

Recovery and renewal

As the term started in September 2021, it was with some trepidation that children, staff, and our therapists returned to schools. There was uncertainty over what the year would bring, and how the disruption of the previous 18 months would affect the children.

This year has been a period of recovery. We are beginning to understand the longer-term impacts of the pandemic, with increasing need for early intervention and mental health support. As a charity, Blue Smile is placing ourselves in the best position to help meet this need for local children.

This review outlines the work that Blue Smile has achieved to support children and schools through this uncertainty. We have focused on maintaining our excellent 1:1 service whilst starting to develop new ways to ensure we reach even more children. Yet again, we have shown excellent outcomes for children and the positive impact that this has had.



"I have brightness in me again and I feel happiness. I feel that I can take on any learning challenge, and I never used to feel that."

Who we helped this year

232 children supported through 1:1 therapy



Our beneficiaries

- 63% Boys; 37% Girls
- 53% eligible for Pupil Premium
(national average: 22.5%)
- 43% on the SEN register
(national average: 12.5%)
- 24% both Pupil Premium and SEN
- 41% performing below national curriculum levels
- 56% with a clinically diagnosable mental health problem

A note from the Charity Director

I am delighted to present Blue Smile's 21/22 Annual Review. This has been a year of consolidation as we return to in-person delivery in all the schools that we support.

Blue Smile's support has become especially important post pandemic due to the long-term impact it has had on children's mental health and wellbeing. Disruption to schooling and social life, and an increasing number of families in financial distress, has exacerbated mental health issues (Office for Health Improvement & Disparities, 2021).

This year has seen record high numbers of referrals of children with mental health problems (NHS Digital 2019-22) and it is unlikely that existing services will be able to meet this increasing demand (The Guardian, 2022).

At Blue Smile, we believe that early intervention is essential, not only to prevent conditions from worsening, but to improve outcomes for people who develop enduring poor mental health.

I am proud that we have remained committed to support those most in need, having a positive impact on children with the most worrying mental health issues, and working with children for as long as we are making an impact.

I believe that by supporting children at the right time, they will be happier and have brighter futures.

Anne

With best wishes,
Anne Kent-Taylor

From September 2021 to August 2022, we have:

- ★ Provided expert arts-based 1:1 therapy for over 230 children across 24 Cambridgeshire schools
- ★ Delivered nine psychoeducational groups to nearly 60 children, on topics such as Managing Big Feelings
- ★ Delivered a new psychoeducational group, designed in response to the challenges raised by the pandemic, focused on Managing Change
- ★ Provided whole-class wellbeing workshops to nearly 50 children, raising awareness in order to normalise discussions around mental health
- ★ Completed a family support service pilot that offered joint parent-child therapy
- ★ Provided formal mentoring to 11 staff at 4 schools, supporting the whole school community
- ★ Directly employed School Clinical Leads to manage our Partner School service, underlying our commitment to the mental health profession
- ★ Offered training to 130 attendees on safeguarding, working with parents, sand use in children's therapy, autism and the neurodiversity paradigm, an introduction to Theraplay, and working with new levels of anxiety post-pandemic
- ★ Delivered webinars to our corporate partners, to help their staff support their own children with their mental health and emotional wellbeing

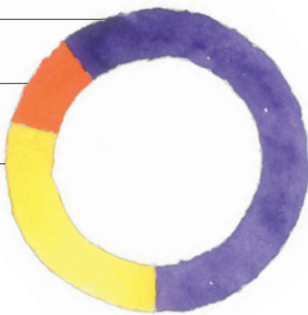
Since we started in 2010...

...we have supported 2230 children

- 1:1 Therapeutic support 1,364
- Psychoeducational groups 225
- Awareness raising workshops 641

37,810

1:1 therapeutic sessions since 2010



The support has been vital to the children in beginning to make sense of some of the experiences that they have had in their lives and in supporting them to move forward emotionally and therefore socially and academically.
Teacher

93%

of parents say their child's mental health has improved

94%

of teachers say children's mental health has improved

74%

of children with very worrying mental health issues improved at school

"It makes me have a smile now when I get back (home), instead of a sad face."

"The group has helped me not to be as worried for secondary [school]."

"It's a great place to go if you feel like you need help. It's a great place if you are feeling sad."



67%

of children were more willing to engage in school life

27%

of children had better attendance

28%

of children had better attainment

Case Study 'Making sense of your story'



Jez*, age 9, had recently joined a new school. He had become very disruptive in the classroom, throwing chairs and turning tables over. The class had to be evacuated every time this happened.

Jez was quite nervous about coming to Blue Smile but slowly relaxed when he found out he could choose what he'd like to do. He started using the sand tray, choosing figures to tell his story. He then started to use the doll house, re-enacting life in his own home.

The picture was one of chaos, trauma and destruction. Jez's dad had been arrested for domestic violence. His dad would often come home drunk and made Jez feel scared and he wanted to hide. But he also didn't want his mum to get hurt. He tried to stop his dad from hurting his mum but couldn't.

Jez used the art materials to paint pictures of his angry feelings. With the help of the therapist, he was also able to make a body map to show where the different feelings lived. Angry feelings were in his arms and legs and mouth making him want to kick, punch and scream, whilst sad feelings were in his stomach giving him stomach aches.

His therapist taught Jez some special breathing exercises to help calm his mind and body which he practiced a lot. Over many months, the angry behaviour became less dramatic, he was able to talk to his mum and teacher whenever he felt anxious, and became much calmer in the classroom.

*All details have been changed to protect a child's anonymity

Looking forward

Blue Smile are committed to supporting both children and the community around the child. Next year, Blue Smile will:

- ★ expand our portfolio of psychoeducational groups to meet emerging needs and increasing demand
- ★ deliver pilot workshops to Year 7 pupils, helping those at risk of emotionally based school avoidance to make a secure transition to secondary school
- ★ respond to the need of parents by developing and delivering parent information session on understanding and supporting children's mental health.

Case Study 'Removing the mask'

Charlie* was always getting into trouble in school and when playing outside, he was angry and found friendships difficult. When Charlie started working with Blue Smile, he said he was frustrated about how he was seen by others, feeling stuck in a negative spiral.

Charlie's therapist felt that he had become used to being this angry persona and wondered about what lay beneath. Blue Smile gave Charlie a non-judgemental space where all aspects of his personality were welcomed. Charlie used paint and clay to explore different parts of himself. Over time, Charlie was able to remove his angry "mask" and think about the

complicated feelings that it had hidden. Gradually, Charlie began to understand more about what was happening with his friendships and how this could be changed.

At the end of the work, Charlie was able to express a more positive sense of value in himself. He felt hopeful for the future and recognised that he had choices and self-agency going forwards into secondary school.



*All details have been changed to protect a child's anonymity

With thanks to

Our work is only possible due to the generous support that we receive. We would like to thank everyone who has helped us over the past year, including:

Individuals

Our major donors

"Friends of Blue Smile"

Regular Givers

our Ambassadors

Supporters

Trustees

Volunteers

We also thank those that remembered us in their will

The Community

Abi & Josh, Annie Cornwall, Arnold Clark Community Fund, Bottisham Primary School, Churchill College, Cooperative Community Fund, David Watts, Dillan, Downing Place United Reform Church, Eastern Fostering Service, Girton Musical Group, Horizon Dance Academy, Leslie Social Dance, Lets Go Punting, Maggie Brown, Mawson Community Orchestra, Mid Anglia Caravan Club, Northstowe Running Festival, Sawston Rotary Club, Simon Blair, St Andrew's Parish Church, St Benet Church, St John's College, Stephen Kent-Taylor, Terracycle, Tim Bryson, Trinity College, Trinity Hall and Vie International

Corporate

Adepto Consulting Limited, Anglia, Barnes Construction, Benevity, Cambridge Healthcare Research, Cambridge University Press & Assessment, Hexcel Composites Limited, Innovia Technology, Laragh Developments, Qualcomm and SHB Real Estate

Trusts and Foundations

Albert Van Den Bergh, Barnabas Oley Trust (Clare College), Betty Lawes, CCF – Arm Community Fund, CCF – High Sheriff Fund, CCF – Outlook Fund, Clothworkers' Foundation, Edward Gostling, Ely Community Unit Trust, Enabling Activities Charitable Trust, Evelyn Trust, Garfield Weston, Henry Smith, Homelands Charitable Trust, Kyral Trust, Leathersellers, Leys School, Malcolm Whales Foundation, Masonic Charitable Foundation, Openwork Foundation, Paragon Trust, Postcode Places Trust, Pye Foundation, Red Hill Trust, Schrierer Foundation, Sir Jules Thorn, South Cambs District Council, Strangward Trust, Thorpe Charitable Trust, TK Maxx and Homesense Foundation and The Toy Trust

By becoming a regular giver or leaving a gift to Blue Smile in your will, you can support Cambridgeshire children to live happier lives and have brighter futures.

Together, let's make building children's resilience and life prospects our immediate priority as well as our legacy.

To donate visit our website:

www.bluesmile.org.uk

For more information email:

info@bluesmile.org.uk

Or call:

01223 314725

Blue Smile: Registered Charity No. 1139279
Registered Company No. 7411348

Blue Smile Heroes



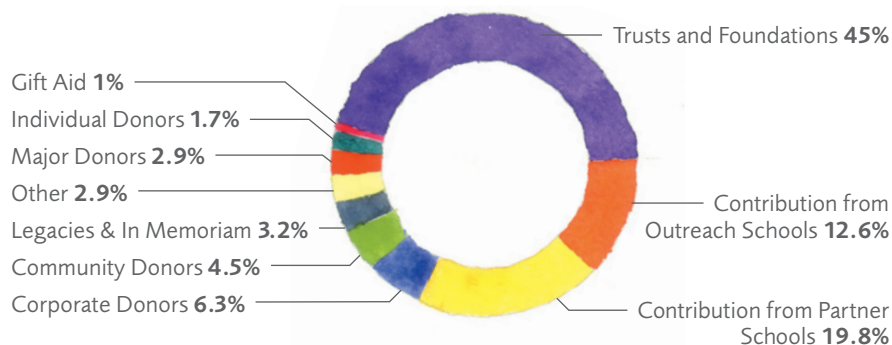
- ★ **Simon Blair** braved desert and arctic conditions and raised **£7713**
- ★ **Annie Cornwall** completed the Cambridge half marathon and raised **£2097**
- ★ **Dillan** finished his Three Peaks Challenge, raising an additional **£878**
- ★ **David Watts** (and Bonzo the dog) ran the ROC Coastal Trail to raise **£770**

How your donation helps

- ★ **£1000** provides a child with a term of specialist, one-to-one, arts-based therapy
- ★ **£200** enables a child to join an interactive workshop on managing their feelings
- ★ **£50** provides all the art therapy materials we use in a term in one school
- ★ **£10** would buy a puppet which helps a child to tell stories about what is upsetting them.

How we fund the help we give

Our income £500,096



Our expenditure £402,951

