

# Mary's

A large yellow speech bubble graphic is positioned behind the letter 'y' in the word 'Mary's', partially overlapping it and extending upwards and to the right.

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

**SAFETY**  
**COMMUNITY**  
**PURPOSE**  
**KINDNESS**  
**FUTURES**



## ANDREW MARR

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As Patron of Mary's, an organisation working with disadvantaged young people in North London, many of them involved in violent gangs, I have come to know Jason and his team as quite exceptional and exceedingly brave. Their direct intervention, dogged determination to stay in touch with people being ignored by much the rest of society, and tireless work with them have, I am absolutely sure, saved many lives.

London, like much of the rest of Britain, is suffering from an epidemic of violent gang-based crime as disenfranchised youths battle for territory and drugs business. Many are excluded early from school and find themselves with nowhere to go save the streets. Many are entirely terrified by what that means and understand that the likelihood of being seriously injured is high. A majority are desperate to get out but have no means of doing so.

Mary's works with them, offering safe places, sports and other activities, and patient conversation about their problems. Jason's team is always available to be called and frequently put themselves in harm's way. They are the nearest thing that this part of London has to genuine local heroes.



# Welcome

**Safety. Community. Purpose.  
Kindness. Futures.**

These words are the foundation of Mary's ethos and approach. Our building bricks for young people.

We are busier than ever. 231 young people received a mentoring call each week throughout lockdowns. They had the phone number of their Youthworker if they were in need or danger.

Serious violence work has been impressive. 34 gang mediations were achieved. 44 weapons were amnestied. Over 270 food packages were delivered by Youthworkers to young people needing food. Educational packs were printed for those without school work. Young prisoners locked in cells received support packs.

As at February 2021 we have a fourfold increase in referrals for our core work of counselling and mentoring year on year. We are preparing ourselves for this challenge.

**Violent Groups will take up the slack if we don't. Investment in our attention to vulnerable young people means less knives, less young lives squandered by gang involvement and a safer and better community.**

**Mary-Jane Roberts**  
CEO, Mary's

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## Who we are



**Jason Allen**  
*Director,  
Youth Work*



**Emile Libock**  
*Senior Caseworker*



**Kafel Brown**  
*Senior Youthworker*



**Camilla Ferdinand**  
*Caseworker*



**Sara Beshira**  
*Caseworker*



**Laura Asare**  
*Creative Session  
Leader*



**Emmanuel Djobo**  
*Young Londoners  
Fund Youth Worker*



**Janine  
Goodin-Deer**  
*Caseworker*



**Abdisamed Abdi**  
*Caseworker*



**Christivie Lenga**  
*Caseworker*





## Letter from our Chair of Trustees

24.02.21

2020 was an incredibly difficult year for us all. We had to learn to live under new unprecedented restrictions and great uncertainties. Many individuals and families faced greater financial hardship and mental health issues. Yet, despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic, the vital and life-saving efforts of Mary's continued as the team adapted and developed new ways to support young people. From collecting and distributing food and other essentials to young people and their families to holding online learning, training and skills development classes, the Mary's team demonstrated their resilience, strength, creativity and commitment in the face of great adversity. We were delighted to hear that Jason Allen, the Director of Mary's, was awarded the British Empire Medal 'For services to Young people in North West London' in the New Year's Honours. We are extremely proud of Jason and of all the team for their unwavering support for young people.

We look to the future with hope. While the vaccine rollout will ease the social restrictions, the situation for young people will remain challenging as research indicates that many young people are living in potentially unsafe environments.

**The efforts of the Mary's team are needed now more than ever.**

### WHY OUR WORK IS NEEDED

■ **'Young people are now in potentially unsafe environments vulnerable to gang-related activity.'**

*Leigh Middleton, CEO National Youth Agency as quoted in 'Out of Sight: Vulnerable Young People: COVID 19 Response', National Youth Agency, April 2020*

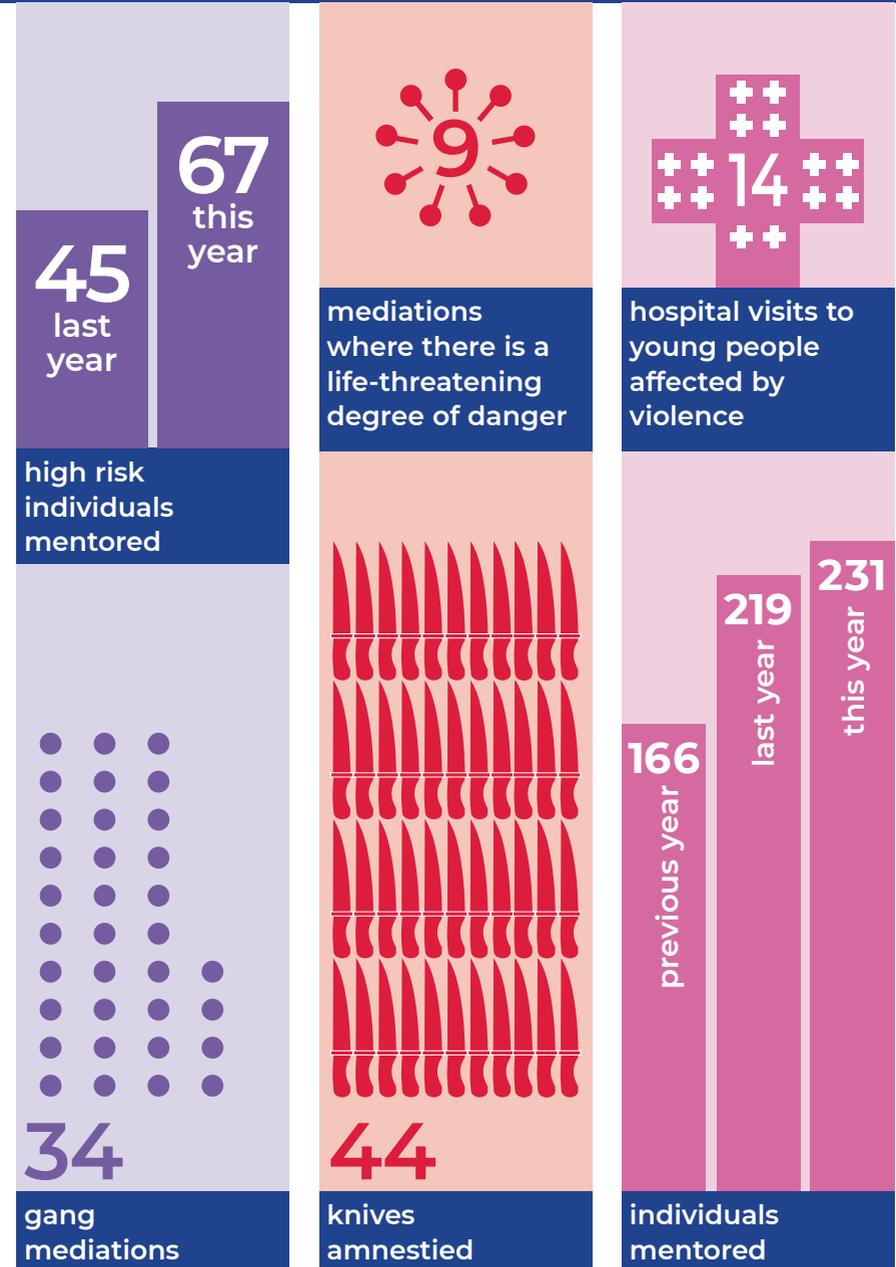
■ **A staggering 1 in 6 children now have a probable mental health condition.**

*Children's Commissioner for England in 'The state of children's mental health services 2020/21'*

■ **An estimated 1 in 5 of youth clubs and services will not re-open post-COVID.**

*Out of Sight: Vulnerable Young People: COVID 19 Response, National Youth Agency, April 2020*

## Our impact



# Purpose

“ I talk with young women about their week, family, how things are. We start every session with a follow up of what we talked about before. We look into life. Things that they enjoy, what they feel, what they need, what they think they want.

*Camilla, Caseworker*

## Talking 1:1

Mentoring is usually one to one in format and in small groups where there are groups of young people in conflict. Our core work is therapeutic mentoring sessions. Our team address the reality that those at risk of exclusion or already excluded

from education are often those with Adverse Childhood Experiences and trauma. **The three outcomes that we work to are improved self esteem, improved mental wellbeing, and reduced aggression.**

Our core mentoring numbers were up from 219 in the previous year to 231 this year despite COVID. The number of school age pupils helped increased from 117 total last year to 137 this year. The pandemic put paid to our group work.

Our theoretical model is a framework for assessing a young person. **The process enables young people to progress towards a greater sense of purpose and of themselves.**

Mentoring	2019-20	2020-21
Young people mentored	219	231
Young men mentored	183	185
Young women mentored	36	46
Pupils in school worked with	117	137
Primary	29	21
Secondary	88	116
Number of pupils intensively 1:1	22	56

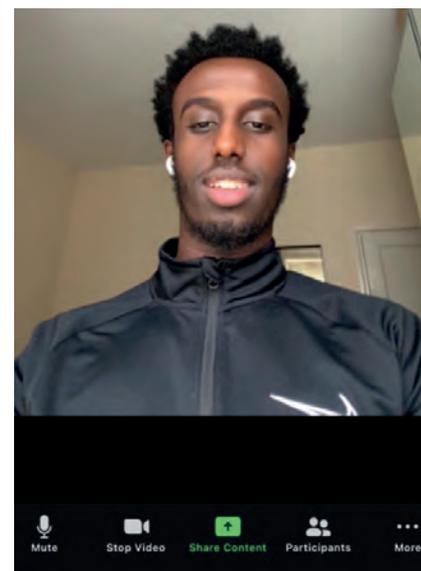


“ Many congratulations, your enthusiasm and commitment have impacted on so many young people over the last 15 years and will have improved thousands of young Londoners' lives and future prospects. Your work is more important than ever during the pandemic.

*Letter from the Mayor of London Sadiq Khan congratulating Jason Allen on his New Year's Honour*

We actively develop potential mentors. Mary's are proud of the fact that two team members this year were once mentees.

Speech and drama groups and leisure and fitness groups ran half the year when it was possible in schools.



*Caseworker Abdisamed conducting a mentoring session on Zoom*

“ AARON, 21  
Simple – I grew up in care, I see Mary's as my family, they've been there through my trials & tribulations literally and now I'm in a good place!



## STEPHEN'S STORY

Stephen is 20 and we have worked with him since he was 13

- Stephen suffered high levels of abuse and trauma as a child
- He was excluded from school at 14
- He has been in prison since he was 16
- Mary's has never stopped mentoring Stephen
- We have focused on therapeutic work to help him understand himself better
- We have mediated 2 violent altercations in prison
- 3 of Stephen's friends have been murdered in 2 years
- Stephen has struggled to believe he can do anything with his life
- We have since helped him complete Levels 1 and 2 in Maths and English
- Mary's has supported Stephen to apply for distance learning in prison
- He was not involved in violence after his prison sentence and is studying for a degree in business.

## We asked Jason about violence reduction

### Why does someone carry a knife?

For protection. To perpetrate violence. For revenge. To be cool. Young people are living in fear. Young people have every reason to be fearful. How many kids has Mary's lost? 17? They are right to be scared. It's horrendous.

### Why do you focus on violence reduction?

Violence is everywhere for them – from growing up, in the media, in your communities, in your house. If you're involved with violence you're going to become involved with the criminal justice system. You're going to be more excluded from society, more ostracised. A lot of young people are not receiving the support they need. We want to work with them to look into the reasons why they're involved with violence and help them stop.

### What does 'intervention' mean to you?

At its most basic it could be a wake up call to a young person at 8am. Just waking you up and saying 'You've gotta get to school'. Just breaking a certain way of life.

We can intervene between a student and a teacher. Find the breakdown between them. We support that young person to develop and lessen the anxieties which lead to violence. At its highest, gang intervention is where you get two young people together when murders have happened and you mediate a conversation. That can take months and years to facilitate safely.

### Why do you go to prisons?

We get some serious work done in prisons. Knowing that someone cares for a young person gives them a sense of security and a breakthrough moment.

Young people get a lot of time to reflect in prison. We follow them through the journey. Many young people get out of prison and come straight here with

**Violence reduction is at the heart of Mary's. We keep young people safe and reduce serious youth violence in northwest London.**

**We specialise in trauma-informed youthwork and understand the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences – our Youthworkers are expertly trained to respond to the challenges they meet.**

their bags. We hope they take the opportunity and latch onto it. Use it as a fresh start.

Apart from death being in prison is the lowest a young person can get. Nine times out of ten it'll be the most hostile environment they'll ever be in. That's coupled with not having appropriate support networks.

We go to see them to support them with their general mental health wellbeing and show them we will be there for them. So many young people are used to being let down – we are here for them.

## FACTS

■ Knife carrying, injuries and deaths continue to affect our young people profoundly.

6.5% of 10-15 year olds knew someone who carried a knife.

■ In 2019/20, of those admitted to hospital for assault by sharp object 16.2% were aged 18 or younger.

*G. Allen and E Kirk-Wade, Knife Crime in England and Wales, House of Commons Library Briefing Paper No. SN4304, 6 October 2020*

## Violence reduction interventions

Core violence reduction work intensified. The number of high risk individuals we worked with increased from 45 to 67 in the year and mediations rose from 23 to 34. Weapon amnesties assisted by Youthworkers stands at 44. Prison visits were hit by COVID and numbered 7 as opposed to the 2019 figure of 31.

“ **SETH, 18**

I'm 18 & been in prison since I was 16, the only letters and support I really had consistently is with Mary's team, they send me worksheets and stuff to keep my mind occupied when I'm in my cell or I'll go crazy with depression and being alone! I don't get calls or visits from my family & friends so I call Mary's team about how my day & week has been.

Intervention	2019-20	2020-21
Number of high risk individuals	45	67
Number of mediations	23	34
Number of mediations with threat of serious violence / life-threatening danger		9
Number of weapons	19	44
Number of different prisons	9	5
Number of prison visits made	31	7



Knives handed in to the Mary's team



# Safety

## Violent mediation response



**10:00 PM**  
Report from a young person of a local knife-point robbery



**10:10 PM**  
Youthworker triage: who is involved, key contacts and strategy. 24hrs/day



**10:30–11:30 PM**  
>20 young people called, messaged or visited to listen and influence, and be talked down from immediate action



**11:30–3:00 AM**  
De-escalation due to trust of Mary's

“My Youthworker has saved my life, literally dragged me out of a fight and took a knife out of my hands. They gave me another choice.”



**1 WEEK INTENSIVE**  
Ongoing group support to react to any triggers



**8:30 PM**  
Knife amnesty



**6:00 PM**  
Mary's organises gang mediation



**4:00 PM**  
Retaliation planned

**A YEAR – DEPENDENT ON NEED**  
Mentoring of new individuals not formerly known but at risk. Reduced street violence. Engagement with education.



**KEY**

- IMPROVED OUTCOME
- VIOLENCE
- COMMUNICATION
- MARY'S ACTION

## PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT SUPPORT

■ We provided support for teachers during COVID. Vulnerable young people excluded from mainstream education could attend class.

■ When senior staff were shielding or in self-quarantine members of our team put in extra hours.

## Lives and education

Our educational support is holistic. **We start with young people's real ability to deal with and engage with education.** We believe that your emotional difficulties can stand in the way of education. We do not divide young people's lives and their education. Our young people undertake external courses. We assist with their work proposals, job applications, support into work and apprenticeships.

Due to COVID the number of young people undertaking courses with us increased very significantly. 40 courses were achieved this year. Support sessions are done alongside a Youthworker. This is to help and motivate the young person. Sharing their experience means a young person is more likely to achieve a qualification. They must feel emotionally supported in order to cope with the course.

### ALICE, 15

I was under a lot of friends pressure and gave in a lot, being in this group work and being able to phone when I need to talk to Cam I have felt I am someone of value and I have a purpose.

Aspiration	2019-20	2020-21
Number of young people helped in to employment	16	12
Number of young people helped in to education	21	67
Qualifications achieved		40
Total hours spent mentoring during course		104
Hours of learning for young people		545

**What has lockdown and Covid been like for you?**

*Pairing the young person with their Youthworker we guided and accompanied young people through their chosen course.*

*This course buddying was unique and kept close ties to our young people.*

*The young person selected a subject they wanted to learn and a full 100% of the young people starting courses completed their study.*

**What did doing the course mean to you?**



*Really was the worst period of my life, as I couldn't do what I loved and staying at home all day I felt like I wasn't myself. I felt this course\* was really perfect helping me with my youtube and editing.*  
\*Adobe Photoshop

*Without having my mind on this course\*, lockdown would have been ten times harder for me because there was just too much going on at home for me. It wasn't everything, but it was everything at the same time. I hope I can follow up with good stuff after this.*  
\*Entrepreneurship Level 2

## LAPTOP DISTRIBUTION

■ The Hadley Trust contributed money for laptops for young people denied home work technical support.



## FACTS

■ 24.8% of children in Camden Town with Primrose Hill ward live in poverty.

*Strategy and Change Report, Camden Town with Primrose Hill Ward Profile 2020, LB Camden  
25 February 2020*

■ Our ward has among the least affordable homes in London, with the average rent for a one-bedroom dwelling exceeding 60% of median pre-tax pay, 4.5% of working-age adults unemployed and 7.5% claiming out of work benefits.

*Trust for London, Poverty and Inequality Data for Camden, October 2020*

## Supporting families

We partnered with Primrose Hill community and Primrose Hill Food Market to support young people's families this year.

### ■ Weekly phone calls

We purchased Pay as You Go phones for every member of the Mary's team. Each lockdown week the Youthworkers rang their young people. This was the basis of our pastoral care and safeguarding and enabled our continued contact.

### ■ Food parcels

It became clear that there were some homes where food was scarce. We set up a foodbank with contributions from the community. A Friday team of organisers, packers and direct distributors to the young people's homes. This was a dedicated and huge operation supporting about 20 families a week.

Community	2019-20	2020-21
Total number of food parcels delivered		270
Number of households supported	21	100+
Maximum number in a week		36



“ The care and support shown by Primrose Hill directly results in young people having counselling and mentoring at crisis points in their lives. Our team sends huge thanks to Primrose Hill residents and the Farmer's Market. This groundswell of support has been wonderful.

*Mary Jane Roberts, CEO*

“ It was a privilege and a responsibility to help those who had it a bit worse than the situation I found myself in.

It was a natural thing. Many people felt they had the time, the inclination, the kindness to help. It brought a lot of people together at a point where we felt so isolated, taking responsibility to do more in the community.

*Zam Kesh, owner of local business Primrose Hill Stores, member of the Mary's Committee and voluntary coordinator of Food Donations in the crisis.*



## A force for good

Kindness is positive and underpins trust. It is our assumption of what humans need to flourish. Empathy that comes from kindness allows for greater exploration of young people's selves and is a potent force for good. Young people feel that someone cares and believes in them.

### ■ Home and prison support

We were distressed to be separated from our young people in prisons in the pandemic. **Hundreds of packs containing therapeutic worksheets sudoku, crosswords, a variety of worksheets – anything to promote mental wellbeing – were posted to young prisoners.** These were also given to young people isolated in the community. Letters were written to prisoners to provide a continual presence of Mary's in their lives.

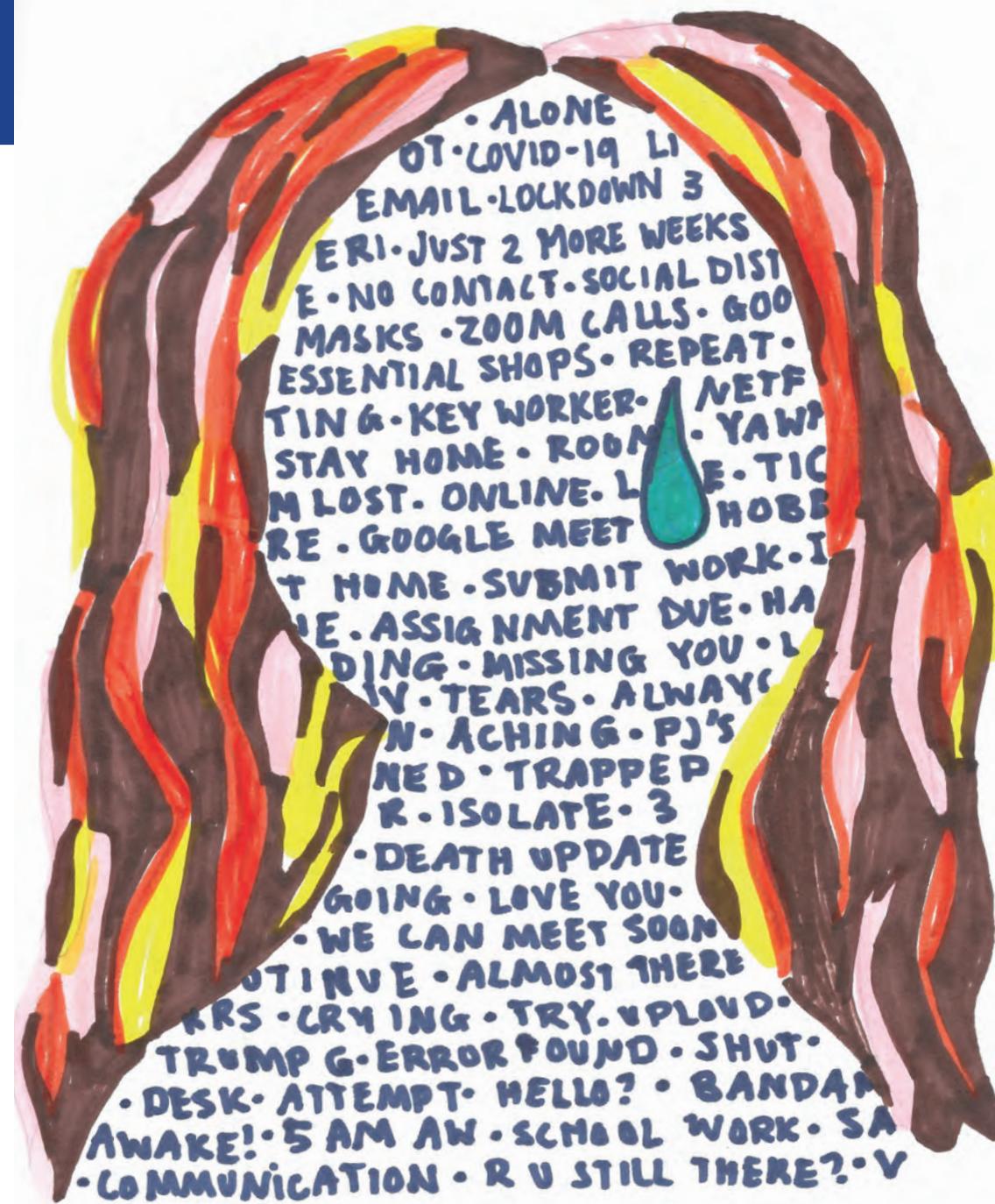
### ■ Holiday outreach

We check on young people, spend time with them and at Christmas gave gifts. We remain the only youthwork in the borough to operate on Christmas Day. We know holidays are often the most dangerous and lonely time for young people in unstable environments. This year we visited 68 young people in the holidays and gave gifts. For 7 of them ours was the only gift they received.

### ■ Ability to care

We decided to bolster our Youthworker skills to help young people. Youthworkers did additional youthwork training: **bereavement counselling; psychology for depression, stress, anxiety and PTSD;** CBT coaching diploma; SEND bundle for Special Educational Needs support; and violence at work.

Remote emotional support	2019-20	2020-21
Number of therapeutic packs		200+
Number of letters sent		28



Lockdown experience art by Neve Ritchie, age 13

# Our partners



“ The mentors from Mary's provide 1:1 support for a targeted caseload of students at Haverstock School.

The mentors work with our most disengaged students who are at risk of exclusion with the intention of keeping them engaged in education and safe in the community.

The youthworkers offer an invaluable service and their training and skill set mean that they have always been able to connect and engage with the most hard to reach students and their families.

The service has offered positive role models that our students often do not have in their lives.

*Simone Quaynor, Targeted Intervention Manager, Haverstock School*

We continue to work in partnership, strengthen relationships, increase our knowledge, and offer our experience to other youthwork providers and organisations.

## Some of those we have worked with this year

- UCL Academy
- Haverstock School
- CCFL
- The Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust
- Camden
- HM Prison and Probation Service
- Metropolitan Police
- London Youth
- National Youth Agency
- Mayor of London
- Brandon Centre
- Young Camden Foundation
- Violence Reduction Unit

## Our finances

INCOME	2019	2020
Charitable Trusts	88,134	87,900
Individuals	41,021	56,763
Fees	1,235	5,001
Other	203	368
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>130,593</b>	<b>150,032</b>
EXPENDITURE		
PEOPLE		
Staff	56,581	81,194
Professional Development	1,500	970
ACTIVITIES		
Trips	6,219	7,985
Sports	1,553	3,088
Prison Visits	693	1,350
BBQ	641	1,173
Equipment	1,418	1,019
Other activities	2,392	5,724
Overheads	10,531	8,073
OTHER COSTS		
ICT	914	625
Reporting	500	304
Knife amnesty bin	2,903	-
Other	891	2,218
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>86,736</b>	<b>113,723</b>
<b>SURPLUS</b>	<b>43,857</b>	<b>36,309</b>
<b>RESERVE</b>	<b>54,597</b>	<b>90,888</b>

■ Mary's Trustees have agreed our goal is a 1 year reserve of £130,000



**GABRIEL, 14**

“ We was listened to when we had something to say. We are honest about what has happened and we get to express our feelings how we want to.

# Donate

## DIRECT DEBIT

Set up a direct debit or standing order to us. The details are:

CHARITY NAME: St Mary's Centre Community Trust

BANK: Santander

ACCOUNT NUMBER: 04555171

SORT CODE: 09 01 50

## ONLINE

Find us at JustGiving and follow their easy process.

[www.justgiving.com/smcct](http://www.justgiving.com/smcct)

## SIGN UP!

Our excellent newsletter can ping into your inbox quarterly with all the updates on what young people are getting as a result of your help.

Please email your details to [info@smcyouthwork.org](mailto:info@smcyouthwork.org) and we will include you in our merry group of wellwishers and supporters.

 Find us online at [info@smcyouthwork.org](mailto:info@smcyouthwork.org)

*St Mary's Centre is the operating name of St Mary's Centre Community Trust, Registered Charity No. 1122054. St Mary's Centre, Elsworthy Road, London NW3 3DJ*

# Thank you to our friends

Artemis Charitable Foundation  
Estate of Jean Aston  
ExPat Foundation  
Fitzdale Trust  
Georgina and Bernard David  
Friends of Regent's Park  
Jimmy Carr  
Jonathan and Ruth Adkin  
Jonathan and Sonita Gale  
LG Harris Trust  
Liberal Jewish Synagogue  
London Community Food  
Enterprises  
Nicholas Hytner  
Omni  
Robert and Anna King  
Savills, Primrose Hill  
Scott Usher  
Shadworth Hodgson Bequest  
St Mary's Church, Primrose Hill  
The Hadley Trust  
The Span Group  
Young Camden Foundation  
Mayor of London's  
Young Londoners Fund

SUPPORTED BY

**MAYOR OF LONDON**



## JASON ALLEN



We want to continue to develop the way we work. Continue to go into new schools, mentor intensively, combat gang violence and spread the work we know we can do. We want to keep kids alive and lower the violence rate.

*Director of Youthwork*

Jason is a recognised leader in youthwork and expert on Serious Youth Violence in the capital.

He received the Medal of the Order of the British Empire for Services to Young People in the New Year's Honours List 2021.

His commendation was supported by Patron Andrew Marr, Sir Keir Starmer and the Rt Revd Bishop of Edmonton.

His honour is for 15 years of service developing and saving young lives.