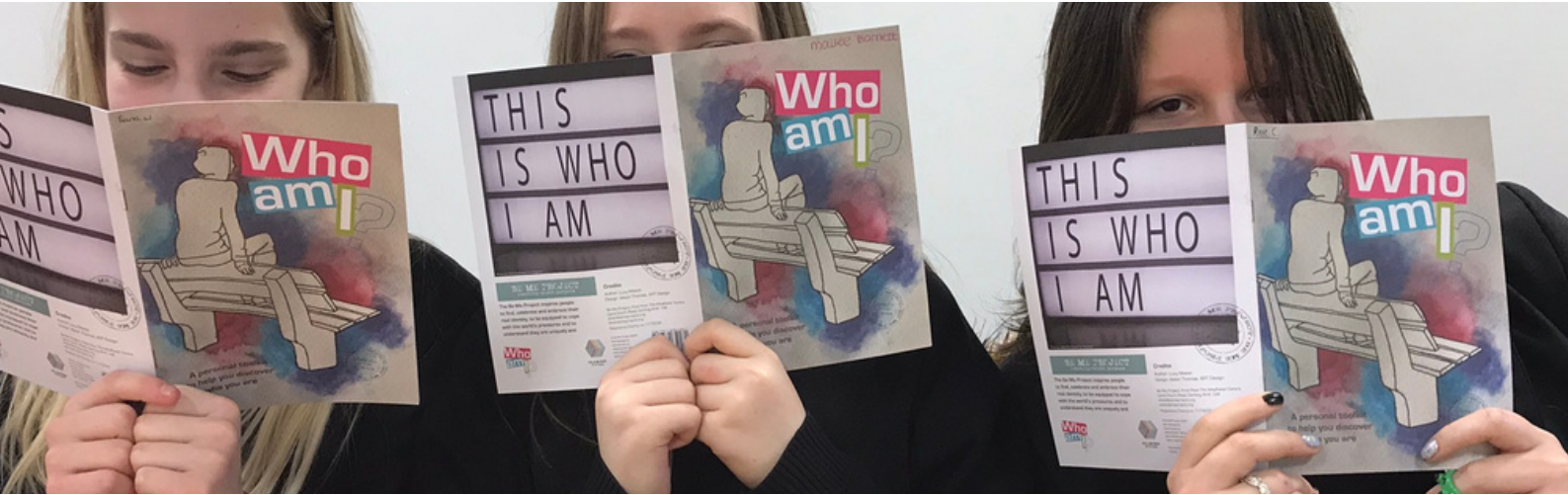


BE ME PROJECT

identity ~ truth ~ purpose



TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT 1ST AUG 2021 - 31ST JULY 2022

“

On Be Me I made a new friend and started to get more confident about talking about my feelings. I feel a lot happier now, it has helped a lot with my mental health and other people have noticed and said I am back to being ME again!

”

CHALLENGES

- Increased anxiety levels and loneliness
- Difficulties of re-socialisation post covid
- Adapting to post pandemic life

OUR RESPONSE

- Adapting delivery style to post pandemic requirements
- Doubling our reach across our regions
- Growing and sustaining our team.

WE HAVE
SUPPORTED
OVER
500 PEOPLE
THIS YEAR



CHAIR'S REMARKS

Be Me project has continued to fulfil its charitable objectives and perform strongly both in terms of its offering and its financial security. The impact of the pandemic has largely dissipated in terms of the operational influences of Be Me Project and yet the damage to those it helps is only just emerging. The principles that underpin Be Me Project have not changed and remain fundamental to what we do.

Having been a trustee of Be Me Project since its formation, I have witnessed the integrity, passion and energy with which everyone involved has worked.

At our core remains a strong desire to enable attendees to see themselves in a different way - one of value, having been wonderfully made.

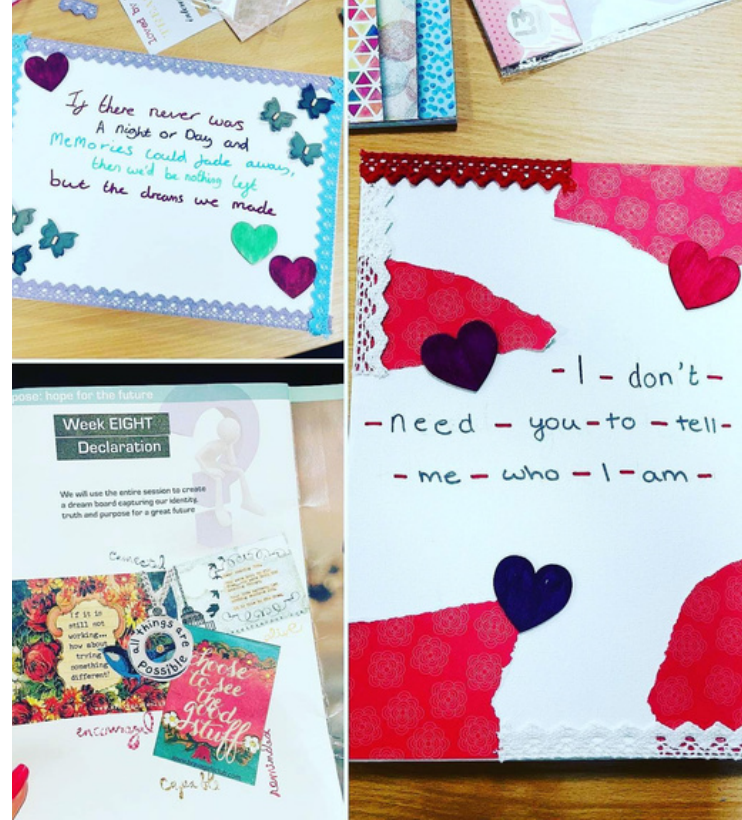
I am thrilled with the performance of Be Me Project and its stability and strong base upon which we have built and will continue to build. However, we are about more than just financial performance, we represent

some of the truths that so many people in our society need to receive. The changes in those who have attended our courses is a delight to witness. That is not to say that one course can fix people, but it is a door opened and a light shone. We do this with genuine compassion, understanding and no judgement and are the privileged recipients of the participants' sharing.

Three new Trustees have joined us in the last year and they bring a wealth of experience in the charitable, medical and psychology sectors.

Even though Be Me has grown substantially over the last year, I am certain the organisation is still in its infancy. The need is ever bigger, and so is our desire to help.

Richard Mason, Chair



“

I loved the crafts and it was comforting to talk about what was going on in my life in a safe place. I learnt about boundaries and what I should and shouldn't tolerate. Before, I felt rubbish about myself but now I know I am unique, special and worthy.

”

OUR STORY

Be Me Project has grown a lot since its early days. From our small beginnings trialling our first course with six girls in 2014, we now deliver a growing number of mental wellbeing courses to young people and women referred to us by community centres, GP surgeries and hostels in several counties across England. Our secondary school programmes are now in huge demand and we continue to expand to try to meet as much of this need as we can. We continue to offer online courses to enable us to reach further afield.

Between July 2021 and July 2022 we have helped over 500 participants. This is a considerable increase above our projected number but remains, sadly, a small fraction of the growing need. But we are excited to have had a good number of new volunteers and staff join us over the last 12 months and this trend looks set to continue.



There has been some wonderful feedback received from our participants which is so encouraging to us as a charity.

“ **I wish I'd had Be Me when I was at school.**

Young person living in a hostel

”

'BE ME SPURRED ME ON'

A woman referred to Be Me through Social Prescribing recently told us that one of her paintings had been published in a mental wellbeing book. Her confidence had grown little by little as the course progressed and she began believing in herself and recognising her talents. She says through Be Me she was spurred on to enter the competition. What a wonderful outcome!

“ **I enjoyed being able to speak up about how I am feeling as I can't always do that. I learnt how to handle my emotions and how to feel better in myself.**

13 year old

”



OUR MISSION

To support young people and women to celebrate that they are uniquely and wonderfully made for a purpose and to be equipped to build positive mental wellbeing and confidence in life.

OUR VALUES

- Inspiring people to believe they are uniquely and wonderfully made
- Respecting and accepting the unique worth and value of each individual
- Encouraging and building up each person
- Compassion and care
- Being real
- Led by Christian love

HOW WE HELP

We run 3 different courses in both 1:1 sessions and groups. The 'She Is' course is craft based. Who Am I? is discussion-based and 'Let's chat' is a very flexible course allowing attendees to select topics they feel best suited to them. In each course we try to ensure that the participants will relate well together to help them get the best out of the sessions and to, hopefully, keep up long term encouraging friendships - something which has happened frequently and given us great joy.

We have also had great joy in witnessing course participants then becoming a course assistant or asking to volunteer in another capacity.

This helps build long term confidence and gives a sense of purpose to those who do it. Be Me Project supports people struggling with depression,

anxiety, low self-esteem and vulnerable young women in the community struggling with their mental health. Our leaders and volunteers have all experienced difficult times so can empathise with our participants and not judge them.

OUR AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

- Build and enhance young people's and women's confidence and positive mental wellbeing
- Support vulnerable people to explore and develop tools to better manage their emotions.
- Develop resilience to help them better cope with life's ups and downs

“
Thank you so much for asking my Year 10 daughter to be a mentor for the Year 8 group. My daughter had lost herself and now I feel like I have her back. She's made better friend choices and she feels a lot happier. It was so helpful that she not only learnt things for herself, but she helped the younger ones too.

A young person's mum

CURRENTLY
1 IN 3
 BENEFICIARIES ARE STRUGGLING WITH
GENDER/SEXUALITY ISSUES

LAST TERM **47%**
OF STUDENTS HAD
**SPECIAL
EDUCATIONAL NEEDS
AND DISABILITIES**

**10% OF STUDENTS
HAD ASD**
**37% HAD NEEDS
SUCH AS ADHD, MLD,
SEMH AND SPLD**



Many of our course participants struggle with friendship and family issues and high anxiety. We also have those with disabilities, including partial deafness and in utero drug exposure which is affecting their mental health.

FEEDBACK:
**22% INCREASE
IN RESILIENCE**
**15% INCREASE
IN CONFIDENCE**

“

It encouraged me to come to school, because I struggled - and now I come in because of Be Me.

A 14 year student with low school attendance due to anxiety

”

'All of the girls took on board **positive messages to remember** when they struggled in some way. **All recommended it** to other pupils.

'They all reported that **they felt listened to** and had the **opportunity to discuss** a range of issues. It was noted that the girls continued through the year **more positively**.

'Emotional 'meltdowns' diminished significantly. Teachers reported an **improved attitude** to the girls' **learning** and the way they **coped with challenge**.'

-Head of Pastoral Care, Ashcombe School



85%

OF COURSE PARTICIPANTS REPORTED IMPROVEMENT IN THEIR CONFIDENCE & RESILIENCE



IMPACT

Over the last 12 months, Be Me Project has been collecting data and analysing the impact of two of the courses we run. A clearer picture will emerge in the future as we undertake further surveys with new attendees and re-survey recent attendees. We are really encouraged by the results and analysis undertaken to date.

'Who Am I?' - 85% of 115 participants surveyed in 2021 and 2022 score more positively in confidence and resilience overall at the end of the course than they did at the beginning.

'She Is' - By the end of the courses, there was positive movement in many areas of the surveyed responses, particularly around improved self-esteem/confidence and an improved sense of a unique identity.

“

There is a saying I heard a long time ago: "Become your own cheerleader"... I had no idea what that meant until after taking this course.

”

In consulting with the attendees prior to and after their course, they were asked to summarise their feelings of themselves.

PRE-COURSE VIEWS:

- I'm Anxious
- I'm not being heard
- I'm letting people down
- I feel judged by others
- I'm not 'good' enough
- I don't like my body

POST-COURSE VIEWS:

- I've enjoyed being able to talk and not be judged
- It's nice to know I'm not alone in how I feel
- I've been able to make some friends
- I felt safe
- It made me think things about myself that I've never thought before
- I've learned to be kind to myself



KEY ACHIEVEMENTS



We are purposeful about sharing our knowledge externally and have been involved in many events this year. We ran an LSA training morning, attended Mindfest in Dorking and undertook talks and workshops for schools and community events. We are involved in external forums such as the KT22.

Be Me Project were invited to have a stall at Mindfest, a mental health and wellbeing festival where Roman Kemp, Capital Radio DJ and presenter of BBC documentary 'Our Silent Emergency' was the keynote speaker.

We made lots of connections with people through this event, including a special young person named Jude.

Jude struggled with life. She was bullied a lot at school which made her withdrawn. She dropped out of secondary school and spent a couple of years in her bedroom, away from everybody. We met Jude's sister at Mindfest where we chatted about meeting up with Jude 1:1. Jude came once a week to do the 'She Is' Course and then started volunteering in the office helping our course leaders. She's now been volunteering with Be Me for five months. We can see, one day, Jude being a course assistant, helping others.

“ **It's good to have something to do every week that I enjoy with someone that I get along with. It helps me to de-stress and has encouraged introspection which has solidified my opinion of who I am.**

Jude, 16 years old

”

Our CEO was asked to share her personal story and the journey of Be Me on Premier Radio with Hannah Scott Joynt. Lu felt privileged to be asked and many found her story very moving and inspiring.



GREASE NIGHT

We were chosen to be the nominated charity for the 'secret cinema' event at St Georges Church, Ashted. It was a brilliant evening and we raised almost £3,000!



DUKE OF EDINBURGH

Once again we have been asked to support a student in her DofE volunteering activity. This year a student has been running our social media posts under supervision, engaging with our followers with encouraging posts and news each week.



BE ME CONFERENCE

We held our first Be Me conference this June in Dorking. What a buzz! We had most of our team together from Cumbria, Kent, Surrey and Sussex. We shared best practice, personal experiences and our stories with one another, and celebrated the charity's achievements. Dr Jill Rasmussen, a highly regarded senior clinician in mental health, came and did some training with us, encouraging us in the work we are doing. We appreciated the time together to build each other up and get really excited about our future as a team!

MARY FRANCES TRUST

This year we partnered with Mary Frances Trust (a mental health and emotional wellbeing charity for adults in Surrey) by running an online course for 10 of their young adults - some at University, some were working and some were unable to work. One of the young adults from this group has recently joined our 'She Is' course in person and is thoroughly enjoying it.

“

I just wanted to say another thank you for the 'Who Am I' project sessions. They were really helpful and it was nice to just speak to some new people who understood where I was coming from.

”



FUTURE STRATEGIC AIMS AND DEVELOPMENTS

- Build on our strong roots in the community, consolidate our existing partnerships and develop relationships with new partners within the regions we work in already
- Grow our teams in all areas, taking on more volunteers and course leaders
- Open our second Surrey Hub in September 2022
- Develop our survey impact analysis by reanalysing our participants' mental wellbeing from six months to a year after the course has been completed
- Continue developing our feedback systems to the partnerships regarding participants' responses and any on-going help to be put in place
- Participate in the schools mental wellbeing event in July 2023
- Develop our 'Let's Live' activity book to support teenagers with helpful topics and advice.

“

Be Me taught me to like myself and to stop judging myself.

”

