reduced audience numbers that had been anticipated.

Less than 40 out of 180 events were able to go ahead in person, and of these all were aimed at engaging small groups in creative activities, mainly in outdoor settings. Even so, the festival featured programmes from 12 regions across Scotland. The core programme, including the International Film Awards programme, Writing Awards, and a series of curated discussion events, all took place entirely online.

A yellow rectangular box containing the text 'SCOTTISH MENTAL HEALTH ARTS FESTIVAL' in black, bold, uppercase letters. The text is arranged in three lines: 'SCOTTISH', 'MENTAL HEALTH', and 'ARTS FESTIVAL'.

**SCOTTISH
MENTAL HEALTH
ARTS FESTIVAL**



@mentalhealthfoundation



@mentalhealth



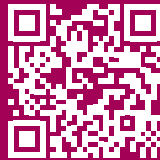
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