

Driving Positive Change for Young People: The Mix 2021-22 Impact Review

For the year ended 30 June 2022



THE MIX
Essential support for young people

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER'S NOTE:



"The Coronavirus pandemic had a wide-ranging impact on all our lives, and it is very easy to imagine that this is all now behind us. For some, this may be true, but for young people it casts a long shadow on their mental health, their academic lives and their financial futures.

Over the past 12 months, the team at The Mix has done incredible work to positively impact the lives of young people under extraordinary pressure, both as they seek to take advantage of opportunities and when they reach out for help in their most challenging moments.

We do this at scale and interacted with some 6.4 million young people aged 11-25 last year. We worked right across the UK and reached more young people from the LGBTQIA+ community, young people from ethnic groups and those with disabilities than ever before by championing their voices and talking about the issues that impact them most.

At the heart of our work is the combination of accessible technology and inspiring, dedicated people. The team at The Mix is not just our wonderful staff, but also the incredible volunteers that give their time on our services, our funding partners and the brands who supported us and the hundreds of young activists who guided our work in co-design, governance and ambassadorial roles throughout the year.

I hope this report gives its readers some insight into what can be achieved when we come together to overcome adversity and invest in our future – our young people."

Chris Martin, CEO at The Mix

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STRATEGIC OVERVIEW

WHO WE ARE:

The Mix is the UK's leading digital charity for under 25s, reaching over 6 million young people each year. Whatever issue a young person is facing, The Mix is always there for them - via our website, over the phone or via social media. Our support is free, confidential and anonymous and can be accessed wherever young people are. We connect young people to experts and their peers to talk about everything from money to mental health, homelessness to jobs, break-ups to drugs and more. No topic is out of bounds, and we are completely non-judgemental.

OUR MISSION:

To be the first place any young person turns to drive positive change in their lives and the world around them.



WE EXIST BECAUSE...

Today's young people - more than any previous generation - face an uncertain future. We have always supported young people when they face challenges, but now, we must do more both to **drive personal change** in those affected and to **challenge the societal barriers** that prevent young people from achieving their full potential.



OUR AIM FOR THE FUTURE:

We want to **drive positive change** in young people, not only by giving all young people the support they need when they need it **but also through youth voice and data**. We want to empower young people to create a world in which they are supported, represented and able to thrive.



HOW DO WE MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN? OUR STRATEGY FOR 2021-22



We will improve our services.

We will provide young people with the **best available support, resources, and signposting** online. We will **expand our reach** through our website and social media to over **5 million** young people and offer more virtual 1 to 1 support. We'll **improve the quality and effectiveness** of our interventions.



We will grow awareness of our work.

We'll grow our brand; online, in schools and in the media; to reach and engage more young people and influence policy. We'll publish more data to offer insights into issues impacting young people.



We will amplify the voice of the youth.

We will create platforms for youth opportunity and advocacy. We'll work to **place young people even more firmly at the heart of what we do in governance roles, strategic development and fronting our media** work. We'll **amplify** young people's **voices** with data collected from their peers and ensure young people lead our campaigns.



We will build a healthy charity.

We will focus on ensuring the long-term future of The Mix. We will achieve this by **investing in our staff's well-being and diversity**. We will ensure we implement working conditions that support the health and well-being of staff.

OUR VALUES



Empowering:

We support young people to speak out, take part and take control of their lives



Non-judgemental:

We are open-minded; we do not criticise or blame.



Inclusive:

We welcome all young people from all backgrounds and circumstances.



Brave:

We talk about everything to reflect the real lives of young people.



Collaborative:

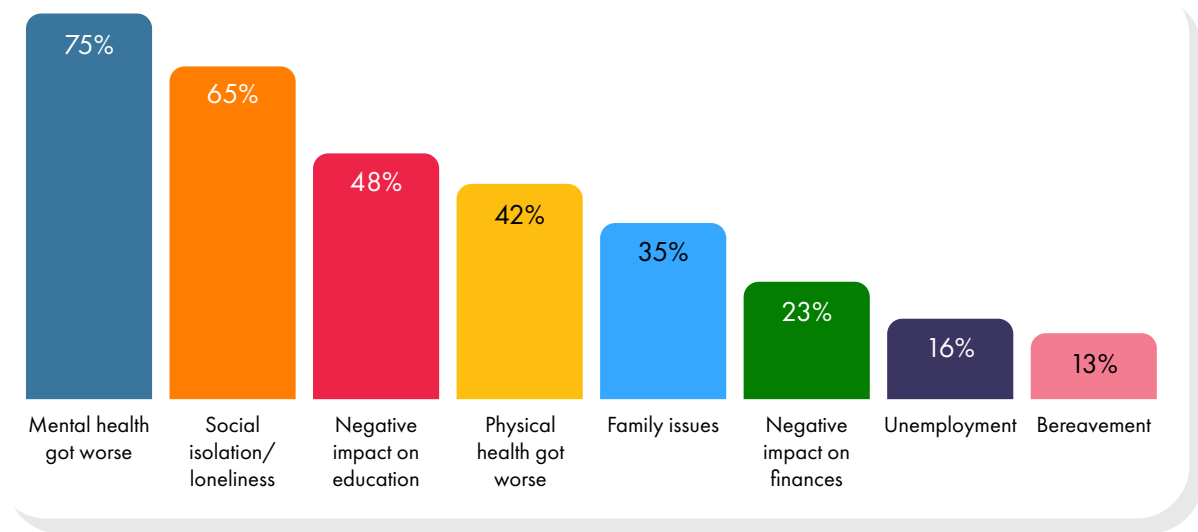
We work with others to achieve the best outcomes.

WE KNOW WHAT YOUNG PEOPLE ARE FACING

We understand the personal and societal issues young people are concerned about. These shape our content and support. We know that key concerns include **mental health, the cost-of-living crisis, body image, family and relationships, loneliness, the future, education, global warming and coronavirus.**



The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on young people using The Mix



IMPACT OF COVID-19

Since 2020, life has been even more challenging for many young people, and particularly for those **disproportionately affected by the impact of the pandemic, such as young people with disabilities, those from ethnic minority groups, LGBTQIA+ communities or young people from disadvantaged backgrounds.**


For this reason, in 2021-22 we particularly focused on better reaching, engaging, and improving our services and information for these groups.

This summary report reviews the progress we made against our strategic priorities. It looks at our achievements in the past financial year (July 2021 to June 2022). We report on the impact¹ we made for each of our strategic objectives. We hope this report is helpful to anyone keen to understand **the difference our work makes to lives of young people.**



¹ The figures on outcomes and the impact of Covid-19 pandemic in this report come from The Mix annual survey 2021, completed by 1,013 respondents.

2021-22: OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS



1.4 million young people visited The Mix website

We delivered over 4,600 counselling sessions to around 1,000 young people



Over 16,100 conversations answered via Crisis Messenger



We responded to 11,000 contacts from young people via our multi-channel helpline

159,600 young people visited discussion boards



Over 5 million young people reached via social media

OUR IMPACT

1,100,000

1,100,000 young people **feel more able to cope with their situation** and **1,045,000** young people **formed a plan to make a positive change to their situation** as a result of using **The Mix website**.

3.5 million young people are more **likely to seek support** when they need it as a result of seeing **The Mix's social media content**.

3.5 million

107,000

107,000 young people feel better able to **form a plan to cope with life's challenges** as a result of using **The Mix's discussion boards**.

4,440 young people feel **more able to cope with their situation** as a result of using the **helpline**.

4,440

660

660 young people **have better coping strategies so they can manage problems** on a day-to-day basis **better** due to their **counselling sessions**.

Over **5,000** young people who used **Crisis Messenger** found the conversation **helpful**.

5,000

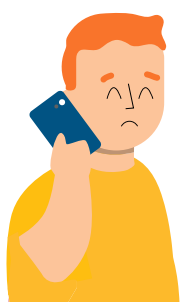
THE MIX'S SERVICES

The Mix offers a wide range of services to young people so that they can choose the type of support, channel or interaction that suits them most.



Our **website** provides over 2,000 pieces of content developed with young people and experts, including **articles, real life stories, advice, tips, digital tools, apps, games, e-learning courses, a local services finder and links** to other services.

Our **helpline** service, available via phone, email and webchat, offers non-judgemental listening and emotional support, information and signposting to over 16,000 organisations across the UK. We also carry out risk assessment and safety planning where appropriate. The most common issues discussed with our Helpline Team include depression, anxiety, self-harm, and suicidal ideation.



We also provide **free phone and webchat counselling**, with counsellors providing support by listening to young people's problems and helping them **find ways to cope in a confidential, safe space**. Digital counselling is easy to access, with many young people preferring to share their issues in writing rather than talking about them.

The Mix provides essential support to young people on the **social media channels** they use the most, including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and TikTok via posts, reels, stories, social packs, social takeovers and videos.





The Mix's discussion boards are an online moderated peer community designed to help young people to work through issues and support resilience. Young people talk anonymously about what is on their minds and help each other out. They can start a thread on anything they choose, receive support from their peers and get involved in youth-led initiatives within The Mix. Discussion boards connect young people in a supportive and anonymous environment that encourage them to open up and share experiences with others.

Moderated live **group chats**, where young people receive support from their peers, provide a safe space to talk through problems or just hang out. Depending on what young people need they can attend a **support chat**, a judgement-free zone to get and give advice within a group, or a **general chat**, a light-hearted chat for fun, distraction and a chance to unwind.



Crisis Messenger text service provides free, **24/7 crisis support** across the UK. Texters are connected to a trained volunteer who listens and helps them think more clearly, empowering them to take the next step towards feeling better. This service is delivered in partnership with Crisis Text Line and Shout.

IMPROVING OUR SERVICES

The Mix's vital services have been needed more than ever since the global pandemic turned the lives of young people upside down. With demand for support services growing and far outstripping the service provision, it is important to provide young people with services that are easy to access on channels and in spaces they use the most.



Out of the 2,312 cases that presented a safeguarding risk, we had to call emergency services for active rescue in 639 cases. That means that in 72% of safeguarding cases, our intervention alone can keep young people safe.

SAFGUARDING

The end of pandemic restrictions in the UK that brought return to “normal” lives presented The Mix with an unexpected trend. We have experienced a sharp rise in cases with risk across our services, with the number growing to **2,312 cases** in the past year, which was likely exaggerated by the loss of other support services for young people.



The Mix responded by recruiting a full-time Safeguarding Officer, which enabled us to bring more structure to our already strong practice. We have firmed up our safeguarding processes, including creating plans for young people in need, to help them access our services within our remit, and the introduction of a safeguarding meeting, to help those young people transition onto more suitable support. As we have strengthened our processes to help young people find long-term support, this means we end up managing more cases with safeguarding risk in the short term.

For the first time we will be putting a safeguarding strategy in place, which amongst other things will focus on improving our safeguarding data, to help us better understand the trends around safeguarding incidents and the young people involved in them; this will be key to improving our processes further.

EXTENDING OUR RANGE OF SERVICES

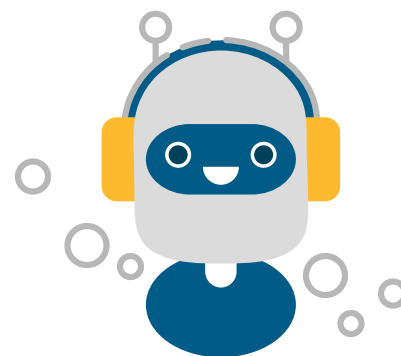
THE MIX CONNECT

Over the past 12 months, efforts of the teams across the organisation were concentrated on developing **The Mix Connect (TMC)**. This is a search tool for schools which can be plugged in to their website or intranet. It offers pupils direct access to The Mix's services, including our website, peer-led online community and Crisis Messenger. The tool provides emotional support and personalised signposting 24 hours a day, empowering students to take their mental wellbeing into their own hands. Its roll out at schools will be supported by young TMC ambassadors, who will help to embed The Mix Connect at schools.



THE MIX BOT

In May 2022, to help us cope with unmet demand for our services and to better support people when English is not their first language, we launched a chatbot called The MixBot. This tool helps people navigate our services and signposts them to internal and external services and resources. In its first two months, **565 people used The MixBot**, with the bot **answering almost 2,400 questions**.



1.4 MILLION

In 2021/22, almost 1.4 million young people visited our website, with around 145,000 young people returning to our website at least once more.

OUR WEBSITE

In the past year we have been focusing on representing diverse communities and experiences through our content, as well as being reactive to key issues affecting young people, such as the cost-of-living crisis, war anxiety, conversion therapy, Monkeypox and drink spiking.



Our content provides a balance of expert guidance and authentic stories and perspectives from young people on the issues they are passionate about. It also provides the chance for our young volunteers to learn about writing content and to have a platform to express themselves. **In the past year we have worked with 41 young people on new article content.**

Later this year, we will be launching our refreshed website to further improve user experience and engagement. Over the past year, we've been working hard on designing new website that will optimise the website journeys for young people and to provide them with the best available resources, support and signposting.

As a result of using The Mix website, among young people seeking relevant outcomes:

94%

found content that was relevant to them.

86%

feel more able to cope with their situation or issue, with the same proportion forming a plan to make a positive change to their situation.

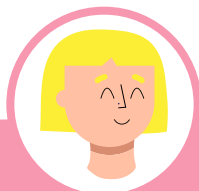
9 in 10

young people (90%) were able to find other organisations or support networks they could turn to for further support.



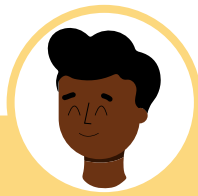
“Helped me feel less alone and like there are people out there who care :)”

Website user



“Reading articles that explain clearly what I'm going through and individual's personal experiences help to feel like I'm not the only one, which re-assures me that I am just experiencing a low period and not that my life is a shambles like originally thought.”

Website user



“Gave me a comparison of my options and helped me to make a realistic decision.”

Website user



“Helped me find mental health support and read about the team beforehand to prepare myself.”

Website user

5 MILLION

Over the past year, The Mix provided vital support on social media, reaching over 5 million young people and achieving over 630,000 engagements.

OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

The Mix also provides support to young people through social media including Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube. In April 2022 we launched our new TikTok account; this included collaborating with TikTok, engaging young people and staff to create content, working with experts and creators and launching our advertising strategy.



Our content focus has been on key cultural moments and campaigns, including Men's Health Week, Mental Health Awareness Week, Volunteer's Week, Exams, Money, Pride and our Summer Wellbeing campaign. **Since the launch we've gained over 10,000 followers and 458,000 video views.** We are continuing to strengthen our relationship with TikTok to ensure the safety of young people on the platform.

Even though many young people understandably want to view support anonymously on social media as and when they need it, **across our social media channels we achieved an engagement rate of 13% (over 6 times the national average)** where many young people are actively engaging by clicking through to the website, watching videos, viewing our full social profiles, participating in a conversation or engaging with posts.

The Mix has been nominated for the **"Charity with the Best Social Media Presence"** at this year's Charity Times Awards and has won a **high commendation prize for "Best Use of Social Media"** at this year's Third Sector Awards for our success in providing vital services directly on social media.

The results of The Mix's annual survey of its users in 2021 highlighted the effectiveness of The Mix's social media posts. Among young people seeking relevant outcomes:

85%

said they were more likely to seek support when they needed it

87%

felt more capable to make decisions about their situation or issue

87%

felt like a part of a community when using The Mix's channels

9 in 10

(91%) found information and advice shared on The Mix's social channels relevant to them



“Love how the relationships campaign was diverse and covered a range of relationship types. I particularly loved the piece on casual sex as I think that sums up The Mix well – talking on issues that are often not spoken about”

Social media user

6,266

In 2021/22 our helpline team supported 6,266 young people and answered 10,922 requests for help.

OUR HELPLINE

Over the past year, the helpline team has focused on improving the quality of service through the learning and development of its staff and volunteer team. Helpline volunteers attended 11 training sessions focused on a wide range of topics, from substance misuse, conflict resolution and domestic violence to eating disorders, understanding emotions and suicide prevention.



We have secured helpline standards accreditation, which is a nationally recognised quality standard that accredits consistent best practice in helpline work and shows the quality of service offered by the team.

The helpline team has also continued to develop resources for volunteers and improved its processes around listening in and data collection. The team supported the volunteers in their transition to the new volunteer platform that will improve the volunteer experience throughout their training, induction and when delivering helpline service to drive the service quality.

According to our annual survey 2021, among young people seeking relevant outcomes:

88%

felt listened to by the helpline volunteer

84%

felt emotionally supported when talking to us

74%

felt more able to cope with the situation they were experiencing as a result of contacting the helpline

82%

found relevant information sources, organisations or support networks (such as peer networks) where they can get further assistance

79%

formed or were going to form a plan to make a positive change to their situation



Jade's story

When I was 19 years old, I struggled with my mental health and ended up self-harming. I did not know how to cope with how I felt and decided to seek support. I was drawn to The Mix as they had services tailored specifically for young people.

The Mix helpline signposted me to multiple services that could help me with my self-harm, and to their website, providing various articles on self-harm. They also offered me counselling support. I liked that in my email conversations with The Mix agents I was being commended for seeking help. It made me feel like I was not overreacting, and I felt listened to.

I also used The Mix website, which was a huge relief. I read many articles about self-harming. It significantly impacted my life and my ability to cope with circumstances in my life. I realised I was not the only one experiencing self-harm; other young people of my age were also experiencing it. The articles also provided me with different practical strategies and mechanisms to cope with my feelings and the environment around me. I have not self-harmed in the last three years. Now, I am in a totally different space than I was at the time.

One thing I like about The Mix is that their support is tailored specifically towards young people. They understand the pressures we face as young people, and there is nothing you cannot seek support for.



4,623

In 2021-22, we provided counselling to 990 young people, totalling 4,623 counselling sessions.

OUR COUNSELLING SERVICES

Our Telephone and Webchat counselling service is available to young people aged 25 years and under. Our volunteer counsellors support young people by listening to their problems and helping them find ways to cope in a confidential, safe space. They are either fully qualified or are working towards their BACP qualification.



“Over the past year, the team was able to increase the number of volunteer counsellors to 55, improve training for counsellors in line with needs identified and further improve their support during induction stages. Migration to new software provided the team with the opportunity to build the system that fits our needs. We’ve implemented a number of automated processes to minimise administration, and we’ve implemented new assessment systems assessing users’ progress and satisfaction with a session.

The team also focused on the volunteer retention. We’ve introduced a buddy system where the new volunteers joining the team are assigned a buddy - an experienced volunteer who can answer their questions about volunteering.

This year we managed to secure a funding for the counselling team that would help us further develop our services. With this funding we will be able to expand our team to 72 active volunteers, and we will apply for the BACP accreditation as an organisation. This will enable us to onboard more counsellors, help more young people, as well as create more opportunities for collaborations with other organisations.”

Counselling Manager

Over the past few years, the team has been working on improving engagement rates to encourage more young people to attend all their sessions to maximise positive outcomes. **We have seen the rate of young people disengaging with our counselling fall from 32% in 2019 to 24% in 2021.**



More than 4 in 5 (81%) counselling users completing their sessions reported improvement in their mental health and wellbeing (based on CORE-10 scores).

As a result of having counselling with The Mix, among young people seeking relevant outcomes:

4 in 5

(79%) had formed a plan to make a positive change to their situation

3 in 4

(73%) felt they had acquired better coping strategies and can manage their problems on a day-to-day basis better

4 in 5

(80%) are now more likely to access other services or therapies

Some young people tell us that they find webchat counselling more accessible than face-to-face counselling **as it gives them an opportunity to explore what counselling is about. Webchat counselling works for many as a gateway to accessing other services.**



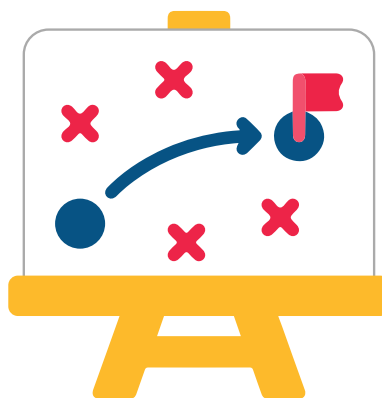
SPOTLIGHT: IMPROVING ENGAGEMENT RATES IN COUNSELLING

The Mix continuously evaluate effectiveness of its services and look for ways to further improve them. In 2019, we identified that a large proportion of young people signing up for counselling sessions did not start their sessions or disengaged with the service only after a few sessions. Our own research alongside research conducted by UCL students identified a number of barriers and facilitators to online counselling, and proposed a wide range of actionable strategies to increase engagement with the service. The counselling team has implemented many of the strategies, some of which have been co-produced with the Services Innovator Committee (SIC) that consists of young people engaged in improving our services. Consequently, **the rates of disengagement have fallen significantly from 32% in 2019 to 24% in 2021**, with the team planning to introduce further strategies in the future.

Some of the implemented strategies included:

Introducing counsellor bios; each counsellor sends a short introductory email ahead of the first session to introduce themselves and help with the development of the therapeutic relationship.

Digitalisation of the counselling contract to make it more accessible to all young people to give them a greater understanding of The Mix policies.



New website content focused on pre-session anxiety and [what to expect](#), accompanied with videos and real-life testimonies from former users to help young people better understand counselling, what to expect, how it works etc.

Improvement in the training program for counsellors to ensure counsellors feel comfortable and confident delivering online sessions, and understand the effectiveness of online counselling.



Sophia's story

I dated my boyfriend since I was 16 years old, and we fell out when I was 20. When we broke up, I could not take it easy. I felt like I had lost a massive part of my life; I had low self-worth, lost myself and began having a pessimistic look at my life and everything.

The Mix counselling sessions gave me strategies to feel better and find myself again. Walking through the weekly sessions with my counsellor helped me reflect on who I am without my ex-boyfriend, what I needed in my life and what was useful to me. It enabled me to create a different picture of myself and helped me "find myself back". My counsellor made me feel better as she listened to me without judging and understood what I was going through. It made me feel my feelings were being validated.

Every Monday, I looked forward to the counselling sessions from The Mix, and I began to have a positive view of myself and everything. In my next relationship, I will always remember what my counsellor said. I now know my self-worth and will never allow myself to go through the same feelings again.



159,000

Over the past year, 159,600 young people visited our discussion boards; 1,097 users actively participated in conversations, generating almost 30,000 posts.

OUR ONLINE COMMUNITY

DISCUSSION BOARDS

Our discussion boards provide a safe space for young people to reach out anonymously and get support online from other young people going through similar experiences.



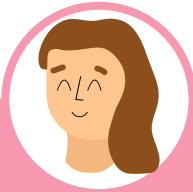
“In March 2022, we reached 5,000 members on our discussion boards. We worked collaboratively with service users to update our community guidelines to make sure they are accessible and suitable for the space, and we updated the layout of our topics to make the boards more user friendly. We've introduced a new on-call system for our board moderators so they have access to the safeguarding team out-of-hours to flag safeguarding concerns or to debrief with a staff member after a shift.”

Online community manager

GROUP CHATS

Our nightly moderated live group chats bring together young people to discuss a wide range of topics and receive support from their peers. 4,279 attendees took part in group chat discussions in 2021-22.





“Since the pandemic in March 2020, we've seen our group chat usage increase by 55%. Last year, we upgraded our Chatwee software and this improved user experience allowing for longer messages, emoticon reactions and 1:1 risk assessments in group chats. We've improved the sign-up process for Support Circle Group Chats, which resulted in a 129% increase in unique young people signing up to receive support from those sessions. Further improvements to group chat scheduling and promotion have led to a steep increase in young people using our group chats, especially among under 16 year olds and young carers.”

Online community manager

As a result of using The Mix online community among young people seeking relevant outcomes:

84%

of discussion boards users feel more able to understand and express their feelings; 74% do so among group chat users

81%

of discussion boards users feel more connected to other people; 69% feel so among group chat users

81%

of discussion boards users feel better able to form a plan to cope with life's challenges, with the same % saying that they have formed or will form a plan make a positive change to their situation

81%

of discussion boards and 77% of group chat users found relevant information sources, organisations or support networks they can go to for further support



During the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic, I realised that many people were isolated and lonely. I just wanted to help, to be there for people and listen to them. I decided to volunteer with The Mix. Now I am a Discussion Boards moderator. Although I was volunteering, I was also receiving support myself. It helped me to feel less isolated as I communicated with other young people. Knowing that I am positively impacting young people's lives gave me a sense of pride and confidence.

Discussion boards moderator

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF THE YOUTH

Young people shape everything we do at The Mix, from co-designing our services or campaigns to creating content and being involved in governance. Youth Voice is a platform for youth opportunity and advocacy aiming to amplify the voices of young people and the issues affecting them.





“Building on the success of our youth participation framework, this year we have implemented a youth governance strategy. This has included the recruitment and onboarding of two young trustees and the development of a youth advisory board.

Currently we have youth voice groups which sit across every area of the charity and young people work alongside our staff to shape The Mix's operations including content creation, campaign development, services development, safeguarding, community and more. However, we were also looking for a systematic way to share power with young people and involve young people in decision making. By bringing two young trustees on to our trustees' board, young people have a voice at the highest level of decision making within the organisation. The development of a youth advisory board means that young people will work alongside SMT to be involved in strategic decisions impacting the overall direction of the charity.”

Head of Youth Voice

Last year, we have extended young people's involvement in shaping The Mix into safeguarding. As part of our increased focus on safeguarding, we have established a safeguarding steering group. For the first time, we have a working group made up of young people, service volunteers and frontline staff to shape The Mix's response to safeguarding. The group created five pillars of safeguarding to drive our work in this space, with these pillars now underpinning our approach and culture around safeguarding across the organisation. Over the next year, the group will be focusing on creating content to ensure that young people are better informed about our safeguarding practices at The Mix.

In the past year, the Youth Voice team have delivered **254 youth voice events for young people** to help shape our services, learn new skills or to reach out to new young people. In total, we had **474 unique young people taking part, many of them in multiple roles. 146 young people engaged with us more than once, with 43 young people helping shape our work on a long-term ongoing basis through youth voice groups.**

As a result of involvement in The Mix's Youth Voice activities among young people seeking relevant outcomes:

100%

developed skills that are valuable to them

94%

felt that their involvement in Youth Voice activities makes a meaningful difference

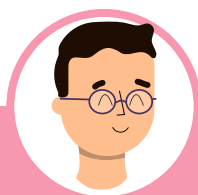
56%

felt more resilient

94%

felt their ideas were listened to by The Mix

(Source: The Mix Youth Voice survey 2021)



The journey as a volunteer with the Mix has provided me with transferable skills and experience, which I find very useful as I pursue an apprenticeship in Public Policy. Personally, it has equipped me with various skills, including stakeholder management, organising, public speaking, leading campaigns, engaging the audience and content creation. It is my ambition that I will continue to be involved with the Mix to make a difference in young people's lives. My short-term aim is to be involved in The Mix Youth Board or any other role providing a youth advocacy platform.

Young Ambassador



Reflection from Matilda

I was looking online for volunteering opportunities with a mental health charity and came across The Mix. Having experienced my own personal struggles numerous times, I wanted to do something where I could focus my energy and experiences on improving similar situations for other people, and helping others in general. I like the ethos of The Mix such as how young people are at the forefront of their work.

This past year, I have been campaigning via social takeovers on The Mix's Instagram for increased awareness of young people's mental health, specifically on the topics of self-harm, body image/ eating disorders and loneliness. I attended an interview with the BBC to discuss the impact of COVID-19 on GCSE and A-Level exam results, and an article was produced following on from this. With The Mix, I have also been able to contribute to the BBC Radio 4 program 'Surviving Self-Harm', featured on Mick Coyle's 'Mental Health Monday' Spotify podcast and spoke live on Times Radio about self-harm in young people. Furthermore, I have been lucky enough to join The Mix's steering group alongside the charity 'Safelives' to help with co-designing the 'Your Best Friend Project'.

Working with The Mix has also allowed my critical thinking and communication skills to flourish. In partnership with NOW TV, I was given the chance help with weekly 'watch-clubs' and to write a web article on the film 'The Invisible Man'. I have undergone ambassador training on how to deliver a good presentation, the outcome of which was the creation of my own presentation on Child Sexual Exploitation.

I am most proud of the work I have done surrounding self-harm, because this is a very personal topic and something which I used to have difficulty talking about. However, I feel that by campaigning for increased awareness and encouraging open conversation, I have reduced the shame about self-harm I felt previously. I also received numerous messages from friends who said they were proud of the work I was doing which helped with my self-esteem.

I feel like I am constantly learning not just about issues affecting young people, but also discovering more about myself. With each opportunity I gain a little more confidence and feel like I am contributing to a worthwhile cause. Working with The Mix also gives me the chance for my views to be heard and listened to. If you think you'd like to get involved, sign-up! The work is so personally rewarding yet gives you the chance to help others at the same time. As well, it is a great way to learn more about yourself and what you are really passionate about.

GROWING AWARENESS OF OUR WORK

The Mix's vital services have been needed more than ever since the global pandemic turned the lives of under-25s upside down. This is why The Mix launched an innovative new Marketing and Communications strategy in lockdown, with the objective of providing essential support to young people on the channels they most use. The highly effective use of youth-led campaigns, activations, influencer marketing, social advertising and content creation resulted in a huge impact, increasing The Mix's annual reach from **2.4 million young people to over 6 million within two years. This helped to increase brand awareness of The Mix amongst young people in the UK by 39% between November 2020 and November 2021** (YouGov, November 2021) and reinforce the charity's position as the first point of contact for any young person seeking help.

OUR CAMPAIGNS

As well as providing social media support all year-round, The Mix launched a series of campaigns and activations for support at key moments, focused on topics such as relationships, bullying, suicide prevention, mental health, sex and bodies and the COVID vaccine.



Over the past year, we have been working with corporate partners, **including NOW TV, TOMs UK, Experian, Anti-Bullying Alliance and Molang**. Our campaigns are always co-designed with young people and informed by data and research. A few key campaigns are highlighted below.

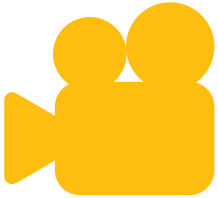
We partnered with NOW TV for two years, with this relationship enabling us to expand our services, upscale our teams and raise awareness of our work.

NOWTV

In 2022, we worked together on a month-long Relationships Campaign. Young people identified the focus for the campaign and to inform the content, we conducted a survey with a nationally representative sample of young people and wrote a white paper about young people's relationships. We worked with young people from our GenNow Ambassador group and experts to create and provide support via articles, videos, newsletters, reels, stories, social packs, social activations and live Watch Clubs. The content was targeted at young people with diverse backgrounds and life experiences. A few examples are below:



Being the only single friend, setting boundaries with family, casual sex, coming out to religious families, dating with autism and learning about your partner's religion.



Three "Watch Clubs" where young people were invited to watch a film and then discuss any themes in a facilitated group chat.



An Instagram live Q&A with a young person from The Mix and relationship and body positivity influencer, Ruby Rare.



The campaign resulted in a reach of 3.4 million young people across the UK; 14.9 million impressions, 220,000 engagements; 83,000 video views and 12,700 article views.

Sex & Bodies Social Media campaign

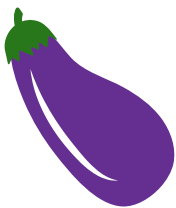
Our six-week-long Sex & Bodies Campaign provided young people with a platform to share, discuss and learn about their bodies, and the relationship they hold with them. This included:



A wide range of diverse support content, from female masturbation and eating disorders, to consent, what's missing from sex scenes and detangling shame from sex.



A "Let's talk about sex" live Q&A hosted by a young person from The Mix and an expert from Brook.



A short video series with an expert from Brook answering young people's most asked questions from "what does an average penis look like?" to "do I need to shave"?



Social takeovers from three young people sharing their lived experiences of eating disorders and toxic masculinity.



The campaign resulted in a reach of 1.8 million young people from the UK and 3.9 million impressions, over 127,000 engagements, 68,300 video views.

Suicide Prevention campaign

Our Suicide Prevention campaign was co-designed with young men and launched in the lead up to Suicide Prevention Day. The goal of the campaign was to reach and engage young men on the subject of suicide and reduce stigma and barriers to support. Activities included:



A partnership with Mental Health Campaigner Jonny Benjamin MBE, who collaborated on social media support content.



A powerful campaign video, wide range of social packs, articles, stories, quotes, advice and conversation starting posts.



A social advertising campaign on Instagram, Facebook and YouTube, which targeted young men in the UK.



A collaboration with Instagram to create content for their new Parents' Guide.



The campaign reached over half a million young people; generated 1.4 million impressions; 82,000 engagements; 53,000 video views and 17,284 article views.

OUR PRESS REACH

Our press work provides an opportunity for us to raise awareness about the issues impacting young people the most through our data. It also allows us to share a platform with young people, so that they can speak out about the change they want to see through published interviews, podcasts and broadcast media. Our coverage and signposts to our site are also key to raising our profile and improving the visibility of our website, our brand and our support services.

In the past year we have worked collaboratively with our young leaders to help shape our press strategy and inform our reports. We have also offered learning opportunities by training young people to communicate with journalists.



Over the past year we have had a total of 221 pieces of coverage, with a combined total reach of 1.1 billion. Our total desktop reach was 314.4 million and our total mobile reach was 860.2 million. We worked with 34 young people on press opportunities, podcasts and press strategy.

BUILDING A HEALTHY CHARITY

OUR PEOPLE

The Mix's employees, volunteers and young people involved in shaping The Mix and The Mix board are essential to delivering The Mix's services and its positive impact on young people.



Chief Operating Officer

“With 2021/22 presenting many additional challenges connected to the fallout of COVID 19, investing in staff and volunteer wellbeing became even more essential. We introduced an extra day of leave for employees to focus on their mental health and wellbeing. Beyond regular supervision to support wellbeing of staff delivering 1:1 services, we have developed new wellbeing and self care resources that are shared with staff and volunteers. We’ve also rolled out Wellbeing Action Plans (WAP) to further support staff mental health and wellbeing; and we are aiming to expand this to all staff in 2022/23.

Equality, diversity and inclusion have become central themes for our organisation. To ensure the values are thoroughly embedded in the organisation, we have introduced a blind recruitment process and policy, and unconscious bias training for all staff. We have created Equality, Diversity and Belonging (EDB) task and finish group that is self-selected from all levels of the organisation. The group has developed a statement that summarises our intent as an organisation and a strategy for embedding EDB at The Mix, with the progress being monitored at the Board level.

Additionally, we have recruited two new trustees from ethnic minority backgrounds alongside two young trustees to ensure inclusion of young people in the governance and decision making across the organisation. Last year, we have also reviewed our annual planning process giving a greater role to input and feedback from young people, volunteers and staff. This has resulted in a clear and strategic operational plan, progress of which is being reviewed on a quarterly basis. This, along with our outcomes based approach, enable us to take our learning into next year’s planning and continually improve the quality of our service.”

Currently, around a third of employees come from ethnic minority groups and a quarter from an LGBTQIA+ group. We are also committed to empowering and developing young people also through employment, with around a third of our staff being up to 25 years old.

In response to changing circumstances in 2021, The Mix have transitioned to a flexible hybrid working model. To ensure effective communication across the organisation, we have continued to hold a weekly organisation-wide meeting, so that all staff both based in the office and home working are kept up to speed on all developments. Our CEO sends regular charity wide emails to highlight successes and update all staff on key information and meets monthly with staff from all levels of the organisation from officers and managers to heads of teams, to provide an opportunity to talk through any issues and changes. Additionally, we have also reviewed all our financial systems and updated our procedures and processes to ensure we are successfully monitoring our income and expenditure.

Despite the difficulties experienced during the pandemic, the results from the 2021 employee survey show a fairly high satisfaction with work life balance and happiness at work among employees; with an average of 7.4 and 7.2 respectively on the 1-10 scale where 10 is a maximum.

Last year, 207 service volunteers helped to deliver community, counselling and helpline services across The Mix.

91% feel the skills gained will increase their ability to secure employment.

OUR VOLUNTEERS

The Mix's services are powered by volunteers, who are thoroughly trained and well supported by The Mix staff. Without volunteers, we wouldn't be able to deliver our services and meet the needs of young people. **207 service volunteers helped to deliver community, counselling and helpline services** across The Mix during the last financial year, with 80% being up to 30 years old.

Training was a central focus for the volunteer team over the past year, with the team extending and improving the training courses for volunteers and staff delivering the helpline service; training 92 new helpline volunteers and recruiting new staff to deliver training sessions. The team also ran 12 online sessions focused on topic related training to improve knowledge and skills around specific topics such as wellbeing.

Apart from training, supporting and managing volunteers, efforts of the volunteer team heavily focused on building a new volunteer platform to improve volunteer experience in The Mix. The platform will automate many processes, such as signing up for shifts and training sessions. It will also provide access to resources, staff team information and support space. It will also enable volunteers to communicate with each other and their teams via online groups and allow the staff to keep track of our service and Youth Voice volunteer journeys and collect better ED&I and management

While volunteers help The Mix to deliver services to young people, The Mix strives to help volunteers to increase their confidence, skills and employability, alongside ensuring a positive volunteering experience and support for volunteers and improving their wellbeing and resilience.

According to the 2022 volunteer survey:



volunteers feel a sense of fulfilment volunteering at The Mix



feel their confidence has grown as a result of volunteering at The Mix



feel they've learnt new skills



feel the skills gained will increase their ability to secure employment

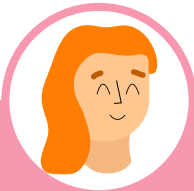


felt volunteering had a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing during the pandemic



“Whenever I have needed any form of support, the team have always been on hand to assist, whether it be technical issues, advice or emotional support after a session. This has helped me to grow and gain confidence as a counsellor.”

Volunteer



“I feel as though the support provided is great - everyone on the team is lovely and I feel as though they really care about the volunteers.”

Volunteer

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

As we continue into an increasingly unpredictable and uncertain period, providing the right support for young people is more crucial than ever. The Mix is here to ensure that young people are supported to overcome their day-to-day challenges before they grow into more complex problems or a full-blown crisis. The Mix is also dedicated to ensuring that young people who are harder to engage or face more barriers to support also benefit from our services.

In the next year, we will focus on:



Improving our services

We will complete our new website that is better optimised for mobile devices, has a high prevalence of video content and offers personalised support journeys to expert sector partners. Volunteers are the life blood of our services; following the deployment of our new volunteer platform, we will build on its e-learning capacity to create an end-to-end virtual volunteering journey that allows us to recruit, assess, train and support volunteers entirely online.



Growing awareness of our work

Growing The Mix brand is crucial to engaging young people, influencing policy and attracting supporters. We will continue to build our profile online through social media, deploying The Mix Connect to schools across the UK, focussing on search engine optimisation, and publishing our data to offer insight into the issues faced by young people.



Amplifying the voice of youth

We will work to place young people even more firmly at the heart of what we do in governance roles, strategic development and fronting our media work. Will amplify their voices with data collected from their peers. We will launch a new Youth Advisory Panel that work directly with our Board and SMT to ensure strategic guidance from young people at the highest level of governance.



Building a health charity

The effect of COVID-19 and -in particular- any associated financial recession means that our sector will face a challenging funding environment over the next 18 months. We will seek to deliver an income target of £2 million via a balanced portfolio of support drawn from trusts and foundations, corporate supporters, individual giving and trading of our services.

Furthermore, we cannot care for others unless we care for ourselves. We will continue to invest in the wellbeing and support of wonderful, dedicated team of Mixers.