

# Charlie Waller News

THE CHARLIE WALLER TRUST NEWSLETTER



## HEART TO ART

Celebrating our inaugural exhibition with our amazing fundraising committee

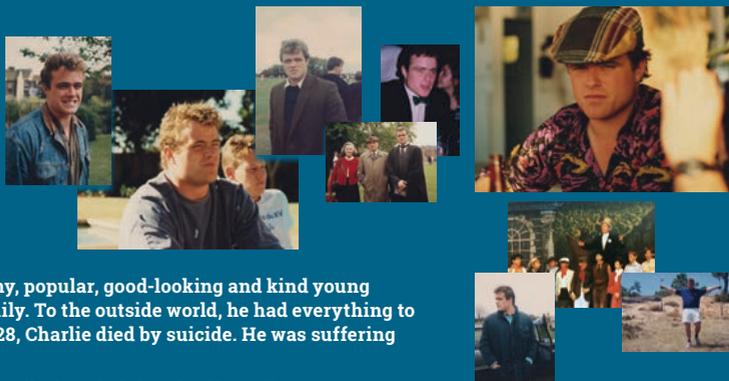
## 'THE ANXIOUS GENERATION'

Jonathan Haidt's best-seller reviewed by a parent, a young person and a clinician

## SUPPORT, SOLIDARITY AND SELF-CONFIDENCE

A parent talks about peer support

APRIL 2025 • ISSUE 51



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 died by suicide. 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.



28

## FEATURES

### 10 Support, solidarity and self-confidence

The value of peer support for those caring for children with mental health issues

### 12 The Charlie Waller Institute

Cutting edge research at the Trust's sister organisation

### 13 Make good mental health your gift to the next generation

Leaving a gift in your will

### 15 Tackling loneliness

A look at the impact of loneliness on young people and how it can be mitigated

### 18 Charlie Waller Workplace: supporting the voluntary sector

How our workplace trainers are helping a variety of charities

### 20 Heart to art

A celebration of our first ever art exhibition in London

## GET INVOLVED

### 30 What's on

A look at the diary for 2025 and beyond

### 32 Looking for help?

Sources of direct help for mental health problems



27

15

## REGULARS

### 4 Who's who...

...at Charlie Waller

### 5 Welcome

From our Chairman

### 6 News

Updates from across the Trust

### 6 Book review

A young person, a clinician and a parent review *The Anxious Generation*

### 25 Fundraising highlights

Celebrating our fundraisers' achievements

## GET IN TOUCH

hello@charliewaller.org  
01635 869754

## FIND OUT MORE

charliewaller.org

## FOLLOW US



20



### COVER STORY

The Trust's volunteer fundraising committee at our inaugural art exhibition.

Photo credit: Nico Wills Photography

# 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)

**Nick Garrett**  
**Julian Hay**  
**Charles Lytle**  
**James Murray**  
**Katie Tait**  
**Philip Waller**  
**Iain Weatherby**  
**Tim West**

## 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 Shafraan**  
**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 Whitfield**

## 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.

**Head of Fundraising**  
Nick Appleby

**Fundraising Events Officer**  
Grace Arthur

**Fundraising Events Officer**  
Debs Burles

**Finance Assistant**  
Chelsey Carré

**Training & Projects Officer (PCPS)**  
Kirsty Connelly

**Grants Manager**  
Angela Cunningham

**Executive Assistant to CEO**  
Kerryn Cyfka

**Programme Manager (Families)**  
Annabelle Easton

**Corporate Partnerships Manager**  
Helen Franks

**Finance & Operations Manager**  
Carrie Green

**Content & Story Manager**  
Tracey Gurr

**Junior Graphic Designer**  
Sophie Henry

**Fundraising Events Manager**  
Tara Hingston

**Director, Charlie Waller Workplace**  
Abigail Hirshman

**Training & Projects Officer**  
Khushi Khandelwal

**Director of Programmes**  
Emily Kippax

**Fundraising Assistant**  
Michelle Lane

**Workplace Training Coordinator**  
Jo Lea

**Head of Communications**  
Tajinder Leonard

**Graphic Designer**  
Amy Martin

**Families Administrator**  
Louise Mustow

**PR Officer**  
Kaelum Neville

**Youth Involvement Lead and Speaker**  
Alice Palmer

**Resources Officer**  
Martha Pipkin

**Student Involvement Coordinator**  
Michael Priestley

**Head of Finance & Operations**  
Faramade Rees

**Project Manager**  
Christina Sell

**Office and IT Coordinator**  
Kirsty Smith

**Fundraising Development Officer**  
Beth Towler

**Chief Executive**  
Dr Hannah Vickery

**Digital Marketing Lead**  
Emily Wyatt

## Youth ambassadors

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

**Fatima Ishaq**  
**Freya Gray**  
**Georgia Taylor**  
**Holly Whitfield**  
**Jonah Sharma**  
**Khadjah Islam**  
**Yasmine Dankwah**  
**Zaph Brouard**

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...



# LETTER FROM OUR CHAIRMAN



When the Trust was set up nearly 30 years ago, we took as our strapline 'Raising awareness, fighting depression'. In those early days, depression was our main focus and our aim was to bring it out of the shadows so that people could talk openly about it and get the help they needed without fear of being judged.

There has been much progress in the intervening three decades: conversations have opened up in schools, universities and workplaces; many screen portrayals of people with mental health problems have become more enlightened, and media coverage is, to some degree, less sensationalist.

It is worrying therefore that, in the weeks before this newsletter goes to print, the news agenda is dominated by stories that threaten to bring back the stigma which the Trust, its supporters and many like-minded organisations have fought so hard to reduce. We have all worked to increase understanding of mental health problems and those who experience them, to spread the message that mental ill health is not a weakness which can be addressed simply by 'getting a grip' and 'pulling one's socks up'; it requires, as do physical conditions, skilled diagnosis, empathy, and evidence-based treatment.

For high-profile politicians to say that mental health conditions are over-diagnosed and exploited by the 'workshy' opens the door to recasting in a negative light thousands of people who are genuinely ill.

It is timely that we have recently appointed two new board members who will help us chart a course through these choppy socio-political waters: Nick Garrett is interim CEO

for a Yorkshire mental health charity. His experience in health inequity and social prescribing, amongst other areas, will be invaluable to the Trust. Tim West is an investment manager with a great deal of financial and teaching expertise who has been a passionate supporter of the charity for many years.

One important way to ensure we can talk with assurance about mental health is to speak from a secure evidence base. Recently we have been working with the Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre to create a network of parents and carers who will be involved in research on children and young people's mental health (see page 11), helping ensure that studies undertaken will benefit those on whom they are focused.

We cannot do any of our work without the enormous generosity, time and energy of our supporters. Many of you attended our inaugural art exhibition in London and are now proud owners of a fabulous painting. Enormous thanks to the wonderful committee and staff who organised this marvellous event, which you can read about on page 20. This, and all the other brilliant fundraising initiatives featured in these pages, are the lifeblood of the Trust and we are hugely grateful to everyone involved.

**RICHARD WALLER KC, CHAIRMAN**

# NEWS & UPDATES

## NEWS AND UPDATES FROM OUR CEO



Having been in post for a whole year, I feel I can no longer introduce myself as the Trust's 'new CEO'! It has been a busy and rewarding year. I have had the enormous privilege of getting to know our supporters, staff, volunteers and trustees, and meeting people who benefit from our work, as well as discovering more about the Trust's origins, history and development.

Of course, learning doesn't stop just because you have 12 months under your belt and I am still avidly listening to the views of all those involved with the charity, especially our lived experience partners, or LXPs. Our parent carer LXPs play a vital part in ensuring our training and resources are responsive to parents' and carers' needs; and our youth ambassadors make sure young people's perspectives are at the heart of our work – you can read more about our new cohort on page 8.

We are living in challenging times. Navigating childhood and adolescence can be rendered all the more daunting by a

backdrop of economic insecurity, war and the climate crisis. It's more important than ever, therefore, that we equip our children and young people to talk about their wellbeing – to their peers, their families and to those with responsibility for educating them. That means giving parents, carers, teachers, employers and other adults the skills, knowledge and confidence to start conversations with young people and to signpost them to help they might need.

Over the coming years, our plans include expanding our families programme, and increasing our reach and impact in education systems and community organisations. I feel confident in our ability to do this, thanks to the loyalty and generosity of our supporters, the energy and expertise of our staff and volunteers, and the dedication, wisdom and commitment of our trustees.

## NEW PARTNERSHIPS WITH SCHOOLS AND COLLEGES

Our experts deliver training to staff, students and parents in schools and colleges throughout the UK. This 'whole organisation approach' helps create a mentally healthy community which is sustainable.

This year, we are looking to increase the number of schools and colleges we work with in this way. New partnerships include **Cranleigh School**, with which we have a longstanding relationship thanks to Phil Waller, Charlie's brother. We will



now be working formally with the school's Assistant Head, Pastoral to realise the full potential of collaborating within a whole school approach. It is fantastic to be working in this way with a school that has



## CHARLIE WALLER WORKPLACE

Through Charlie Waller Workplace, we offer training and consultancy to organisations across the UK. The income generated by Charlie Waller Workplace is invested in our work with schools, colleges and universities.

Charlie Waller Workplace Director Abigail Hirshman attended the annual conference of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in Manchester last autumn, taking part in a Q&A on the topic of 'having wellbeing conversations'. There was standing room only at the session, with participants commenting "best session I went to all day", "great format, practical insights", and "such a great session".

Abigail was also invited to the House of Commons to attend an event hosted by CIPD and the Society of Occupational Medicine on a new health strategy for women at work, focussing on all aspects of reproductive health. Speakers included MPs from both main parties as well as Carolyn Harris MP who campaigns for greater awareness and structural change for menopause at work.

Our expert workplace trainers continue to work with existing partners, including Air Partner and TL Dallas, where, in addition to training sessions and webinars, we will also deliver our Workplace Mental Health Evaluation Tool (W-MET) to support ongoing impact measurement and strategic development.

New clients include Lancashire and South Cumbria Training Hub, Boden and Omlet.

We are always looking for new partnerships with companies who are keen to improve mental health strategies across their organisations. If you would like to find out more, please contact [jo.lea@charliewaller.org](mailto:jo.lea@charliewaller.org)

supported us through many fundraising activities over the years.

We are also developing a whole college partnership with **Gloucestershire College**, following a call between the school's Pastoral Lead, Trust CEO Dr Hannah Vickery, and the parents of a student who sadly died by suicide last year. The partnership will support the 11,000 students in the college which currently has just one member of staff with protected time in her job role for pastoral care.

In **West Northamptonshire**, we are working with the local authority to support up to 10 schools within the area through a whole school approach.

## CARERS' SKILLS WORKSHOPS

Our workshops for people caring for a loved one with an eating disorder offer a lifeline to many parents and carers. One recent participant said: "Thank you so much for these workshops. They have been so helpful, and the strategies have given us the confidence to feel like we might be able to navigate this illness with our daughters."

Another said: "CAMHS has been great with our daughter but there is nothing for parents to help them understand and help their children until we found you. It is an invaluable service, and we have started to use some of the tools you have taught us and can see how it helps."

The workshops use the New Maudsley Approach originally developed at the renowned Maudsley Hospital. They offer parents and carers professional techniques for supporting the recovery of children and young people.

This year, at least 90% of the workshops will be delivered online – meaning that they are available to anyone in any part of the UK. We will also be looking to promote them through specialist eating disorder clinicians and teams to increase their reach and help us to measure their impact more effectively.

For more information, please visit [charliewaller.org](http://charliewaller.org)



## YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Our youth ambassadors play a key role in ensuring the voice of young people – those we are here to serve – is at the centre of our work. As lived experience partners for the charity, they are involved in many different ways, from helping to shape our strategic business plan to reviewing resources, influencing policy and recording podcasts.

We're thrilled that our next cohort of ambassadors has recently started, seven of whom are new to the Trust and one – Freya Gray – who already has a year of experience with us.

It's a very popular role – we had 340 applications and carried out 28 interviews. Here's a brief introduction to our current ambassadors:

### Khadijah Islam

Khadijah is passionate about supporting others and fostering wellbeing, which drives her aspiration to work in the mental health sector.

### Fatima Ishaq

Fatima has a passion for supporting others to reach their potential and creating safe spaces for communities to drive change, connect and thrive. You can read Fatima's review of Jonathan Haidt's book, *The Anxious Generation*, on page 23.

### Freya Gray

Freya is a university student studying geography who is interested in the charity sector. Alongside CWT, she has experience with an outdoor education charity and policy work promoting carers' rights.



### Georgia Taylor

Georgia is from South Wales and works as a mental health and community coordinator at Skills & Volunteering Cymru and as a volunteer with Mind.



### Holly Whitfield

Holly is deeply passionate about mental health and is committed to raising awareness, offering support, and encouraging open conversations around wellbeing.



### Jonah Sharma

Jonah is a creative producer, writer and performer currently based in Manchester. He is a co-founder of community arts organisation Purple Collective, for which he has co-ordinated over 20 arts events.



### Yasmine Dankwah

Yasmine is a writer and spoken word poet from London. She's really passionate about using creativity and storytelling as media to explore and validate the lived experiences of marginalised groups from a place of vulnerability and care.



### Zaph Brouard

Zaph has a bachelor's degree in psychology and philosophy, and works in equity, diversity and inclusion, specialising in tackling disability and LGBTQIA+ discrimination.





## IDENTIFYING CHILD ANXIETY THROUGH SCHOOLS (iCATS)

We are collaborating with Professor Cathy Creswell on a project to develop a tool to identify children with anxiety in schools. The findings of the iCATS project are promising so far, indicating that a brief questionnaire for parents can be an efficient way to identify children who may benefit from support for anxiety problems.

## EMPOWERING PARENTS AND CARERS

Another way in which we are putting parents and carers at the core of our work is through a new project, Empowering Parents and Carers.

Thanks to the generosity of our supporters, we raised £87,244.50 through our Big Give appeal last year to fund the project. It will see us working alongside families to deliver engaging, evidence-based mental health resources which are relevant to their needs. Our co-production approach will enable us to assess the priorities of parents and carers, ensuring resources are accessible and that gaps are filled.

## SUPPORTING SCHOOL STAFF ON THE TOPIC OF SELF-HARM

One of our expert trainers has recently been involved in an important project at the University of Cambridge. The Supportive Response to Self-harm in Schools (SORTS) project has created a website which includes training and information to help school staff recognise and respond to young people who self-harm. It is aimed at all staff working in schools, including those in admin, support and teaching roles. The content was developed by researchers, school staff and young people. [sorts4schools.org.uk](https://sorts4schools.org.uk)

## NEW PODCAST EPISODES

We have recently released a new episode of our Stigma to Strength podcast. Entitled 'Milestones & mindset: letting go of the script', it explores navigating adolescence and adulthood along an unconventional path.

Stigma to Strength is hosted by our youth ambassadors (see previous page). Visit [charliewaller.org/about-us/podcast](https://charliewaller.org/about-us/podcast) for more information.



Podcast hosts Ginya (left) and Emma



## NEW HEAD OF COMMUNICATIONS

In December, the Trust welcomed new Head of Communications, Tajinder Leonard. Tajinder has expertise in marketing, communications, brand and audience development, spanning more than 20 years across multiple industries and sectors. She is also a trustee of Wonderseekers, a STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) charity for young people.





# SUPPORT, SOLIDARITY AND SELF-CONFIDENCE

Caring for a child who is struggling with their mental health can be incredibly challenging. Often the best way for parents and carers to get support is to connect with others who have been through something similar.

Informal peer support amongst parents and carers is invaluable. It's also been recognised that a more formal parent carer peer support (PCPS) role in local communities can make a huge difference.

In response to that, the Trust delivers in-depth PCPS training to parents and carers who want to work professionally or voluntarily in the role. It's a way to use their lived experience to provide hope and encouragement to other families, work in partnership with mental health services, enhance existing provision and help families to have their voice heard.

Bec Jasper, from Suffolk, is a parent and a committed advocate for parent carer peer support. She's also one of the Trust's parent carer peer support lived experience partners. Bec was part of the first cohort to complete the PCPS training but her passion for supporting parents goes back many more years.

"Prior to 2012, I knew nothing about mental health," Bec explains, "but then one of my children developed school-based anxiety while at primary school. We didn't have an official diagnosis at that point but another parent in the village was experiencing something similar, and that helped share the load."

What started as two mothers having a monthly coffee quickly grew as more parents joined, soon becoming four monthly coffee drop-ins across Suffolk. From there, PACT (Parents And Carers Together) was born, providing peer-led support and resources for local families. PACT offers support both face-to-face and online, training (for example Youth Mental Health First Aid), and tools and resources, including those from the Charlie Waller Trust.

**What started as two mothers having a monthly coffee quickly grew as more parents joined.**

"With gaps in accessing services, parents are passionate about finding other ways to support their child," says Bec. "We all want happy, healthy young people."

## A PLACE FOR PARENTS AND CARERS

PACT is a member of the PLACE Network, which is supported by the Trust. Its name was chosen because of its key message, "that there is always a PLACE for parents and carers in children and young people's mental health."

Bec was there at the formation of the network, when the Trust's then Parent Lead, Wendy Minhinnett, invited nine other parents, carers and professionals to meet in London. Members of the network now

Your support for parents in need is a great thing ... it's invaluable that you understand because you are in a similar situation.

include a wide range of projects and services, from national to local. Bec says: "I was very keen to support PLACE, it's been pivotal. Sharing resources has been marvellous."

It was PLACE members, including Bec, who identified the need for PCPS worker training and who worked on its development, funded by the Trust. Bec took part in the pilot course in 2022, which was endorsed and funded (and has continued to be) by Health Education England. She says: "The training is a real confidence booster. We all learn from each other, and you feel you're part of something bigger, all connected through the PLACE Network."

"We get excellent feedback from parents. They feel less isolated. They don't feel judged or shamed because they know we've lived their lives. PCPS workers also understand the local services and can provide a bridge, particularly where parents have perhaps lost trust with the services."

## FEELING HEARD AND SUPPORTED

PACT has supported four parents to complete the PCPS training, including Liz, who became involved with PACT after one of her children began to struggle with their mental health. She says: "The support I received was important as I felt heard as a parent. I also felt empowered and supported and I felt I could support my child more than just relying on services."

Liz became a volunteer at PACT and completed the PCPS training. She now works with PACT's online group, signposting and offering support. She also offers direct peer support on the phone to parents who have requested more in-depth one-to-one support. She says: "I wanted to give something back and became a PCPS worker as I never want parents to feel alone."

Karen also completed the same training and now uses the skills and knowledge she has taken from that, plus her skills in administration, to help PACT. She is currently

working with local schools to organise and facilitate drop-ins so that parents and carers can find support, resources and the opportunity to meet up with other local parents.

The work that Karen and Liz are now doing is having a direct impact on other parents and carers. One said: "Your support for parents in need is a great thing ... it's invaluable that you understand because you are in a similar situation."

The parents and carers involved share a huge enthusiasm for parent carer peer support:

"If we weren't passionate about it, we wouldn't be here," says Bec. "We're a determined bunch, us parents!"

PCPS workers understand the local services and can provide a bridge, particularly where parents have perhaps lost trust with the services.

## Parent Carer Research Network: championing the voices of parents and carers

We recently launched the Parent Carer Research Network to champion the voices of parents and carers in mental health research. 88 parents and carers have signed up to take part – including more than 70 in the first week! The network is being run in partnership with the Mental Health in Development team at the University of Oxford.

Parents and carers who join the network will have opportunities to get involved in making research more relevant to families and to influence what is researched to help improve services and systems.

The network is guided by a steering group of parents and carers who have lived experience of supporting their children with mental health difficulties.

To find out more and join the network, go to [mhid.org.uk/parent-carer-research-network](https://mhid.org.uk/parent-carer-research-network)

# THE CHARLIE WALLER INSTITUTE: CUTTING EDGE RESEARCH

All our work is informed by sound clinical evidence. Central to this is our sister organisation, the Charlie Waller Institute (CWI), part of the School of Psychology and Clinical Language Sciences at the University of Reading. CWI undertakes innovative research and trains hundreds of psychological practitioners each year. The research team is led by Professor Stella Chan, Charlie Waller Chair in Evidence-Based Psychological Treatment.

CWI recently completed a study into Emotional Vulnerability in Adolescents (EVA).

Depression and anxiety are common in adolescents but current treatments are not always effective. Over five years, the EVA study at CWI looked at factors that could make adolescents more vulnerable to depression and anxiety, to help inform prevention strategies. These factors included health and lifestyle, family history and personality, as well as biological risks such as levels of the 'stress hormone' cortisol, and social experience, such as bullying.

Data was collected at three different times: the start of the study (baseline), after six months, and after five years. A total of 425 adolescents, mostly females, aged 12 to 18 years participated. The participants completed various assessments covering biological, psychological and social factors.

The study confirmed that females and those with personal or family histories of mental health issues had higher levels of depression and anxiety and lower levels of wellbeing. These groups also had poorer sleep, less resilience, and more rumination, stress, neuroticism, external shame, bullying experiences, cognitive biases and dysfunctional attitudes.

Symptoms of depression and anxiety increased with age, peaking around age 15, and age was also linked to a higher risk of eating disorders.

Symptoms of depression and anxiety increased with age, peaking around age 15.



The findings suggest that future prevention and intervention strategies should consider individual differences amongst young people of different ages, gender and experience.

This research gives us vital insights to inform our training and resources in the coming months and years.

## Using hair to measure stress hormone

The EVA study used an innovative way of measuring cortisol, the 'stress hormone', by taking samples of hair from participants.

Cortisol levels are often measured by sampling saliva, but this only indicates levels at a single point in time. Cortisol is also stored within hair, which grows at about one centimetre per month, so the 1cm section of hair closest to the scalp represents the cortisol concentration in the past month.

This means that longer-term cortisol exposure can be assessed through measurements of cortisol concentration within the hair samples – the longer the hair, the longer period of time captured.

# A GIFT IN YOUR WILL

## MAKE GOOD MENTAL HEALTH YOUR GIFT TO THE NEXT GENERATION

We want to be there for young people and their families now and into the future. Can you help us by leaving a gift in your will?

Gifts in wills are enormously helpful to us in planning our future work. They enable us to think ahead and to develop new training and resources to help meet the evolving mental health needs of young people and those who support them. With so many challenges facing children and adolescents today, the importance of this forward planning cannot be underestimated.

We are so grateful for gifts in wills – large and small. It's a very special way of supporting our work and will make a huge impact on the mental wellbeing of future generations of children and young people.

**If leaving us a gift is something you might consider, please take a look at our FREE will writing service by visiting [go.charliewaller.org/gift-in-will](https://go.charliewaller.org/gift-in-will)**

If you would like to tell us you've left us a gift in your will or to find out more about this way of giving, please contact our Fundraising Development Officer, Beth Towler, by email: [legacy@charliewaller.org](mailto:legacy@charliewaller.org) or call her on **01635 945061**.



# Walk for Wellbeing 2025

1. Choose one of our great challenges
2. Boost your wellbeing
3. Support young people's mental health

*It's a win-win-win!*



## South Downs Challenge

Sat 11 October 2025

A 21.2km trek along the beautiful South Downs Way. We'll give you great support, fundraising tips, a training plan, FREE T-shirt...and more!

New for 2025!



## Schools Challenge

6-12 October 2025

To mark World Mental Health Day (10 October), we're inviting teachers and students to walk one mile that week. It can be laps round the playground or hall!

Our FREE pack includes a wellbeing lesson plan, fun activity ideas and resources on young people's mental health.



## Your Challenge

6-12 October 2025

10 October is World Mental Health Day - mark it with your own walk that week. Take part by choosing your route and distance, and we'll provide you with training tips, fundraising ideas, a motivational Spotify playlist and a FREE T-shirt.

Scan the QR code for more information:



# TACKLING LONELINESS

**Michael Priestley, the Trust's Youth Involvement Coordinator, worked on the U-Belong study on loneliness and shares some of its findings.**



Loneliness is a widespread and growing issue that has negative consequences for our society, our health and our economy. Evidence collected by the Office for

National Statistics shows that approximately one in four people in the UK report feeling lonely most or all of the time, with younger people and the elderly more likely to feel lonely.

Loneliness is an equality issue too, with different demographic groups reporting higher rates of loneliness, such as people with disabilities and those from poorer economic backgrounds. Research also shows that as a society we may be getting lonelier, particularly following the Covid-19 pandemic.

## NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF LONELINESS

Most people will feel lonely at some point during their life. For the majority, this will be short term and specific to a certain situation (like starting a new school, ending an important relationship or leaving home). These feelings are normal and can even be seen as the brain's natural, evolutionary response to being isolated; it senses that we are more vulnerable to threats on our own, and so alerts us to the need to connect actively with others.

People who experience frequent loneliness are up to two to three times more likely to develop depression.



However, when loneliness is experienced long-term, it has hugely detrimental impacts on our mental health, our physical health and our brain functioning. Studies show that people who experience frequent loneliness are up to two to three times more likely to develop depression, whilst the physical effects of loneliness are comparable to smoking more than 15 cigarettes a day and more harmful than alcoholism, obesity and lack of physical activity. It has also been estimated that loneliness costs UK employers £2.5 billion a year, due to its impact on employee sickness, productivity and staff turnover.

## U-BELONG

Michael worked for 18 months as a researcher at King's College London to help improve understanding of the experience of loneliness and how to address it. The project he was engaged in, U-Belong, was funded by the Medical Research Council. Its aim is to increase what we know about loneliness, specifically among university students – partly because, at this stage of life, a great deal of psychological and cultural emphasis is placed on having a secure identity in relation to others.

Michael told us about some of the results of the U-Belong project:

“One of the main findings was related to expectations versus reality. We found that young people are constantly told they are living through the best time of their lives and should have lots of close friendships. A difference between this expectation and actual social experience was found to increase the risk of loneliness.”

Another interesting finding was that first impressions can be important. Michael explains: “We found that early experiences in a new social environment can have a big impact on future behaviours and relationships. Positive social exchanges early on promote ‘pro-social’ behaviours – activity that intentionally benefits other people, such as helping, sharing, cooperating and comforting. This type of interaction can positively spiral into large and fulfilling social networks. On the other hand, feeling excluded creates cycles of isolation and loneliness.”

A particularly important point to emerge was that social connection takes effort:

“We found that young people often expect all relationships to form as they do at school,” says Michael, “where they’re often based on being in the same place at the same time. They can underestimate the effort and responsibility involved in making and maintaining friendships. Without consciously making the effort to meet new people and try new things, friendships are significantly less likely to form.”

What are the practical implications of these results? Michael has drawn out five top tips:

Activity that intentionally benefits other people, such as helping, sharing, cooperating and comforting...can positively spiral into large and fulfilling social networks.

## TACKLING LONELINESS: five top tips

### 1 Be proactive

Friendships take time and effort. Make the first move. Actively start a conversation and suggest hanging out. Remember lots of people are feeling lonely; they may well jump at the chance to connect with you!

### 2 Find what works for you

Evidence shows there is often no ‘quick fix’ to loneliness that works for everyone. Addressing loneliness takes time and requires you to work out what you want from social relationships.

It’s worth thinking about what sort of friendships you’d like and how you like to spend time with people. And it’s fine if that isn’t big parties! You might prefer going for walks, watching films, or just chatting over a cup of tea.

### 3 Set your own expectations

Remember, loneliness can often come from a difference between the social relationships you expect and those you have. Try to be realistic in your expectations of your social relationships, both in terms of how close you feel and how many you will have. You might not make best friends for life straight away like they do in the movies!



## 4 Beware the social media effect

Social media can be really positive for keeping in touch with friends. However, it can also make us think that everyone has a better social life than us. And remember, spending time alone is not the same as loneliness; time alone can be pleasant and necessary to recharge.

## 5 Take small steps

Paradoxically, lonely people often describe desperately desiring social connection, but engage in behaviours like avoidance, withdrawal and conflict. This is because loneliness changes how our brain works, heightening the fear of social threat from others. These defensive patterns mean that lonely people can be perceived as hostile and unfriendly, so that people tend to avoid them and the cycle continues.

So, if you are a friend, parent or carer trying to help support someone who is feeling lonely, be patient if they turn down opportunities to do things together. Take one small step at a time.

### References

- ONS (2023). Public Opinions And Social Trends, Great Britain <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/wellbeing/bulletins/publicopinionsandsocialtrends/greatbritain/1to11june2023>
- Victor, C. & Yang, K. (2012). The Prevalence of Loneliness Among Adults: A Case Study of The United Kingdom. *The Journal of Psychology*, 146(1-2), 85–104. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00223980.2011.613875>
- Emerson, E., Stancliffe, R. J., Aitken, Z., Bailie, J.,

Bishop, G. M., Badland, H., Llewellyn, G., & Kavanagh, A. M. (2023). Disability And Loneliness in The United Kingdom: Cross-Sectional and Longitudinal Analyses of Trends and Transitions. *BMC Public Health*, 23(1), 2537. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-023-17481-y>

Qualter, P., Hennessey, A., Yang, K., Chester, K. L., Klemera, E., & Brooks, F. (2021). Prevalence And Social Inequality in Youth Loneliness in The UK. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18(19), 10420. <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph181910420>

Buecker, S., Mund, M., Chwastek, S., Sostmann, M., & Luhmann, M. (2021). Is Loneliness in Emerging Adults Increasing Over Time? A Preregistered Cross-Temporal Meta-Analysis and Systematic Review. *Psychological Bulletin*, 147(8), 787–805. <https://doi.org/10.1037/bul0000332>

Patulny, R., & Bower, M. (2022). Beware The 'Loneliness Gap'? Examining Emerging Inequalities and Long-Term Risks Of Loneliness And Isolation Emerging From COVID-19. *The Australian Journal of Social Issues*, 57(3), 562–583. <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajs4.223>

Cacioppo, J. T., Cacioppo, S., & Boomsma, D. I. (2014). Evolutionary Mechanisms for Loneliness. *Cognition and Emotion*, 28(1), 3–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02699931.2013.837379>

Cacioppo, S., Capitano, J. P., & Cacioppo, J. T. (2014). Toward A Neurology of Loneliness. *Psychological Bulletin*, 140(6), 1464–1504. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0037618>

Mann, F., Wang, J., Pearce, E., Ma, R., Schlieff, M., Lloyd-Evans, B., Ikhtabi, S., & Johnson, S. (2022). Loneliness and the Onset of New Mental Health Problems In The General Population. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*, 57(11), 2161–2178. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s00127-022-02261-7>

Sherman, D. W., Alfano, A. R., Alfonso, F., Duque, C. R., Eiroa, D., Marrero, Y., Muñecas, T., Radcliffe-Henry, E., Rodriguez, A., & Sommer, C. L. (2024). A Systematic Review of the Relationship between Social Isolation and Physical Health in Adults. *Healthcare*, 12(11), 1135. <https://doi.org/10.3390/healthcare12111135>

New Economics Foundation (2017). *The Cost of Loneliness to UK Employers*. Co-Op Foundation: London.

Luhmann, M., & Hawkey, L. C. (2016). Age differences in loneliness from late adolescence to oldest old age. *Developmental psychology*, 52(6), 943–959. <https://doi.org/10.1037/dev0000117>

Eccles, A. M., & Qualter, P. (2021). Alleviating loneliness in young people - a meta-analysis of interventions. *Child and adolescent mental health*, 26(1), 17–33. <https://doi.org/10.1111/camh.12389>

Roberts, J. A., Young, P. D., & David, M. E. (2025). The Epidemic of Loneliness: A 9-Year Longitudinal Study of the Impact of Passive and Active Social Media Use on Loneliness. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 0(0). <https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672241295870>

Bian, K. (2021). When Loneliness Evolves into Solitude: The Answer to the Self from Within. *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 11(4). <https://doi.org/10.4236/ojpp.2021.114038>

Matthews, T., Fisher, H. L., Bryan, B. T., Danese, A., Moffitt, T. E., Qualter, P., Verity, L., & Arseneault, L. (2022). This Is What Loneliness Looks Like: A Mixed-Methods Study of Loneliness in Adolescence and Young Adulthood. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 46(1), 18–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0165025420979357>

Cacioppo, J. T., & Patrick, W. (2008). *Loneliness: Human Nature and The Need for Social Connection*. W Norton & Co.



# CHARLIE WALLER WORKPLACE: SUPPORTING THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Charlie Waller Workplace provides training and consultancy to companies across the UK. It has also provided expert support to charities, offering insights into the particular challenges of working in the 'third sector'.

Charlie Waller Workplace supports leaders, managers and staff in creating mentally healthy workplaces through expert training, consultancy and focused wellbeing sessions. Its evidence-informed approach to training equips individuals with the right skills and knowledge, giving them confidence to support mental health at work. The income generated by Charlie Waller Workplace is invested in the training and resources we provide to schools, colleges and universities free of charge.

## SUPPORTING THIRD SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

In 2023, Charlie Waller Workplace was awarded a grant to deliver mental health training to third sector organisations in Berkshire.

The third sector plays a crucial role in supporting individuals and communities in all parts of the UK, from refugees to prisoners, self-help groups to children's playschemes, the list is endless. However, it faces a number of significant challenges that impact its ability to function effectively.

One of the most pressing issues is the mental health and wellbeing of its workforce. Third sector work can be demanding; employees and volunteers often experience high levels of stress. A recent study by the publication Third Sector found that 94.3% of charity workers had felt stressed, overwhelmed or burnt out over the previous year.

Reluctance to take a break often stems from a deep-rooted commitment to helping others, which often prevents workers from prioritising their own wellbeing.

Additionally, research indicates that over 40% of staff in the third sector continue to work despite experiencing poor mental health and needing time off. This reluctance to take a break often stems from a deep-rooted commitment to helping others, which often prevents workers from prioritising their own wellbeing.

Work-related stress and poor mental health have significant economic implications. In the UK, these issues cost employers an estimated £28 billion annually. While this figure applies across all sectors, it highlights

the urgent need for improved mental health support in workplaces, including the charity sector.

The training delivered by Charlie Waller Workplace trainers received an overwhelmingly positive response, with waiting lists for all events.

## BESPOKE TRAINING

Building on this success and feedback from participants regarding the challenges they face, Charlie Waller Workplace expanded its offerings for 2024, incorporating more practical techniques and peer-to-peer support strategies to help embed a positive workplace culture.

Recognising the impact of this initiative, the Berkshire Community Foundation awarded Charlie Waller Workplace a grant for a second year, enabling the delivery of bespoke workshops designed to address sector-specific challenges. The themes of workshops included leading a voluntary workforce, how to have difficult conversations, and creating healthy boundaries.

The session was well run and delivered by experts in the field.

The organisations supported were varied in nature and included a hospice and a volunteer centre, as well as charities supporting people with learning disabilities, women involved in the criminal justice system and young people leaving care or who are homeless.

Abigail Hirshman, Director of Charlie Waller Workplace, said, "We are incredibly excited and honoured to have received this grant for a second year. Our training and workshops motivate, build confidence, inform and offer practical tools to help deliver tangible change. They also enable attendees to support their own and others' mental health and wellbeing and make a real difference in the workplace."

## POSITIVE FEEDBACK

Feedback from those receiving the training has been very positive. Rachel Peters, CEO of Volunteer Centre West Berkshire, said: "The session was well run and delivered by experts in the field. It created some

reflective practice and also time to connect with others and share challenges and solutions". Caroline Henman, Founder of All Yours Period Box CIC, said "I found it really helpful and a great place to start on how to think about the wellbeing of our team".

The third sector is a vital component of UK society.



The third sector is a vital component of UK society, providing essential services and support, many of which are increasingly in demand. It currently faces multiple threats to its long-term sustainability, including financial instability and the mental health of its workforce. By implementing proactive measures, including training programmes like those offered by Charlie Waller Workplace, the sector can build a more resilient and supportive working environment for its employees and volunteers.

For more information please contact [jo.lea@charliewaller.org](mailto:jo.lea@charliewaller.org)

## MENTAL WELLBEING AT THE CHARLIE WALLER TRUST

As well as supporting mental health in external organisations, the Charlie Waller Trust prioritises mental health and wellbeing within its own workforce. The Trust has established a culture of openness and support, ensuring that its own employees and volunteers have access to the resources and tools they need to manage their mental health effectively.

The Trust enables flexible working arrangements where appropriate, which can help alleviate stress and improve work-life balance. This includes options such as remote working, flexible hours, and wellbeing breaks to help employees manage workloads more effectively and reduce burnout.

Employees have access to confidential mental health support services, such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) and counselling services. This ensures that staff members can seek professional support if they are struggling with mental health issues, without fear of stigma.



Photo credit: Nico Willis Photography

# HEART TO ART

**The inaugural Charlie Waller Trust art exhibition drew a wide range of people interested in the visual arts and mental health – for many, there is a positive connection between the two. We take a look at the highlights.**

We are always looking for new and unique ways of raising funds to continue our work. Last year, the idea of holding an art event was first suggested. We think it's safe to say that the resulting exhibition, held at the prestigious Mall Galleries in London, has proved to be a great success.

We're aware that many of our events are based on music and sport or other physical activities and we're keen to broaden our appeal to people with different interests. An art masterclass, Unleash Your Inner Artist, was very successful, so it seemed a natural progression to explore another art event on a larger scale.

## GENEROUS SUPPORT

Large-scale it certainly was! From 18 to 22 March, we took over a space at the Mall Galleries, with 80 artists exhibiting more than 400 pieces of art, including sculptures, ceramics and paintings in many different media. It drew in 1,420 visitors and raised a brilliant £166,525. We are very grateful to the artists who donated 50 percent, and in some cases 100 percent, of the sale proceeds to us.

As well as the main exhibition, there was a lot going on to pique visitors' interest, not just in art but also in the work of the Trust.

More than 300 guests attended a launch event on the evening of 18 March, where the exhibition was formally opened by renowned

interior designer Lulu Lytle. There were some fabulous auction prizes on offer too, including an original artwork by Charlie Mackesy which sold for a very generous £11,000!

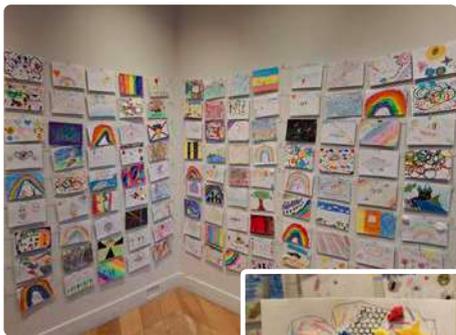
The following evening, we held an impact and information event for 145 people to celebrate the impact of the Trust. Lisa Thomson spoke about her role as a trainer; Charlie Stanley-Evans and Justin Wateridge shared their fundraising adventure along the Yukon river; and Molly Pridmore talked movingly about her lived experience and recovery from an eating disorder.



Photo credit: Nico Willis Photography

During the days, there was a range of events, including a painting demonstration by painter Laura Wallace, a drawing lesson with printmaker Bridget Tempest and a talk by Joe Nickols, who is an art historian and a curator at the British Museum. He spoke about the importance of integrating culture and the arts into society to aid mental health.

On the 22nd, there was a closing day celebration featuring talks from the Trust, a Q&A on building your art collection from Sarah McDonald Brown, owner of the Thackeray Gallery, and music from Harrison Cowell.



Throughout the week, our 'heart to art envelope exchange' proved very popular.

We encouraged visitors to share feel-good messages in envelopes they had decorated themselves. Mum Victoria Lunn said: "The exhibition was fantastic, what a great idea to involve the children and include their artwork at such a wonderful venue. It was such a happy welcome to see their paintings alongside the artists' work. The messages inside were really special and you couldn't help but smile reading the beautiful words."

We are so proud of everything we achieved with our first art exhibition. Thank you to everyone who got involved, helping to raise much-needed funds and raising awareness of mental health. A special thanks must go to the exhibition committee, without whom this amazing event would not have happened: Mia West, Julie Cameron, Laura Wallace, Katie Waller, Lucy Fishburn, Katharine Foster-Brown, Melissa Owston, Charlotte Bedford, Emma Barker and Sarah Brearley.



Members of the Charlie Waller staff team

## YOUTH AND COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

On Thursday, 20 A-Level art students from Farnborough College, led by former youth ambassador Ginya Marr and illustrator Gary Scribbler (Andrews,) had fun recreating an artwork from the exhibition, giving it a back story or a new purpose. One student said: "There was a very friendly atmosphere. It inspired me a lot and energised me to do a sketch every day."

The students' art teacher, Paul Ayres, said: "Thank you so much to the Charlie Waller Trust for organising this, it was a wonderful experience. All the students I have spoken with have been very enthusiastic about the day, and several commented to me that this is the first time they have ever been to a gallery!"

"Gary's workshop was brilliant, and it was lovely to see the students so engaged with the experience."



# BOOK REVIEW

## THE ANXIOUS GENERATION

by Jonathan Haidt

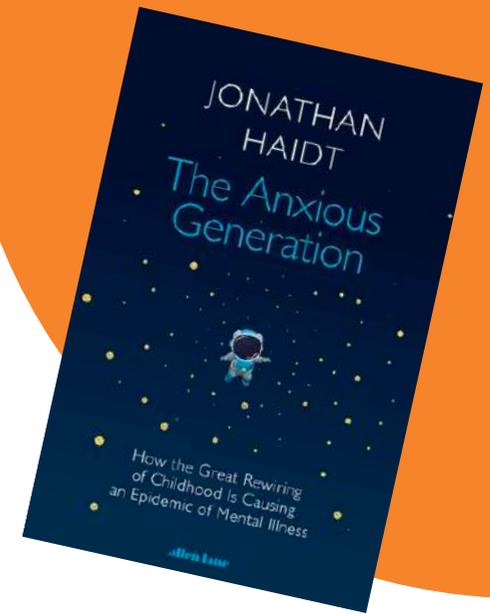
Few topics generate more debate than the effects of smart phones, social media and the internet on young people's wellbeing. We asked a parent, a mental health clinician and a young person to review Jonathan Haidt's best-selling book.

### A parent's view

As a parent of post-teens, I have witnessed firsthand how the rise of smartphones and social media has deeply affected the mental health of children and young people. For the past 13 years, I have also been a director of two community interest companies: PACT, which supports parents and carers in Suffolk who care for a child or young person experiencing mental health issues, and Define Fine for parents of children experiencing school attendance issues.

I've supported those who have seen their once confident and social children become increasingly anxious, overwhelmed and emotionally distant. What started as harmless screen time became endless scrolling, self-comparison and withdrawal from real-life interactions. Research, like that presented in Jonathan Haidt's *The Anxious Generation*, confirms what many parents like me have painfully realised—our children's mental wellbeing has been eroded by a digital world designed to keep them hooked.

The alarming rise in anxiety, depression and social disconnection among young people is not just a statistic; it's a reality many families are struggling with. As parents, we can no longer afford to ignore the impact of unrestricted digital exposure. It is our responsibility to understand the research (and there is much of it), set boundaries, and push for societal changes that prioritise our



children's mental health over corporate profits and digital addiction.

When I purchased this book, I believed I would enjoy it, learn something new and hopefully find some resources or ideas to share with the families we support, which I most certainly have. But what I didn't expect was to have my core opinion on social media and access to smartphones completely reversed.

What started as harmless screen time became endless scrolling, self-comparison and withdrawal from real-life interactions.

Being classic 'Gen X' parents, we found ourselves the guinea pigs raising our children in the period which is highlighted throughout the book (from the early 2010s onwards) when young people's mental health outcomes changed drastically. I wanted to believe that the positive aspects of having access to the online world far outweighed the negatives.

However, having read this book it seems obvious that the combination of increasingly overprotective behaviour by parents since the 1970s and under-protection in the virtual

world has hampered children's development in many ways. It has evolved into being less based on play and face-to-face interaction, and more on fulfilling needs via different routes in a virtual world.

To be fair, we weren't as aware of the risks 10 years ago as we are today, but the research is stark and Haidt makes his case in an easy to read and digest style which leaves no room for doubt.

There are clear, actionable steps proposed by Haidt, including a delay in smartphone ownership which sees 'different stages for different ages', a reduction in time spent accessing social media, and implementation of phone-free zones (particularly in schools to encourage more time for active socialising and development). He also suggests a return to more unsupervised play time, to enable growth and learning from real life interaction, problem solving and risk taking.

I would recommend this book (also available on Audible) to any parent, teacher, youth club leader or anyone with an interest in the mental health and wellbeing of children and young people.

### *Bec Jasper*

*Charlie Waller Parent Carer Peer Support (PCPS) Lived Experience Partner, and Co-Founder, PACT*

## A young person's view

The *Anxious Generation* opens our eyes to the dangers of the ever-expanding digital world, highlighting the risks of social media use for children and young people, and its links to a range of mental health issues.

Throughout the book, the writer builds and presents a compelling evidence base, demonstrating the links between excessive social media use and mental health issues like depression and anxiety. Haidt writes in a highly persuasive way, drawing on empirical evidence, case studies, reports and analysis, presented in an accessible and easy-to-read manner.

A significant premise of the book reveals that since the early 2010s, we have been facing the 'great rewiring' of childhood. This shift has been fuelled and aided by the increase in social media use and technology which have

hooked and exploited children during critical developmental stages.

Haidt emphasises that overprotection in the real world and under-protection in the digital world is why children born after 2005 are termed 'the Anxious Generation'. He argues we have moved away from a play-based childhood and that this has proven disastrous – the writer argues children need opportunities to play, to make mistakes freely, and be exposed to risk and stressors to build resilience. This loss of synchronous, real-world interactions is why children and young people are struggling, and the book demonstrates how this is reflected globally.

The book highlights the impact on young men becoming disconnected from the world and 'falling behind' – socially and intellectually.

A striking revelation in the book particularly relates to the vulnerability of girls, who are seen to be disproportionately impacted by mental health challenges in recent years – facing additional pressures online with perfectionism and comparison, bullying and even predation. As a young woman who was a child in the era of the 'great rewiring', much of this resonates with my own experiences. Simultaneously, the book highlights the impact on young men becoming disconnected from the world and 'falling behind' – socially and intellectually.

This book serves as a call to action for parents, carers, educators and even policy makers, with a section of the book dedicated to 'Collective Action For Healthier Childhood', featuring chapters dedicated to action points for schools, governments and parents.

Throughout the piece, the writer nurtures a space for us to reflect on the current discourse surrounding social media, to examine the evidence and consider the impact of its use on our lives. This offers key recommendations and a roadmap for us to follow to create change for young people – which includes calls for phone-free schools, unsupervised

childhood play, and increasing the age limit on social media use, all to protect the wellbeing of young people.

Overall, Haidt provides an enlightening and captivating account of the drastic and dangerous impacts of social media on children and young people. The book is informative yet empathetic on the challenges and societal barriers young people face, and the tone of the book offers a sense of urgency and concern. This is reinforced by gripping calls to action for parents and carers to consider and enact in our day-to-day engagement with children and young people.

*Fatima Ishaq*  
Charlie Waller youth ambassador

## A clinician's view

Jonathan Haidt argues that social media algorithms and constant smartphone usage are having negative mental and emotional impacts on young people. I was excited to read this book as I personally agree strongly with this, and it promised to back up the arguments with sound evidence.

It argues that children growing up in the second decade of the 21st century have been experiencing a phone-based childhood rather than a play-based childhood; that they have been under-protected by parents and carers in the virtual world and overprotected in the real world, leading to a generational mental health crisis. The author describes what children need to do in childhood, how a phone-based childhood causes harm, and the need for a collective action for a healthier childhood.

I found the style a bit alien. As a clinical academic it did not read as a textbook as it is quite 'chatty' and contains lots of personal anecdotes mixed in with tables and graphs. It is easy to read but information is repeated a great deal which I found a bit tedious. The introduction explains how the book is set out which is helpful but feels like you are in for a long haul. The author claims that what you do is more important than what you say, but then admits he does not follow his own advice in practice.

More evidence could have been presented about enabling access to technology, devices and services, the age limits imposed on these products by third parties, and the lack of parental control. There is little space

given to transgender people and the author's claims regarding this group are not backed by reputable evidence. Also, this group was not included in the author's interviews.

Some of the studies referenced in the book were a bit old. The research cited is mainly correlational, i.e. data has been gathered from natural settings to find out if there is an association between two variables, but a causal relationship is not proved.

The solutions offered  
by the author are good  
(though common sense).



Is the book useful for parents, carers and others concerned about children's anxiety? Yes, it could be. It was cheap to buy on Amazon, I paid £5.49 for my copy. The solutions offered by the author are good (though common sense): no social media or smartphones before age 16, phone-free schools, engage more in shared sacredness and self-transcendence, be slow to anger and quick to forgive, and find awe in nature.

Parents merely wanting some guidance on what limits to set with their child's tech use might find this book burdensome. I wondered whether they could get to the main points by looking up the author on YouTube and listening to some of his interviews, but most of these are quite long too. It would be helpful to have a short, easy to read, user friendly version for busy people who might not find the thought of reading a nearly 400-page book appealing.

Coming from a primary care background, I questioned whether this book may help clinicians working there; but unless someone can condense the main points into an A4 document, I think it is unlikely!

*Dr Sheila Hardy*  
Charlie Waller Educator for Nurses and Allied  
Healthcare Professionals

# FUNDRAISING HIGHLIGHTS

THANK YOU  
TO ALL OUR  
SUPPORTERS

It's been an exciting six months for fundraising at the Trust.

Last autumn, we launched our free will writing service and the response has been incredibly positive. Throughout March, we promoted gifts in your will as a special way to support the charity and that make a huge impact on the mental wellbeing of future generations of children and young people (see page 13).

Our inaugural art exhibition took place in March and was a resounding success. Thank you so much to the many volunteers who helped deliver such a brilliant fundraising and awareness-raising event. You can read the full story on page 20.

We're also launching our first ever Summer Appeal in June, raising funds specifically to support our work helping young people move from one life stage to the next.

We continue to be overwhelmed by the vast array of fundraising events and activities

that our supporters take on, including the incredible all-female Ocean Empower team, who rowed almost 3,000 miles across the Atlantic Ocean during December and January.

As always, a huge thank you to our fantastic supporters and volunteers for your ongoing generosity and enthusiasm. Our vital work supporting young people's mental health simply would not be possible without you.

**NICK APPLEBY**  
HEAD OF  
FUNDRAISING



Nick with his daughter, having just completed the Bath Half Marathon in March

## BRADFIELD CAROL SERVICE

The beautiful chapel at Bradfield College provided the perfect setting to bring in the festive season, with over 350 people attending. They were treated to readings by Alistair Petrie, Alex Kingston, Jules de Jongh, Mark and Rosie Durden-Smith and Reverend Dr Peter Hansell.

Youth ambassador Freya Gray spoke movingly on behalf of the Trust. Music was provided by the combined and uplifting voices of the Bradfield College and Elstree School choirs.

Many thanks to Bradfield College for their continuing support of this festive celebration, which raised £17,700.

Date for your diary: this year's Bradfield Carol Service will be on Tuesday 2 December.



Photo credit: Nicco Wills Photography



## LONDON CAROL SERVICE

As ever, our flagship London Carol Service, held at St Luke's in Chelsea, was extremely well attended, with 900 people in the congregation and total funds raised of £54,735. The singing was magnificent, inspired by the beautiful voices of the Vox Cordis Choir, under the baton of longstanding supporter Charlie Grace.

Trustee Donna Colbourne spoke on behalf of the Trust and the readings (and a song) were delivered by a host of amazing speakers: Reverend Colin Heber-Percy, Mark Pougatch, Alan Power, Joely Richardson, Gabriella Wilde and Bear Grylls.

Special thanks to sponsors The Marble Group and Auriens, Chelsea.

Date for your diary: this year's London Carol Service will be on Monday 8 December.

## BRIDGE DAY AND MORE

In February, 112 enthusiastic bridge players enjoyed the opportunity to come together and learn more about the complexities of the game, under the tutelage of Andrew Robson. He is both a supporter of the Trust and England's best known bridge player and teacher.

The day raised £8,190 and was held at Englefield House, Berkshire – thank you to Lord and Lady Benyon for allowing us to host the event in such a lovely setting.

Thanks also go to the fundraising committee: Celia Woollett, Katie Waller, Louise Wendin, Bonky and Dom Morris Marsham, Lucinda Spurrier, Hilly Lewis, Juliet Milliken and Charlotte Bedford.

Andrew also organised his own online Christmas Bridge Quiz in December, which raised £955.

## WALK FOR WELLBEING

27 people took part in our Walk for Wellbeing last Autumn, hiking 21.2km along the South Downs Way in Sussex. In total our Walk for Wellbeing events raised a brilliant £12,661 to help us continue our crucial work. The day also provided a great opportunity for our supporters to chat and get to know each other, whether they had come as individuals or with a company that supports us, such as dunnhumby.

The day began with a talk about our work from CEO Dr Hannah Vickery and lunches were handed out, well-received and sure to give participants' wellbeing a boost!

One member of the dunnhumby team said: "A truly enriching day for an essential cause. Well done to all involved, such a thoughtful and seamless experience."

Another said: "Couldn't have been done without the amazing collaboration of organisers, logistics, guides, walkers and

all inspired by Charlie's story. He was with us today on this glorious and very special occasion."

Why not join us for this year's challenge on 11 October – another chance to walk this beautiful stretch of the South Downs Way. If you prefer, you can do your own challenge any time between 6 and 12 October. Please see page 14 for information about these, and Walk for Wellbeing for Schools – new for 2025!



## OCEAN EMPOWER: WORLD'S TOUGHEST ROW

The World's Toughest Row is an incredible feat of physical and mental endurance: rowing across the Atlantic Ocean from the Canary Islands to Antigua, covering approximately 3,000 nautical miles.

Team Ocean Empower, made up of Deborah Cope, Fiona Steel, Dawn Smith and Kerry Swanton, not only won the 2024 Women's Class, a staggering achievement, but also raised just under £60,000 for three charities, including the Charlie Waller Trust.

On their fundraising page, they say: "If our campaign empowers just one person to overcome their own challenges, our struggle to row 3,000 miles will be worth it, because our struggle is nothing compared to someone who feels their life is not worth it."



Photo credit: World's Toughest Row

## QUIZ NIGHT

The CWT quiz night held at St Columba's Church, London raised £10,241. With thanks to the fundraising committee and to quiz masters Mark Young and Jeremy Davis.

## CAMBRIDGE AND BATH HALF MARATHONS

11 people ran the Cambridge Half Marathon for the Trust, including our own Fundraising Events Officer Grace Arthur. Grace says: "It was a lovely, sunny day, although almost too hot. It's the first time I've run for a charity and the atmosphere was great.

"It felt really supportive among the Charlie Waller runners as we recognised each other wearing the CWT T-shirts. One of them tapped me on the shoulder as he ran by and wished me luck. I had a long chat with another when we realised we'd been emailing as part of my office role supporting the event!"

Five people took part in the Bath Half Marathon for us on 16 March, running through the UK's only World Heritage City in glorious spring sunshine.

Between them our Cambridge and Bath runners raised a marvellous £9,883.



Triumphant bath runners!



Grace with fellow runner, Joe Clayton

## FRIENDS OF Charlie Waller

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. By becoming a **Friend of Charlie Waller** and giving a regular donation, you'll help us plan our future work with confidence, building crucial partnerships with schools, colleges, universities and community organisations.

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.



"...some of the best training I have had in 20 years of education...A fantastic delivery of all the key information we needed as well as a supportive and informative website to use".

Deputy Headteacher, The Bishop William Ward Primary School (CofE)

We are immensely grateful to every single group and individual who raises money to help us continue our vital work. Here are a few more highlights:



Having experienced his own mental health challenges a few years ago, **Hamish Smellie** swam, cycled and ran the Weymouth Ironman in memory of his uncle Justin, who was also a schoolfriend of Charlie's. He raised £6,950.

Covering 3,787km through 15 countries over 38 days, **Julian Owston** cycled from Hampshire to Istanbul, raising £3,689.

**Jam Sandwich**, a five-piece contemporary rock and dance act, organised a night of music and fundraising at the Clapham Grand. Bass and keyboard player Jeremy Garret-Cox was at both Radley College and Durham University with Charlie and he and the band have been supporting the Trust for many years.



Jam Sandwich in the spotlight

Keeping with the musical theme, the **3 J's DJ night** raised £3,564, while **Tilly Meynall's blizzard party** for teenagers, organised through Mojo Events, raised £1,000.

Members of **Land Operations Command**, Field Army Headquarters held a bake-off in memory of a colleague, whose death deeply impacted the military community, as well as his family and friends.

During the Christmas period, **Sophie Watt**, who is on the London Carol Service fundraising committee, raised £1,000 from a Christmas fair. Ceramicist **Emma Payne** held her second Advent calendar raffle for the Trust and raised £400. Three classes from **Heywood Prep School** – the Saxons, the Romans and the Danes – competed against each other in a Santa run and raised £1,087.

**Onyx Racing Team**, who have been supporting the Trust for a number of years, raised £3,000 from their annual charity dinner.

A big thank you to **Sarah Brearley** who raised £1,784 from a Burns Night supper.

**Kevin and Luke Jones** have taken part in various running events, including the Basingstoke and Wokingham Half Marathons, with more to follow this year.

# WHAT'S ON

These are the events we have planned for 2025. Please bear in mind they may be subject to change and keep an eye on our website for updates.

## 2025

**Weds 14 May**

### CHARLIE WALLER TEXAS SCRAMBLE

Badgemore Park Golf Club, Henley-on-Thames

(operating a waiting list)

**Sat 31 May**

### BRADFIELD CRICKET TOURNAMENT

Bradfield College, Berkshire

(operating a waiting list)

**Thurs 26 June**

### CWT CORPORATE GOLF DAY

**NEW**

The Drift Golf Club, Leatherhead

Get together a team of four colleagues or clients and join us for our first Corporate Golf Day. Following the format of four-ball better-ball, as well as lunch and a raffle.



**Mon 7 July**

### NEON DISCO

Englefield House, Berkshire

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

**Sun 5 October**

### CARDIFF HALF MARATHON

Take part in Wales' largest mass participation and multi-charity fundraising event and enjoy a flat, fast course passing all the city's iconic landmarks.

### Mon 6 - Sun 12 October WALK FOR WELLBEING – YOUR CHALLENGE

Nationwide

Mark World Mental Health Day (10 October) and complete a walk of any length with friends, family, colleagues or your four-legged friends.



### Mon 6 - Sun 12 October WALK FOR WELLBEING – SCHOOLS CHALLENGE

**NEW**

Nationwide

We're inviting teachers and students to walk – or wheel – one mile between 6 and 12 October. Teachers will receive a FREE activity pack, including a ready-to-use lesson plan on wellbeing, fun activity ideas and printable resources on young people's mental health.

**Sat 11 October**

### WALK FOR WELLBEING – SOUTH DOWNS CHALLENGE

Nationwide

Our South Downs Challenge will return for 2025. Join us for this beautiful 21.2km walk along part of the South Downs Way.

**Sun 12 October**

### OXFORD HALF MARATHON

Enjoy this fast, flat course through the historic university city of Oxford.

**November (TBC)**

### QUIZ NIGHT

London

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

**Tue 2 December**

### BRADFIELD CAROL SERVICE

Bradfield College

Celebrate the season with carols by Bradfield College and Elstree Chapel Choirs and festive readings from special guests.

**Mon 8 December**

### LONDON CAROL SERVICE

St Luke's Church, Chelsea

Join us for our flagship festive event of candlelit carols and celebrity readers.

## 2026

**Fri 13 February**

### ANDREW ROBSON BRIDGE DAY

Englefield House, Berkshire

Andrew Robson OBE is England's best known bridge player. A great day of bridge and a delicious lunch.



## 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)

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

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

COMING SOON...

## CHARLIE WALLER SUMMER APPEAL

We'll be launching our first ever Summer Appeal in the coming months, raising funds to equip young people with the tools they need to navigate life's big changes.

With so many challenges to young people's mental health today, we're going to be working very hard to make this a really successful appeal.

There'll be more news on the appeal and how you can support us on our social media, our website and email bulletins in the near future. We hope you'll help us spread the word.

[charliewaller.org](http://charliewaller.org)



Fri 8 August

## FLACKSTOCK 2025

Fourth glorious year!

Please join us on **Friday 8 August** at **Crystal Palace Bowl** for this unique festival.

We're delighted to be going to Flackstock again as a charity partner, with a new day and venue for 2025. Flackstock celebrates the life of the amazing Caroline Flack while promoting mental health awareness.

Tickets on sale now, line-up to be announced soon – [flackstock.com](http://flackstock.com)



# 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

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

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

## **NHS 111** **111**

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

## **SHOUT** **Text 85258**

Free, confidential text messaging service for anyone struggling to cope

## **NHS URGENT MENTAL HEALTH HELPLINES** **nhs.uk/service-search/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

## **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**

First Floor • 23 Kingfisher Court • Newbury • Berkshire • RG14 5SJ

The Charlie Waller Trust is a registered charity in England and Wales 1109984.  
A company limited by guarantee. Registered company in England and Wales 5447902.  
Registered address: as above.



[charliewaller.org](https://charliewaller.org)