

Charity no. 1104507
Company no. 4733478



Solace Annual Review

1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

626 individuals in contact with Solace

This figure shows how many unique individuals we have offered support to. This could be group work, one to one work, writing letters of support, advocacy, check ins and follow ups, and other miscellaneous support.

609 offers of one to one support

This figure shows how many unique individuals we have offered one to one support to, 200 people had their first one to one therapy appointment this year.

440 people have had 1 to 1 therapy

This figure is the number of people who have actively attended one to one therapeutic sessions with a Solace therapist in the 12 month period.

Referrals - 199

This year we received 199 referrals from across all projects.

Snapshot!

289 Current active case load 31.3.2021

On this day, we recorded an active caseload of 289 people.

Closed cases - 169

This year we closed 169 people's cases.

Wellbeing and Stress Management Groups

124 people attended a therapeutic group session (online).
5 new regular group sessions were set up, including groups for women only, Arabic speakers, Albanian speakers and Farsi speakers.

From the Trustees

April 2020 to March 2021 – what a year! Lockdowns, working from home, no face-to-face meetings, no office, Zoom, providing therapy and support to clients over the phone after first providing them with mobiles a year of anxiety, stress and uncertainty for all.

Looking back, it seems remarkable how everyone rose to the many, many challenges the year presented. Solace staff, volunteers, interpreters, fellow trustees, funders – and most of all, the refugees and asylum seekers Solace supports – all found ways of responding positively and creatively to the situation. Instead of looking inwards, Solace and other organisations working in the region strengthened networks and increased collaboration. What's more, by the spring we had found new office premises and were about to launch a series of activities celebrating 15 years of existence.

Jo Habib - Chair of the Board of Trustees



The team at a recent Zoom meeting!

From Inside Solace

From a Solace therapist

The year has presented personal and professional challenges. In March 2020 I was made redundant from my previous role, just as the 1st lockdown took place. I joined Solace in September 2020. Working remotely has brought many challenges and made the whole team think differently about the way we manage routine processes like gaining consents or how we undertake the outcome measures with clients. Thankfully when I began my role in September 2020, a lot of these issues were being discussed within the team and solutions were being identified. The main thing has been managing how I can offer the same level of support when I am not physically with the client.

This year I have had success in developing a professional link with Head Start in Hull, they have provided a virtual platform for Solace to deliver training around trauma and the impact on children and young people in educational settings, 43 participants from nursery's, schools and colleges from across the city were able to attend. This is great for Solace as an organisation, as those professionals now know about our service, the clients we support and how to make referrals.

Solace is a very important service to the clients we support. We have a key role, acting at times as a bridge between families and schools to support and improve communication. We also support schools with identifying support strategies to reduce distress and improve learning. We can support clients in voicing their strengths and difficulties, finding ways to cope better together.

This year I had to grow my patience and persistence and accept the new ways of working. Remote working has been a blessing in terms of delivering training and consultations. I usually get a lot of 'stage fright' when public speaking, however working online seems less overwhelming for me, I notice that it does reduce the opportunities to engage deeply with larger groups. Delivering training remotely and helped me to reach a lot more people across the city as we haven't had to book venues, reduction of commuting time etc.

Some clients still struggle with technology, accessing devices etc. Some schools have not been able to grant access due to lack of COVID secure spaces for external professionals.

From Inside Solace

From a group who attend the weekly stress management sessions

How Covid impacted us over the last year:

This year of Covid has been difficult for everyone. As asylum seekers we felt very isolated, and it really wasn't easy at first but one thing that helped was that Solace gave us a phone that meant we could communicate with others. I wanted to join the Stress Management Group but couldn't do this without a phone that could use zoom.

Other organisations sometimes helped us with data top ups as well as Solace which meant once we had a smart phone we were able to join social groups, and whats app groups for other organisations. Keeping in touch with other people was so helpful when otherwise we had nowhere to go and nothing to do.

The phone was really important as it was the only way we could find out information about Covid and what we needed to do. Even my GP needed me to have a smart phone because they couldn't see me face to face, and asked me to join a video call. I couldn't have done this without the phone from Solace. We had to be really careful about how much data we used, so as well as relying on the data top ups, we also went to the library to use their Wi-Fi, and also other places like standing outside McDonalds to access their Wi-Fi as well. We have to be resourceful!

How Solace has helped us this year:

Solace has been my sanctuary – if you ask for help you know that they will do their best for you. They connect you with other organisations, like a bridge, to help you find the support that you need. The people here are really helpful, they are caring. They don't give you the fake smile, or the body language that tells you that you need to leave. It's like they put their foot in my shoe and feel where it hurts.

I would describe Solace as an umbrella that you can shelter under. They don't care whether you speak English or what you look like but they welcome everyone and don't judge you. When I came to the UK I was like a dead person, but Solace was like a lifeline.

We all go to the Stress Management Group and we really like the exercises. They help with my pain and I feel happy when I'm in the group.

Nick really takes care of people, and always asks what people need and how they are feeling. It works because it treats both physical and emotional wellbeing at the same time, and builds people's confidence.

Our hopes for Solace for the next year:

It's really important that Solace carries on doing what it is doing and grows more so more people can benefit, not just the lucky ones like us.

I hope that Solace is able to carry on helping with the cost of getting to appointments or topping up data for zoom. It costs £4.70 to get a bus and I only have £5 per day for everything. I usually plan to do lots of things on the same day because it's the only chance I have of travelling around. If Solace didn't cover the cost of the bus then I wouldn't be able to access any of their support. Every pound is important.

It's good that the building is starting to open. I hope that it is a place where we can come and sit and eat and feel safe, and be treated with respect. It's welcoming here, and the building is easy to get to, I'm looking forward to starting the group face to face again.

You have to wait a long time to see someone, so I hope that this changes and more people can get help. I'm so pleased I've been able to come to Solace today – I've been waiting for this day like seeing a rainbow in a storm – it makes me happy.

Tabita, Dominique and Bukky

From Inside Solace

From Kathryn Ashworth, CEO

Once again, this has been an exceptionally busy year with over 600 people being supported by the Solace Team. Demand continues to exceed our capacity, and it is both heartening to see our services recognised, and making a difference, but also saddening to see the high level of need in the community we work with.

I am continually reminded of the resilience our clients have, despite the huge challenges they face. Their dignity, humour and generosity are humbling, as well as a huge encouragement to me personally.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to the fantastic team at Solace. With the lockdown continuing throughout most of 2020, everyone went out of their way to provide support, work together and make adjustments to their work to provide the best possible service they could. Many clients described this as “a lifeline”. Particular thanks must go to our administrators, who had to learn new procedures very quickly, and have been absolutely essential in finding ways for clients to engage with online therapy and group work by providing phones and data top ups, and explaining how to use zoom. Creating new systems and dealing with administrative procedures is often overlooked as a skill, but is vital to enabling services to continue.

The need to support people who are particularly affected by Covid was recognised by a number of funders, which meant we were able to apply for new grants to support our work. Although all short term, it enabled us to support people who otherwise would not have been able to access help, and reduced the impact of health inequalities in our communities. We are grateful to all our funders, large and small for their support.

Our largest item of expenditure continues to be our salary costs. We were able to benefit from reduced premises costs during lockdown, but we have now moved into a permanent home at Manor House in Leeds which will increase our expenditure next year. We also notably spent a significant amount on interpreting costs, which is an essential part of our service provision. All our interpreters are self employed, but they have all been trained by Solace to work in a mental health context. Their skill and sensitivity is enormously valuable in enabling our therapists and admin team to support clients effectively.

Income and Expenditure

A breakdown of where funding came from, and how the funds were spent.

