

Summer 2020

Response

For supporters of
Rethink Mental Illness

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Emergency appeal

Our anniversary

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Rethink
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Response is produced by the fundraising team at Rethink Mental Illness.

Chat to us about supporting Rethink Mental Illness, email info@rethink.org or call 0121 522 7007.

Have you got an amazing fundraising story to tell? Email your photos and story to events@rethink.org



Leading the way to a better quality of life for everyone severely affected by mental illness.

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 www.rethink.org



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I lead the amazing fundraising team here at Rethink Mental Illness. At this time of year I would normally be out and about with my team meeting lots of our lovely supporters and cheering them on at events like the London Marathon or our own Walky Talky event. Sadly, so many of these events have been postponed or cancelled this year. But our amazing supporters and fundraisers continue to inspire me every day. Like all of us in the team, you care passionately about people experiencing mental illness.

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a huge impact on all of our lives. We know that it has had a significant impact on people living with mental illness. In a recent survey of people living with mental illness, 80% of responders told us that coronavirus had made their mental health worse. Of those, 41% said it was worse because they've been unable to access support from mental health services.

In this issue you can read how our teams across the country have rapidly adapted services to make sure we can still be there, safely, for those who need us. Whether that's producing specialist information resources for our Covid-19 hub or adapting our peer support services to a remote model, none of it would be possible without the generous help of our donors and fundraisers.

We have been inspired by your passion and creativity. Despite events being cancelled and the new social distancing rules you have carried on fundraising safely. I hope you enjoy reading about some of them in this issue.

It has been so important during this time of isolation to stay connected – to colleagues, family and friends. Have a look inside to see how our support groups are helping to keep people connected.

Finally, I want to thank you for all your support and wish you all the very best during these strange times. You're making a positive impact on the lives of people living with mental illness.

Mel Oley

Associate Director for Fundraising & Supporter Engagement



Covid - 19 Emergency Appeal

We are working tirelessly to be there for people who are severely affected by mental illness in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic. Our advice services are a lifeline to many and now more than ever, we need your help to keep them running.

Our Advice and Information Service is often described as “life-saving” by the people we support. As we face the most momentous health challenge in living memory, with a growing number of us experiencing new or exacerbated mental health problems due to Covid-19, the need to ensure no one is left isolated or unsupported has never been greater.

For people living with mental health problems the distress and disruption caused by the pandemic can be overwhelming. We are working flat out to provide people with the quality advice and information they need to navigate this challenging time.

Right now, we are doing everything we can to support those who need us by; answering calls and emails on a one-to-one basis, supporting carers who are concerned about their loved ones, ensuring that our information is updated rapidly as new guidance is frequently published by the government.

Like many charities, to run these services for our beneficiaries, we rely heavily on funds raised through events such as the London Marathon. The postponement or cancellation of such events means we are facing a potential shortfall in our finances, which is why we are turning to our supporters at this time.

A donation today helps us support people who are diagnosed with a severe mental illness and their carers during the coronavirus pandemic and adapt to the new normal once lockdown measures ease.

£10

could help a volunteer respond to an online chat query from someone less comfortable talking over the phone

£25

could help us answer the next call to our helpline

£50

could ensure our online information remains accurate and is updated rapidly as new government guidance is frequently published

At a time when many of our usual income streams are curtailed due to the coronavirus, we desperately need your help to fund our life-changing work.

Please help keep our services running, so that we can be that lifeline to people experiencing a mental illness during the pandemic and beyond: www.rethink.org/rais

How our services are adapting

Services responding during Covid-19

During the crisis our residential and accommodation services have never stopped. Although our advocacy and group services have moved to remote working they have been able to continue to offer support using a variety of channels including telephone, video calls, and group & peer support online.

One advocacy service in Devon had to make adjustments and said:

“We have worked so well, in collaboration with ward staff, to ensure people under section on forensic wards, have contact with the outside world including family and friends. We helped facilitate a laptop, with video conferencing, to be shared every day for use by all patients.”

Our emotional support helplines have also seen a huge increase (150% rise) in need during the Covid-19 crisis. Both with people known to the service affected by mental illness, as well as a huge increase in calls from new people (now up to 32% of calls) affected by the Coronavirus and lockdown.

How has the Survivors of Suicide Service in Brighton coped

The Rethink SOS & MENDOS service supports adults within the Brighton & Hove areas working to provide psycho-social support across the city.

The service quickly adapted after all face to face meetings temporarily ceased. That has meant working from home throughout the Covid-19 period. We spoke to Wendy, the service manager, who said:

“We now offer telephone, audio support, signposting and forwarding information to service users and multiple agencies. An upside of working in this new way is the capacity to speak with more people during a day. Overall, the team has been able to respond and support people positively during these times.

People have said they miss face to face support and there is a healthy amount of anxiety expressed about when we are able to restart this again. However, we will meet that challenge safely when we can.”

For further information regarding the service please visit; www.rethink.org and www://communitroots.org.uk



How our Braintree Art Group adapted during lockdown

Our Braintree Art Group offers people with lived experience of mental illness the chance to come together to write, paint and draw.

Lockdown has made this hard. Trina, the group coordinator, has told us how they've adapted during the crisis by moving the group online to Facebook and staying in touch on the phone: “We are quite a close group and so many keep in touch on our closed Facebook page that Rethink set up for us. I speak to them every day on there and encourage them to keep motivated.”

The group still meet online and complete activities remotely such as art, reading, poetry writing and sharing experiences, as Trina explains: “members ring up and it can be hard to be positive and keep the conversation light hearted. I know many are struggling and feel a little helpless. I would like to think it's helped a little, though.”

To check out the group's art yourself, simply search for on Facebook.

Join Clic



We know how important staying socially connected is for our mental health, and we believe that no one should be lonely or isolated - that's why we've launched Clic.

80% of people who responded to our recent survey told us that coronavirus and the measures to contain it have made their mental health worse, including 28% stating that it is "much worse". In response, Mental Health UK, of which Rethink Mental Illness is one of the founding charities, has launched Clic - the first UK-wide online peer support service of its kind.

Clic is a free online support community to help respond to the increased demand for mental health support across the country as the nation copes with the impact of coronavirus. It aims to reduce the loneliness and isolation experienced by people with poor mental health and their carers.

Clic hosts an online forum which creates a safe space for people to chat about how they're feeling

and connect with others. It also hosts a wealth of mental health information, tools, tips and resources to signpost people struggling with their mental health to key services in their local community.

Since it was piloted in Wales four years ago, Clic has helped thousands of people to feel less isolated and find the mental health information that they need, and it has now been expanded to provide support to adults across the whole of the UK.

To ensure Clic is secure and confidential, promoting recovery and protecting the safety of its users, the site is monitored 24 hours a day.

Join us today at clic-uk.org and connect with others for mutual support, share your thoughts and find helpful information.

How our corporate partners are helping

We are incredibly grateful to our corporate partners who have continued to support us the past few months in lots of ways.

Liberty Specialty Markets kick-started our partnership by making a fantastic donation; our friends at Berkeley Homes made an extremely generous £10,000 donation through their Foundation to help support us through the Covid-19 crisis and Capital One have taken to virtual fundraising by hosting a remote game of bingo and a lunchtime comedy gig for colleagues, raising over £1,700.

Lots of our partners also took part in our Kindness Challenge for Mental Health Awareness Week, a bingo-style activity where colleagues carried out acts of kindness for themselves and others, including doing something calming for 10 minutes, sharing an inspirational quote and donating £5.





A brother's view

Andrew discusses the challenges his parents faced when caring for his younger brother John who was diagnosed with schizophrenia in 1987.

John was 52 and my only sibling. He died suddenly in 2018 less than a fortnight after my father's funeral, with the coroner declaring his death accidental. Hallucinations and delusions forced him to abandon his geography degree aged just 20, but it took over a year for a diagnosis: paranoid schizophrenia. Confused, guilty, and distressed, my parents worried about his future while grieving the loss of their athletic and intelligent son with so much potential.

Although John's schizophrenia proved treatment-resistant, he never had to be sectioned. In the early years, it was difficult to cope with his moods, agitation and disturbed thoughts. He never held a job for more than a week; nor did he ever manage to live independently. Determined to support him, my parents were his carers until the day he died.

My father strived to understand schizophrenia and the workings of the mental health and benefits system. He became chairman of the local branch of the National Schizophrenia Fellowship and a volunteer on hospital panels to hear the appeals of those detained under the Mental Health Act. Recently, I found an article from the British Medical Journal in my father's desk quoting his experience of the gaps in the NHS in the 1990s: "John had become increasingly psychotic, deluded and agitated during the previous few weeks. He has been ill for five years since his first attack as an undergraduate at Cambridge. He had always lived with us since then and we recognised the signs that he was going downhill fast. But our GP told us there was a waiting list for beds, and the psychiatrist

said he was not ill enough yet. Over Christmas, he was driving us up the wall and very trying. On New Year's Day, he got really psychotic. I lost my temper and forced the system. I physically ejected my own son from the house and told him to go to the police. I knew they could make the hospital admit him. I feel terribly guilty about the whole thing, having to use coercion, putting the police and the hospital on the spot, but we were desperate. I may have been doing a more deserving patient out of a bed. One should not have to descend into this wheeling and dealing."

John became calmer with age, but negative symptoms of his illness persisted. He became depressed and fearful of a future without the care, support and reassurances of his ageing parents, now with their own health issues. The increasing frailty of my parents, and my consequent greater involvement made me appreciate how much John depended on them. For years, his medication alone required a visit to hospital every four weeks for a blood test and a return trip to collect the controlled drugs. My parents also had to navigate the tortuous benefits system to ensure he received the financial support he was entitled to.

They were unstinting in their care, providing a safe and loving environment. As carers, they were no different to others in their position, catapulted into an unfamiliar and unwelcome landscape; but like so many others they accepted it and strove to do their best by their son right to the end. I know my brother for all his illness felt loved and protected by them.

We would like to thank Andrew for sharing his story and for the legacy donation his father made in order to support our vital work. If you're interested in leaving a gift to us in your will, visit www.rethink.org/legacy.

Fifty years ago, our mission was born



May 2020 marked the 50th anniversary of a newspaper article that changed the way society talks about mental illness and led to the creation of Rethink Mental Illness. Our CEO, Mark Winstanley, reflects on the changes we have seen and what challenges lie ahead.

On 9 May 1970, The Times published an anonymous article by John Pringle, who wrote honestly about his experience of caring for his son who had been diagnosed with schizophrenia and the ways in which that diagnosis affected the family. The article resonated with hundreds of carers across the country whose letters flooded in. A community began to grow, and the National Schizophrenia Fellowship was formed. In the 50 years since then, the Fellowship evolved into five charities, including Rethink Mental Illness, which directly provide support to thousands across the UK and millions more online.

The landscape that John Pringle describes in his article is both alien to us fifty years on and in other ways sadly still recognisable. Public attitudes over time have improved towards people severely affected by mental illness (albeit not as fast and deep as attitudes to mental health more widely). More recently and through the NHS England Long Term Plan, we have started to see the investment in services we have long called for. Services are now being embedded in the community, with the public sector and third sector working together to bring about change. Reflecting the importance of supporting a whole person's needs, including employment, housing, financial wellbeing and physical health. Change that we have long called for and been instrumental in bringing about. Change that is also reflected in the hard-fought commitment to amend the outdated Mental Health Act.

However, many of the challenges John Pringle highlighted remain. Improvements in services are not universal, too many people still struggle to get the right treatment at the right time. There are huge problems with the welfare system. People should not have to fight so hard to get the financial support they need to survive at the cost of their mental health. A problem that is compounded by too many people severely affected by mental illness struggling to find fulfilling work - to their cost and society more widely. Crucially we still do not fully recognise the critical role carers play in propping up a system that has been historically underfunded.

It is peculiar that the anniversary of this campaign falls while we are living through a crisis that is affecting so many people's state of mind. Our role has never been more vital and I am enormously proud of the way the charity has responded to the crisis and more broadly the impact we have made over the last fifty years.

Through our services, groups, campaigns and the advice and information we provide, we have shown that with the right support and investment we can improve the lives of people severely affected by mental illness and their carers. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who makes our work possible. Our brilliant staff, members, supporters and volunteers.

Together we have created a blueprint and foundation of support that if scaled up will at long last resolve all the issues that John Pringle raised fifty years ago. We have the answers, our mission is to ensure they are implemented.

We think you are all **AMAZING**

During these challenging times we have seen our fundraisers be even more innovative and hard working than ever. We would like thank you all for being the best! Here are just some of our fundraisers stories...



Lewis ran a virtual half marathon & raised £310, brilliant work.

"The reason I ran for Rethink Mental Illness is because it's something close to my heart having suffered from depression in the past and knowing so many of my friends and family who have struggled as well. To get the support I got and to raise around £300 for a great cause really does feel amazing and I hope it inspires others to do the same"



Demi-Leigh decided to cycle 80k during Mental Health Awareness Week. She raised £245. We can't thank her enough.

"I started this challenge because I really wanted to help a charity that means so much to me, having family who have suffered with their mental health and also myself ... the current situation has been tough on everyone but especially those that are vulnerable"



Malcolm decided now was the time to set himself a massive challenge. He is a keen walker but wanted to push himself to raise money and awareness for Rethink Mental Illness. He chose to do 15,000 steps for 26 days. Altogether he raised £1,102. Amazing effort Malcolm!

"The walking is a real pleasure and I'm fitter now than I've been for ages!"



Jenny is one of our London Marathon 2020 runners. She organised a virtual run through social media on the original London Marathon date. She got over 20 people to take part and has raised over £2,200 so far.

"I created a virtual marathon challenge the week that would have been the London Marathon so anyone who wanted to could still run in a safe manner and celebrate their achievement! Over 20 people who I had never met all got involved with me virtually... As I turned up my road to finish my final stretch all my neighbours and family were outside to cheer me, along with a fake finish line they'd created and a medal!"



This year's Rethink Comedy night had an incredible line up hosted by our friend and ambassador, Russell Kane. There were plenty of laughs and awareness raised for mental health. Over £11,000 was raised on the night, thank you so much!

Virtual fundraising events during the Covid-19 crisis have helped us continue to support the people who most need help. During lockdown we have seen over 400 people sign up for Miles for Mental Health and raise over £26,000. The 2.6 Challenge raised over £3,500. For more information on what you can do to get involved go to www.rethink.org/fundraising or events@rethink.org



Conquering Snowdon during Lockdown

We are continually blown away by the innovative and exciting ways our fundraisers choose to support Rethink Mental Illness. This is especially true in these trying times. The incredible Kathryn and Matt took on the enormous task of running 88,250 steps indoors over 24 hours to raise money.

Kathryn and Matt’s challenge started at 6am on Monday 27 April and they completed it in 13 one-hour-long shifts with a one hour break in between. They ran throughout the night taking small power naps on their rests.

They chose to cover an amazing 88,250 steps because it’s 44 miles from their front door at their home in Conwy to the summit of Snowdon and back home.

“The biggest challenge for us both was the mental aspect. Running from your front door to your back door is ok the first 100 times. but by the middle of the challenge we had looked at the same walls thousands of times”

There were lots of highs for the pair though: “We had people cheering us on at midnight and one friend Carl was the first up at 6am cheering us on. It was great to see how many people cheered us on.”

“Many of us during the outbreak of Covid19 have an increased amount of stress and anxiety that we all have to deal with on a daily basis and the uncertainty ahead for some can be too much. but we’re now busy planning our next challenge so we can raise more awareness and money for this great cause. ” - Kathryn and Matt

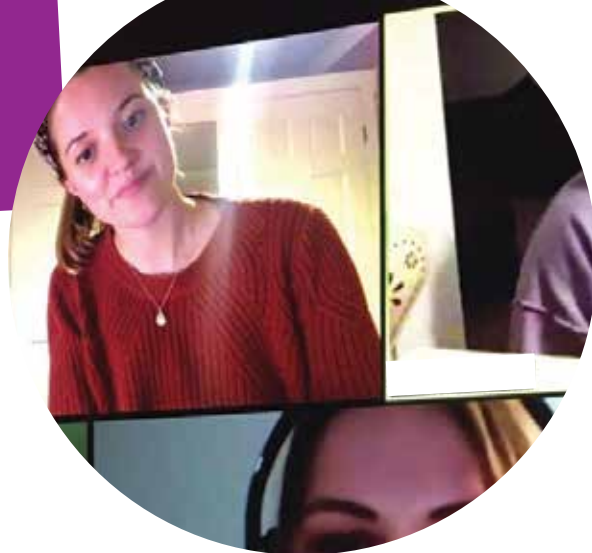
“It was great to see how many people joined us on Facebook live to watch us finish and It was great to see how many people joined us on both pretty sure it was the adrenaline (and coffee) that got us over the finish line.”

Kathryn and Matt told us the reason they wanted to take on this challenge for Rethink Mental Illness was “to raise awareness for those who are struggling with their mental health and raise money to improve the services available for people struggling with mental illness.”

We can’t thank Kathryn and Matt enough for all their hard work and for coming up with such a brilliant challenge. You can sponsor them at www.virginmoneygiving.com/Runningintothewild

If you’re inspired by any of these stories and want to give it a go at trying your own online fundraiser contact us on 020 7840 3063 or events@rethink.org

Fundraising during Covid-19



The pandemic hit just before our peak season of outdoor events which are a crucial source of income to help deliver our life-changing work. Marathons, swims, and cycles may be on hold, but our community has proven there are still plenty of ways to fundraise while keeping safe and active. If you're looking for ideas for your own event, here are some to get you started...



Miles For Mental Health

Join hundreds of others who've signed up to our challenge to cover the distance of a marathon over the course a month during their daily walks, jogs or cycles!



Rethink Your Wardrobe

It may be summer, but there's never a bad time for a spring clean. What better chance to put your phone down, forget the news, take some time decluttering your wardrobe and drawers, and donate the proceeds?



Virtual Pub Quiz

Host a quiz over video call and ask participants for a small donation to play. You can find questions online, write your own, or ask your contestants to submit a mystery question each!



Baking sessions at home

Fancy yourself as the next Mary Berry, Paul Hollywood or Nadiya Hussain? How about dusting off your rolling pin and hosting a virtual baking session with friends, family or colleagues?



Set up a birthday fundraiser on social media

Did you know you can set up a birthday fundraiser on a Facebook post or via your Instagram story in a few clicks? Don't forget to tag us in your posts so we can wish you a happy birthday!



Garden pitch and putt

In the mood 'fore' golf? Agree on a setup and par with your friends and play the course over a video call to see who can complete it in the fewest shots.



Teach your talent

Whether you're a yoga master, craft extraordinaire, or you're just really great at something and fancy, why not use any spare time you have to skill-share your pearls of wisdom with others?



Cocktail/Mocktail night

Whether you fancy a mojito or a nojito, bring your friends and family together for a catch-up over some drinks and exchange recipes in advance.

Practical tips on getting started

If you do decide to fundraise, please stick to government rules and also collect donations safely online without coming into contact with cash or making any trips to the bank. You can set up your page at www.justgiving.com/rethink and email events@rethink.org if you need any help along the way!



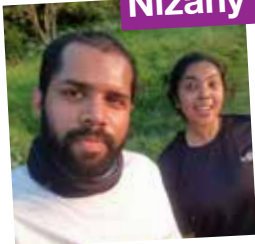
Kate

walked the equivalent of a marathon 26.2 miles over a month to raise money. She has accessed support from some of our groups based in Milton Keynes. She said "it also helped me to get fit and improve my stamina." She raised £267.



Sophie

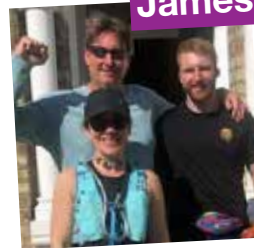
took part in the 2.6 challenge. Her challenge was to score 260 netball goals in her garden on the 26 April. She made it! What a great challenge and she raised £730 to help people living with mental illness during this difficult time.



Nizany

with her brother completed her own Miles for Mental Health and raised £712.

"It was perfect for me. I was able to bring running into my routine which was helpful to my mental health and well-being whilst raising awareness and funds to help others"



James

and a group of his friends from England & South Africa decided to run together. A few family & friends got together (virtually!) to each run a half marathon with the hope of reaching a cumulative 6 marathons in three weeks. They did it and raised £2,790.

Patrick's Father's Day run

Many of our supporters have taken part in some inspirational virtual activities during the lockdown. Patrick's journey saw him not only take up running for the first time, but also cover the distance from London to his father's home in Scotland.



Patrick, who is based in London, was concerned about his father, who lives in Glasgow. He normally visited him to make sure he's okay but hasn't been able to because of the lockdown: "Dad suffers from mental health issues and I really wanted to do something, to let him know I am still here for him."

Patrick found out about our Miles for Mental Health event online and decided it was the challenge for him: "I decided to run 389 miles (the distance to Glasgow) up to Father's Day on Sunday 21 June."

Reflecting on his experience, Patrick said: "It really is a challenge for me and before this I could hardly run a hundred yards. People sometimes do challenges that are well within their comfort zone but this is pushing me right out of mine."

Patrick went on to say that "it's not just for dad – it's for everyone", before adding: "Doing this has given me a sense of purpose and something to do in the evenings. I am feeling a lot better about myself. I've put a lot of effort into fundraising on social media and I've been amazed by the response. I've raised over £1,500 so far and climbing. I've also had loads of messages offering me support which helps to keep me going."

"Mental health issues still have a lot of stigma about them and I want to do my bit to change that. Dad is actually doing pretty well these days – I'm looking forward to finishing my run on Father's Day and sharing my photos with him."

A woman with a headset is sitting at a desk, looking at a computer monitor. She is wearing a black long-sleeved shirt and a black and white plaid apron. The background is a plain wall.

COVID-19 doesn't care
about mental illness.

But we do.

The Rethink Advice and Information Service is a lifeline to so many. Now more than ever, with the nation facing a mental health crisis, we need your generosity to keep it running.

You can help us continue our life-changing work and be there for people during this pandemic and beyond.

Please give to our emergency appeal at www.rethink.org/rais

**Rethink
Mental
Illness.**