



# The Charlie Waller Trust

## Impact review 2024



# Empowering support networks



Mental health problems affect individuals. But recovery doesn't usually happen in isolation.

Young people, especially, need those around them to understand what they're going through and how to help. It's amazing what can happen when they do.

In 2021, Molly was battling anorexia. She moved back home from university for treatment. She said: **"I was struggling immensely, dealing with my illness and coping with the transition of moving home after having my independence."**

Molly's parents were struggling too. They felt lost and didn't know how best to support her. They began attending our workshops and webinars, meeting other parents and carers going through similar experiences.

Molly said: **"When my parents joined these sessions I noticed significant improvements in my recovery; they began to understand what was going on in my head more and offer me strategies that really helped."**

**"They encouraged my brother, grandparents and friends to all join in, so I had such a supportive network around me. I owe my life to my parents and they wouldn't have been able to support me without what the Charlie Waller Trust offered them."**

Molly is now a teacher. She is still benefiting from our work – as are her students:

**"I have started to use your resources for schools and have become increasingly aware of how I can support children's mental health. I'll endeavour to continue with this throughout my whole career and your resources help with this."**

**"Your charity has made a direct positive impact on my life, and I will be forever grateful."**

Molly's story illustrates the crucial role of adults in young people's mental health. Parents, carers, teachers, aunts, uncles, friends – we can all play our part. We hope this Impact Review shows how.



This is a stock image; it does not depict anyone referred to in the text.

# Our lived experience partners – a vital relationship

Our lived experience partners (LXPs) put the voices of young people, parents and carers at the heart of our work.

## Parent carer lived experience partners

Our parent carer LXPs champion lived experience and bring perspective to our work. Among other things, they play a vital role in ensuring our training and resources are responsive to parents' and carers' needs.

## Youth ambassadors

In 2024, our youth ambassadors helped shape our strategic business plan, gave talks about our work, ran mental health webinars with our trainers and speakers, recorded podcasts, trained Charlie Waller staff in co-production, influenced policy and reviewed resources.

Last year our youth ambassadors' Stigma to Strength podcast was played 1,625 times. Episodes included Entering the World of Work, Revision and Exam Stress, Friendships, and Balance and Routine as a Young Professional.

“I feel like I've developed so much as a person and professionally...I have massively benefitted from the public speaking opportunities I have been granted, as well as from the opportunities I have been given to take more responsibility.”

Youth ambassador, 2024



## Parents and carers

Parents and carers have a vital role to play in children's mental wellbeing. Supporting a child or young person with mental health issues 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. This is known as parent carer peer support (PCPS) and evidence shows not only how much it helps the mental health of the parent/carer but often leads to improvements in the mental health of their young person.

Our PCPS training courses offer parents and carers supported by local services the opportunity to become PCPS workers. Having PCPS workers within local mental health services (including inpatient, community and neurodevelopmental teams) is hugely valuable and means parents and carers are more likely to get the support they and their children need. They can help those whose children are in the very earliest stages of distress or in a complex crisis.

In July 2024 we celebrated the achievements of the 34 parents and carers who attended our third PCPS training course, thanks to support from NHS England.

Last year also saw the conclusion of three years of funding from the Bernard Sunley Foundation for our PCPS work. This enabled us to pilot the PCPS role in three areas – Derbyshire, Devon and County Durham – and give direct support to over 1,400 families.



“

**“I just want to feed back that your support for parents in need is a great thing...It's invaluable that you understand because you are in a similar situation.”**

**Parent supported by a PCPS worker**

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### Coming up

#### Parent carer research network

In partnership with Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre, we are creating a network of parents and carers who'll be involved in research on children and young people's mental health. More than 70 parents and carers signed up within a week of the launch.

## Parent carer peer support (PCPS) training course

With support from NHS England, our PCPS training, in partnership with the University of Reading and the University of Northumbria, builds the skills, knowledge and confidence of parent carer peer support workers. It enables them to be effective and safe in setting up, and running, support for parents and carers of children and young people with mental health problems.

At the start of the course, an average of **48%** of trainees rated their awareness and knowledge of the key training areas as good, very good or excellent. By the end, this had risen to an average of **82%**.

“It’s enabled me...to explore concepts further which I feel has built my confidence, knowledge and expertise.”  
PCPS trainee, 2024

**34** parents and carers completed the PCPS course lecture programme in 2024

## Workshops for people caring for a loved one with an eating disorder

Using the New Maudsley Approach (originally developed at the renowned Maudsley Hospital), our workshops offer parents and carers professional techniques for supporting the recovery of children and young people.

**52** topical sessions delivered in 2024 - over **1030** carers attended these workshops

**300** carer skills workshops were delivered in 2024, with an average of **13** carers attending each workshop

“It has given me my first glimmer of hope and for the first time I feel I might be on the right path.”  
Workshop participant, 2024

**94%** of respondents said the course increased their personal knowledge and understanding to support their loved one with an eating disorder.



# Education



Our expert trainers deliver mental health training in schools, colleges and universities. Wherever possible they use a 'whole organisation approach' involving teachers, learners and – in schools and colleges – parents and carers. This helps create a mentally healthy community which is sustainable. It can include innovative ways of working such as emotion coaching, a technique which helps school staff support children to regulate their emotions in the classroom and outside it.

We have a wide geographical reach and deliver training across mainstream and special schools, the state and independent sectors, and community settings such as prisons.

Our trainers are often involved in education-based projects and research. Last year these included the Whole School and College Approach (WSCA) Toolkit developed by the University of Sussex and funded by NHS England to enable schools to track their progress in applying the whole school approach.

For higher education providers, our CREATE toolkit offers guidance in creating an effective and evidence-based mental health and wellbeing strategy. In 2024, we began developing a practical workbook to complement the toolkit.

“Charlie Waller...have supported our school wonderfully over the past years.”  
Headteacher, Colerne CE Primary School



## Coming up

### New partnerships

We'll be focusing on building new partnerships with schools, colleges and universities, using our whole organisation approach.



## Schools and community

**11,142** people received our training in schools in 2024

**97%** of training participants agreed or strongly agreed that the session increased their knowledge.

**95%** agreed or strongly agreed that our trainer was able to promote practical strategies.

“Throughout the session [the trainer] made sure what he was delivering was relevant to the different roles within the room...keeping the group feeling engaged. Charlie Waller Trust is invested in making a difference and that’s what counts.”

Family Engagement Manager,  
HMP Cardiff Invisible Walls

“...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)

## Colleges and universities

**2,841** people received our training in colleges and universities in 2024

**96%** agreed or strongly agreed that the session they attended increased their knowledge.

**95%** agreed or strongly agreed that the session they attended increased their confidence.

“[The trainer’s] knowledge was excellent and she conveyed it in a way that was engaging. She was approachable and I left the session with a greater understanding of the science behind brain development.”

Assistant Principal,  
Sixth Form College Farnborough

“[The trainer] was supportive, engaging and inspirational...Her warmth put everyone at ease and we were left feeling energised and uplifted.”

Student Wellbeing Policy Manager,  
BIMM University

## Resources



Our booklets, posters and other resources have always been a core part of our charitable work. They are now available as text on our website and as downloads. However, there is still a demand for printed versions as so many young people, parents, carers, teachers and youth workers find these helpful to use and to share.

Every week, our small and dedicated team of office volunteers packs and sends out hundreds of resources free of charge on topics ranging from 'Supporting a Child with Anxiety' to 'Coping with Self-Harm' and 'How to Ask for Help'.

With extremely useful insights from our youth ambassadors, we updated our Wellbeing Action Plans for children and young people, simplifying the language and including more relatable and inclusive examples. We also launched a version for adults, full of practical guidance on wellbeing.

Our free mental health book club continued to give schools books that help staff support the mental wellbeing of the children and young people they work with.

“These books give valuable insight into how I can best support my caseload of children and young people in relation to a variety of areas that can cause struggles/difficulties.”

School nurse

“I LOVE these examples! It's great to see representation of a variety of different individuals and names...Having the case studies, that are very simply and effectively worded, really helps with completing activities.”

Youth ambassador



In 2024 we sent out **49,529** printed booklets, posters and other mental health resources, up **6%** on 2023.

On our website there were **42,921** views of our resources and **26,304** downloads.

Our free book club makes a tangible difference to its members and their day-to-day work. In 2024 we sent out **962** books to schools and other youth settings.



“The books you have offered are fabulous. They reflect the most current thinking and are completely suitable for the service we provide.”

Member of Behaviour Support and SEMHS Team (Social, Emotional and Mental Health for Schools)

### Coming up

#### Talking about suicide

We're reviewing our guide on Talking about Suicide to ensure the language is helpful for those supporting neurodivergent young people.



# Research and development

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.

Our trainers often work on research and development projects in their fields of expertise. Last year, this included the development of a tool to identify children with anxiety disorders in school and community settings. The findings so far are promising, indicating that a brief questionnaire for parents can be an efficient way to identify children who may benefit from support for anxiety problems.

We also undertook research to inform the creation of new resources launching in 2025: our mental health resource for young people at work, and Empowering Parents and Carers, a suite of materials we are co-producing with our lived experience partners.



## The EVA study: emotional vulnerability in adolescents



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.

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.

In 2024, CWI delivered clinical training to more than 350 practitioners working with children and young people and families, including:

**37**

Postgraduate Diplomas in Evidence-Based Psychological Treatment for Children and Young People, for staff whose role includes working with children and young people experiencing, for example, depression or anxiety disorders.

**32**

Postgraduate Certificates in Supervision for Children and Young People's Mental Health, for those supervising staff delivering psychological treatments for children, young people and their families.

## Resilience Rucksacks

The Resilience Rucksack project aims to give every child a rucksack containing items to help them look after their mental health as they move from Year 6 to Year 7 – a challenging time. Items include a song about sleep, a stress ball and a self-compassion journal.

**1,000** young people have attended 'Resilience Fairs' during the pilot stage, with **93%** saying they like the rucksacks.



“The pupils had an excellent time and found the fair really helpful...they were able to identify the techniques and resources which might help them develop their resilience in the future.”

Abingdon Preparatory School, Oxfordshire.

### Coming up

#### Bringing Eden to School

CWI will be working with the Eden Project, harnessing the positive impact of nature on young people's mental health.

## Workplace

Charlie Waller Workplace supports leaders, managers and staff in creating mentally healthy workplaces through expert training, consultancy and focused wellbeing sessions. Our evidence-informed approach to training equips individuals with the right skills and knowledge, giving them confidence to support mental health at work.

Our workplace partnerships flourished in 2024, with some entering their fourth year and new partners joining up for long term strategic work. More than two thirds of our training delivery was to managers, whose understanding of mental health is vital to organisational wellbeing.

The industries to which we deliver training include the financial sector, IT services and aviation. We continued to support voluntary sector organisations in Berkshire through our funded programme of training for charity leaders, managers and workers.

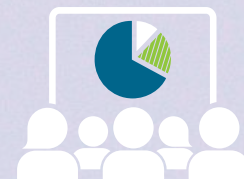
Responding to the changing needs of workplaces, we developed a new training course in neurodiversity, introduced sessions on creating more inclusive workplaces, and launched our YES (Young Employee Support) workshops to help employers support those new to work.



“Berkshire Music Trust has greatly valued Charlie Waller Workplace’s webinar training sessions. The broad choice of training sessions enabled all staff to take something away...that will impact them well beyond their professional roles.”

**Dawn Wren, CEO, Berkshire Music Trust**





The income generated by Charlie Waller Workplace is invested in the training and resources we provide to schools, colleges and universities free of charge. In 2024, workplace revenue was up 10% on the previous year.

**100%**

of training participants who responded to our survey would recommend our training.

We delivered workplace training to more than **2,000** people.

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“The presentation...offered invaluable insights and practical tools for our working parents to support their children’s wellbeing effectively.”

**Sian Robinson, People Officer, Sanctuary**

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“A very useful session and very well received by the team. We will all take away useful skills and learning from it. I would thoroughly recommend other companies get Charlie Waller Workplace to come to speak to staff.”

**Doug Glenday, Group CEO, Supporting Education Group**

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### Coming up

**Work.Life.Tools.**

In 2025 we’ll launch our new guide for young people at work.

# Thank you to our supporters

A huge thank you to all our supporters. From everyone who has taken on a challenge, attended an event, or donated through our Friends of Charlie Waller membership scheme; our trusts, foundations and statutory funders, our legators and major donors, and corporate partners who have contributed so generously; our wonderful volunteers; and everyone else who has supported the Trust in the last year. The work we do would not be possible without you.

**Below are some of our funders and partners:**

The B G S Cayzer Charitable Trust  
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The Stewarts Foundation  
The Wychwood Charitable Trust

We are enormously grateful to all our funders, and to all those that donate to support our work. Thank you.



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“I am so proud that ING has chosen CWT as a charity partner...Mental health is so important and CWT is already making a significant contribution to increased knowledge and awareness of good mental health across our UK business.”

**Rob Perkins,**  
**Managing Director, Corporate Finance**

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A truly enriching day for an essential cause. Well done to all involved, such a thoughtful and seamless experience.”

**Walk for Wellbeing participant, 2024**

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## Remembering Charlie

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 to ensure that young people are able to understand and look after their mental health and to spot the signs in others.

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

*PLEASE FOLLOW US*



### The Charlie Waller Trust

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