

Impact Report 2022

Stories of Change

**SECOND
STEP**

PUTTING MENTAL HEALTH FIRST

A time of change



The last year has been a story of change for us all. The global pandemic has had huge and lasting implications for everyone, in communities in this country and across the world.

Here at Second Step, we've seen first-hand how Covid-19 affected people's mental health and wellbeing through the work we do in Bristol and across the south-west.

Now, as we confront yet another all-encompassing crisis, this time around the cost of living, we find ourselves regrouping, reassessing, and reaching out to each other for support and reassurance once again.

We've also noticed how, despite all these difficulties, we've been able to find solace in the learning from the last year and that during tough times you can have times of positive change and celebration too.

This year's Impact Report focuses on stories of change. As we looked back, we realised that time and again our clients, staff and teams were able to do positive work during a time of national crisis.

Finally, we'd like to say a big thank you to all our colleagues and partners who worked together under the most challenging circumstances and embodied our values of building trust, learning and growing and succeeding together.

Aileen Edwards
Chief Executive

Graham Russell
Chair of the Board

Key Stats:

£14m
turnover

3429
clients

293
staff

22
services

47
volunteers



New Ways of Working

We understood that the focus on our clients' mental health and wellbeing was paramount from the moment the pandemic hit, prioritising those most in need. We offered in-person support where we could throughout this time, despite the lockdowns and restrictions. We also set up new ways of working and reaching out.

For some people, accessing new online support was a godsend. You can read Taylor's story on page 11 and find out how he got through the pandemic with the support of the Wellbeing College.

We also quickly realised how important it was to double our efforts to support our hard-working and skilled staff too.

Peer workers Jo and Colette share their stories on pages 25 and 29 describing how they were able to make strong connections of change with their clients using their own lived experience of coping with mental health challenges.



This report details some of the stories that emerged during the 12 months from April 2021 to March 2022 capturing the overarching Second Step story from three perspectives:

one:

For our clients

Sharing the amazing work our services have been doing with some of the most vulnerable people in our communities - **see page 9**

two:

For the system

Spotlighting those partnerships and connections which are working tirelessly to create real change - **see page 20**

three:

And for us

Showing how we adapted and changed internally as an organisation - **see page 28**

one:
For our clients

Sharing
stories of
change...

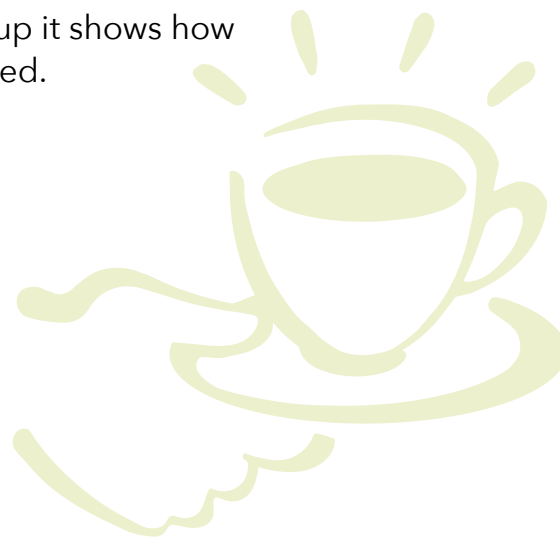
...from the
People we
support

Safe Haven & River

Safe Haven understood that River didn't need someone to fix him, he needed someone to listen.

Our Safe Haven crisis and recovery centre offers support and refuge to people across North Somerset and South Gloucestershire. On average the team supports 500 people a month, with more than 4,000 interventions last year. With just nine per cent of appointments not taken up it shows how much the service is needed.

100% of Safe Haven clients are satisfied or very satisfied with their experience of crisis support*



*Safe Haven data April 2021– March 2022

River's story

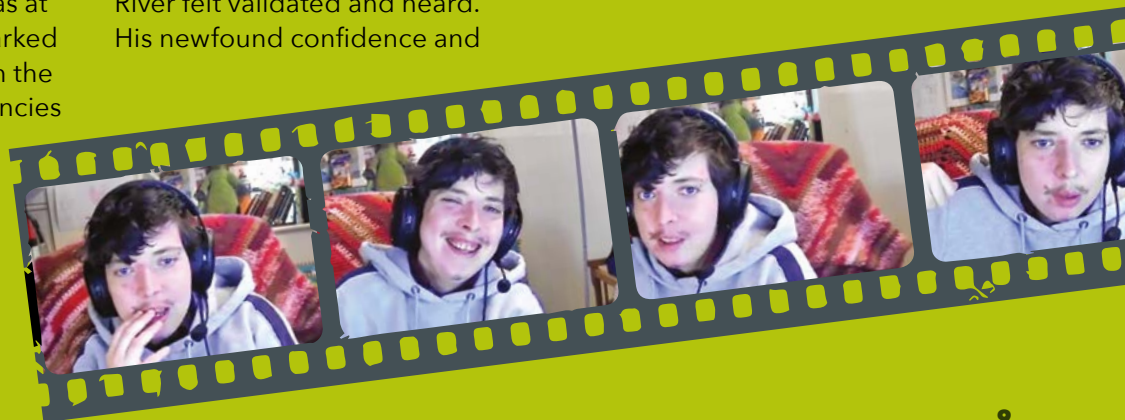
River, like so many, found lockdown hard. But it also provided him an opportunity to reflect properly and deeply on who he was and who he wanted to be.

These reflections were difficult and he sometimes found himself plunged into deep upset and trauma. Sometimes life just felt too much for him. It was then he turned to the team at Safe Haven. He ended up talking to staff there most days, often when he was at his lowest ebb. And what marked out these conversations from the many River has had with agencies and organisations in the past, was that the Safe Haven team really listened.

"You didn't try and fix me," he explained. **"And that's so important. So many times I've had to talk to people who want to fix me."**

After many weeks of support, River felt validated and heard. His newfound confidence and

positivity meant he jumped at the chance of representing LGBTQ+ people as the service's first ever LGBTQ+ client representative. He said: "I still have bad days and then I try to remember how far I've come."



one:
For our clients

Bristol Wellbeing College & Taylor

Open to anyone over 18 in Bristol who wants to improve their mental health and wellbeing, Bristol Wellbeing College's free courses offer a lifeline to hundreds of people.

Over the last 12 months we've worked with learners online and also back in community venues when Covid-19 restrictions were lifted. Taylor was one of them.



80% of Bristol Wellbeing College learners managed their mental health better and were able to make positive changes in their lives**

one:
For our clients

Taylor's* story

27-year-old Taylor* describes how he made a commitment to himself to find a way out of what he calls his mental prison.

At first, he found it hard to accept help, but once he met the tutors and staff at the Wellbeing College he realised here was a safe space where he could learn and change.

"I struggled to do the first simple creative exercise, I noticed so many emotions bubbling up, I realised then I needed to push through, I needed to attend these sessions," he explains. He went on

to attend a number of College courses including the Managing Depression course which he found powerful. He says the quality of the courses was high, and what really struck him was the quality of the staff and their energy.

This, he says, was so impactful and profound. Now Taylor is in a far happier, healthier place ready to look to move on to take the next steps in his journey.



*Not his real name

Step Together & Craig

Step Together in Somerset is an amazing service supporting people to find and keep a home of their own.

Since the service began in 2018, it has supported 480 people and has a team of around 16 recovery coaches who work alongside their clients supporting them to make changes in their lives. We supported one man, Craig, who had been living on the streets for more than 20 years.

86% of clients experienced a positive change in their living arrangements after working with Step Together*

one:
For our clients

Craig's story

Craig was homeless for over 20 years. Because he had no fixed address, he couldn't open a bank account.

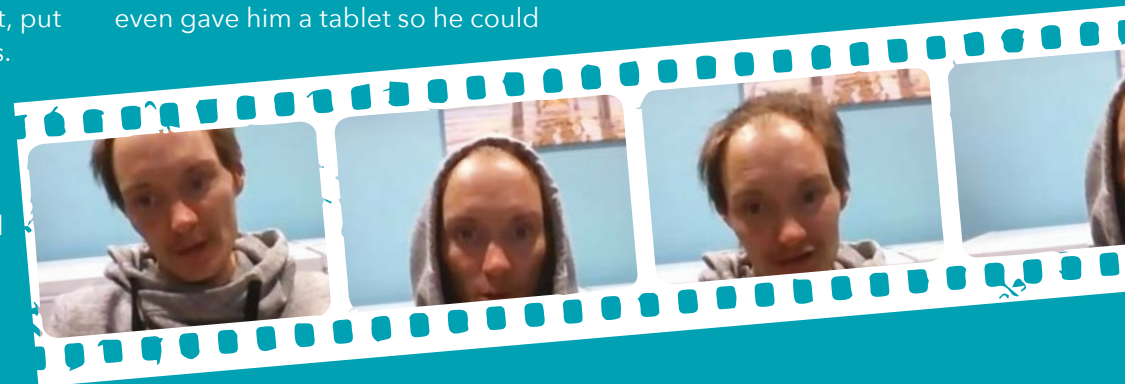
Not having a bank account made it almost impossible for Craig to change his situation, lay down roots, or even stay in touch with his family. He found that people took advantage of him, taking money from him when he had it and not paying it back. Using cash and not having a safe place to keep it, put him at risk of these situations.

out about the No Fixed Address project which helps people experiencing housing difficulties to open bank accounts.

Craig was able to open a bank account with a debit card in just one appointment with HSBC. They even gave him a tablet so he could

access his money safely. Since opening his bank account, Craig has been able to manage his own money without worrying about it being stolen. He has moved into supported housing and is starting to reconnect with his family.

When Craig was put in touch with Step Together, he worked with one of our recovery coaches who found



Hope Project & Simon

Hope is our suicide prevention project for men aged 30-64 in Bristol, North Somerset and South Gloucestershire.

Men in this age bracket are the highest risk group for suicide in England and Wales, and in Bristol, suicide rates are slightly higher than the national average. Hope aims to reduce suicide in this high-risk group and one of the men it helped was Simon.

#GET REAL

50% of clients experienced a reduction in depression and suicidal thoughts after support from the Hope Project*

one:
For our clients

Simon's story

At first glance, Belfast Walk in Knowle West is just an ordinary Bristol cul-de-sac. But take a closer look and tucked between the houses you'll discover a secret garden.

Knowle West Community Garden used to be an overgrown wilderness. But that all changed when Filwood Residents Association took over the site. Under the care of volunteer site manager Simon, the land has been transformed into a tranquil green space for the local community. A space people can go for their mental wellbeing and come together to support each other.

For Simon, the garden has been a life-saver: **"This garden has kept me from any thoughts of self-harming or anything. It really kept me going,"** he explained.

He was struggling with suicidal thoughts when he first came to Hope which offers both emotional and practical support for middle-aged men. It was Simon's Hope worker who encouraged him to pursue his love for gardening and the outdoors.

Just one year later, Simon helps to run Knowle West Community Garden and has completed training so he can run groups at the garden to help others going through mental health struggles.



Community Rehabilitation & Katie

75% of clients were discharged to the care of their GP

The Bristol Community Rehabilitation Service supports people living with complex and long-term mental health problems to achieve their goals and gain the skills and confidence to live as independently as possible.

Since the service began in 2015, we have supported more than 400 people and reduced inpatient admissions with three quarters of clients discharged to the care of their GP – a really positive outcome considering many of the people we work with have been in secondary mental health services for many years.

Community Rehabilitation data April 2021 – March 2022

one
For our clients:

Katie's story

Katie was very unsure of Second Step when she first met the team. She'd spent years in hospital and had experienced support in the community too.

However she says working with the Community Rehabilitation team was very different. The team is large including occupational therapists, psychologists and peer recovery navigators. Katie quickly realised the support was tailored to her and what she needed.

radio station, Ujima. There she found her happy space. Yes, she was nervous, but she was in her element. Months later and she's now curating her own weekly radio show called Express Yourself about music, theatre and art – all subjects close to her heart. She

says: **"Although I still have bad days, I now have more good days than bad. I came from a bad place thinking I wouldn't amount to anything, and there's still days where I think I won't, but if I can do it so can you."**

Together Katie and her recovery navigator tried various volunteering and work opportunities, and thanks to her experience in Second Step's radio group she took the plunge to volunteer with local Bristol



Working
together

changing
the system
for good

Behind all of these wonderful stories are teams of staff working across Second Step to support people to make changes in their lives.

And we at Second Step are part of numerous systems – networks of organisations which work together in certain ways – sometimes successfully, sometimes less so.

Partnership working when done well is a key driver to making change happen. So much so, that Second Step has been an active partner in a number of key system partnerships over the last year:

Golden Key: a partnership from which we learnt important lessons about supporting and working alongside people with complex needs facing many disadvantages in their lives

Changing Futures: a new partnership set up to support Bristol to bring about significant change in the way it commissions and delivers services for some of our most vulnerable citizens

Open Mental Health: an award-winning partnership in Somerset bringing together the talents of the NHS, social care and the voluntary sector to deliver mental health services differently.



Golden Key: our learning about change and how to achieve it



The Golden Key partnership of Bristol organisations including the police, leading voluntary sector organisations, the city council and the NHS ended in June 2022 after eight years of supporting some of the most complex people in the city, and looking into how to change the system.

Its lead external researcher, Richard Bolden, has distilled the programme's learning into seven key enablers of system change for people facing multiple disadvantages, (see table opposite).

This learning is hugely instructive to the way Second Step approaches its work and is reflected in the way we're working in a new partnership project in Bristol called Changing Futures.

two:
For the system

Enabler	Example
Person centred services and support	A pilot of the Housing First approach prioritised the allocation of safe and stable accommodation before attempting to address other client needs.
Collaboration and partnership working	The appointment of an independent chair to facilitate quarterly Partnership Board meetings ensured equitable engagement of partners and resolution of any conflicts that emerged.
Diversity of perspectives and experience	The Independent Futures group, comprising members with lived experience of multiple disadvantage, ensured representation of client voice in key decision-making forums.
Relationships	The Service Coordinator role enabled the development of long-term, trusting relationships between clients and service providers.
Whole system approach	The Creative Solutions Board drew together professionals from across services to review and take action on cases that had become 'stuck.'
People support & empowerment	The Action Experiment approach encouraged frontline staff to innovate and experiment with novel approaches/interventions.
Learning and reflection	Reflective Practice was built into work schedules to ensure that staff had time for structured learning and support.

Changing Futures: finding new ways to make sustainable change



Our vision is that people facing multiple disadvantages are valued and empowered. They inspire and are inspired to have a life beyond services.

To realise this vision, we acknowledge that the current system is not designed to support people facing multiple disadvantages. That's why we are committed to changing it. We see Changing Futures as the mechanism for establishing a new system which will become a roadmap of change for Bristol.

Our core ambition is to bring in a new way of supporting people facing multiple disadvantages in their lives called My Team Around Me. The aim is that people will have a known team of professionals who will stick with them for the long term – rather than services offering short term contact and staff changing. It's about creating a strong relationship of trust not just for the person but for all the agencies involved. Working with our partners across the city and our partners with lived experience of the old system, we are optimistic that we can bring about real change for people for whom life feels hopeless.

Open Mental Health: a new system for Somerset



two:
For the system

The vision for creating Open Mental Health is to enable people in Somerset to access the mental health care they need, when they need it.

The innovative alliance of voluntary sector organisations and the NHS, Somerset Partnership Trust has won awards and recognition at national level for bringing together mental health organisations from all sectors to create one service for people in Somerset.

Next Steps, led by Second Step in partnership with Mind, is a fantastic example of turning this idea of a new and changed way of working into practice. It brings together the trauma-informed approach of a skilled and experienced voluntary sector team to work alongside the NHS on hospital wards, supporting people back into their homes and their lives once again.

Next Steps: Supporting People to change their lives

Next Steps supports people to leave hospital and return to living in the community once again.

96% of Next Steps clients stayed well and stayed out of hospital

An amazing statistic when you consider clinicians judged that 67% of clients were at risk of readmission.



two:
For the system

Jo's story of change as a Peer volunteer

One of our Next Steps peer volunteers, Jo, supports people to make this transition from hospital ward to living back in their own home or in the community once more.

Using her first-hand experience of managing her own mental health difficulties, and having had spells in hospital herself, Jo is uniquely placed to support people to make this challenging change in their lives.

With support like this the vast majority of Next Steps clients are able to stay well and out of hospital.



Being
ambitious in
our approach

keeping
true to our
values

Our experience of the Covid-19 pandemic propelled us into thinking about the way we worked as a staff group with our clients and with each other.

While prioritising the work we do to support our most vulnerable clients, ensuring in-person support wherever possible, we recognised the importance of really maximising the support we give each other as staff and volunteers.

As a result of our experiences during the pandemic we agreed

to prioritise a number of initiatives and ways of working including:

- Developing a **trauma-informed** culture in our work ensuring we help people understand what's happened to them.
- Monitoring what worked well and what needed to change in **our ways of working** to make
- Supporting our colleagues of Black, African, Caribbean, and Asian descent through our **addressing racism strategy** with our core message that ending racism at work is everyone's business.

sure we remained connected and energized as a staff group.

Our Values:



**Believing in hope
and courage**



**Succeeding
together**



**Building
trust**



**Celebrating
diversity**



**Learning and
growing**

The Power of Peers

Employing staff because of their lived experience to change lives.

We have a team of peer workers at Second Step who are employed because of their own lived experience of mental health services expressly to share that experience in their support work with clients.

We're immensely proud of our peer approach finding that time and again our clients respond positively to their approach enabling them to create change in their lives. We talk to one peer worker, Colette, about the work she does in Bristol.



Colette's story of change as a Peer worker

As a peer worker, Colette worked in our homelessness and complex needs team in Bristol.

She explains about the approach she takes to her work and why she passionately believes that peer work is an absolute must for the many people we support who face multiple disadvantages in their lives. **"I say I've been there, that I'm still there and I know what you're going through...they often don't believe me at first and then you see them relax and understand."** Colette is changing lives through empathy and connection.



Looking ahead: our Priorities

Our **new strategic plan** for the next three years until 2026 builds on our skills and experience to ensure we continue to be flexible and innovative in what are likely to be difficult times. As always, we will be inspired by the people we support to deliver excellent and responsive services.

We will continue to ensure that the **mental health voluntary sector** has a key role in the development of community mental health services in the primary care arena, working with the NHS to build on what we and our partners do well.

We will continue to focus on developing an inclusive and collaborative culture at Second Step to make sure there is **no room for racism** and where we continue to develop our trauma-informed approach to support our clients and work sensitively with each other.

Our Services

Homelessness Services

- High Support Accommodation
- Mixed Homeless Pathways
- Specialist Community Forensic Team
- Step Together
- Supported Housing

Recovery and Mental Health

- Beside Project
- Community Mental Health Partnership
- Community Rehabilitation
- Get Connected
- Hope Project

Community and Wellbeing

- Bristol Wellbeing College
- Floating Support Service Bath and North-East Somerset
- Health Link
- Help When You Need it
- Next Steps (*Open Mental Health*)
- North Somerset Wellbeing
- One You
- Recovery Navigators

- Safe Haven Crisis and Recovery Centre
- Somerset Crisis Safe Space (*Open Mental Health*)
- Stepladder (*Open Mental Health*)

Innovation Projects

- Changing Futures (*from November 2021*)
- Golden Key (*until March 2022*)

- Call- in
- Golden Key services (*joined Second Step April 2022*)
- Housing First
- Link Service
- Out of Hospital
- Temporary Accommodation Floating Support

Across all services

- STAR Involvement Groups
- Volunteering

Our Bristol office

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Safe Haven Crisis Centre

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