

# GREATER MANCHESTER MENTAL HEALTH IN COLLEGES

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42<sup>ND</sup> STREET ONLINE SUPPORT FOR FURTHER  
EDUCATION ACROSS GREATER MANCHESTER  
FEBRUARY 2021



42nd street have supported young people aged 11- 25 years with their emotional well-being and mental health, for over 40 years, promoting choice and creativity in all areas of support.

They champion young person-centred approaches that demonstrates local impact and have national significance including one to one work, group work and projects.

**42<sup>ND</sup>  
STREET**

## INTRODUCTION

This is part of the Greater Manchester Mental Health in Further Education Colleges.

The aim of this programme is to:

- Develop the capacity of further education and sixth form colleges in Greater Manchester to collaborate in support of the mental health and wellbeing of their staff and students
- Identify good practice that can be shared across the system.

There are 21 colleges in Greater Manchester (9 general further education colleges and 12 sixth form Colleges) and approximately 90% of 16 to 18yr olds in Greater Manchester are in colleges. During an academic year approximately 51,000 out of 56,000 16-18-year olds will study at these further education and sixth-form colleges.

The Association of Colleges (North) has been awarded funding for Year Three of this programme to deliver a wide-ranging programme across Greater Manchester to raise awareness and support development of the mental health agenda within individual colleges.

[hub.gmhsc.org.uk/mental-health/fe/](http://hub.gmhsc.org.uk/mental-health/fe/)



**Colleges benefit from services that covers the whole of GM to promote to a diverse student body'**

16 to 18 year olds often report significant levels of stress and anxiety, often resulting from educational pressures which in the last year has been even more pronounced.

Making support as accessible as possible has always been a focus of 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and, even before the impact of COVID-19 was felt, creating an online service was seen as a potentially invaluable resource to offer. It provides a “front door” that can be accessed with a good deal of anonymity, at any time, from any place and importantly for this project, was not constrained to individual boroughs or Clinical Commissioning Group funding streams (a key characteristic of colleges being the wide catchment area for students, often meaning any given student body crosses multiple post codes, meaning colleges benefit from services that covers the whole of Greater Manchester to promote to a diverse student body).

In the very early stages of this project 42<sup>nd</sup> Street conducted a survey of 827 college aged young people to understand help seeking behaviour online and used the results of this to create a bespoke online platform able to offer confidential one to one support, group work and drop-in advice to this demographic as part of a wider Greater Manchester project funded through the National Health and Wellbeing Fund.

**What did college-aged young people say in 42<sup>nd</sup> Street's survey? ([full findings available as published paper](#))**

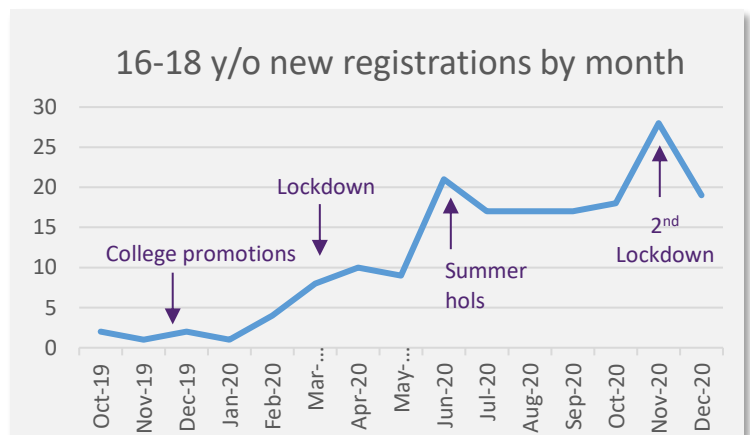
The most important qualities for a valued website were ease of use, security, a trustworthy 'brand' and being able to have personal interactions (adverts and intrusive / flashy technology being off-putting factors). 85% accessed online resources exclusively via a phone. 41% had already looked for mental health support online (LGBTQ+ young people being twice as likely to say yes than heterosexual counterparts) and a further 28% indicated they would but were unsure of what services were appropriate (LGBTQ+ young people again being twice as likely in this category too) The largest group to say they didn't feel they needed support was heterosexual males. Opinion on whether an anonymized service was preferable proved quite divisive, with even evenly split across the various options.

## The project

42<sup>nd</sup> Street met with the nominated leads of the selected targeted seven colleges to introduce the service and the online platform. Information was provided covering how the site worked and the best pathways into the service and further shared with the wider staff teams via posters, leaflets and information cards. Colleges were offered the opportunity to embed the online link on their intranet and social media channels as well. Plans were made to attend two colleges to speak to their student ambassadors to consult on how best to improve engagement on the platform but unfortunately, these had to be cancelled due to the national lockdown. However, 42<sup>nd</sup> Street continued to hold consultations with further education students as part of the “Digital Pizza” group.

Whilst the national lockdown limited face to face engagement, it led to a sizeable increase in engagement with the platform for all ages but in particular those aged 16-18. The additional funding from the Association of Colleges programme allowed 42<sup>nd</sup> Street to focus on expanding one to one capacity to meet the significant increase in demand from 16 to 18 year olds, creating additional weekly open-access group sessions and an expanded drop-in service at times accessible to college students. Since the beginning of the project (Q3 2019) **173** 16 to 18 year olds joined the platform, **108** of which were enrolled in college and these referrals have increased month on month (significantly higher than first anticipated!).

42<sup>nd</sup> Street’s online support platform was redeveloped with Aequana so that learners from the targeted colleges could select their college when registering, allowing students to register under new criteria where previously they would have been excluded from the offer (due to geographically based funding). This was subsequently expanded to include all further education colleges in the wake of lockdown in order to gain a fuller picture of further education engagement and a wider service offer.



An online drop-in was set up offering on average 6 sessions per month since March, with **30** students accessing when needed (accounting for **42%** of all young people accessing the drop-in).

Which of the following best describes you?

I am aged 13-25 and study at a college or sixth form in Greater Manchester

Please select the college you attend

Select your college

- Stockport College
- Thameside College
- The King David High School
- Trafford College
- Trinity CofE High School

An online social group was also established to offer young people a way of connecting during lockdown. These began in May, with 29 sessions offered so far and **47%** of young people attending are further education students.

So far the core one to one work has offered 6-12 sessions of support to **96** of those registered (with 40 opting not to access support after registering and the remainder currently on the waiting list).

These developments have been supported directly or indirectly by the funding provided by the Association of Colleges and has enabled 42<sup>nd</sup> Street to support more further education students and share information and resources with more professionals and young people to help promote prevention and early intervention.

The seven targeted colleges accounted for **35%** of the overall further education engagement after we widened accessibility due to COVID-19 with the largest referrers being Xaverian and Loreto colleges. **42%** of young people heard about the service from their GP, **26%** from their college.

**Who's accessed the platform?**

- 72% identify as female
- 32% as LGBTQ+
- 28% as BAME
- 10% as having a disability

**173** 16-18yr olds have registered  
**41%** of [registrations] show severe psychological distress  
**91%** of young people show improvement

Anxiety accounted for **54%** of all presenting difficulties, followed by depression (**39%**), suicidal thoughts (**16%**) and panic attacks (**12%**) (bearing in mind the majority of young people do not present with just a single issue).

96% registrations over clinical threshold of need, 41% showing as severe psychological distress (according to YP Core)

For all those ending support (including those leaving the service prematurely) 91% of young people show improvement and 55% clinically significant change or better.

For those completing all sessions 100% have improved, 60% clinically reliable change or better.

**Young people core outcome measures**

For online work 42<sup>nd</sup> Street asked young people to complete a “YP CORE” form each week before their session and when first starting support giving a numerical score

>10 = clinical threshold of need

>15 = moderate distress

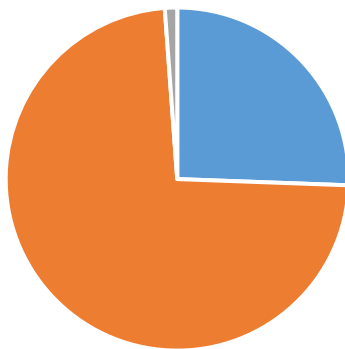
>20 = moderate-sever distress

>25 = severe psychological distress

A reduction of 5 pts or more is seen as clinically reliable change

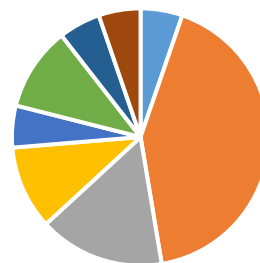
The platform allows 42<sup>nd</sup> Street to also gather considerable data on the access patterns of young people.

breakdown of gender



■ male ■ female ■ non-binary

breakdown of disability



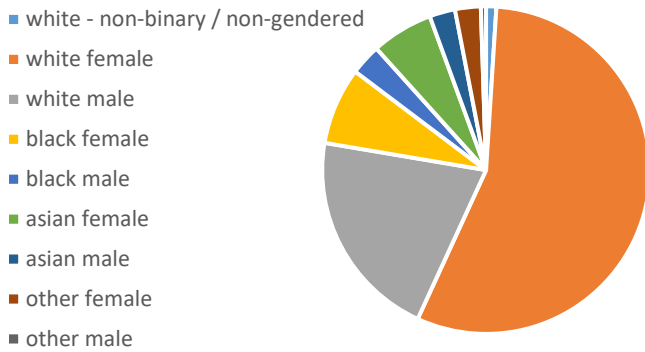
■ learning ■ mental health ■ physical  
 ■ Unclear ■ Dyspraxia ■ hearing  
 ■ Autism ■ Vision



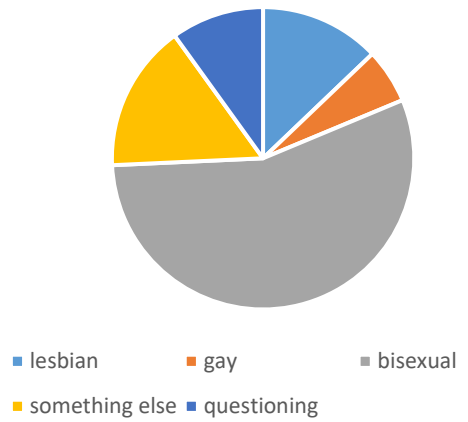
**[Being online] actually worked out better in the end for me definitely and I feel like I got a lot more out of the sessions than I would have face to face.**

Online young person

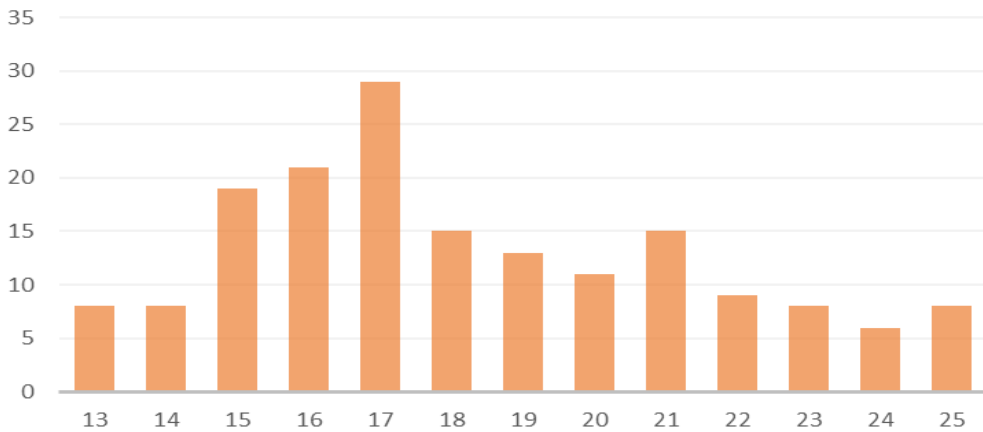
ethnicity and gender



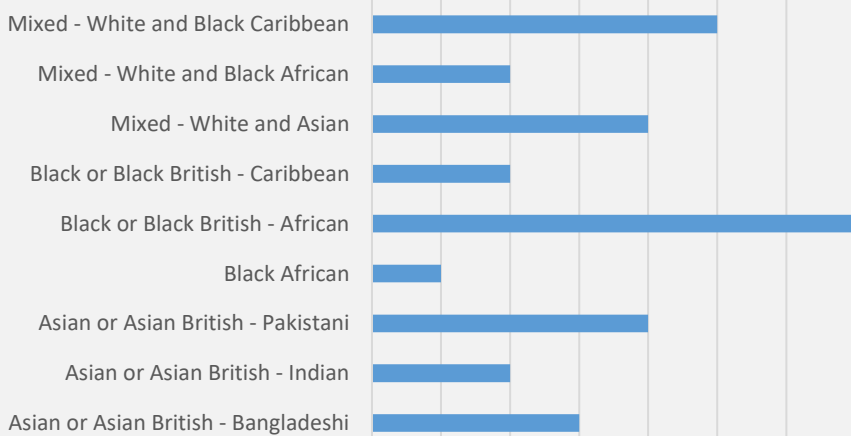
non-heterosexual identities



Ages registering

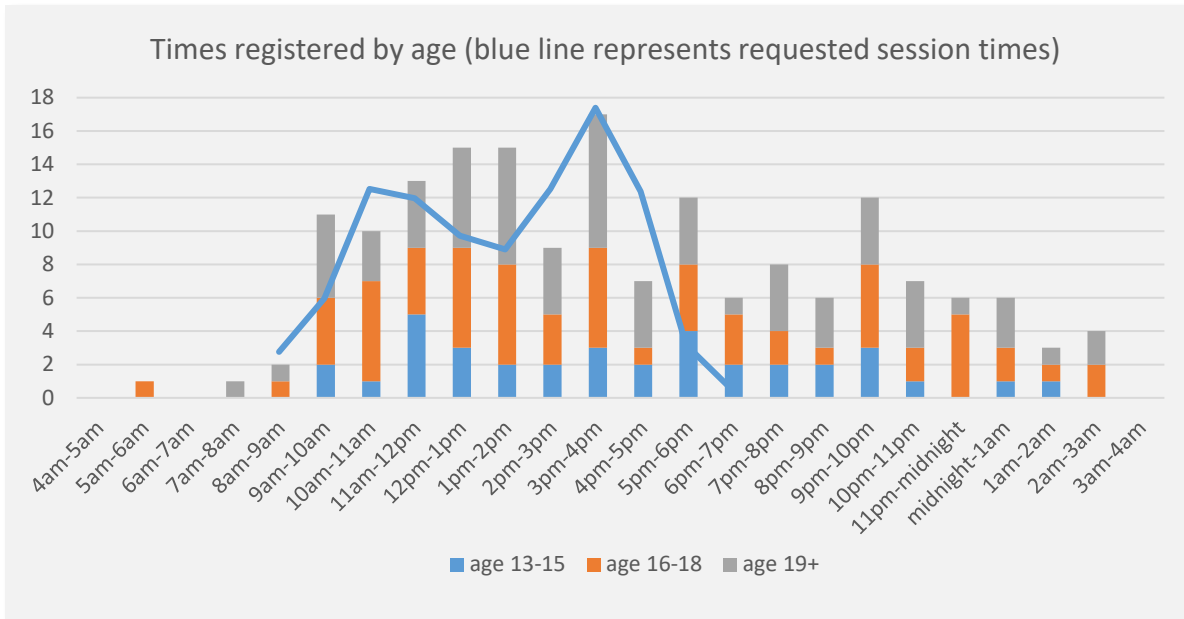


Breakdown of BAME registrations



**I can't imagine where I would be now without all of the support, I was so close to ending my life all together and now I couldn't even imagine that.**

Online young person



## Next steps and the learning

The ability to access support via a text-based system has proved increasingly popular since lockdown began. Whilst some young people initially expressed disappointment it was not a video-based environment as they had expected, a considerable amount grew to prefer the text-based nature, citing both an ongoing difficulty to find a confidential space and “Zoom exhaustion” as lockdown continued. The 42<sup>nd</sup> Street service was able to effectively offer a tailor-made service for this.

42<sup>nd</sup> Street was also keen to ensure it remained flexible, offering both synchronous live chats and asynchronous weekly messages dependent on what was most convenient for young people. As the above graphs show though 3pm-4pm is overwhelmingly popular both for registering and requesting sessions and they will likely look into expanding capacity at this time going forwards.



**Whilst we’ve absolutely experienced an increase in college-aged young people we’re aware most are hearing about the service via GPs or predominantly from two key colleges (Xaverian and Loreto) and there is the potential for closer liaising with more colleges as well. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street**

Its clear online working is particularly relevant for this age range and ensuring colleges are continuously aware of the service could be of great ongoing benefit.

42<sup>nd</sup> Street are mindful however this was not actively pursued as they hit capacity on their ability to offer support to this cohort quite early on and instead focused resources on increasing trained online one to one staff to meet this demand (it’s also worth noting the jump in registrations over the summer holidays in this age group where ordinarily referrals tend to slow).



Increasing this one to one capacity is key to reducing the waiting lists that have grown since lockdown (approximately two months by the end of 2020), producing obvious complications when attempting to respond to issues like exam-related stress with a college-aged cohort.

42<sup>nd</sup> Street are constantly exploring options to increase this and are also recruiting a group of young people to create open access resources for our new platform launching in March 2021 where there would be an opportunity to create additional content focused on this age range too.

“ Overall, we have managed to offer a service to considerably more college-aged young people than expected and have seen extremely positive outcomes for a cohort of young people displaying a high level of need. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street

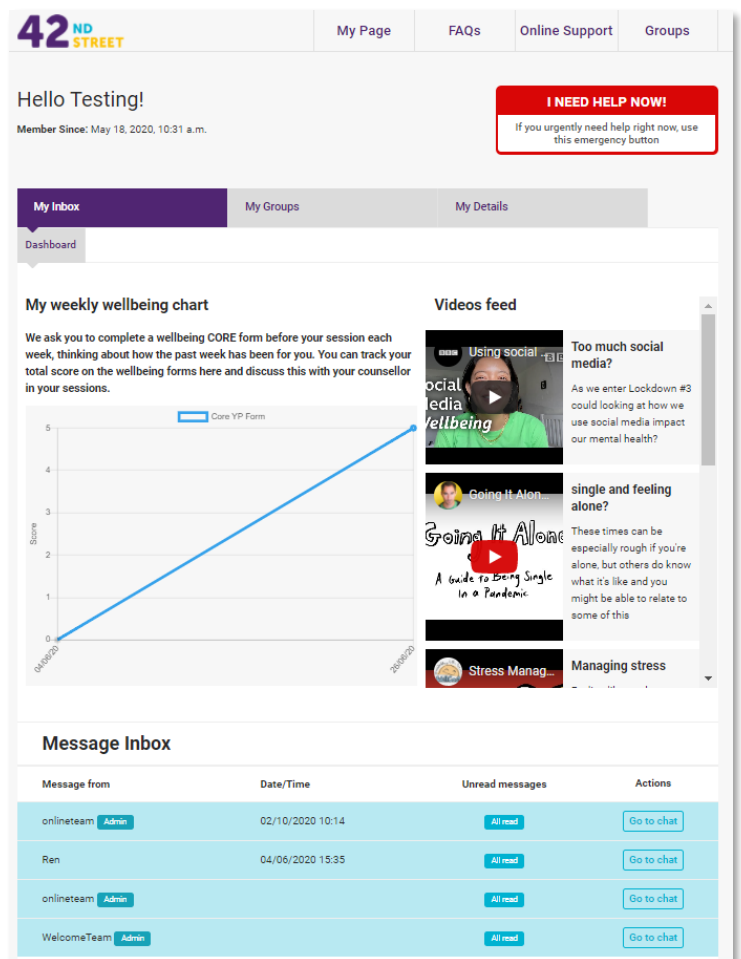


Can you tell us why you would like support from 42nd Street? It might be helpful to think about: What's going on? How's this affecting you? How long's this been affecting you? What would you like to be different? \*

If we're especially worried about your safety from this info then we'll message online to talk more. If we can't reach you we'll follow our safeguarding guidelines, which may mean trying to reach you, or others, outside of the platform. You can read more [HERE](#).

“

It made me continue to think about the work that we had done each session, the way that I was able to talk about my past and Also work on things that will help me improve ... when I was having a really hard time. Online young person



# GET IN TOUCH

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