

# Charlie Waller News

THE CHARLIE WALLER TRUST NEWSLETTER



## WORLD'S TOUGHEST ROW

An extraordinary fundraising voyage

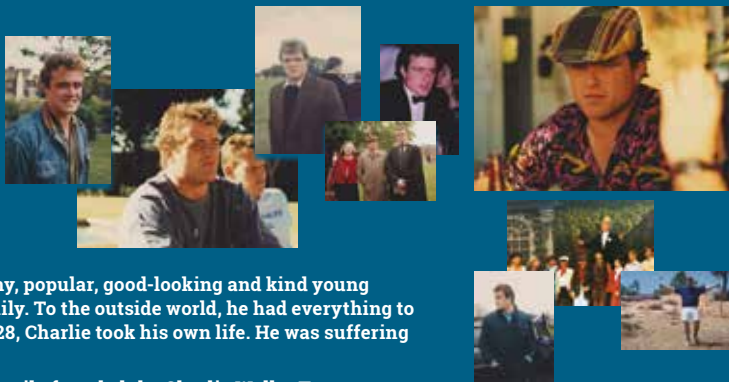
## MEET OUR NEW CEO

An interview with  
Hannah Vickery

## CREATING A CARING COMMUNITY

Our work in primary schools

APRIL 2024 • ISSUE 49



Charlie Waller was a strong, funny, popular, good-looking and kind young man, with a close and loving family. To the outside world, he had everything to live for. Yet in 1997, at the age of 28, Charlie took his own life. He was suffering from depression.

In response to this tragedy, his family founded the Charlie Waller Trust, to open up the conversation around depression, and ensure that young people can look after their mental health and spot the signs in others. We have since become one of the UK's most respected mental health charities.

Charlie sits at the heart of our story, our vision and our purpose.

### Our purpose

Our purpose is to empower young people to live life to the full by giving them, and those who care for them, the skills, knowledge and confidence to look after their mental health.

### Our work

We provide mental health training, resources and consultancy to schools, colleges, universities and workplaces. We build partnerships to help create a long-term culture of wellbeing.

We focus on support for young people throughout their journey from primary school to the early years of their working lives.

### Our approach

We don't offer direct support to individuals. However, we sponsor the Charlie Waller Institute at the University of Reading, facilitating training in evidence-based psychological treatments and increasing the availability of therapists.

Our training is free. The only exception is our work with employers, the income from which is invested in extending our work to support young people.

### Our vision

Our vision is of a world in which young people are educated to understand mental health and can get all the support they need.



### POSITIVE

We take a positive approach to mental health. We focus on prevention and early intervention, and recognise the importance of offering hope.



### PROVEN

Our consultancy, training and resources are all based on sound clinical evidence.



### PRACTICAL

We give people practical strategies and tools to care for their mental health, and to support others in doing so.



## FEATURES

- 9 Becoming a therapist, inspiring a community**  
Komel Jalil tells her story
- 10 Meet our new CEO**  
Robert Beaumont talks to Hannah Vickery
- 12 Young mums and mental health**  
How can they be better supported?
- 14 Partnerships with purpose**  
Working with dunnhumby, and the BGC Charity Day
- 15 Support with every swing**  
The Trust's links with Badgemore Park Golf Club
- 16 Creating a caring community**  
Our whole school approach to mental health
- 19 Wondrous wellies**  
One unique event, ten glorious years
- 20 Charlie Waller youth ambassadors**  
Young people at the heart of our work
- 22 How full is your stress bucket?**  
Managing unhealthy stress

## REGULARS

- 4 Who's who...**  
...at Charlie Waller
- 5 Welcome**  
From our Chairman
- 6 News**  
Updates from across the Trust
- 25 Fundraising highlights**  
Celebrating our fundraisers' achievements

### GET IN TOUCH

hello@charliewaller.org  
01635 869754

### FIND OUT MORE

charliewaller.org

### FOLLOW US



27



### COVER STORY

The Ace of Blades team in the World's Toughest Row – see page 27 (Photo: Worlds Toughest Row)

## GET INVOLVED

- 30 Supporting us**  
How you can help
- 31 What's on**  
A look at the diary for 2024
- 32 Looking for help?**  
Sources of direct help for mental health problems



# WHO'S WHO

## Presidents

The Trust was founded in 1997 by the Waller family in response to the tragic loss of Charlie, their son and brother. Sir Mark and Lady Waller are now the Trust's presidents.

**The Rt Hon. Sir Mark Waller**  
**Lady Waller**

## Trustees

Our trustees come from a variety of backgrounds and offer a wealth of experience, strategic direction and support.

**Richard Waller KC**  
(Chairman)

**Robin Booth**  
(Hon. Treasurer)

**Dr Nick Broughton**  
(Consultant Psychiatrist)

**Donna Colbourne**

**Michael Cole-Fontayn**

**William de Laszlo**

**Mark Durden-Smith**

**Dr Mina Fazel**

(Research Fellow &  
Consultant Child  
Psychiatrist)

**Julian Hay**

**Charles Lytle**

**James Murray**

**Katie Tait**

**Philip Waller**

**Iain Weatherby**

## Board advisers

Our board advisers are leading experts in their respective fields of mental health.

**Professor David Clark**

**Lord Crisp KCB**

**Lord Layard**

**Dr Denise Meyer**

**John Olsen**

**Professor Andrew Reeves**

**Professor Suzanna Rose**

**Sir Anthony Seldon**

**Professor Roz Shafran**

**Professor Sir Simon Wessely**

## Patrons

Our patrons do important work in promoting the Trust and supporting our aims.

**Alexander Armstrong**

**Gordon Black CBE**

**Louise Black**

**The Hon. Mrs de Laszlo**

**Neil Durden-Smith OBE**

**Nigel Gray**

**Professor Steven Hollon**

**Mary Nightingale**

**Sue Shenkman**

**Phoebe Waller-Bridge**

**Anthony West**

**Michael Whitfeld**

## Staff team

Under the leadership of the Chief Executive, the staff are responsible for all aspects of the day-to-day running of the Trust.

**Chief Executive**  
**Hannah Vickery**

**Executive Assistant to CEO**  
**Kerryn Cyfka**

**Director of Programmes**  
**Kay Boyden**

**Director, Charlie Waller Workplace**  
**Abigail Hirshman**

**Programme Manager**  
**(Families)**

**Annabelle Easton**

**Project Manager**

**Christina Sell**

**Families Administrator**

**Louise Mustow**

**Resources Officer**

**Martha Pipkin**

**Training & Projects Officer**

**Chelsey Dixon**

**Head of Fundraising**

**Nick Appleby**

**Fundraising Events Manager**

**Tara Hingston**

**Corporate Partnerships Manager**

**Helen Franks**

**Fundraising Events Officer**

**Debs Burles**

**Fundraising Events Officer**

**Natasha Austen**

**Grants Manager**

**Angela Cunningham**

**Fundraising Assistant**

**Michelle Lane**

**Fundraising Development Officer**

**Beth Towler**

**Head of Communications**

**Rebecca Miles-Mallowan**

**Content & Story Manager**

**Tracey Gurr**

**Graphic Designer**

**Amy Martin**

**Junior Graphic Designer**

**Sophie Henry**

**Digital Marketing Lead**

**Emily Wyatt**

**PR Officer**

**Kaelum Neville**

**Finance & Operations Manager**

**Carrie Green**

**Office and IT Coordinator**

**Kirsty Smith**

**Finance Assistant**

**Shardai Wilson**

**Workplace Training Coordinator**

**Jo Lea**

## Youth ambassadors

Our youth ambassadors help us ensure the voice of young people is heard throughout our work.

**Matilda Prestridge**

**Andy Macdonald**

**Amy Knight**

**Patrick Regan**

**Usman Javaid**

**Kyanne Graham**

**Sophie Griffiths**

**Fariha Agha**

**Emma Pratch**

**Freya Gray**

**Virginia Marr**

You can find out more about all those listed here, as well as our freelance trainers, at [charliewaller.org/about-us/our-people](http://charliewaller.org/about-us/our-people)

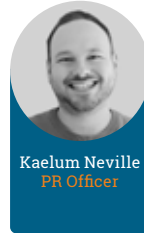
## Welcome to these new staff team members...



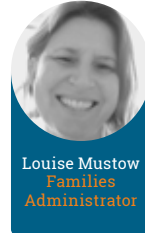
**Tara Hingston**  
**Fundraising**  
**Events**  
**Manager**



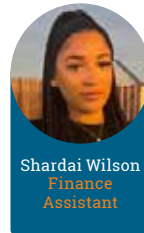
**Beth Towler**  
**Fundraising**  
**Development**  
**Officer**



**Kaelum Neville**  
**PR Officer**



**Louise Mustow**  
**Families**  
**Administrator**



**Shardai Wilson**  
**Finance**  
**Assistant**



**Sophie Henry**  
**Junior Graphic**  
**Designer**

We also welcome new CEO, Hannah Vickery: see page 10.

# LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN



**Spring is my favourite time of year. After the darkness of a long winter, green shoots and sunshine bring a sense of renewed hope and optimism.**

As a mental health charity, we are all about giving hope to young people and those who care for them. Hope that, if they find themselves struggling with their mental health – now or in the future – there is a way through. The good news is that this hope is based on sound evidence: we know getting appropriate treatment at the early stages of a mental health problem can lead to better outcomes for young people.

It can be hard to recognise when you or someone you care about needs help, and daunting to reach out and ask for it. That's why our training and resources enable young people and those around them to spot the signs that they might need support. Crucially, we give people the skills to have important conversations: we teach young people how to ask for help; we guide parents on recognising signs of a mental health problem; we train teachers how to talk about suicide.

We aim to be there for children and young people from primary school until they enter the world of work. Being there 'every step of the way' was the focus of our appeal for the Big Give Christmas Challenge. I'm delighted that not only did the appeal raise a fantastic amount, it also won the Big Give's UK Charity Award. This story was picked up by a number of media outlets, including BBC Berkshire who ran the story on their website and on the radio.

Talking of BBC Radio, I am hugely grateful to trustee and professional broadcaster, Mark Durden-Smith, who voiced our appeal on Radio 4. Broadcast in January, as well as raising vital funds, it told a whole new audience about our work. There is more information about the appeal on our website: [charliewaller.org/bbc-radio-4-appeal](http://charliewaller.org/bbc-radio-4-appeal). Mark and all our other trustees give their time freely and generously to provide the Trust with invaluable support and guidance.

I would also like to say a special thank you to Mia West and her voluntary fundraising committee for organising, and the Walduck family for hosting, the spectacular Charlie Waller Ball at the Royal National Hotel in London to mark the Trust's 25th anniversary (see page 28).

In this edition of the newsletter we introduce our new CEO, Dr Hannah Vickery. I hope you enjoy reading our interview with her and I'm sure you will join me in welcoming her most warmly at this exciting time for the Trust.

As Shakespeare said in one of his sonnets, 'April hath put a spirit of youth in everything': that spirit is one of energy, excitement and wonder. With your help, we hope to continue to help unlock and foster that spirit in our young by improving and nurturing their confidence, mental health and wellbeing.

**RICHARD WALLER KC, CHAIRMAN**

## NEWS & UPDATES

### WELCOMING HANNAH VICKERY, OUR NEW CEO

As you may have read in our Autumn edition, Clare Stafford, the Trust's CEO of ten years, stepped down at the end of February. Her successor is Associate Professor Hannah Vickery. Hannah comes to the Trust from the Charlie Waller Institute where she was Head of Section and Director of Training. Hannah brings a wealth of academic, clinical and directorial experience. Read our interview with her on page 10.



### RESILIENCE IN A RUCKSACK!

While mental health problems can affect us at any age, 75% of people who experience them say their problems first emerged before they were 25. Times of transition can make young people more vulnerable to mental health problems, for instance when moving from primary to secondary school.

The Resilience Rucksacks project aims to help address this by providing every young person in the UK with an opportunity to engage in understanding their own mental health, normalising conversations about it and removing stigma.

The project is being led by Professor Stella Chan, Chair in Evidence-based Psychological Treatments at Reading University, a post supported by the Trust. The aim is to give every child a rucksack containing items that will help them look after their mental health. Young people have given their ideas on what these could be. They include a comic about good sleep, a sporty stress ball and a little book of things you can do rather than stare at a screen. Testing has begun and feedback so far is very positive.



Ben (centre) with Eliza (left) and Kyanne

### STIGMA TO STRENGTH: NEW PODCAST EPISODES

In the last edition we reported the launch of our new podcast series, Stigma to Strength, hosted by two of our youth ambassadors, Eliza and Kyanne (see page 20). Since then, we've released new episodes: Life Transitions, Your Mental Health Toolkit, and Male Body Image with leading mental health campaigner Ben West.

We have lots of plans for new episodes, giving more of our ambassadors the opportunity to present on topics close to their hearts.



Scan me for more details on our podcasts!

### NEW CHARLIE WALLER VIDEO SERIES

This spring we're going to be launching a new series of short videos to highlight today's mental health issues. The videos will feature two animated characters whose problems and experiences we hope many people will relate to. They use their friendship to open conversations about anxiety, sleep, body image and other topics. We'll use the videos to showcase our resources, bringing them to new audiences in an engaging way. Keep an eye on our website and social media for updates or scan the QR code to sign up to our news bulletins.



### WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH

Charlie Waller Workplace provides training in mental health and wellbeing for staff and managers in workplaces across the UK. Our core training session, Managing for Good Mental Health, gives managers the confidence, skills and knowledge to manage mental health in their teams. It helps them spot when employees might need support and to have conversations about mental wellbeing.

Learning for Good Mental Health is our training session for employees. We train the staff of all kinds of organisations in all aspects of mental health. The session helps people recognise what is likely to cause them to feel stressed and how to take care of their mental wellbeing.

Hugely engaging course that was informative and interesting in its content.

*Leading for Good Mental Health participant, 2023*

I thought there were some excellent practical strategies shared.

*Managing for Good Mental Health participant, 2023*

To find out more about our workplace training and consultancy, please visit [charliewallerworkplace.org](http://charliewallerworkplace.org)







## BIG GIVE AWARD

We're delighted to report that the Trust has been named Best UK Charity by match funder Big Give. We were one of the many charities to take part in Big Give's week-long Christmas Challenge back in December, where all donations received were eligible to be doubled.

A focus of our successful fundraising appeal was an animated video, featuring the voice talents of real children and young people, showcasing the impact of the mental health training we deliver.

## PEER SUPPORT FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

Our mission to help parents and carers develop their expertise to support other parents and carers in their communities has been boosted by further funding from NHS England for the third year running.

Our unique training course has been co-produced with parents who have lived experience of supporting a child with mental health problems. It is delivered in partnership with Charlie Waller Institute and Northumbria University.

As well as training parents, carers, supervisors and service managers, we are continuing to build the evidence base to demonstrate why these services are an essential in every area of the UK.

**This training was so informative. It has challenged my thinking in so many ways and has stretched my abilities."**

*PCPS trainee*



Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, our appeal raised £61,933. Big Give, which called our appeal 'a wonderful case study', will donate £1,000 to the Trust as part of the prize.

We hope to take part again this year – we'll keep you posted!

## SEVERE MENTAL ILLNESS AND PHYSICAL HEALTH

People with severe mental illness are more likely to die prematurely because of physical illnesses such as respiratory disease, diabetes and cardiovascular disease. Charlie Waller trainer, Dr Sheila Hardy, has contributed to NHS guidance for service providers to improve the physical health care of adults living with severe mental illness, through improved physical health checks and follow-up interventions. The guidance has been published on the NHS England website, which features 10 key actions for improving the physical health of people living with severe mental illness.



## BECOMING A THERAPIST, INSPIRING A COMMUNITY



Introducing Komel Jalil, a newly qualified cognitive behavioural therapist, working within the South Asian community.

With the rise in mental health problems amongst young people, it's vital that more people train as therapists in evidence-based treatments.

Our sister organisation, the Charlie Waller Institute (CWI) based at the University of Reading, has trained hundreds of new therapists since it was launched in 2008, combining innovative psychological research with the highest quality teaching.

Komel embarked on the course on becoming the second recipient of the Caroline Gilbey Scholarship. Caroline was a tireless supporter of the Trust and after her death her friends and family raised money which funded two scholarships at CWI.

Komel says: "I am pleased to report that I have successfully completed my studies. My goals in psychology are to be of service to the South Asian population for their mental wellbeing, since, due to several barriers, they are less likely to access help.

"Undoubtedly, this course has been a life-changing opportunity for me to achieve these goals by providing me with a comprehensive understanding of the human mind and

behaviour, and equipped me with the skills necessary to treat several mental health conditions.

"The knowledge and expertise I have gained through this course have allowed me to have a positive impact on the lives of my clients, which has been evident through their continuous feedback. I have already begun my work within the South Asian community in treating and educating on mental health, which is also yielding positive results. I can't wait to see the changes that are to come!

**The knowledge and expertise I have gained through this course have allowed me to have a positive impact on the lives of my clients.**

"I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the scholarship committee and Charlie Waller Institute at Reading University for their support and encouragement. I am confident that the skills and knowledge gained through this course will serve me well in my future endeavours which will always aim to be for the betterment of society."

We wish Komel every success in her future career.

## A LASTING LEGACY

Komel was able to train as a therapist thanks to the wonderful generosity of our supporters. A gift in your will can be invaluable in helping us continue our work and make a huge impact on the lives of young people. If you would like to find out more, please contact [nick.appleby@charliewaller.org](mailto:nick.appleby@charliewaller.org)

# MEET OUR NEW CEO



Dr Hannah Vickery, the new chief executive of the Charlie Waller Trust, talks candidly to Robert Beaumont about her aims and objectives for the Trust and the challenges that lie ahead

It is now more than 25 years since the Charlie Waller Trust was formed and it is no exaggeration to say that the services it provides are needed now more than ever. The lingering effects of the global pandemic, the cost of living crisis, social inequality and the febrile global political climate with vicious wars in the DRC, Gaza, Sudan and Ukraine have all combined to have a profound impact on mental health in the UK.

Report after report from concerned mental health and children's agencies underline the urgency of the situation, with some suggesting the mental health crisis within the UK has reached epidemic proportions. To give one chilling example: about 4.2 million children are in relative poverty in the UK, while the number of young people experiencing destitution or extreme poverty – meaning their families cannot afford to clothe them, clean them or keep them warm – has tripled over the past three years. This often leads to isolation and exclusion, potentially exacerbated by the effects of social media. Inevitably that takes a massive toll not just on the mental health of those children, but on their parents and carers too.

So, it's a challenging time for Dr Hannah Vickery, the new chief executive of the Trust, to step into the hotseat. But Hannah, fiercely bright and consistently positive, sees challenges as opportunities and believes that now mental health is nearing the top of the political and cultural agenda, which it certainly wasn't when the Trust was launched in 1997, there are more potential opportunities to make a difference and to support successful mental health initiatives. As an Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology, with her area of specialism being child and adolescent mental health, Hannah brings her relevant clinical experience to inform her strategic approach.

Hannah, who was educated at Wellington School in Somerset, where she first became interested in mental health, then studied psychology at Swansea and completed her doctorate in clinical psychology at Southampton. For the past ten years, she has been working at the Charlie Waller Institute, University of Reading, and for much of this

time she has been steering the department through a significant period of growth as their Head of Section and Director of Training. This experience has led, amongst other things, to an intimate knowledge of CWT and a commitment to keeping Charlie's story at the heart of our purpose.

Although it is very early days, Hannah already has a clear vision for the Trust for the next five years. She explained: "Success, of course, looks different to different people but for me, success will include widening the demographic reach of the Trust to better address the significant mental health inequities across our systems. We will look to invest in more collaborations that best support those children, young people and families who often face additional barriers to accessing evidence-based mental health guidance and treatment. For example, our black and brown communities, families of different faiths, and parents/carers of gender- and relationship-diverse children and young people. The proactive inclusion of marginalised communities will enable us to listen, to work alongside, and ultimately to support provision in ways that can equitably, and therefore most meaningfully, impact on all.

"Another of my priorities is to understand how we best demonstrate that we are one of the 'most respected UK charities'. I know [former CEO] Clare and the team have been planning an impact evaluation piece and I'm excited to lead us in this undertaking. Measuring the consequences of our work in robust and systematic ways will facilitate more financial growth opportunities and will provide us with more data to inform our strategic decision-making about which opportunities we pursue. Both of these important outcomes will in turn lead to more impactful charitable activity."

She added: "Whilst I am incredibly excited for the future and working with such amazing staff, trustees and supporters, I am also a realist and I do not underestimate the work ahead. The charity sector is facing the challenges of increased cost of living, post-pandemic demand, diversifying revenue streams, and issues with staff recruitment and retention. I appreciate the seriousness of these factors and with the team's support I am confident we will navigate them and come through stronger than ever."

Hannah is very keen to pay tribute to Clare Stafford, who stepped down as chief executive after 10 very busy and successful years for the Trust.

"What an act to follow! The scale of growth that Clare has led over the past decade speaks volumes; the charity has expanded from a team of just three substantive staff and four trainers, to the 25+ staff we have now in the office and the 30+ trainers.

"Through Clare's compassionate, innovative and collaborative leadership, the charity now impacts on far more children and young people across the country than ever before. It is not just impressive growth that reflects Clare's achievements, it is also what she has delivered reputationally.

Success will include widening the demographic reach of the Trust to better address the significant mental health inequities across our systems.

"For me, a standout part of Clare's legacy is the national recognition of CWT as providing the gold standard of lived experience partnership working, in which the voices of children, young people and families are centred and amplified in all our work. Whether it is the fabulous work of our youth ambassadors, our recent whole school approach evaluation piece, or the UK's first course training people to become parent/carer peer support workers, so many aspects of our charitable activity are leading the field thanks to Clare's vision and guidance. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Clare for all she has done for CWT and to wish her the absolute best in her next ventures."

There's no doubt that the challenges that lie ahead of Hannah will be time-consuming, but she is a firm believer that a decent work-life balance is crucial and, for her, this means continuing to compete in the equestrian sport of international eventing and maintaining a strong connection and relationship with her husband and close circle of friends.

Hannah has led the Charlie Waller Institute with great success and there's every reason to believe she will be equally successful in her new role at the Trust.

*Robert Beaumont, who is Charlie's uncle, is a freelance journalist and public relations consultant.*



# YOUNG MUMS AND MENTAL HEALTH

Young mums aged 16-25 are at higher risk of mental health problems but a report finds they can face significant barriers in accessing support.

Launched last October, the 'Maternal Mental Health Experience of Young Mums' report was created by the Children and Young People's Mental Health Coalition and the Maternal Mental Health Alliance. They spoke to young mums across the UK to learn about their experiences and to hear their views on what needs to change to support their mental health more effectively.

## YOUNG MUMS AND MENTAL HEALTH: THE FACTS

In 2020, one in four births in England and Wales were to mums aged 16-24. Compared with those over 25, young mums are at increased risk of mental illness. They may develop mental health problems during pregnancy, or a pre-existing condition may get worse. Postnatal depression is up to twice as prevalent in teenage mothers compared to those over 20.

In 2022, 22% of young people aged 17 to 24 had a probable mental health problem, but much higher rates were identified in young women (31%) compared to young men (13%).

Suicide remains the leading cause of direct maternal death in the first postnatal year and between 2018 and 2020 there was an increase in teenage maternal suicides. While the numbers are small, any number is a concern.

Many young mums face additional difficulties which can contribute to poor mental health. These include experience of care, isolation and loneliness, housing difficulties and

poverty. Young women who become teenage mums are 22% more likely to be living in poverty at age 30 than their peers – again a particular risk factor for mental health.

## WHAT YOUNG MUMS SAY

Many young mums experience stigma, shame and judgement, which can contribute to poor mental health and prevent them seeking help. This affects their interactions with different professionals. They told the report's researchers that they felt judged as a parent and that their concerns about their health and their child's were not taken seriously. Fear of losing their child is a key reason for them not opening up to services.

Overwhelmingly, young mums said they want non-judgemental services that listen to them and take their health concerns seriously. They felt the most positive experiences of support were from dedicated local services catering to their needs as young mums.

At the report's launch, Raiye Frazer spoke about her experience as a teenage mum. Her own childhood had been traumatic: her parents lived in poverty; there was abuse; she struggled with thoughts of suicide from the age of 11 and became homeless at 17. It was one of her teachers who reached out to her and Raiye emphasised the importance of training teachers to be able to talk to pupils about mental health.

After giving birth, unstable housing meant basic needs such as heating weren't met, leading to her son falling ill. She said: "What would have helped would have been professionals following up with me – teachers, police, social workers etc. I felt ignored, referrals were never followed up...

"Professionals need to dig deep and find compassion. Every community of young mums needs you – you need to see us as human beings. That will help promote change. We do want more, we do aspire to more for our children. We do strive to be better."

Between 2018 and 2020 there was an increase in the number of teenage maternal suicides.

Currently, welfare systems are not set up to support young mums who don't have support from their family. Researcher Ruth Naughton-Poe says: "Historically, policy has been framed around seeing young mums as a problem that needs to be sorted. Efforts have been focussed on reducing the number of teenage pregnancies and less on the support needs of young mums."

## IMPROVING SUPPORT: FOUR KEY AREAS TO ADDRESS

The report identifies four key areas:

### Listen and respond to the needs of young mums in national and local systems.

Rather than trying to prevent teenage pregnancies, we need to support young mothers, ensuring their needs are considered within policy development. Locally, health commissioners should listen to and work with young mums to co-design holistic support pathways.

### Resource and invest in universal and preventative services.

Universal services, such as midwives, GPs and health visitors, play a vital role in identifying young mums struggling with their mental health, yet health visiting numbers decreased by 40% from 2015-2023. Action is needed to increase the numbers of vital public health teams. More Family Hubs are also needed, to provide support in a friendly and accessible setting.

### Ensure access to specialist mental health services.

Expansion of specialist mental health services, both perinatal and for children and young people, has been a priority for the NHS but many young women are still unable to

access the support they need. For example, in 2021, over 16,000 women in need of support from perinatal services were unable to access specialist care.

### Research and listen to the voices of young mums.

Little research has been done to understand the mental health of young mums and their experiences of accessing support. The report recommends that an in-depth review of teenage maternal suicides is carried out. This will help systems at both a national and local level to learn lessons and to identify where change can be made in service provision.



## YOUNG DADS TOO

There is very little research into the impact on young men of becoming a father but it's quite possible they experience similar issues to the mother of their child.

A recent BBC Newsbeat article reported that a charity in Gateshead, the North East Young Dads and Lads Project, found that young men often struggle with their mental health and feelings of loneliness after having a baby, with one in 10 experiencing anxiety and depression symptoms in the first six months.

## References

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<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/newsbeat-67150025>  
 NHS Digital, 2022  
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 Institute of Health Visiting, 2023  
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 Office for National Statistics, 2020  
 Public Health England, 2016



## PARTNERSHIPS WITH PURPOSE

Corporate partnerships play an important part in our work. Our current partnership with dunnhumby has been so successful they have extended it for a second year.

dunnhumby, a multi-national data services company working in the retail sector, has 900 employees in the UK. They voted for the Trust to become their charity partner after it was nominated by a member of their Helping Hands charity committee, whose close friend had been supported by the Trust.

Amy Clifford, a member of Helping Hands, lost her younger brother, Christopher, to suicide in 2019, shortly after university. She says: "The work of the Trust really resonated with me because they're helping young people and also the people around them, like university staff, so that they can better support people feeling the same way as my brother."

Since May 2022, dunnhumby has raised £23,405. They've organised their own events – including a tennis tournament and the Derry family 510km cycle challenge – and supported ours, including the Texas Scramble golf day, the Bath Half Marathon and the 45km Walk for Wellbeing. A team of volunteers also helped at our London Carol Service.

For Amy, the highlight has been the dunnhumby annual Christmas auction, which raised £11,492. She says: "It's probably the most stressful to plan but it's really enjoyable and rewarding.

"I'm really proud that even when money is tight, we're still able to raise a lot – that's because it's so clear what the money is put towards and how it helps people."

This year, as well as a full calendar of fundraising, they aim to promote the Trust's

services, for example by asking employees who are parents to talk to their children's schools.

Helen Franks, the Trust's Corporate Partnership Manager, meets every month with members of the Helping Hands team. "That has helped exponentially," Amy says. "It's a true partnership, which is why we've extended it for another year."



Last year, the Trust was honoured to be chosen as a beneficiary for the annual **BGC Charity Day** in memory of employees who lost their lives in the 9/11 attacks.

We were incredibly fortunate to have Clare Balding as our ambassador for the day. To say Clare went beyond the call of duty is an understatement! She worked the phones, closing trade deals and spreading the word about the importance of young people's mental health. The day's theme was 'farmyard fun' and Clare had no hesitation in posing for photos with some, er, unusual companions (see above).

Clare has supported the Trust on many occasions. She said: "It's a big deal for the Charlie Waller Trust to get selected for this...not only does it raise funds, but it also allows us a chance to talk about the work that the charity is doing to support young people."

## SUPPORT WITH EVERY SWING

For more than 25 years, Badgemore Park Golf Club, near Henley-on-Thames, has provided the setting for a memorable day of competition and fundraising.

Badgemore Park has been owned by the Connell family since 1997 and has supported the Trust for nearly as long. Jon Connell, the current managing director, explains: "We were keen to support the Trust from the start. My father, Sir Michael, was a great friend of Sir Mark Waller, both personally and professionally. Fundraising has always been important and holding a golf day is traditionally a good way to raise money." That's certainly true of this event, which on the first occasion raised £10,000 and, since then, has raised an astonishing total of just over £390,000!

The event follows the same format each time – the Texas Scramble is played in teams, with each player teeing off. The best of these shots is chosen as the next shot, from which each player hits *their* next shot, and so this process continues. It's described as being about 'camaraderie and fun' but there has certainly been some friendly rivalry along the way! Jon used to put in a team himself but now takes more of an oversight role. However, that hasn't stopped him doing his best to ensure his brother Sean's team has had to work a little harder. He says: "We make sure his team has to walk to the furthest point and start with one of the trickier holes!"

Each year, more than 18 teams – around 80 to 100 players – take part. From mostly being friends and members of the Waller family, the event now attracts corporate supporters, including more recently Field Seymour Parkes and dunnhumby. "It's lovely to see the number of different people who come from far

and wide," says Jon, "and then come back year after year."

As well as the competition, the day also includes a lunch and auction, where much of the money is raised, thanks both to the generosity of the players and the skills of the auctioneer. "Mark Durden-Smith has regularly entertained everyone, making the auction quite hilarious," says Jon. "We wouldn't raise as much without his persuasive powers!"

It's such a key part of the Trust's fundraising calendar that, as a mark of their gratitude, Sir Mark and Lady Rachel Waller, pictured above, gifted a memorial bench to the club on the 10th anniversary. To mark 20 years, the Connell and Waller families privately commissioned a sculpture by local artists Laura Jayne and Sebastian Wylder. Entitled 'It's good to talk', the piece features three figures in conversation and stands in full view of visitors, opposite the pro shop, surrounded by a gravel garden.

Miraculously, the weather has always been kind. "We have been blessed with fabulous weather," Jon says. "The golf day has brought sunshine to the golf course, whether it's taken place in May or September! We love hosting the event and we'd love to do so for another 25 years."



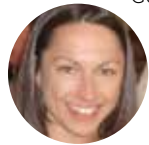
Golfers from PACE XL, one of our corporate partners



# CREATING A CARING COMMUNITY

## OUR WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH TO MENTAL HEALTH

For children to flourish, they need an environment that nurtures their mental wellbeing. Our whole school approach shows teachers, parents and pupils how to create one.



Gemma Howard is a Charlie Waller mental health trainer in south west England. She is working with primary schools in and around Bradford-on-Avon, using our whole school approach.

As the name suggests, this means engaging everyone in mental health training sessions: teachers and other staff, parents and carers and, of course, pupils.

Fitzmaurice Primary School has about 295 pupils in seven year groups, with around 13 teachers and 15 teaching assistants. As with many, the school suffered from a lack of training during the Covid pandemic. However, the staff were passionate about enhancing the mental health and wellbeing of everyone in their school, starting with a review of current policies and practice.

Gemma used our mental health assessment tool – S-MET – with the senior leadership team to build a picture of the school's needs. She then worked with the team to develop surveys for staff, and for parents and carers, to ascertain their views on taking a whole school approach to mental health. From the results, they identified key areas and put together an action plan, starting with the development of a mental health policy.

They later developed activities to give pupils a voice and used individual surveys

with children in years five and six; the school assessed these with Gemma. The data collected helped show the need for an adapted version of the PSHE (personal, social, health and economic) curriculum for students with SEND (special educational needs and disability). The school was then able to work towards this.

### TRAINING FOR EVERYONE

The whole school approach means staff, pupils and parents are involved at all stages of creating and implementing the plan. All the teachers and teaching assistants attended mental health training sessions: it was very important to ensure all teaching and support staff were given equal opportunities to learn and develop a universal approach to understanding mental health, brain development, stress and supportive strategies.

Trauma-informed practice asks, 'What does this person need?' rather than 'What is wrong with this person?'

All the staff were given an overview of mental health, low mood and depression, anxiety, stress and the brain, and tools to support wellbeing. These include developing emotionally responsive relationships, listening skills and emotion coaching. Parents and carers were all invited to webinars on supporting children's mental health too.



We are hugely grateful to Dr Sarah Temple for making online versions of her books available free of charge through the Trust. 'All emotions are okay' aims to help parents and caregivers explore and talk about emotions and feelings. For more about this and Sarah's other books, please visit [charliewaller.org/blog/caring-community](http://charliewaller.org/blog/caring-community)

### TRAUMA INFORMED APPROACH

All Gemma's training is trauma informed. This means being sensitive to the trauma that children may have experienced, and actively seeking to prevent re-traumatisation. Trauma-informed practice acknowledges the need to see beyond an individual's presenting behaviours and ask, 'What does this person need?' rather than 'What's wrong with this person?'

As part of an INSET morning for all staff, Gemma led a session on understanding the impact of trauma on children's development and wellbeing. She said: "I really wanted to help staff understand the impact trauma can have on a child's nervous system and their ability to relate to others, and learn.

"When a child is stuck in a nervous system response, their behaviour is not the result of choice; we can help by coming alongside a child, supporting them to regulate their emotions and feel safe before they are able to engage with us and be ready to learn.

"All behaviour is a form of communication, and it's vital we look beyond behaviour and focus on building responsive relationships – it's all about 'connection before correction' as Professor of Psychiatry Dan Siegel suggests.

"Mindful Emotion Coaching can really enhance our ability to support children's emotional development. I'm going to use this model in some 'how to' training to complement what we've done with staff so far. This will enable them to practise the skills they've learned, communicating in a way that is validating for the children through emotionally responsive relationship.

"Harvard university has suggested this buffers against the effects of ongoing or toxic stress. Using this model, teachers can support children to build emotional literacy, trust, and connection."

### WELLBEING AMBASSADORS

Gemma is now developing a programme for teams of students in local schools to train as wellbeing ambassadors, starting with Fitzmaurice. The programme has many benefits: as well as engaging pupils and ensuring their voices are heard, it enables them to reflect on the values of kindness, compassion and acceptance, and to develop ways to embed them throughout their school.

The pupils will learn what the teachers learned, in a way that's appropriate to their ages.

Gemma explained: "The pupils will learn what the teachers learned, in a way that's appropriate to their ages. This will include an understanding of mental health, stress, and wellbeing strategies, how to seek help, and how to support each other. The next step will be for them to ask: 'How can we use what we've learned to be wellbeing ambassadors in our school?'. This might include buddy systems and other ideas they come up with themselves."

### SUPPORT FOR ALL AGES

As well as sessions for prospective wellbeing ambassadors, Gemma is running assemblies for the whole school, using highlights of the ambassador training. These are run for all year groups, including the four-year-olds in the foundation classes, using language, puppets, and pictures they can relate to and engage with.

### PARENTS' VITAL ROLE

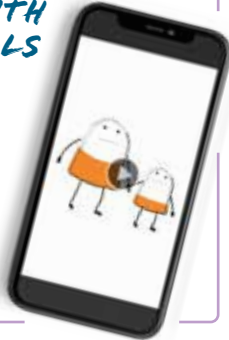
Parents and carers are a crucial part of school life and Gemma runs webinars for them on supporting children's wellbeing. As well as general mental health awareness, these can cover specific topics, such as anxiety, emotional wellbeing, the teen brain and responsive communication skills. To make these more economical, Gemma runs them for parents and carers from several local schools at the same time.

Gemma's aim is to empower the school to continue the work she has done with them into the future, embedding a culture of mental wellbeing that will benefit the whole community for years to come.

Assistant Head, Laura Wilson, said: "Working with the Charlie Waller Trust has benefitted all our pupils, staff and parents. As Mental Health Lead for the school, I cannot stress enough how useful it has been to have an expert to work alongside me to guide and plan our provision. I really feel Gemma knows our school, our ethos and what we want our future to look like."

### WORKING WITH MORE SCHOOLS

The money we raised through our Big Give appeal (see page 8), will enable us to expand our work with schools.



## MOUNT TOUBKAL MOROCCAN CHALLENGE

7-12 SEPTEMBER 2024

Limited spaces available

Join our second overseas adventure to summit North Africa's highest mountain.

We'll be aiming to reach the summit on 10 September – World Suicide Prevention Day.

Fully supported trek with mountain guides and cooks.

Supporting young people's mental health.



For more information and to book your place please visit: [charliewallertrust.org/moroccan-challenge-2024](http://charliewallertrust.org/moroccan-challenge-2024)

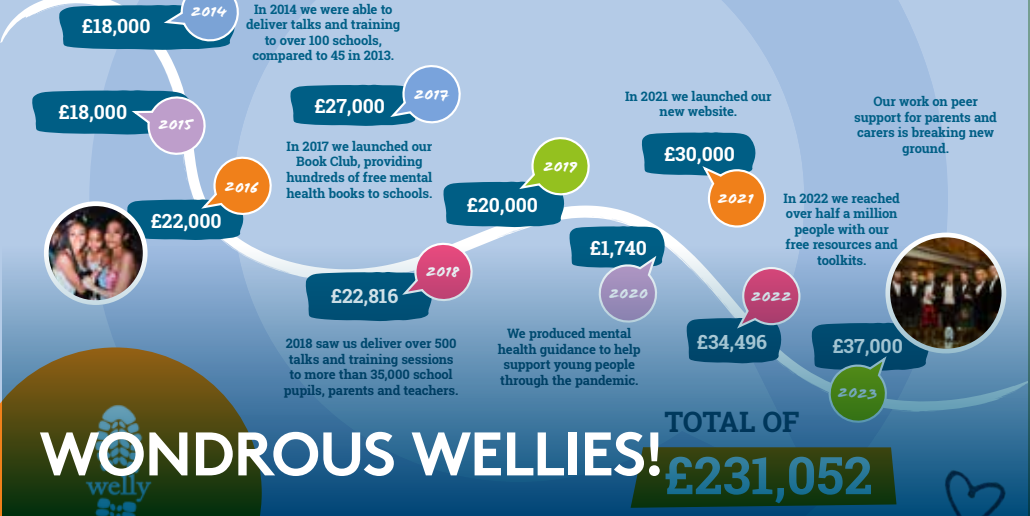


"We were keen to support the excellent work of the Charlie Waller Trust... The charity supported us in our time of need and we were keen to give back."

Jack and Catherine Lovell, Sahara Challenge 2023



Last year's Sahara challenge group



Ever been to a smart party and wished you'd worn more comfortable footwear? That's never an issue at the Welly Ball!

For an incredible 10 years, students at St Andrews University have been donating to Charlie Waller the funds they raise at this unique event. The Welly Ball has raised an astonishing £231,052 for the Trust over 10 years, including £37,000 in 2023. We asked Marisa Singh, the Welly Ball's Head of Charity and Community, why they wanted to support the Trust:

"When Welly Ball chose the Charlie Waller Trust as our main charity ten years ago, it was because the committee then wanted to support a cause that directly affects students. CWT's goal of raising awareness and support for young adults with mental health problems, and of reducing stigma, is something I think all students can relate to and benefit from."

"We value our relationship with the Trust and greatly appreciate all the support CWT has given us, especially the talks and training."

"On a personal level, I really appreciated that the ball's directors created my current role because they wanted to make sure the event was inclusive of everyone in our community."

Starting out as an after party for the university's clay pigeon shooting competition, Welly Ball has become the largest black-tie dinner in Scotland. An incredible 900 dinner guests attended last year, with an additional 1,100 at the after party. That's quite an evening to pull together, as Marisa explained:

"I think the biggest challenges in organising such a big event are communication, striking

a balance between Welly Ball work and studying for our degrees, the sheer scale of the ball, and finding ways to keep it relevant. The Trust's resources definitely come in handy to remind us to prioritise our mental health when ball planning gets a bit too stressful!

The Trust's resources remind us to prioritise our mental health when ball planning gets a bit too stressful!

"The day before the ball, when we do our set-up, there are always moments of panic when we realise we have a couple of hours to complete 900 place settings, and at the ball when we have to serve 900 people dinner in an hour."

But alongside all the challenges, there are real high points, as Marisa told us: "Every year, as a thank you for planning the ball, we're able to reserve some tickets for our friends. This year was extra special since my mum and sister were able to attend and it was a special kind of joy to see how proud they were of me and the rest of the committee for organising the whole event."

"Another highlight for me specifically was a charity talk we did last year with Debbie Spens. Debbie was kind enough to come to St Andrews and do a Q&A session with us. We learned so much about Charlie's story and about the Trust, and I think this really affirmed our commitment to supporting it."



# CHARLIE WALLER YOUTH AMBASSADORS

## PUTTING YOUNG PEOPLE AT THE HEART OF OUR WORK

We launched our new Youth Involvement Team last year, recruiting nine youth ambassadors aged 16 - 25 to make young people's voices central to our work.

Our ambassadors are led and supported by Youth Involvement Lead Alice Palmer and Student Involvement Coordinator Michael Priestley. Eliza Antelme joined the team when it launched in January 2023. She has packed a huge amount into her year as youth ambassador, from presenting our podcast to contributing to our sustainability strategy. We caught up with her before she takes her finals at university.

### How did you hear about the Trust and our youth ambassadors?

I have known about the Charlie Waller Trust for a long time because my parents knew Charlie, so it's always been a charity close to my family's heart. I found out more about the amazing work the Trust does after doing one of their quizzes during lockdown. After this, I followed the Trust's Instagram and kept up to date with their work. I spotted the job



Eliza

opening and thought it was such a brilliant opportunity that I didn't want to miss so I applied straight away!

My parents knew Charlie, so the Trust has always been a charity close to my family's heart.

### What made you want to become an ambassador for the Trust?

I have always been keen to advocate for support for young people's mental health. From personal experience and with friends and family I've seen how challenging struggling with your mental health is and how this is exacerbated further by the stigma that surrounds it. Therefore, I thought it was truly fantastic (and says so much about the Trust) that they want to hear from young people to inform decisions and projects. I believe this is so important for understanding what young people find helpful and unhelpful with mental health support from teachers, schools and carers.

### How has it been working with the other ambassadors?

We started with a great onboarding day when we all met in London. We spent a day getting to know each other and why we

wanted to be ambassadors. It was so great as it's meant we are a very close group even though a lot of our work is remote. The other ambassadors have been so wonderful to work with, each person has so much to offer and has been truly inspiring to me.

### What are some of the things you did during your time with us?

It's been a busy year and has really flown by! The main thing I've done is host series two of the Trust's podcast: Stigma to Strength. This was a huge project for [fellow ambassador] Kyanne and me. We were given an amazing amount of influence on the project. We worked with Alice and the comms team to create the title and artwork, and to plan the content. It was so exciting to be a part of the podcast and even better to hear feedback that it has really helped individuals who have listened.

I was also part of the Sustainability Steering Group. This was such an interesting opportunity; I learnt so much about big and small changes that can make an organisation more sustainable. I produced some social media posts to raise awareness of increasing eco anxiety amongst young people and how parents and carers can support them.

I have loved how valued we feel to share our opinions and ideas.

I enjoyed reading and reviewing materials for the Trust such as the 'starting university' guide and guides for parents and carers on anxiety and depression.

It has been utterly incredible the range of opportunities we are given. I've loved how valued we feel to share our opinions and ideas, and to step out of our comfort zone whilst being hugely supported by Alice and Michael.

### What have been the high points?

A highlight was recording the podcast episode with Ben West, a leading mental health campaigner. We thought it was a long shot when I asked Ben to join our podcast. But to our delight he said yes! He is so insightful and wise; it was an honour to interview him, and I know the episode will help many young people who are struggling with their body image.



Back row (l-r): Andrew, Emma, Fariha, Freya, Patrick, Ginya, Usman. Front row: Michael, Stella, Tilly, Sophie, Amy

Another highlight has been our group ambassador meetings every six weeks. We always have such important conversations about pressing issues affecting young people's mental health. It provides a time to self-reflect and catch up with the rest of the group – which is always so much fun!

### Any challenges?

Sometimes it was hard to remember I needed to do university work as well – recording a podcast is much more fun than essays!

### What would you say to anyone thinking of applying to be a Charlie Waller youth ambassador?

Go for it! It can be really daunting applying for jobs, but the team are lovely and will support you through the process. I didn't really know what to expect from my year as an ambassador and never would I have thought that the group of youth ambassadors would achieve so much.

It has been so much fun and I have developed so many new skills which I will use for the rest of my career. I have met amazing people from the CWT team who are great role models. It is very rare to find a position which gives you such a wide range of opportunities at such a young age while making a noticeable difference to changing the stigma around mental health.

### What are your next steps in life?

I am in my third year at Durham University, so I am currently focusing on my dissertation and finals and importantly making sure I still have time to have fun! Once I've graduated, I am really excited to start working for Unilever in September on their Future Leaders Programme.

# HOW FULL IS YOUR STRESS BUCKET?

## RECOGNISING AND MANAGING UNHEALTHY STRESS

April is Stress Awareness Month so we take a look at what we can all do to manage stress and keep well.

Stress has been described as a modern-day epidemic, with one in five people in the UK feeling stressed more days in a month than they don't.

### CAN STRESS EVER BE GOOD?

Stress is not necessarily a 'bad' thing. Without the ability to feel stress, the human race wouldn't have survived. The brains and bodies of our cave-dwelling ancestors reacted when faced with threats such as a

### TRY THE STOPP TECHNIQUE:

**S**top – as soon as you notice you're feeling stressed or overwhelmed, stop what you're doing.

**T**ake a breath – focus on your breathing: take a deep breath, hold and release.

**O**bserve – ask gently and without judgement: what am I thinking? What am I reacting to? What am I feeling?

**P**ull back – see the bigger picture and put the situation in some perspective. Is this fact or opinion?

**P**ractise what works – find what works for you and focus on practising this.

sabre-toothed tiger: the sympathetic nervous system was triggered, blood pressure and heart rate increased, muscles tensed, as they prepared for 'fight or flight'. That energy rush helps us focus our attention so we can respond quickly.

10,000 years later, we experience stress very differently, and our stressors are far more complex. From childhood onwards, we can face pressure from being labelled either a 'failure' or a 'success'; we strive to do well, get a good job, look a particular way, fall in love. When reality doesn't meet expectations, we may feel something is wrong – with others, the world or ourselves.

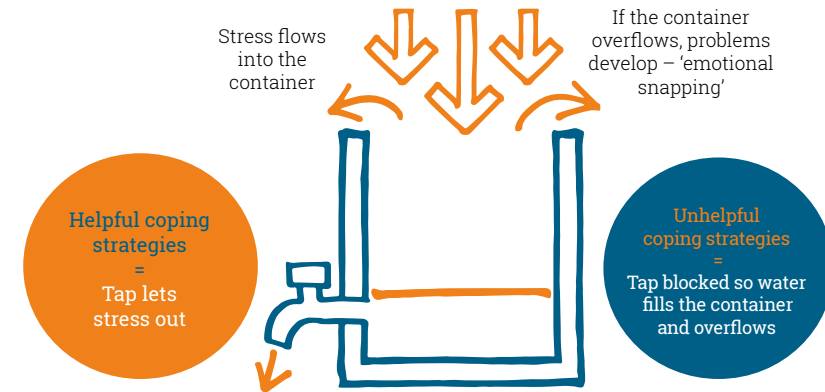
### FIGHT, FLIGHT, FREEZE, FLOP!

We are hard-wired to focus on perceived threats. We're also more likely to think negatively when stressed. Those negative thought patterns – 'It's all too much' or 'I can't cope' – can lead to behaviour changes that cause problems. These include:

- **Fight:** becoming more irritable and prone to emotional outbursts.
- **Flight:** avoiding difficult situations, worrying, difficulty relaxing.
- **Freeze:** difficulty making decisions, compulsive checking of social media.
- **Flop:** withdrawal, inactivity and low mood.

These responses evolved as a way of surviving danger but problems arise when they take over our life. We can get locked into one or more of them as a coping mechanism, in ways that aren't appropriate to the current situation.

## THE STRESS BUCKET – MENTAL HEALTH UK



### EFFECTS ON BODY AND MIND

We need a certain amount of stress to perform well. It takes us from an under-stimulated state to a level of alertness necessary to achieve our goals. Stress allows us to face the day's challenges feeling sharp and focused.

However, when stress gets too much for us, we can feel panicked and fatigued. It can affect our immune system, sleep pattern, short and long-term memory, capacity to learn and relationships. Ongoing stress can cause serious physical problems such as heart disease, migraine and ulcers. It's not a mental health condition in itself, but if it's intense and persistent, it can lead to mental health problems such as anxiety and depression.

### RESILIENCE – AN ANTIDOTE

Resilience can be an antidote to stress. Resilience is our ability to manage or tolerate 'ordinary' distress, including disappointment and failure; to normalise difficult feelings and see beyond them; and our ability to have confidence in our own resources to help us cope.

The past can affect how we feel and behave. Our successes, setbacks, losses, and the support or criticism we've received all influence how we respond to stressful situations and behave in the face of adversity. This is particularly true if we've had challenging or traumatic times growing up.

We all differ in our capacity to manage stress. Imagine your stress level as a 'bucket'. Some

of us have a large bucket, which can hold a lot before overflowing. Others have a much smaller bucket, which will be full to the brim sooner. Now imagine a tap on the side of the bucket that lets stress out so it doesn't overflow. The tap represents strategies to help reduce your stress levels, for example the STOPP technique (see opposite page).

### PROMOTING WELLBEING

Here are some steps for managing stress and promoting our wellbeing:

- **Eat well:** the brain and body need the right kind of fuel for mental wellbeing and the immune system. Eat a 'rainbow' of foods and drink plenty of water (ideally six to eight glasses a day) – even slight dehydration leads to increased anxiety.
- **Exercise regularly:** exercise is crucial for wellbeing and a well-functioning immune system. The best form of exercise should be something you enjoy!
- **Sleep well:** A regular sleep schedule makes a big difference, as does having sufficient exposure to daylight and avoiding caffeine later in the day. Set up a 'wind down' routine, such as a warm bath before bed and/or reading in bed, and try to avoid devices for at least 60 minutes before bedtime.



## YOUNG PEOPLE AND STRESS

We can experience stress at any life stage. Children and young people may experience stress at school, for example when taking tests; stress at home, due to parental separation, poverty or family expectations; or from the news.

In a 2018 survey, 60 percent of young people aged 18-24 said they had felt so stressed by pressure to succeed that they felt overwhelmed or unable to cope. 49 percent had experienced significant stress in relation to body image and worries about their appearance, and 39 percent had had suicidal feelings due to stress.

The survey shows just how vulnerable young people are to mental health problems. Given that three quarters of mental health problems are established by the age of 24, it

is vital that young people receive the best mental health education to promote their wellbeing and resilience.

Look out for our campaign during April. We'll be creating free new materials for stress awareness month. Visit [charliewaller.org](http://charliewaller.org) to find out more.

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# HANDEL'S MESSIAH

in aid of the Charlie Waller Trust

Cadogan Hall, London

17 April 2024



Buy your tickets here!

Join us for Handel's iconic Messiah in the elegant surroundings of Cadogan Hall in Chelsea.

Vox Cordis choir will perform this beautifully uplifting work under the baton of Charlie Grace and with four wonderful soloists: soprano, Hilary Cronin, countertenor, Tim Mead, tenor, Nick Pritchard; and baritone, William Townend.



Tim Mead



Hilary Cronin



William Townend



Nick Pritchard

# FUNDRAISING HIGHLIGHTS

THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS



I am constantly astonished by the generosity and support we receive from so many donors, volunteers, partners and friends of the Trust. We are extremely fortunate to have such a loyal and dedicated community of supporters.

Your support helped 2023 to be a record-breaking year. Together, we raised over £2.6 million, which enables the life-changing work so many young people and their support networks rely upon.

There were so many highlights from last year, many of them featured over the next few pages. One particular achievement was the 25th Anniversary Ball; expertly arranged by our fantastic fundraising committee, it raised a colossal £400,000! A huge thank you to everyone who supported the event, helping us celebrate the 25th year of the charity in style.

2024 is sure to be another year full of wonderful fundraising activity. We kicked off the year with an appeal on BBC Radio 4, voiced by our trustee Mark Durden-Smith; we've seen scores of runners take to the streets of Cambridge and Bath in support of the Trust; and we've launched a new two-year corporate partnership with ING Bank. There is still time to grab your ticket for a wonderful evening of Handel's Messiah at Cadogan Hall (see page 24) or sign up to one of our fabulous walking challenges later in the year (see pages 18 and 31).

A huge thank you for your ongoing support.

**NICK APPLEBY**  
HEAD OF FUNDRAISING

## PUTTING THEIR BEST FEET FORWARD



### Walk for Wellbeing – Royal London Parks Challenge

29 dedicated trekkers walked 45km across London, taking in all 10 Royal Parks, to mark World Mental Health Day in October. The walk started as the sun rose in Bushy Park

and took in landmarks including Trafalgar Square, as well as quieter spots such as Brompton Cemetery, finishing at the gates of Greenwich Park.

Several staff members took part, including former CEO Clare Stafford, who said: "I had some really interesting conversations along the way about why people take up such challenges and the impact of the

Trust's work. So, despite the blisters and exhaustion, I felt incredibly positive and energised!"

Around 80 supporters took part in our Virtual Walk for Wellbeing the same weekend; together, the events raised £20,438.



### Bath Half Marathon

15 people ran the Bath Half Marathon for us with wonderful support in the crowds, raising a total of £24,017. Runners included four people from corporate partner



dunnhumby (more about their support on page 14) and a group running in memory of Xanthe Mortleman – among them her mother Sally, her sisters Tamsin and Mischa (who will also be running the London Marathon this year) and several of their friends. Xanthe took her own life aged 18 after a long battle with her mental health.

Sally said: "In her 18 years of life, Xanny fitted in a lifetime of laughs and happy memories, which we will all cherish forever. We have chosen to support the Charlie Waller Trust because we want to not only help, but also prevent other families from experiencing what we are going through." The family are continuing to support the Trust through the Sevenoaks Hockey Club, of which Xanthe was a member, and 7Oaks Triclub.

### Bournemouth Half Marathon

A group of friends – Alex, Holly, Jess, Sophie, Will, Harry and Keelan – ran the Bournemouth Half Marathon in memory of Xanthe (see the Bath Half Marathon above) and raised £1,600. Alex said: "We decided to fundraise for the Charlie Waller Trust in support of anyone and everyone who suffers from mental health illness and for the family and friends of those affected. Increasing the awareness and understanding of mental health in young people is so important."



### Amsterdam Half Marathon

Two Jamies ran the Amsterdam Half Marathon in memory of Harry Nettlefold, a "wonderful family friend" of Jamie Mackwood's, and raised £1,520.

### Great North Run

Paul Rushton and family took part in the Great North Run and Mini Run, in memory of Paul's father and brother. They smashed their fundraising target, raising £5,605.

## GOING TO EXTREMES

### 'The Journey'

Not content with cycling 4,000km and raising a phenomenal £55,000 for the Trust in 2021, Connor Kelly has completed another epic challenge, which he called The Journey. Connor ran 15 marathons from November 2022 to November 2023, reflecting the number of suicides per day in England and Wales.

These were not just 'any' marathons, but some seriously challenging ones worldwide, including the Marathon De Sables in Morocco and Polar Circle Marathon in Greenland. He has raised £18,055.

Connor has struggled with his own mental health and said: "The Trust helped me in my darkest and lowest time, it was a bedrock. I'm raising funds so they can continue for the next 25 years."

Connor was joined in his final marathon in London by youth ambassador Patrick Regan (see feature, page 20).



### Barcelona Ironman

Archie Browner, along with friends Fergus and Alex, took on Ironman 70.3 Barcelona: a 2km swim, a 90km bike ride, followed by a 21.1km run. After "months of training, blood, sweat and tears," they completed the challenge and raised £7,626. Archie said: "We believe that by supporting the Charlie Waller Trust, we are contributing to a brighter and more compassionate future, where mental health is prioritised, and no one feels alone in their struggle with mental health."

Photo: World's Toughest Row



### World's Toughest Row – Atlantic

Lizz Watson, Kit Windsor, Laura Langton and Beth Motley made up team Ace of Blades, who joined over 35 other teams to row 3,000 miles, unassisted, across the Atlantic Ocean aboard a 25-foot boat. The team raised money for four charities, including the Charlie Waller Trust.

Setting off from La Gomera in the Canary Islands in December and rowing continually in a rotation of two-hour shifts, the team covered a staggering 3,000 miles. They faced and overcame many challenges during their voyage, including sea sickness, strong winds and being hit in the face by flying fish!



### [Not the] Mongol Rally

Four friends from Durham University, Max, Nathan, Robbie and Nick, signed up to the Mongol Rally 2023. Due to the war in Ukraine it was cancelled so, undaunted, the team chose an alternative route, heading to Kazakhstan.

Max described it as a "fantastic experience" despite one of their cars breaking down in Romania and all then squeezing into one car for 150 miles of sandy track and potholes through Uzbekistan with failed suspension!



They documented the adventure on their Instagram page: @genghis.car

They chose to support the Trust not just because Charlie was also a Durham student but because "the Trust's approach to mental health is pre-emptive and aims to prevent problems arising in the first place". They raised £2,360, including donations from people they met along the route who saw the Trust's logo on the car.

## TWO WHEEL TRIUMPHS

### 12-hour spinathon

Rob Kitchen, his daughter Hannah and friends Christian and Karen chose to raise money for three charities close to their hearts, including the Charlie Waller Trust; Rob had attended a workshop run by our trainer Jenny Langley. They raised £650 for the Trust. Well done all!



## DANCING THE NIGHT AWAY

### Heatwave and the Blizzard

Through Mojo Events, Tilly Meynell organised two events for teenagers, the Heatwave at an Oxford nightclub and the Blizzard in London. Another event is planned for this spring. Guests enjoyed entertainment, DJs, a chill-zone, photo-booth, 'mocktails' and doughnuts. A donation of £2,000 was made to the Trust.



### 25th Anniversary Ball

On 3 November, more than 400 people enjoyed a wonderful evening of dinner, dancing, fundraising and, most importantly, celebrating the impact of the Trust's work over the last 25 years.

Chairman Rick Waller said: "It was very fitting that we celebrated our anniversary at London's Royal National Hotel, as it was where our fundraising events started all those years ago. It is a testament to the hugely loyal support we have received over the years that so many guests at the ball also attended those very first events."

Connor Kelly (see 'The Journey', above) delivered an incredibly moving speech, reminding everyone of the importance of the Trust's work. The ball raised a staggering £401,120.

## TAKING A FESTIVE APPROACH

### London Carol Service

In December, St Luke's Church in Chelsea resounded once again to Christmas carols under the baton of Charlie Grace.



London Carols Committee members, Kate Shenkman and Sophie Watt, said: "It was the best carol service we have been to. The atmosphere was buzzing and everyone sang their hearts out to the traditional carols and listened in awe to the outstanding performances by the Vox Cordis Choir, accompanied by the wonderful Clara on her trumpet.

"We were spoilt by our readers, Sol Campbell, Susannah Constantine, Sebastian de Souza, Bishop Michael Doe, Minnie Driver and Tamsin Greig who delighted the congregation with their skills, humour and professional delivery. A particular highlight for us was Minnie Driver singing Joni Mitchell's 'River'.

Sue Shenkman spoke on behalf of the Charlie Waller Trust and every one of the congregation was gripped by her brave and poignant message. As is traditional, the Revd Prebendary Dr Brian Leathard closed the evening with prayers and a blessing as the congregation raised the roof with the jubilant singing of the final carol of the evening, O Come all ye Faithful." The service raised a marvellous £61,659.

### Bradfield Carol Service

Our Bradfield carol service was equally brilliant and raised £18,574. Dedicated Trust supporter Clare Pannell said: "It was wonderful to be back at the Bradfield Carols, and this year certainly didn't disappoint. The chapel looked magnificent, decorated with its many candles and stunning Christmas tree.

"The combined choirs of Bradfield College and Elstree School sang beautifully and created a wonderful, festive atmosphere. The readers, who included Louise Minchin, Mark Pougatch, Max Foster and Hugo Salter, all spoke splendidly and with great compassion. As ever it was a special evening."

Thank you to trainer Julie Castleman who spoke on behalf of the Trust, and to all our volunteers, sponsors, advertisers, readers, choirs and other helpers who helped make both services so glorious! We could not have done it without you all.

### Christmas lights

For over 20 years, Tony and Jancis Shepherd have covered their house in Marlow Bottom, Bucks with around 25,000 festive lights, synchronised to music, raising thousands of pounds for charity. They have supported the Charlie Waller Trust for several of these years and, in 2023, raised £7,261.



### Ceramic advent auction

Ceramicist Emma Payne auctioned one of her beautiful pieces for each day of advent and raised £896.

### Onyx Christmas dinner

Onyx RT is a cycling team based in London. They chose to support the Trust at their annual Christmas dinner, raising £2,200.

## MORE GENTLE PURSUITS

### Dinner party

A ball held in memory of Boo in 2022 was a tremendous success but some of her friends were unable to attend it. Instead, they held a dinner party last summer – all wearing pink in Boo's honour – which raised £520.

### In2Drama

Held at Cranleigh Arts Centre, In2Drama held its annual Summer Academy for aspiring young performers and made a donation of £278 to the Trust.

### Bridge Day and beyond

A very special Bridge Day in November, led by renowned bridge expert and Trust supporter Andrew Robson, raised £6,475. Vicky Bateman who attended said:

"There can be nothing more cheering on a dreary Autumn day than to drive through the beautiful Englefield estate, watched only by stags, as one makes one's way towards the magnificent Elizabethan Englefield House. An uplifting start to an inspiring day of bridge!

"Concentration, brain work and laughter was the order of the day for well over 100 card players. Andrew Robson, guru of bridge learning, guided us through many pre-determined card hands with his typical logic, clarity and wit.

"There were plenty of refreshments to oil the cogs of the brain and the committee produced a lovely lunch. Many thanks to everyone who helped to organise this friendly and instructive occasion and to Lord Benyon for allowing us to use his lovely house."

Having heard about the Trust through Andrew Robson, the Winchester Bridge Club held their own fundraiser, which raised £552. Andrew meanwhile held a quiz in December which raised £1,035.

## AND ALSO...

- Thank you to **Karen Clark** who raised £250 through a memorial service for her brother-in-law. We're very pleased to hear that guests at the service took copies of our literature to share at their workplaces.
- A charity golf day organised by **Lesley Horne** at Cuckfield Golf Club raised £275. Just as importantly, the day raised awareness of mental health and of our work. Our thanks to everyone who contributed.
- Enormous thanks to **Sarah Brearley**, who is on the Trust's Fundraising Committee. Sarah is also a member of Putney Parish Action Group who have generously donated £3,000.
- Longstanding Trust supporter **Ted Wainman** put on a gig at the Half Moon in Putney. With great music from Waystar, £600 was raised.

## SUPPORTING US



Become a **Friend of Charlie Waller** and help us support more young people to look after their mental health.

Right now, thousands of young people and their families are struggling with their mental health. By becoming a **Friend of Charlie Waller** and giving a regular donation, you can help us to provide critical support to young people right across the UK.

As a **Friend of Charlie Waller**, you will be helping us plan our future work with confidence. Together, we can give young people and those who support them the tools to look after their mental health – and the confidence to seek help when they need it.

If you would like to become a **Friend of Charlie Waller** and make a regular donation, please: visit [charliewaller.org/get-involved/friends-of-charlie-waller](http://charliewaller.org/get-involved/friends-of-charlie-waller) email [fundraising@charliewaller.org](mailto:fundraising@charliewaller.org) or call **01635 869754**.

"As a school we are immensely fortunate to have been given the opportunity to work alongside The Charlie Waller Trust to improve the work we do in school around mental health... It's just been second to none. It is something...that has an impact now and will also have an impact in 10 years' time."

Mark Solomon, Headteacher,  
Colerne Primary School

## PLEASE FOLLOW US



## OTHER WAYS TO DONATE



**By telephone**  
Call us on  
**01635 869754**

**By text**  
To donate £10  
**Text 'CWT' to 70085**

This costs £10 plus the cost of a standard rate message.



**By cheque**  
Send a cheque (payable to Charlie Waller Trust) to  
**Charlie Waller Trust**  
**23 Kingfisher Court**  
**Newbury**  
**Berkshire RG14 5SJ**



**Donate online**  
Please visit our website  
[charliewaller.org/donate](http://charliewaller.org/donate)  
to make a donation online

## WHAT'S ON

These are the events we have planned for 2024. Please bear in mind they may be subject to change and keep an eye on our website for updates.

## 2024

**Weds 17 April**  
**HANDEL'S MESSIAH**  
Cadogan Hall, London

Join us for Handel's iconic Messiah in the elegant surroundings of Cadogan Hall in Chelsea.

**Sun 21 April**  
**TCS LONDON MARATHON**

We have filled all our spaces but if you'd like to volunteer to support our runners on the day we'd love to hear from you! Contact [fundraising@charliewaller.org](mailto:fundraising@charliewaller.org)

**Weds 1 May**  
**CHARLIE WALLER TEXAS SCRAMBLE**

Badgemore Park Golf Club, Henley-on-Thames

Teams of four are invited to compete at this renowned golf club, followed by a delicious lunch (see feature on page 15).

**Thurs 16 May**  
**KINSKY TRIO**

Grays Inn Chapel, London  
The Kinsky Trio Prague is one of the outstanding Czech chamber ensembles. Join us for a recital followed by supper.

**Sun 23 June**  
**BIKE OXFORD**

Choose your distance from three well marked routes, approximately 80, 50 and 25 miles, starting at Oxford University Rugby Club, taking in the best scenery of Oxford and the surrounding countryside.

**Mon 8 July**  
**NEON DISCO**

Englefield House, Berkshire

A fun colourful evening for years 7 and 8 to party away in the grounds of Englefield Estate!

**Mon 22 July**  
**FLACKSTOCK**

Englefield House, Berkshire

We are delighted to be joining Flackstock again as a charity partner in 2024. This unique festival, held in the beautiful grounds of Englefield House, celebrates the life of the amazing Caroline Flack whilst promoting mental health awareness. The line-up is coming soon!

**7-12 September**  
**MOUNT TOUBKAL MOROCCAN CHALLENGE**

Join our second overseas adventure to summit North Africa's highest mountain. Fully supported trek with guides and cooks. Stunning views of the Sahara from the top! (See page 18).

**Sun 28 September**  
**NEWBURY INFLATABLE 5K**

Bounce your way through the world's biggest inflatable 5K obstacle course, at Newbury Racecourse. With four distances – 2.5k, 5k, 10k, 15k – to choose from, anyone can take part!

**7 - 13 October**  
**VIRTUAL WALK FOR WELLBEING**  
Across the UK

Challenge yourself to complete a walk over the week with friends, family, colleagues or your four-legged friends.

Please see our website for event tickets, entry forms and more information, or contact us

**01635 869754**  
[fundraising@charliewaller.org](mailto:fundraising@charliewaller.org)

**Weds 6 November**

**QUIZ NIGHT**

London

Our annual quiz returns, giving you the chance to battle to be the Charlie Waller quiz champions.

**Tues 3 December**

**BRADFIELD CAROL SERVICE**

Bradfield College Chapel, Berkshire

Celebrate the festive season with carols and readings from special guests.

**Mon 9 December**

**LONDON CAROL SERVICE**

St Luke's, Chelsea

Our flagship festive event of candlelit carols and celebrity readers.



**Sat 12 October**

**WALK FOR WELLBEING - SOUTH DOWNS CHALLENGE 2024**

Join us for a 13.1 mile/21.2km trek through the South Downs Way for our second UK Walk for Wellbeing.

Find out more information and how to sign up here:



## FIND THE CHALLENGE FOR YOU!

We have partnered with Run for Charity, which gives us access to over 500 runs and challenge events. Why not take a look and find just the challenge for you?  
[charliewaller.org/our-events/find-the-challenge-for-you](http://charliewaller.org/our-events/find-the-challenge-for-you)



# LOOKING FOR HELP?

As we don't provide clinical help to individuals, we have listed below some organisations which offer direct advice if you are concerned about anyone's mental health.

## **SAMARITANS** **116 123**

For confidential emotional support 24/7  
[jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

## **YOUNG MINDS PARENTS' HELPLINE** **0808 802 5544**

For parents concerned about their child's emotional problems or behaviour

## **NHS 111**

For help and reassurance 24/7 when it is less urgent than 999

## **NHS URGENT MENTAL HEALTH HELPLINES**

[nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline](https://nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline)

Help to find a local NHS urgent mental health helpline in England

## **BABCP** **babcp.com**

For a register of accredited therapists

## **BACP** **bacp.co.uk**

For a directory of registered/accredited therapists

## **PAPYRUS HOPE LINE** **0800 068 4141 Text 07786 209697**

For practical advice on suicide prevention – particularly in teenagers and young adults

## **STUDENTS** **studentsagainstdepression.org**

For information and self-help material

## **HUB OF HOPE** **hubofhope.co.uk**

A comprehensive directory of mental health support services local to you based on your postcode

Inclusion here does not mean the Charlie Waller Trust recommends or endorses any of these organisations above others, nor can we guarantee that the organisation will have a solution to your particular problem. All details correct at time of going to press.

## Mental health resources

Free guides and workbooks for professionals, parents, young people and others interested in mental wellbeing.

All resources are available as free downloads, and some are available as printed copies.

Visit [charliewaller.org/resources](https://charliewaller.org/resources) where you'll also find lots more information on mental health and wellbeing.



### **The Charlie Waller Trust**

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