



Empowering Young People to Thrive

Impact Summary 2022-23

For the year ended 30 June 2023

THE MIX

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS & IMPACT

In 2022-23,
across The Mix

1.2 million
young people visited
The Mix's website.

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

The Mix's multi-channel
helpline responded to almost
7,000 support requests from
4,000 young people.

Over **152,000 young people**
visited our discussion boards.

Our **social media** content
was seen by around
5 million
young people.

Our **Youth Voice team** involved
over 1,100
young people
in The Mix's work.

Our volunteers provided
12,323 hours of volunteering
– which is the equivalent of 514
days or almost 1 and a half
years!

We had over 13,000
conversations with over **5,100**
young people via our crisis
messenger service.

As a result¹,

Around **1 million young people** felt more
capable to cope with their situation.

A similar number formed a plan to make a
positive change to their situation.

More than **660 young people** have better
copng strategies so they can effectively
manage problems on a day-to-day basis.

Around **2,800 young people** felt **listened to,**
understood and emotionally supported by our
helpline team.

Almost **2,500 young people** feel more able to
cope with their situation or issue.

Around **122,000 young people** found relevant
information sources for further assistance on our
boards.

Almost **4 million young people**
are more likely to seek support
when they need it.

Almost all young
people involved feel
they made **a positive**
difference to the lives
of young people.

The vast majority of volunteers
said **they feel a sense**
of fulfilment.

Most volunteers also felt they
had **learned new skills** in the
role that would help them with
future employment opportunities.

Over **4,000 young people**
who used Crisis Messenger
found the **conversation**
helpful.



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CEO FOREWORD

The Mix's Annual Impact Report provides unique insight into the incredible work by our team, young ambassadors and volunteers as we reflect on the impact we've made on the lives of young people around the UK in 2022/23.

At The Mix, we believe in the role technology can play to empower the next generation, by providing them with the information and support they need to make positive choices in their lives. Our aim is to cultivate an environment where every young person has access to the tools that allow them to thrive on their own terms.

This past year has been a testament to the resilience of our team, volunteers, and young supporters. Following the challenge of a global pandemic, we continue to experience an unprecedentedly high level of demand for our services. We remain committed to serving young people from communities across the UK, and to adapting our programs and services to meet their evolving needs.

Throughout this report, you will find inspiring stories, compelling statistics, and tangible evidence of the impact we've had on the lives of young people. From providing access to co-created online resources and building supportive communities online to offering crisis and counselling services for those in need of additional help.

As we celebrate our achievements, we also recognise the work that lies ahead. In a time of reduced funding to youth services, a cost-of-living crisis and an epidemic of poor mental wellbeing among under 25s, the need for The Mix has never been greater. We are committed to increasing our efforts to reach even more young people in the year ahead.

Finally, my gratitude goes to the donors, partners, volunteers, and funders who have supported us. Your generosity, compassion, and commitment has been a driving force behind our success, and we are deeply grateful for your continued support.

Thank you.

CHAIR OF THE YOUTH ADVISORY BOARD FOREWORD

Over the past year, I have volunteered with The Mix as the Chair of the Youth Advisory Board; within this role, I have witnessed the power that The Mix's community and young people have! From our online discussion boards to the stories that we share on social media, it is clear that the community has allowed young people to have a place of belonging, understanding, and empowerment.

One of the most inspiring aspects of our community is the power of youth voice that shines through every part of it. Young people are using the services The Mix provides to raise their voices, share their experiences, learn from each other, and advocate for change. The services that The Mix provides are needed now more than ever; the lack of support that is out there for young people means we are often relying on social media and our peers; The Mix allows us to gain this support in a safe and controlled platform. With the cost-of-living crisis and loneliness, sometimes we cannot afford to meet up in person, or sometimes we might not even know anyone to meet up with; the community The Mix has allows us to feel listened to and allows us to talk to each other.

The Youth Advisory Board, in particular, plays a crucial role in ensuring that these young people's voices are heard and valued in all aspects of The Mix's work. Having young people's voices at the forefront is not just important – but necessary. We bring unique perspectives, insights, and ideas that have all helped shape our services, initiatives, partnerships, and governance. Our voices drive The Mix to be better and to do better and have helped to create a space to allow The Mix to be a charity for young people, run by young people!

To end, I want to say how proud I am to volunteer with such an amazing charity. I am so proud of the young people who are never afraid to speak out about their experiences and help each other! Our amazing volunteers and staff have worked so hard to continue to provide support to young people this year and continue this incredible charity! I am really looking forward to continuing this work next year, and I cannot wait to see what The Mix gets up to!

WHO WE ARE

The Mix is the **UK's leading digital support service for under 25s**, reaching over **6 million young people** each year with **free and confidential support** on any and every issue.

OUR VISION

All young people should be able to make informed choices about their physical and mental wellbeing so that they can live better lives.

OUR MISSION

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

OUR VALUES

Here at The Mix, we are...

Empowering

We lead, we train and support, we respect, we give space to grow, we give the power to choose.



Supportive

We listen, we encourage, we care, we're understanding, and we're empathetic.



Non-judgemental

We are open minded - which means we do not judge, we do not criticise, we do not blame.

Brave

We innovate, we pioneer, we take risks, we tell it how it is.



Proactive

We create situations, we make things happen, we get things done.

Collaborative

We are open and transparent, we co-create, we respect experience and expertise.



HOW DO WE MAKE CHANGE HAPPEN? OUR PLAN FOR 2022-23: WE WILL WORK TO...

... IMPROVE OUR SERVICES

...by providing our young people with the best support, resources and signposting online. We will keep developing our existing services, grow our reach and invest in new ways to reach young people such as deploying The Mix Connect to schools across the UK. We'll keep improving the quality and effectiveness of our interventions.

... AMPLIFY THE VOICE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

...by working to place more young people at the heart of what we do in governance roles, strategic development, fronting our media work and shaping our content and community. We will provide young people with a platform to amplify their voices and ensure they work directly with our Board and SMT to ensure strategic guidance at the highest level.

... GROW AWARENESS OF OUR WORK

...by building our profile online through social media and search engine optimisation to reach and engage more young people. We'll grow our brand across online spaces, in education setting and the media through publishing our data to offer insights into the issues faced by young people.

... BUILD A HEALTHY CHARITY

...by prioritising the long-term future of the charity. We will invest in our staff, volunteers and young people's wellbeing and diversity. We will ensure we implement working conditions that support the health and wellbeing of staff.

HOW IS THE MIX SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE?

Here at The Mix, we know that young people face unique challenges:

- Over **10.5 million young people live in the UK²**. Around **one in five young people have a probable mental health issue³** and even more struggle with their wellbeing, yet the vast majority are not ready to receive a referral to care⁴.
- Over half of young people feel their mental health got worse over the last five years and **wellbeing is at a ten-year low⁵**.
- **Under 30s are two times more likely to report feeling lonely** compared to over 70s⁶, and it is more important than ever for young people to have safe and trusted spaces to connect with others.
- The three most **common issues** among young people accessing our services are **anxiety or depression (75%)**, **body image issues (53%)** and **relationship issues (46%)⁷**.
- The cost-of-living crisis is impacting many of our young users⁸:
 - **1 in 3 struggle to pay bills**
 - **1 in 5 had to borrow money** to pay for essentials
 - **1 in 5 skip meals due to lack of money**
- Despite the pandemic having eased and life being seen by many as “back to normal”, the impact of the pandemic is still felt by many young people. We found that as a result of the pandemic⁹:
 - **56% of our young users still experience mental health issues**
 - **44% experience loneliness**
 - **33% report a negative impact on education or grades**

Under 30s are **2x more likely** to be **lonely** than over 70s

75% of young people contacting us have **anxiety and depression**

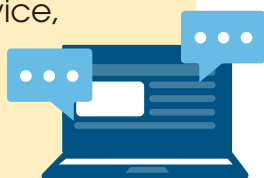


OUR SERVICES

At The Mix we know that choice and empowerment is really important. We provide a wide range of services as we know that all young people are unique and different – they have different needs, preferences, life experiences and want different things, and all of these can change over time.

Many young people use multiple services we offer. While, for some, our helpline may be their entry point, for others this can be our articles, discussion boards, counselling or social media channels. Young people use and combine the different services according to their needs and preferences while building their skills, confidence and resilience.

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



Social media - We provide direct support to young people via the social media channels they use the most, including TikTok, Instagram, Twitter/X and YouTube via posts, reels, stories, social packs, social takeovers and videos.

Discussion boards -

Our discussion boards are an online moderated peer community designed to help young people work through issues and support resilience. They encourage young people to open up and share experiences with others in a supportive and anonymous environment.



MixBot - Our chat bot is new a tool which helps people to navigate our services and signposts them to internal and external services, information and resources.

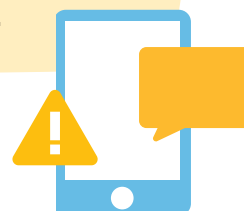
Helpline - Our helpline service, available via phone, email and webchat, offers non-judgemental listening and emotional support, information and signposting to over 16,000 organisations across the UK.

Counselling - We provide free phone, video 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.



Group chats - Our moderated live group chats, provide a safe space to talk through problems or just hang out. Our group chats are a judgement-free zone to get and give advice, a light-hearted space for fun, distraction and a chance to unwind.

Crisis messenger - Crisis Messenger text service provides free, 24/7 crisis support. 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.



ISAAC'S STORY:

With The Mix, I have used the helpline, the counselling service and community spaces. I had been dealing with some mental health troubles, had been looking online for some support and came across your website.

The helpline was my first contact with The Mix as it was available and easy to contact. **It really helped me to realise it was okay to have bad days** and start to think about what works for me to **start to address some of the things I was facing. The helpline also led me onto the other support you have available.**

The counselling I had was really helpful as I could speak to the same person over a longer period of time, allowing me to better understand my thoughts and feelings.

The community spaces were different as they felt more like a general chat, talking about anything and everything. **The community helped me to connect with others. It really felt like a really non-judgmental space to talk.** It was also helpful that they were available into the night, as that was often when I needed support.

The support I received from The Mix helped me to learn new ways to cope with some of the things I was struggling with, acknowledge that my feelings do matter and made me feel like I wasn't alone.



OUR THEORY OF CHANGE

Our theory of change represents how the activities we undertake at The Mix contribute to the intended outcomes and impact we aim to achieve for young people. It is guided by an asset-based approach and Framework of outcomes for young people¹⁰. We assess the impact of our services against the outcomes identified in our theory of change.

Our vision

all young people should be able to make informed choices about their physical and mental wellbeing so that they can live better lives.

IMPACT

More resilient young people

Young people's lives are saved

Young people have improved life chances

Young people have sense of belonging and agency

OUTCOMES

Long term

YP have improved mental health and wellbeing

YP have improved resilience

YP have improved employability

YP avoid crisis as issues are stopped from escalating

YP are more able to cope with life changes

YP lead and contribute to change within their lives and environments

YP give back through volunteering

YP feel less lonely and isolated

OUTCOMES

Short to mid term

YP access knowledge

- Find relevant information
- Have a clearer understanding of the problem and the solution
- form a plan to make a change to their situation

YP learn new skills and build capabilities

- Develop skills, capabilities, learn how to support others and gain experience
- Shape campaigns, The Mix and advocate

YP change their state of mind

- More likely to seek help
- Feel safe to open up & access support
- Have a greater sense of control and agency

YP are connected to support networks

- Find relevant support services or support networks for further assistance
- Build connections, sense of belonging & community

ACTIVITIES

Skills and capabilities building through interaction, training and experience

YP are involved across The Mix, create content, share experiences, provide peer support

Reaching YP in spaces where they spend time (online, social media, schools)

Evidence based information, tips & answering questions

Providing tools and strategies to deal with challenges

Coaching approach while exploring issues

Risk assessment & safety planning

Listening and Emotional support

Signposting

Rationale: More and more young people (YP) experience mental health issues and a wide range of other challenges, with many having nowhere to turn to for support. Most are not ready to receive a referral to professional care. Some young people find it difficult to speak about their issues and some lack clarity. Young people need support that will enable them to overcome their issues and help them build resilience, so they avoid slipping into crisis

IMPROVING OUR SERVICES

THE MIX CONNECT

The Mix Connect is a new joint programme, delivered in partnership with Shout UK. It is a website plug-in that schools can embed on their website or intranet to provide students with direct access to youth-focused information and advice, a peer-led wellbeing community, crisis support via text and to information on local services.

The Mix Connect offers school aged young people emotional support and personalised signposting 24 hours a day, empowering them to take their wellbeing into their own hands. It is supported by a unique student led ambassador programme designed by The Mix to help with embedding it into students' daily routines, in conjunction with school leaders. It also comes with evaluation tools designed to measure the programme's impact on the school and students' wellbeing.

Over the past 12 months, teams across the organisation focused on developing The Mix Connect. Key activities have included:

- Embedding the tool across 7 schools

- Continued outreach to Westminster schools and colleges as funded by The Westminster Foundation

- Promotion with councils across the country about licensing the programme in their schools

- Navigating potential partnerships with other companies in the sector to ensure the support offered by The Mix Connect is available to students everywhere as efficiently as possible

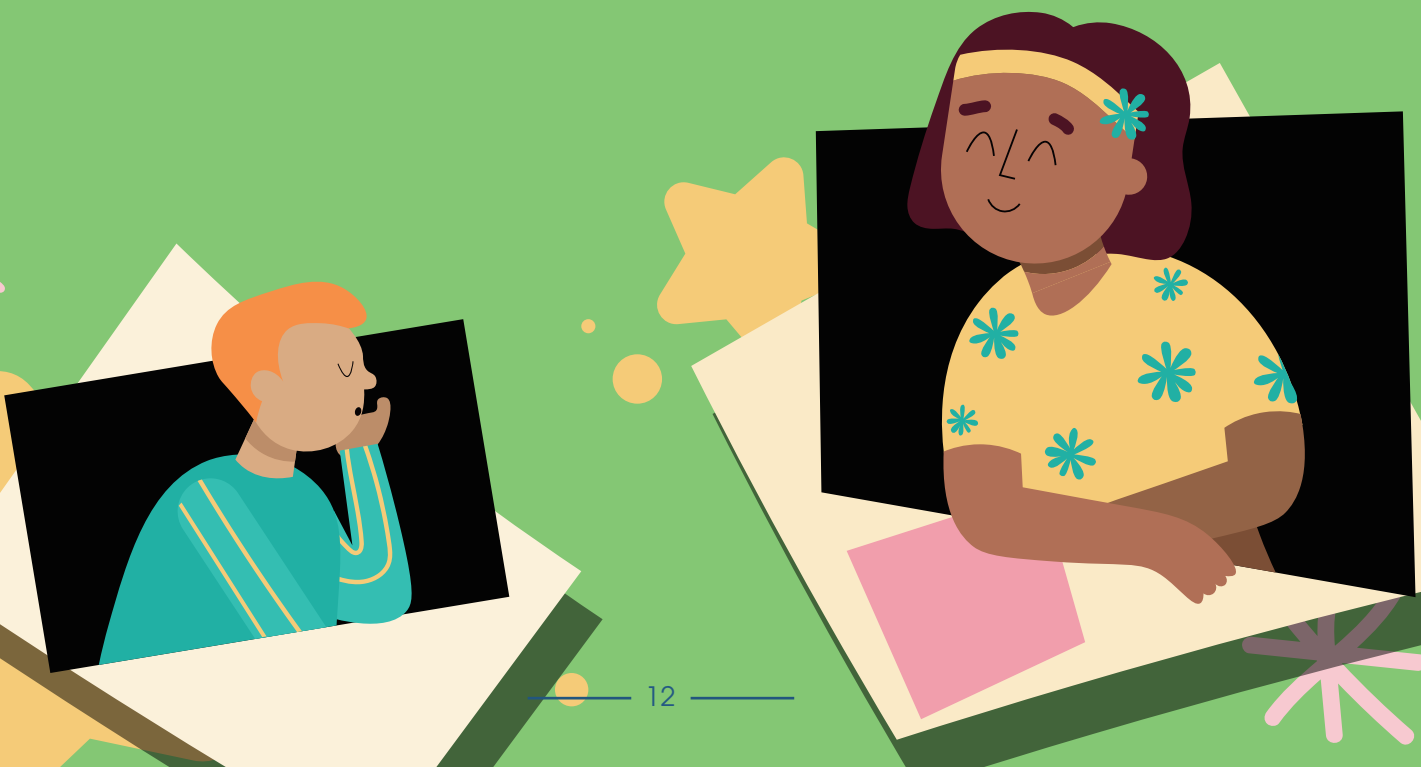
- Developing evaluation of the TMC programme and of the tool

"The Mix Connect has given students at Westminster Academy an amazing opportunity to be creative in ways to improve mental health support and awareness across the academy. Alongside this the mental health survey and tool for our website has been very useful in gathering information about how we can support students further."

Designated Safeguarding Lead

"The Mix Connect acts as a perfect immediate way for students to access help, as well as be more comfortable knowing they aren't alone, allowing them to focus on their education!"

Student



OUR WEBSITE

The Mix's website moved up to page 1 on Google for almost 900 keywords making us more visible to young people. Over the past year, 1.2 million young people visited our website, with 1 in 10 returning at least once more.

We want to make sure The Mix appears at the top of internet searches for any and every issue, so young people can quickly and easily find the information and support they need – whenever they need it.

Our content

The Mix has published 49 support articles in the past year, covering a huge range of topics for young people and working with experts and young volunteers from across diverse communities and sectors:

- Mental health guides on hearing voices, resilience and grounding techniques

- Sex tips and support for body image issues

- Drink and drugs information with a focus on real-life stories

- Support for lesser-represented sexual and gender identities

- Money and energy-saving tips to support with the cost-of-living crisis

- New articles about neurodiversity

- Mental and physical health tips for young men

- Articles encouraging activism and educating young people about the police

SEO & Ad strategy

In the past year, The Mix has worked on an extensive SEO and Google Ads strategy, improving our content and updating almost 600 priority articles from across our website. This has made our support articles more visible and accessible. It enabled us to reach new groups of young people who were unaware of The Mix and our services.

We have updated the images, terminology and tone of voice to ensure our content is up to date with the latest expert advice, best practice and that it is as inclusive as possible to diverse communities of young people.

As a result of using The Mix website¹¹, among young people seeking relevant outcomes:

90% found information or advice that was relevant to them

86% feel more capable to make decisions about their situation

88% formed or will form a plan to make a positive change to their situation

"I was signposted to The Mix website for lots of information on my condition. I now frequently visit the website just to read articles about my condition and other subjects. I like how the website is always up to date with information and advice about what young people are experiencing."

Young person using our website



OUR SOCIAL MEDIA

The Mix provided vital support on social media, reaching over 5 million young people across the UK and achieving almost half a million engagements.

The Mix provides vital services and information directly on the channels young people most use including TikTok, Instagram, Twitter/X and YouTube.

By engaging a wide range of staff teams, partners, volunteers and young people we were able to:

Co-design, co-create and launch our brand new TikTok service based on data, insights and expertise

Create a wide range of impactful content from young people, experts, influencers and staff

Establish new community guidelines and safeguarding processes online

As well as providing “always-on” support year-round, we delivered a series of TikTok campaigns from mental health to cost of living, drugs and exams, as well as support for diverse audiences of young people from young carers to BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ communities.



Our TikTok launch has been a real success story.

Since the launch we achieved...



The Mix's TikTok has been a free and largely organic platform for reaching, engaging and supporting thousands of young people vastly contributing to The Mix's impact. The rapid success of our TikTok has also led to new areas of funding, with corporates and foundations investing in the channel, campaigns and content across a range of issues and topics, which will help to continue providing vital information, support and services to even more young people.

The Mix won "**Best use of social media**" for their 2022-23 content at Third Sector Awards, recognising the impact of our social media support services.

"These are the videos people need to hear!"

Young person on The Mix's TikTok

As a result of The Mix's social media posts¹², among young people who engage with them:

- **90%** felt the information or advice they found was relevant to them
- **90%** found relevant information sources/organisations or support networks to go to for further assistance
- **89%** felt more likely to seek support when they need it
- **89%** felt more capable to make decisions about their situation or issue



OUR HELPLINE

Our helpline team supported just under 4,000 young people and answered almost 7,000 requests for help via webchat, phone and email.

Helpline user

“The helpline helped me take my mind of my bad thoughts and helped me create coping mechanisms. I felt listened to and that’s all I ever wanted – so thank you.”

Helpline user

“I felt calmer after speaking to someone (on the helpline). I felt listened to and felt that my feelings were very validated, which is what I needed in that moment.”

Last year, we continued to see a strong demand for our helpline as mental health and wellbeing continues to be a key concern for young people across the UK.

Over the past year, the helpline team successfully moved to a new shift pattern with a 5-day opening week, while continuing to provide high quality support to young people accessing the service and retaining our volunteers. This change was necessary to ensure the continued safe and robust delivery of the service, with a full staff team available to provide top quality support.

With 82% of young users finding the helpline beneficial, last year we have seen the highest ever levels of satisfaction across almost every measure.

The helpline team have also been closely involved in reviewing data categories used to track the topics discussed on our helpline and understand what challenges young people are facing in their lives. Apart from enabling us to accurately capture the trends on topics discussed, this helps us ensure that the language and format used is accessible and meaningful for young people as well as staff and volunteers.

According to our routine service evaluation for 2022¹³, among young people seeking relevant outcomes:



felt listened to



felt understood



felt emotionally supported

NADIA'S STORY:

I was struggling with a few different challenges when I found The Mix's helpline. These included things related to my physical health issues, my family and starting at university.

During my conversations on the helpline, **the agents were able to calm me down and give me strategies to try out in the moment. I still use most of the tips I learnt in my day-to-day life now.** The conversations helped me to break down the problems I was facing into smaller and more manageable tasks.

The helpline was a space where I could speak to someone, get some guidance and also find more information. I was also given some useful follow up services to go to for further support. **It was the first time I'd felt able to speak out about the issues I was facing and gave me confidence to keeping speaking up.**



MIXBOT

Our MixBot answered over 9,000 questions from over 4,000 users last year.

**Young person
using the MixBot**

“The MixBot made me feel less anxious about reaching out for help.”

**Young person
using the MixBot**

“The MixBot directed me to relevant services where I could find more information or people who could support me.”

The Mix is committed to using new technologies to improve the lives of young people and to increase our capacity for support. We developed the MixBot in partnership with Futr to provide **a space available 24/7 for young people to access information and support**. The MixBot significantly increased our capacity to support young people as there is no limit on how many people it can help.

The MixBot is currently able to respond to around 300 topics, with further development work planned for next year involving creating new support pathways and personalising the interaction to enable us to respond to individual user needs better. Involving young people in development through testing enabled us to ensure responses are accessible and relevant.

We've been working on further embedding human empathy into the AI tool. Looking ahead, the MixBot will be:

increasing the number of topics it is able to answer

helping more people to feel supported by the service

improving capacity on the helpline by responding to queries with signposting to relevant information, resources and services

upscaling its use as it will be enabled throughout our website

As a result of using The Mixbot (Annual survey 2023)¹⁴, among young people seeking relevant outcomes:

Just under three quarters feel understood

Over three quarters feel more capable to make decisions about their situation or issue

Approximately four in five found relevant information sources, organisations or support networks available for further assistance

OUR COUNSELLING SERVICES

Over 1,000 young people were supported by our counselling service, completing over 4,600 sessions.

3,724
telephone sessions

826
webchat sessions

64
video sessions

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.

Head of Counselling

“Our key focus over the past year was on implementing a new delivery method – video counselling. Our counselling and tech teams have been creating an automated booking system to allow our counsellors to deliver video sessions to young people. We have also developed a separate training session to help our counsellors in facilitating their first video sessions. We are currently piloting the new service and have delivered over 60 video sessions. In 2023/24 we are planning to introduce improvements to our internal systems that will enable us to vastly upscale the delivery of video counselling sessions.”

Our goal is to support more and more young people with their mental health. In order to achieve this, we will be:

Updating our process of onboarding volunteer counsellors

Strengthening our relationships with places of study to enhance our recruitment (i.e. places that offer counselling courses)

Updating our training by introducing e-learning for our first training session, helping us to train greater numbers

84% of counselling users completing their sessions reported improvement in their mental health and wellbeing (based on CORE-10 scores)¹⁵.

We continue to collect and analyse our data to improve our counselling processes to increase engagement as this alongside support is key to resolving problems.

Although we have managed to significantly decrease disengagement rates over the last few years among both young people receiving counselling as well as those who did not proceed with their sessions after registering, disengagement remains an important issue. Our data show that it is mainly driven by feelings of anxiety about having counselling, and our surveys show that many reasons contribute to these feelings. We have created a detailed plan for the next 12 months to tackle this issue.

According to our service evaluation in 2022¹⁶, among young people completing their sessions:

- **97%** found the counselling service helpful
- **92%** feel more able to understand and express their feelings
- **90%** formed or will form a plan to make a positive change to their situation
- **86%** feel their mental health improved
- **84%** feel they now have better coping strategies to manage problems on a day-to-day basis

Counselling case study

KIERAN'S STORY:

When I first signed up to counselling at The Mix, I was feeling really hopeless, unhappy and often felt like life wasn't worth living. Many of the issues I was struggling with stemmed from my physical health which had a real impact on my mental health. I didn't feel supported by my doctors and everyone else didn't understand what I was going through.

Counselling was really useful as it gave me a space to really speak about what was happening and how I was feeling. Over the course of my 8-week sessions, **my counsellor helped me find opportunities to feel more optimistic about life.** It provided me with **a safe space to explore my mental health where before I tended to feel guilty.**

After finishing counselling, **I can see that life is worth living. I do still struggle with anxiety, but I feel more positive and feel hopeless less frequently. I now feel more confident that I can cope if and when things do go wrong. I've learnt some useful coping strategies and am currently looking into other support opportunities.**

OUR ONLINE COMMUNITY

Discussion boards

Boards moderators moderated over **17,000** posts

Over **152,000** young people visited our boards

Almost **400** new young people joined as users

Around **200** users took part in a discussion

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.

Online Community Manager

“We worked with our Community Champions Youth Voice Group to review our Community Guidelines. Previously we used to have separate guidelines for Group Chat and the Discussion Boards, and we had feedback from young people that it was confusing to have two sets of guidelines. We have since merged them to create one set of Community Guidelines that cover our discussion boards, group chat and social media channels. The team also started collecting community case studies to highlight how valuable the community is to them. All of these stories highlight how valuable online communities are and the work we have been doing to provide a safe space where young people can connect with other young people to get support.”

Recently we launched a new volunteer community role - the Peer Supporter. This is a light touch and flexible role for young people to drive engagement across the community and take a leading role in discussions. In our first month of launching, 70 young people applied to volunteer as a Peer Supporter!

SAMMY'S STORY:

Growing up I've struggled a lot with my mental health and wellbeing – experiencing low self-esteem related to my views on my body image, sexual assault and PTSD. Despite accessing support through other mental health services, I was struggling with the lack of support between my sessions.

I quickly joined The Mix's online community. **The discussion boards acted like a safety net for me when I needed support but wasn't able to access any through formal routes. They felt like a really non-judgemental and accepting space to explore my feelings. I feel like everyone on the boards genuinely cares and wants to support one another.**

On the boards I feel safe and able to talk about challenges I'm experiencing at any hour of the day. I think this is incredibly important, as often overwhelming thoughts hit me in the early hours of the morning when no one is awake to listen to or help me. By using the boards, you can have someone responding to you within a short period of time.



Group Chat

Group Chat Moderators ran over 370 sessions supporting 1,500 young people over the past 12 months.

Our moderated live group chats were run Monday to Thursday last year. Group chats are a smaller community space where most evenings, from 8 - 9.30pm, young people can join a small group to discuss a wide range of topics and receive support from their peers. We run a range of group chats with a different focus. Our Support Chats are a judgement-free zone to get and give advice within a group. Our General Chats provide space for a light-hearted chat for fun, distraction and a chance to unwind. Last year, we also run group chats for young carers and survivors of sexual abuse.

Community Manager

"Over the past year, The Mix partnered with The Green House, a specialist support service for children, young people and families who have experienced sexual abuse. We launched a new weekly Support Circle Group Chat service for young people who have experienced sexual violence, so they have a safe space to get support from other people who have been through similar experiences. This was the first themed support group we've launched, and we've been seeing members coming back to attend repeatedly. This new project also developed our staff and volunteer team, by allowing us to create an internship opportunity for a young person to join our team and develop skills to enhance their future career opportunities and upskilling our community moderators via a session delivered by The Green House covering how to support someone who has experienced sexual violence."

The Mix team has been working closely with a number of universities across a range of research opportunities. To highlight one of these, we worked with MSC Behavioural Changes students from UCL to identify strategies to further improve our group chats delivering mental health support, which have seen a sharp increase in usage since the Covid-19 pandemic.

Online Community Manager

Our struggles with recruitment of young people for telephone or video interviews helped us uncover that our community users tend to prefer to remain anonymous and favour text-based communication when engaging in research. These insights and recommendations have been shared with our university partners and some studies have now amended their ethics applications to be more inclusive, greatly increasing participation from young people.

These studies identified a number of actionable improvements the community team is planning to implement over the next few months.

As a result of using The Mix online community¹⁷, among young people seeking relevant outcomes:

Discussion boards

- **92%** feel safe when using the boards
- **87%** feel supported when they need it
- **85%** feel more connected to other people or like part of a community
- **74%** feel better able to form a plan to cope with life's challenges

Group Chat

- **88%** feel safe during a group chat
- **83%** felt supported by people in the chat
- **83%** felt like part of a community
- **84%** felt better able to form a plan to cope with life's challenges

OUR APPROACH TO SAFEGUARDING

The skills of The Mix's staff supported by our safeguarding practices help keep young people safe and supported through times of risk, ultimately helping them find safety. In over three quarters (77%) of cases with a safeguarding risk, our intervention alone can keep young people safe. Young people seeking support from our helpline report **feeling listened to, understood and emotionally supported**, which tends to lead to a de-escalation of risk.

"(The Mix) helped me by calling some paramedics when I was about to kill myself. I was very scared but they assured me everything was going to be alright... They make me feel heard and important."

Helpline user

"Over the past year, our Safeguarding Steering Group focused on listening to and collaborating with young people to better understand how safeguarding affects them. We know that 'safeguarding' often feels unclear to young people – it can be a scary word and seen as something being done to them, rather than being done to better support their safety. In partnership with young people, we created the Unlocking Safeguarding Project to demystify our safeguarding practices and remove the stigma from the word itself. The group will create a range of content to inform young people on safeguarding, leading to greater empowerment among our young people when their life is affected by safeguarding."

Safeguarding Officer

AMPLIFYING THE VOICES OF THE YOUTH

OUR YOUNG PEOPLE

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

"Young people have continued to make a significant impact on The Mix. Our Youth Voice staff team have worked hard to ensure the quality of our programme continues to deliver what young people want. Over the past year: Our Youth Advisory Board have really found their feet and, following an exciting residential trip, led on the direction of our organisational strategy alongside The Mix's senior management team and Trustees. They played a key role in setting our strategic direction and are involved in various aspects of the organisation, including The Mix Connect steering group, engagement with funders, safeguarding, and engaging young men. The Services Innovator Committee co-designed video counselling and important website elements, such as the "get urgent help" page. The Safeguarding Steering group co-designed plans to empower young people with knowledge about safeguarding systems."

Head of Youth Voice

As well as co-shaping the direction of the organisational strategy, our Youth Advisory Board (YAB) represented The Mix at the parliament, speaking in the House of Lords in partnership with the Centre for Mental Health during the launch of the Mentally Healthier Nation paper.

Several members of our YAB helped to shape, as members of the steering group, the event 'Exploring our Emotional Worlds' hosted by The Royal Foundation, also appearing on a panel with Prince William.

2023/24 will bring some exciting shifts in our youth voice work as we focus on creating community across our online platforms. Led by suggestions from our Youth Advisory Board, we'll be launching new ways young people can get involved in our work and build a community for everyone online!

Noteworthy youth-led projects in the year included work focused on young people's attitudes to the police. Originating from one of our youths, the project engaged 247 young people through surveys, conversations with other young people and co-design sessions.

The Mix has also been focusing on embedding young people and their voices in our content. A few highlights are below. The Mix created:

55 pieces of youth voice content, including articles, videos, lives and social media posts

A youth-led Instagram campaign called 'Another Perspective', planned and produced by our Young Ambassadors, with a reach of over 1 million

2 pieces of youth voice content for Pride Month, including an article on demisexuality, our top performing new piece for June 23

A youth voice article for Suicide Prevention Week, including a young person's lived experience of suicidal thoughts

24 youth led TikTok's featuring topics such as managing anxiety, gap year tips, looking after your mental health at Christmas and studying support

According to our youth voice survey¹⁸:

- **100%** feel that they make a positive difference to the lives of young people through their involvement in Youth Voice

- **96%** developed skills that are valuable through the Youth Voice activities

- **94%** feel more confident speaking up about issues that are important to them as a result of their involvement

- **94%** feel that their involvement in Youth Voice activities makes a meaningful difference



YASMINA'S STORY:

I'm really passionate about mental health and had my own mental health struggles over the years. But I really liked The Mix and wanted to get involved with the Youth Voice team as **the charity didn't just focus on mental health, but also on so much more!** There's a lot alongside mental health that we as young people don't learn about in school or elsewhere that is really important. I struggled at school so having somewhere **trusted and safe to turn to** was great.

Charities like The Mix are important as stepping stones as young people get older to learn and grow. Becoming an adult can be a really scary prospect, so having somewhere to go to for support is really helpful.

The fact the Youth Voice team works with young people up to 25 years old is also such a benefit. **A lot of the time you reach 18 and then you're treated like an adult. It doesn't feel right so it's important to recognise there is a transition period where you still need support and guidance.**

I've done a lot of trainings and taken part in a few of the youth groups with The Mix. I like working with charities as I lacked a lot of confidence in school and other settings. **Working with the youth voice team really built my self-confidence and self-belief - I now feel I know who I am. I realised I was actually worthy and valued and that people were interested in what I had to say!**



GROWING AWARENESS OF OUR WORK

OUR CAMPAIGNS

In the past year, across all our campaigns we achieved a **combined reach of just under 6 million young people, with almost 3 million video views.**

The Mix has run several impactful multi-channel campaigns across the past year, focusing on topics such as summer wellbeing, drink and drug support and the cost-of-living crisis. All these campaigns have included a balance of youth voice content and expert advice, as well as collaborations with influencers and each had a significant reach, helping us to grow awareness of our work and support.

All our campaigns are planned and produced in collaboration with young people and are informed by our data and research. Our Young Ambassadors completely led and produced one of our successful campaigns last year – Another Perspective.

A spotlight on two of our most successful campaigns:

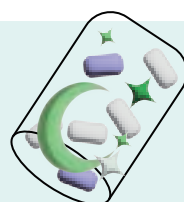
Our **Summer wellbeing campaign (Jul-Aug 22)**

covered a range of issues most affecting young people during the summer, from anxiety to body image, money, depression, sexuality and change.

The campaign included lots of different types of content, including lives, Q&As, polls, articles, activations, videos, social media support and collaborations with experts, influencers and young people from The Mix's community.

The campaign resulted in:

- Over **7 million** impressions
- Almost **2.3 million** people reached.



Our **Drink and drugs support campaign (Sep-Oct 22)**

was led by data from our nationwide survey of young people around drug use and informed by co-design sessions with young people. It included a press and digital campaign uncovering new, [crucial data about young people's substance use](#), and covered topics such as anti-depressants, ketamine, heroin, laughing gas, valium addiction, medical cannabis and how to talk about drugs without using stigmatising language.

The press campaign was very successful, we achieved **285 pieces of coverage about our report**, including both regional and national coverage, **with a total potential readership of 438,000,000. Our digital campaign achieved almost 730,000 people** and went viral on TikTok for [our animated Ketamine short](#) – **with over 258,000 video views and 27,000 likes**, boosting our **following to over 10,000 followers.**

OUR PRESS REACH

In 2022-23 we have achieved a total of **827 pieces of press coverage** across radio, TV and print with a total combined **potential readership of almost 4,000,000,000**.

The past year has been a really exciting one for press coverage as **The Mix's research has been cited and discussed in hundreds of publications and across broadcast press**. Our support services have also been signposted to by multiple high-profile publications. This has allowed us to reach new and diverse audiences and to grow awareness of our services and the issues impacting young people across the UK.

Spotlight on:

Pride press campaign with The Royal Foundation: During Pride Month, The Mix worked with The Royal Foundation to launch a press campaign. Two of our young volunteers met The Prince of Wales to discuss mental health in the LGBTQIA+ community and their conversation was [filmed for a video](#) that was released across regional and national press. This was an incredible awareness-raising youth voice piece that drew attention to the challenges LGBTQIA+ young people are facing, as well as signposting to our services as a source of support for this.



PARTNERHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

We **collaborated with experts from across the youth and mental health sectors** as well as from within our own services to create support articles, videos and social posts on a range of different issues. We also worked with partners and influencers on campaigns and content enabling us to draw on expertise from different industries and sectors and support new audiences of young people.

"Mental Wellness is something we all need support with, which is why our mission at schuh is to connect our young customers to the right services for help.

We're proud to partner with The Mix to signpost our community to advice, resources and bespoke expert mental health services. The team are energetic, professional and passionate about helping us understand the key mental health issues young people face."

Head of Marketing, schuh

A huge thanks to all our partners!

- Tampon Tax Fund
- NOW TV
- WH Smiths
- Toms
- Revolution Beauty
- Blue Star
- Experian
- Schuh
- Xcite Energy
- Mischon De Reya
- Hollister
- TOMS
- Goodloop
- Nominet
- City Bridge Trust
- Hellvelyn Foundation
- The Westminster Foundation
- Tides Foundation
- Clothworkers
- Blaggrave Trust
- CHK Foundation
- Esmee Fairbairn
- 29th of May 1961 Charitable Trust
- The Prudence Trust
- Garfield Weston
- John Lyons Charity
- Lottery reaching communities
- Pears Foundation
- St James Place
- Rayne Family Foundation
- Flourish Arbonne Foundation
- Nominet
- The Green house
- New Philanthropy Capital
- Merriman Charitable Trust
- Gift Aid
- Ian Donald
- Lyle Wier flight
- Matthew Fautley
- WGMI
- Bancroft's School
- River Café
- And all the individuals who make our work possible!

VP of Impact, TOMS

"TOMS is proud to support mental health all year round, through our partnerships with amazing nonprofit partners like The Mix. We are thrilled to support The Mix's work to address and destigmatize mental health issues among the young people of the UK. Through their thoughtful, approachable, and accessible resources, The Mix continually demonstrates their focus and commitment to the community they serve."

BUILDING A HEALTHY CHARITY

OUR PEOPLE

The Mix team consists of under 40 employees supported by an 'army' of volunteers delivering our services, young people from youth voice shaping The Mix and The Mix board of trustees. All are essential in delivering our services and ensuring continued positive impact on young people.

"Investing in our staff and volunteers' development is essential. Last year, we have run an intense 2-day training for our Heads of Team to support them in their leadership skills and development. We also ran an internal training session for Managers to strengthen their skills as a manager. We will compliment this with an external session for all managers and all staff that might be managers early next year.

Our Youth Advisory Board had upskilling opportunities on our residential trip, leading our organisational direction, having fun and meeting the team. The Mix also ran training for our Young Ambassadors youth voice group to provide them with the tools and skills to create presentations and talk passionately about topics. More broadly, our youth voice network was provided with opportunities to get involved in information sessions to ensure new members are engaged and informed about the work being done by The Mix and the opportunities to get involved.

We assess organisational training needs via our annual appraisal system – we focused on job specific training that is required for the roles such as Safeguarding and supervision for our counsellors, and more general support such as a subscription to the masterclass series which can be utilized by all staff."

Chief Operating Officer



The Mix continue to provide an Employee Assistance Program for our staff and key volunteers to support their wellbeing. To ensure our employees' happiness at work and that their voice is heard, each year we run an employee survey, the results of which are used to gauge the staff experiences at work and to develop measures in response to staff concerns.

Despite the difficulties experienced following the pandemic, the results from the 2022 employee survey show staff are happy with the hybrid working arrangements, allowing for work-life balance and flexibility on the whole.

The Mix staff member

“The people at the Mix are amazing and I love working with them.”



OUR VOLUNTEERS

The Mix would not be able to deliver our services without the fantastic work of our volunteers, who power our charity with the support of our staff.

The incredible contribution from our volunteers is highlighted below. Last year they delivered:

Over **12,000** hours of volunteering, a total of **514** days!

Community:
over **2,100** hours

Counselling:
over **4,500** hours

Helpline:
over **4,200** hours

Youth Voice:
over **1,400** hours

At the end of June 2023, there were 164 active volunteers working across The Mix. We know it is important that our volunteers reflect the young people we support. Most of our volunteers are under 30 years old:

85%
in the community

80%
on the helpline

52%
in the counselling

“Volunteering has and will continue to change post Covid. One of the main challenges the sector is facing at the moment is recruiting and retaining volunteers. As an organisation we want volunteering to continue to grow and to do this we have to find ways of adapting to an ever-changing environment.

In response, our Community team launched a Peer Supporter role, allowing applicants to sign up and begin their volunteer journey quicker. All our service volunteering roles require regularity, but this role allows volunteers to pick and choose when and how much time they offer. Volunteers are free to donate anything from 20 minutes to a couple of hours a week or month. Instead of making volunteers select a regular shift, they log the hours they have volunteered. So far, The Mix has had 10 volunteers up and running in this role, and 113 hours of volunteering taken place.”

Volunteer and Training Manager



The Mix has also **continued to train and develop our volunteers**, offering 8 additional training sessions throughout the year delivered by in-house specialists and external partners. These covered a range of topics relevant to what our volunteers are dealing with, such as drugs and alcohol, sexual violence, neurodiversity and LGBTQIA+.

Volunteer

“Thank you so much for this! I have to say it was probably one of the most thought provoking and helpful training sessions I've ever had.”



We know volunteering can be difficult as volunteers deal with emotionally challenging situations. For that reason, it is paramount to us that we provide support, both practical and emotional, for our volunteers. On top of our existing support, last year **The Mix launched a new peer to peer support programme** for our helpline volunteers – a space to both receive and offer support. It is also a space to make connections with other volunteers to help them feel embedded into The Mix.

According to the 2023 volunteer survey¹⁹:

98% of our volunteers feel a sense of fulfilment volunteering at The Mix

96% feel supported around personal and volunteer development

96% feel they've learnt new skills

88% feel the skills gained will increase their ability to secure employment

Volunteer

"I have loved my time at The Mix so far. I've really noticed a difference in my communication skills outside of shifts too, which has been so rewarding to see. I feel as though the skills I've learnt are going to prove so valuable to me as I progress through life and I am especially excited to showcase them with my next year of university coming up!"

"Everyone is very lovely indeed... I am so glad I applied to volunteer with you guys, it helped me a lot as well with my own feelings of isolation, it is so good to help someone and realize you are not alone"

Volunteer

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY, INCLUSION AND BELONGING

The Mix feel very passionate about ensuring equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging (EDIB) for our staff and volunteers and that this is reflected in the content we produce.

Our steering group developed our [EDIB statement](#), setting out our organisational goals and plan focusing on four key areas:

Recruitment

Listening to the voices of marginalised communities

Training

Creating a welcoming and warm environment at The Mix

Over the past year, we have reviewed our internal policies to ensure they align with our new EDIB statement. We have introduced blind recruitment and refined our application process so that it now includes specific EDIB questions and diversity monitoring forms. These steps will ensure we gather data more systematically across the organisation and support more sophisticated diversity measurement tracking and analysis. By collecting more data, we will be able to assess whether people applying to us come from diverse backgrounds and take appropriate steps to address any shortfalls.

Spotlight on our Youth Voice engagement:

According to our Youth Voice diversity data, the young people we involve are above national average in diversity in all demographic aspects, aside from engaging young men which will continue to be a priority in 2023-24. Particular attention was given to neurodivergent and autistic young people over the past year, resulting in the creation of a guide for frontline services staff on supporting autistic individuals and providing training on the neurodivergent experience. These efforts have contributed to making The Mix a more inclusive and accessible space.



WHAT'S NEXT FOR THE MIX?

As The Mix moves into our next financial year, providing wellbeing and mental health support via a variety of means to young people remains our priority.

NEXT YEAR WE WILL FOCUS ON

IMPROVING OUR SERVICES

We will focus on building a vibrant community across all our spaces, empowering young people with resilience and genuine connections, in the pursuit of wellbeing and a sense of belonging. However, a young person chooses to engage with The Mix, they are part of our community: on our website, discussion boards, TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Threads, support articles or group chat.

AMPLIFYING THE VOICE OF YOUNG PEOPLE

We want to create a cohesive youth-led community where young people receive a consistently high level of support, connection and fun wherever they are most comfortable engaging. We will work to be youth-led in every way through a range of accessible youth voice and youth volunteering roles, with guidance support and expertise from our staff.

GROWING AWARENESS OF OUR WORK

We will focus on raising The Mix's brand across all of our digital spaces through growing our community strategy, across education settings by continuing to deploy The Mix Connect in schools and throughout the media and online. We will use our rich data to continue to offer insights into the lives of young people and what matters most to them.

BUILDING A HEALTHY CHARITY

We will continue to invest in the long-term future of The Mix, aiming to deliver an income target of 2 million. We will keep investing in our staff, volunteers and young people, focusing on supporting their wellbeing and embedding equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging across our team.



WE CAN'T THANK YOU ENOUGH!

To everybody who supports
The Mix, you really do help shape young people's lives.

That goes to our volunteers, trustees, partners, funders, staff
and, most importantly, our young people –
we hope you all know what a difference you make.

Thank you for everything.

APPENDIX

METHODOLOGY AND EVALUATION DATA SOURCES

To demonstrate our impact, we base the estimate for the number of people achieving each outcome on the number of people using particular services and our evaluation data. The following evaluation sources have been used:

THE MIX ANNUAL SURVEY 2022:

- Fieldwork was conducted between the 1st September 2022 to 20th November 2022.
- The annual survey was advertised via a range of channels provided by The Mix (website, discussion boards, group chats, social media). An invitation to participate was also sent to all counselling and helpline users with emails who used the service in the last six months and agreed to be contacted.
- Responses received: 1,177 from people over the age of 12.
- Answers including not applicable, I don't know, prefer not to answer, not sure were typically excluded for easier comparison.

THE MIX ROUTINE HELPLINE SURVEY 2022-23:

- Invitation to the online survey was sent to users who had used The Mix helpline and agreed to be contacted the next day after contacting the helpline.
- The fieldwork took place from April 2022 to April 2023.
- A total of 420 young people responded to the survey. Those aged 12 and under were excluded from the survey.
- Don't know, prefer not to say and not applicable answers were excluded from analysis.

THE MIX ROUTINE COUNSELLING SURVEY 2022-23:

- Invitation to the counselling survey was sent to users who had used The Mix counselling service and completed their sessions. The survey is not sent to users who disengaged from the service or only completed a small proportion of the sessions.
- The fieldwork took place from April 2022 to March 2023.
- A total of 92 young people responded to the survey. Those aged 12 and under were excluded from the survey base.
- Don't know, prefer not to say and not applicable answers were excluded from analysis.

THE MIX COUNSELLING CORE 10 REPORT 2022:

- The time period of the data analysed is from 1st October 2021 to 30th September 2022.
- A total of 222 young people were included in this analysis.
- The purpose of this analysis is to assess how the scores given by counselling users change throughout the course of both the 4- and 8-week sessions.
- For core score analysis, only counselling users that had both an initial and end score were included.

THE MIX YOUTH VOICE SURVEY 2022:

- An invitation to an online survey was shared with all young people who registered interest in or participated in a Youth Voice activity.
- Fieldwork was conducted between 2nd December 22 to 29th January 23.
- A total of 37 responses were received from young people.

THE MIX VOLUNTEER SURVEY 2023:

- The Mix conducts an annual volunteer impact survey at the beginning of each year.
- An invitation to an online survey was shared with our service volunteers who consented to contact.
- A total of 56 volunteers responded to the survey and were included in the analysis.

THE MIX

Registered charity number: 1048995

Endnotes

1. Please see the Appendix for methodology used to estimate our impact
2. 10 to 24 year olds in England and Wales (ONS, Census 2021)
<https://www.ethnicity-facts-figures.service.gov.uk/uk-population-by-ethnicity/demographics/age-groups/latest#age-profile-by-ethnicity>
3. In 2022, 18.0% of children aged 7 to 16 years and 22.0% of young people aged 17 to 24 years had a probable mental disorder.
<https://digital.nhs.uk/data-and-information/publications/statistical/mental-health-of-children-and-young-people-in-england/2022-follow-up-to-the-2017-survey#:~:text=Key%20findings,between%202020%2C%202021%20and%202022>
4. Digital Strategies to Accelerate Help-Seeking in Youth with Psychiatric Concerns in New York State; Michael L. Birnbaum, Chantel Garrett, Amit Baumel, Nicole T. German, Cynthia Lee, Danny Sosa et al., 2022, *Frontiers in Psychiatry*
<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/well-being>
5. <https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/press-release/younger-brits-report-higher-levels-of-loneliness/>
6. The Mix Annual survey 2022
7. The Mix Annual survey 2022
8. The Mix Annual survey 2022
9. The Mix Annual survey 2022
10. The Young Foundation 2012. A framework of outcomes for young people. Bethia McNeil, Neil Reeder and Julia Rich. <https://youngfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/10/Framework-of-outcomes-for-young-people-July-2012.pdf>
11. Data source: The Mix Annual survey 2022 (n=192)
12. The Mix Annual survey 2022 (n=154)
13. The Mix Routine helpline survey 2022/23 (n=420)
14. Data is based on The Mix's annual survey 2023. Early results are included for illustration only as fieldwork is still in progress. (n=38)
15. The Mix Counselling service check-in and CORE 10 report 2022 (n=222)
16. The Mix Routine counselling survey 2022/23 (n=92)
17. The Mix Annual survey 2022 – Discussion boards (n=95), Group chats (n=79)
18. The Mix Youth Voice survey 2022 (n=37)
19. The Mix volunteer survey 2023 (n=56)