

Annual Review

2020 - 21



Mind
Quality
Mark

Contents

Chair’s Introduction	3
Message from the CEO	4
Communications and Training	5
Training.....	5
Keeping you in Mind – our newsletter.....	5
The Forum – Service User Engagement	6
Social Media	6
Activities & Wellbeing	7
What is happening now?.....	9
Wellbeing Support.....	9
Drop-In.....	10
Supporting People.....	11
What is happening now?.....	12
Active Monitoring.....	15
What is happening now?.....	16
Peer Support	17
Gobaith.....	17
Side by Side Cymru	18
Early Intervention in Psychosis.....	19
Student Scoping Project.....	19
Finance and fundraising	21
Looking forward to this year	23
Partners, supporters and referral pathways	24
Partners, supporters and referral pathways continued.....	25
A big thank you to.....	26
Our Board of Trustees.....	26
Our Staff.....	26
Case Study to show the vital support of Mind Aberystwyth.....	27

Chair's Introduction

Having been a trustee of Mind Aberystwyth since 2009 I feel a real sense of privilege in becoming the chair of the Board of Trustees, following on from the excellent work by my predecessor Catrin Owen who I wish to thank for all her excellent service and dedication to our organisation as she retires as a trustee.

I would also like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to Eurwen Booth, who has stepped down as a trustee after 16 years. Eurwen was a founding member of our Board of Trustees when we launched back in 2005 and has been a familiar face to many staff, volunteers and members during this time.

The recent appointment of Jamie Jones-Mead as our new CEO, has been accompanied by the recruitment of five new trustees in a refreshed and enlarged board, which has significantly strengthened our governance and renewed our sense of purpose as we continue to make progress following the many challenges presented by the Covid pandemic.

The dedication and commitment of our staff team during the pandemic has been exemplary, and we now collectively look forward with confidence as we strive to serve our community to the very best of our ability.

Dylan Wilson-Lewis

Chair of the Board of Trustees

Message from the CEO

The last 16 months has been very difficult for so many of us and for so many different reasons.

I joined Mind Aberystwyth in April 2021, and due to the ensuing lockdown, I did not have the chance to meet ‘in person’ the team or any of the people who rely on Mind Aberystwyth.

However, I have been blown away by the eagerness and professionalism of the team over the lockdowns. The feedback from the people that benefit from the charity’s work shows that we have continued to have an immensely positive impact, although for much of the year, it has been difficult to see people face-to-face.

I feel privileged to be joining Mind Aberystwyth at an exciting time when we are considering how the charity will move forward into the coming years, and where our focus will be.

I would like to extend my personal thanks to all our funders, supporters, partners and users who have stuck with us through the last period. Your support has been invaluable and without this we would not have been able achieve what we have done.

Please enjoy reading the report!

Jamie Jones-Mead

Chief Executive Officer

Communications and Training

With the move to online only support during the COVID 19 pandemic, it has never been so important to be able to offer information and support online.

Training

During the year all the training was delivered online:

- 15 training sessions were delivered over 45 hours (Peer Support, Blue Light, Mental Health Awareness, Aberystwyth University Student Scoping Project),
- Almost 150 people benefitted from our training.

Keeping you in Mind – our newsletter

We have published 17 editions of *Keeping You in Mind*, our mental health and wellbeing newsletter for Ceredigion, sending out to partners, stakeholders, and service users. We wish to thank service users, staff, volunteers, and trustees for their contributions and ongoing support. The newsletter came about as a way to keep in touch with service users during the pandemic and has become an essential way in which we communicate across Ceredigion.

We send a handful of hard copies of the newsletters out in the post to our contacts that are unable to access it online and who are not regular users of social media. This has helped us keep in touch with a wider audience.

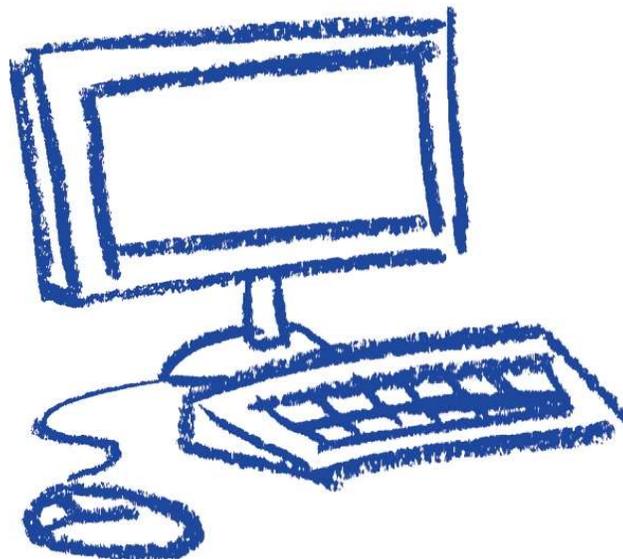
The Forum – Service User Engagement

We have been proud to host *The Forum*, a group of service users who have reviewed and commented upon Mind Aberystwyth services, policies and publications. During the past year members have informed the development of the newsletter, including contributing articles, improved our Complaints procedures, attended the AGM and advised the Management Team and the Board of what we do well, what can be improved and what we should be delivering in the future.

We wish to thank all the existing members, and those who helped to set up The Forum in 2019, for their enthusiasm and forthright views that has helped to inform and improve our service development, delivery, and evaluation.

Social Media

Our two Facebook pages, Mind Aberystwyth and Side by Side Cymru at Mind Aberystwyth, have a total of **1550** followers and average monthly views of 158.



Activities & Wellbeing

In March 2020 along with most support services, the Activity & Wellbeing Service moved to online and remote support.

As face-to-face contact ceased, Mind Aberystwyth had to move to a new way of working and the charity moved quickly to offer weekly check-ins with service users.

During the year, there have been a total of 2428 separate contacts. This included:

- 221 groups
- 2211 Wellbeing support sessions
- 6440 hours of support provided
- 128 people received regular support
- 57 new referrals which includes 31 from other organisations in the Third Sector, 25 self-referrals and 1 from Primary Care.
- A total of 248 service users were referred onto other services.

“The loss of Mind groups at the onset of lockdown was hugely destabilising and isolating. I was offered a weekly phone call with a support worker... I appreciated the offer and accepted it, [but] felt despondent how much it could be... Although nothing can replace the collective wisdom and warmth of community... that weekly call with the empathy, insight, lightness, and confidence the support worker had brought, has in some ways surpassed the input I gain from groups.”

“By chance, lockdown has coincided with an extremely challenging situation in my life, and that one-to-one support had been instrumental in helping me navigate a path through.

[Wellbeing Support] has been literally life-changing! As well as life-supporting.”

Several of our groups moved to online platforms such as Facebook, Zoom, Moodle and Microsoft Teams.

This was a challenge for both our group facilitators and our attendees, but we were able to adapt surprisingly well! We noticed numerous positive changes:

- We were able to reach further, and support individuals from near Machynlleth to west of Swansea, and lots of places in between!
- Individuals who were unable to attend previously could now access support that was not available to them before. This was due to several reasons such as rurality, transport, and anxiety.
- The birth of our newsletter, *Keeping You in Mind*.
- We were able to reap the benefits of our recently completed Reboot UK project, which aimed to improve digital access and confidence by supporting people with a range of skills.

We were also able to introduce two new groups: Trauma-Informed Yoga, and a walking group (when restrictions allowed).

“Unfortunately, as has been the case for many people I had bereavements during this time, it really helped to have someone I knew to listen to and reflect on my emotions.”

What is happening now?

Wellbeing Support

Thanks to the success of our wellbeing check-ins over the lockdown, we are delighted to be able to offer a new, developed and more structured version of this support.

Wellbeing Support is now comprising of 12 weekly sessions. In the first session the individual's wellbeing will be assessed by use of a wellbeing scale. Support will then centre on areas agreed between the individual and the support worker, based on the results of the scale.

This support is open to referral from anyone, and is for individuals who:

- Would like someone to talk to.
- Are socially isolated.
- Require support managing their mental health.
- Require support to access Mental Health services.
- Require support to improve their wellbeing.
- Require signposting to specialised services/peer support networks.
- Want to learn new skills/access education.
- Cannot access other services.
- Are on waiting lists for other services.

Support will be flexible and where restrictions allow and delivered in a way that is most accessible for the individual.

Drop-In

Due to its success the Drop-In has continued to operate online, and is now moving back to face to face delivery.

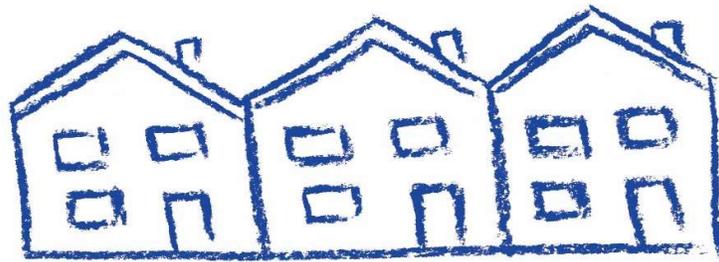


Supporting People

In order to keep providing support to our service users, our Supporting People Tenancy service was adapted to virtual support from the start of the first lockdown in March 2020. We have been supporting individuals over the phone and through video conferencing platforms. While this has been a challenge for us and our service users, we have all pulled together to keep working and keep people safe in their tenancies.

There was a total of:

- 2608 Tenancy Support sessions held between April 20 and March 21
- 2520 hours of support provided
- 27 new referrals which includes 2 from other organisations in the Third Sector, 6 self-referrals, 10 from Primary Care and 9 were referred from other Mind Aber delivered services.



What is happening now?

Supporting People

Our Tenancy Support Service provides one to one support for individuals with tenancy-based needs in North Ceredigion. The support is designed to be short term and provides people with the skills to live independently in their own homes.

The main aim of our tenancy support is to help people to live successfully in settled accommodation within the community.

We want to empower people and enable them to live as independently as possible. Assistance may include help to improve daily living skills, social interactions, and community involvement, but focus on housing related issues.

Individuals work on a support plan which is tailored to their needs. We base this on an outcome scale which helps individuals identify the areas where they need support. Our service users often find that setting achievable goals helps them stay focused and helps them achieve positive outcomes.

This support is open to referral from anyone, and is for individuals who:

- Live in North Ceredigion
- Need support with housing/tenancy issues which are also impacting your mental health
- Need support to manage budgets
- Need support to access other services
- Need support to build life skills
- Need support with daily living
- Would like to be signposted to other relevant services

Providing virtual support to the people of Ceredigion has worked so well during the pandemic and has allowed us to support even more people than before. Due to this success, we will be looking to provide a blended approach to support in the future so that all individuals can access the support that is most appropriate for them.

Support will be flexible and where restrictions allow and delivered in a way that is most accessible for the individual.

This service is funded under the Supporting People grant in partnership with Pobl Group and Ceredigion County Council.

“ ‘Invaluable’ and ‘essential’ doesn’t even begin to describe the support I have received from Mind. My difficulties had been severe and ongoing long before Covid, but the virus exacerbated an already dire situation until I just did not know which way to turn. I couldn’t connect with the first Mind support worker I spoke to; I find it very difficult to make connections, but then a new worker was allocated to me and that made a huge difference. There are some things that she has done for me but, probably more importantly, there are other things that her support has enabled me to do for myself. Between us we have achieved things like getting GP appointments, having someone in to fit a new oven, getting an electrician in, completing a PIP application and appeal, and bringing some order to my financial affairs so that I have a better chance of continuing to keep them in order. I cannot find words to adequately describe the emotional support that she has also given me. Most of my life is quite difficult to say the least but being able to offload in a supportive and non-judgemental environment, and having help to untangle and order my thoughts, has helped me to cope. Thank you, my support worker and Mind, for keeping me going with this indispensable support.”



Active Monitoring

Active Monitoring is an early intervention and prevention service. It has been developed by Mind and funded by WCVA and the Welsh Government. Active Monitoring is a guided self-care programme delivered by our team of practitioners over the telephone or through video chat. Mind Aberystwyth delivers to people aged 18 years and over who are residents of Ceredigion.

100% of those people asked said yes they would recommend the Active Monitoring programme to their family and friends.

Between June 2020 and March 2021, there were:

- 270 referrals
- 216 people reported positive outcomes, with others not taking up the offer of an assessment.
- 756 hours of practitioner support

“It helped me so much, definitely recommend to someone else. Really good to have this toolkit to go forward.”

“Feeling the best I’ve felt in years. You’ve been fantastic and I’ve found it very helpful. It’s opened my mind to things I wasn’t doing to help myself and as far as I’m concerned, it’s been an extremely worthwhile experience that I’ve gone through.”

“The perseverance shown by the practitioner and the weekly calls have made a significant difference. It has forced me [to] consider aspects of myself which I have not considered in the past. The phone calls became a focal point for introspection. I have thought a lot about the past, particularly considering self-esteem. I consider this to be the end of the beginning. I will be continuing to explore these techniques further.”

What is happening now?

We are planning to continue to deliver the adult Active Monitoring Programme. Working with Mind we would like to offer a Children and Young Persons Programme (11-18) in the future.



Peer Support

In 2020/2021 we continued our peer support work that began through the Side by Side Cymru peer support hub project in 2019 and our own in-house developed Gobaith Peer Support project focused on suicide and self-harm. Our Peer Support work thus far has focused on providing training, support, networking, and seed funding to Community-Based Organisations (CBOs) who provide peer support to their community.

Gobaith

The Gobaith Peer Support Project, started in 2020, is a smaller-scale peer support hub-based project that aims to provide more targeted support to a small number of groups in West Wales. During 2020, with our partners Mind Pembrokeshire and Llanelli Mind, we successfully funded, supported, and trained two new peer support groups, the Pobl Art Group (Ceredigion) and Living in Suicides Shadow (Pembrokeshire).

“We knew from experience how little help there was out there for those bereaved by suicide. We wanted to help those who tragically through no fault of their own found themselves in the same position. After several months through MIND Aberystwyth we were put in touch with S who sadly had also lost her brother to suicide. Our individual journeys in trying to raise awareness of suicide and the stigma surrounding it, made us realise there was little to no support for families and friends bereaved by suicide. This is why we formed a peer-to-peer support group.”

Beneficiary of the Gobaith Peer Support Project

Side by Side Cymru

Through our delivery of the Side by Side Cymru peer support hub project we have worked with a wide variety of groups and individuals providing support, training, networking and seed funding, with the following outcomes:

- 76 Peer Leaders signed up to the Side by Side Cymru programme in 2019 – 2020.
- 74 Community Based Organisations (CBOs) / Peer Support Groups attended at least one event, totalling 250 people
- At least 1,520 people were supported by Peer Leaders who were part of the Side by Side Cymru programme.
- Over £12,500 has been distributed in small grants to Peer Support Groups / CBOs by Mind Aberystwyth so far.
- 39 Peer Support Groups / CBOs received a grant from Mind Aberystwyth
- 6 in 10 people engaged with the project reported a positive change in their understanding of peer support
- 9 in 10 reported an increase in confidence which was directly attributed to the programme
- 6 in 10 said the quality of peer support they delivered has increased
- 5 in 10 said the opportunity to network was the best part of the events
- 5 in 10 said the programme has helped improve their knowledge which will help them in the future.

Early Intervention in Psychosis

This project is delivered in partnership with Mind Pembrokeshire and Hywel Dda University Health Board. It aims to support individuals in their plan to develop skills that will improve confidence, self-esteem and employability.

Student Scoping Project

The Mind Aberystwyth Student Scoping Project is a 12-month initiative delivered in partnership with Aberystwyth University aiming to engage with students locally in order to establish what unmet needs the student population have around mental health.

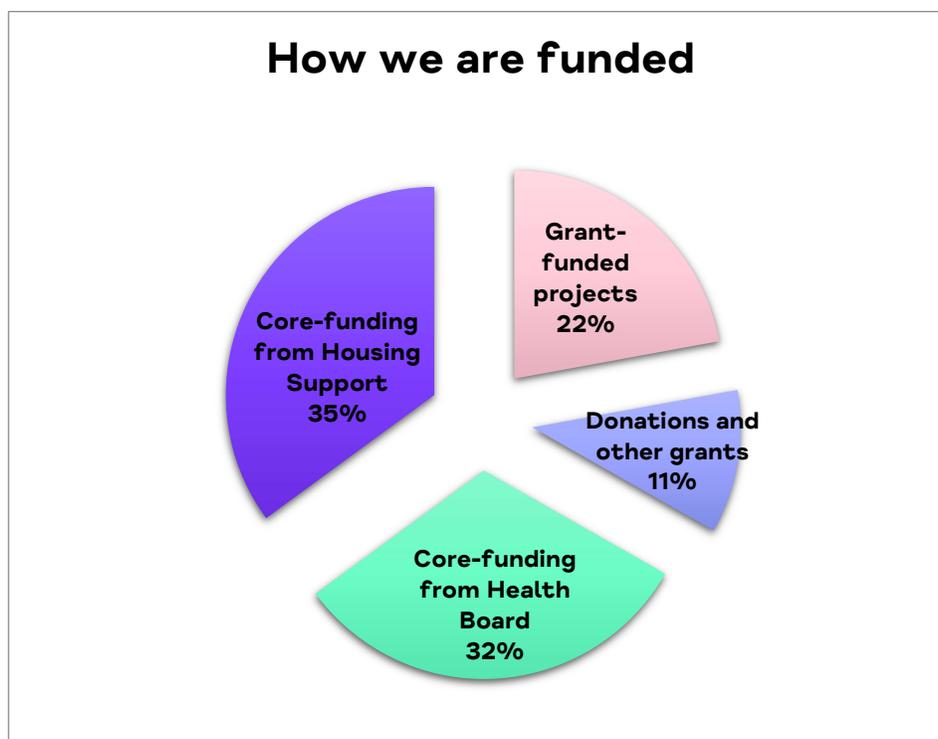
The project comprises a few different strands. Firstly, we have established a Student Steering Group (SSG) consisting of Student volunteers and chaired by a Project Worker. The SSG meets to discuss students' wellbeing needs, share ideas, comments, and feedback, help to run events or organise training and design and deliver trial services.

Secondly, we have trialled a variety of interventions and activities, informed by the SSG, such as arts and craft sessions, gaming, and drop-in sessions. We have also recently begun trialling limited one-to-one 'Tea and talk' sessions where students can talk about issues they are facing in their lives both within and outside of an academic context.

Thirdly, through surveys, feedback, and case studies we are gathering data to inform a final report on what students want and need from a local mental health service, establishing areas of unmet need and barriers to accessing support. This report will be written in September 2021.



Finance and fundraising



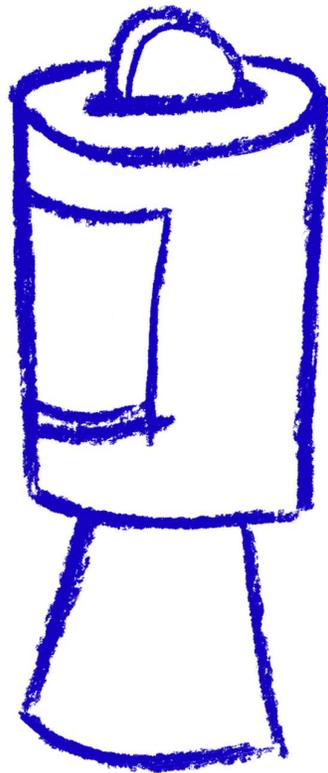
The funding we receive from Hywel Dda University Health Board provides for some of our regular services, including Activities and Wellbeing Support but is also the key foundation of our organisation allowing us to invest in the staff skills and time to develop grant-funded opportunities to run specific projects - such as Side by Side Cymru and to raise funds through donations and other sources of small grants.

The funding we receive through our partnership with Pobl to provide floating tenancy support is targeted at services for people who need very specific, tailored support. This funding also maintains our pool of skilled staff, which allows us to make the most of the project opportunities that are available to add further value to our support for as many people as possible.

New ways of raising funds are always opening up and our aim is to continue to develop our ability to secure the funds that will allow us to maintain and extend our reach across the community.

We are extremely grateful for all the financial support we have received from major institutions to individuals sending us a donation or putting their loose change in a collecting tin. We particularly appreciate the people who have chosen to remember some-one dear that they have lost, by making a donation to help support others.

In the coming year we are very grateful that our development work will be supported by the Lloyds Bank Foundation's Enhance programme.



Looking forward to this year

At this time of great change and renewal, Mind Aberystwyth is exploring its future aims and identity.

The charity will have a new strategy in place by the end of the year which will take us into an exciting new era of Mind Aberystwyth.

Over the next year we would like to:

- Delivering and developing the high-quality Wellbeing Support Service comprising of support for individuals and groups led with the needs of our service users in mind.
- Continue to enable and empower vulnerable people with mental ill health to live independently within our communities through the provision of tenancy related support through the Supporting People programme.
- Look into the continuation of the delivery of the Mind-led Active Monitoring Service.
- Transform the services and internal processes to enable service users to support themselves independently of Mind Aberystwyth.
- Develop closer relationships with Mind nationally and local Mind associations to deliver our communications output and deliver new projects and services.
- Build upon our local links to community members and community organisations to develop joint projects and services.
- Embed new Mind branding and designs into all our work and look at the name of the charity.
- Welcoming new staff members to the team.
- Piloting a 'hybrid' offering of services that can be delivered both online and remotely and face-to-face.

Partners, supporters and referral pathways

We would like to thank our funders and main delivery partners, especially:

Hywel Dda University Health Board

Pobl Group

Cyngor Sir Ceredigion County Council

Mind

Charities Aid Foundation Coronavirus Emergency Fund

The Edward Gostling Foundation

Lloyds Bank Foundation

Postcode Local Trust

Community Foundation Wales

Partners, supporters and referral pathways continued...

Cyfle Cymru	Hafal	Powys Association of Voluntary Services
Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services	Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations	West Wales Association of Mental Health
West Wales Domestic Abuse Services	The Community Hub, Penparcau	Mirus
Mencap Ceredigion	Ray Ceredigion	Borth Community Hub
Coed Lleol	Area 43	Arts 4 Wellbeing
Citizens Advice Bureau Ceredigion	Antur Cymru Enterprise	Adult Learning Wales
Aberystwyth University	Radio Bronglais	Abergem
Castell Ventures		



A big thank you to.....

Our Board of Trustees

Dylan Wilson Jones - Chair	Iva Dulkova
Professor John Williams	Katy Sinnett-Jones
Mair Pugh-Jones - Treasurer	Mark Pascoe
Martin Dodd	Naheed Kadherbai
Nate Pidcock	Sally Bathurst

Our Staff

Aled Pritchard – Support Worker	Alistair Thain – Support Worker
Charlotte Aldred – Support Worker	Emma Goldsmith – Communications Manager
Gillian Styles – Finance Manager	Helen Jones – Support Worker
Jamie Jones-Mead – Chief Executive Officer	Kristy Blackwell – Wellbeing and Support Manager
Lisa Humphreys – Support Manager	Megan Elias – Support Worker
Rhodri Edwards – Support Worker	Rob Allen – Service Manager
Sally Maclachlan – Support Worker	Sarah Goodson – Support Worker
Tarek Robertson – Business Development and Sustainability Manager	Tyler – Support Worker
Ingrid Pakkas – Support Worker	Amy Dryburgh – Support Worker

Case Study to show the vital support of Mind Aberystwyth.

By staff member Megan:

This Summer I have had the great pleasure of welcoming my Art Group members back to face-to-face groups. They are a wonderful bunch, some of whom have known each other for years and I always look forward to my Tuesdays with them.

I soon realised when I started facilitating the group, that Mind Aberystwyth's Art Group has a well-deserved reputation for being a welcoming safe place for those who are struggling with their mental health. They can take time out and get creative and be supported by others who understand what they are going through. The dynamic of the group means that those who have been with us longer create a familiar settled atmosphere that seems to help other newer members adjust and feel part of a group.

The artwork I have come across has sometimes been quite accomplished and often beautiful and expressive, but the true value of these Tuesday Art Groups is in experiencing the quality of empathetic support between the members. Social anxiety is a huge problem for most of our members and the group is often a place where people support each other in resolving issues they are worried about. There are often tears, sometimes fear and distress, but laughter and singing are nor out of place in the group either.

I would like to share a couple of stories of individuals on the pages that follow:

During the restrictive social regulations of the **Covid 19 pandemic we ran the group on Facebook**, and it was a lively place where we met and shared art and talked through the terrible changes we have all experienced in the last year and a half. It worked, and the **threads of contact between members and me were kept alive** in the hardest of times and were a lifeline for many. Part of our service at this time was Wellbeing Support offered to all group members. This was quickly rolled out and enabled me and other support workers to support people one to one. This had the added benefit for me of getting to know some of the group members much better. It was a time of immense struggle for all of us and the time I spent talking to clients from my kitchen in this period will stay with me always. There was a **heightened degree of empathy and intimacy** in the circumstances that we were all experiencing together, and this has left its mark.

One client who has been with us for years and is a real backbone of the Art Group community lived alone and was extremely isolated in this period. He had no family close by and was very physically vulnerable and so unable to meet others until very recently. He is an amazing artist and photographer, and used to teach both, we would chat twice a week about how to keep going and how not to give into the fear and challenge of it all. He was always very respectful and thankful of the support we were able to offer him, and we talked often of the day when the Art Group would return. Art for him is a **way of managing the overwhelming and often disturbing dreams and visions** he experiences, and the intensity of what he produces means he is unable to do it at home alone. So, returning to Art Group was the first time he had been able to pick up a paint brush in 15 months! He was first on the list for return to groups and true to form now sits happily, and often silently, just enjoying the chat of others around him. He has been working hard at managing his mental health for decades now and so frequently has kind words and advice to share for newer members, especially regarding addiction. **Being back at the Art Group face-to-face has meant everything to this man** and having his good humour and gentle presence back in the room has meant a lot to others too for whom he is part of their lives. Not everyone has a family to support them, and many members struggle with friendships, and so **Art Group provides its own community of support.**

There is another member in the Art Group whom I feel has **made huge strides** since she first came to us a couple of years ago. She once told me it took her months to get up the courage to come, and then once she joined, she often felt overwhelmed and needed to take time out. I have just supported this client through the pandemic with Wellbeing Support and got to know her a little better. It is clear to me that this vulnerable individual had been in a situation of

domestic abuse for years and through the **support of the Mind Aberystwyth community was able not only to remove herself from this but support her children in dealing with it and the ongoing difficult communications with her ex-partner**, and much of this during the pandemic. In supporting this one individual, we have by extension undoubtedly been able to support the whole family. Her children are now thriving and doing well in school. She has often worried about the effects of her mental health on her children, and we frequently talked through childcare concerns together. What she needs to realise however is that she is a fantastic mum, the very quirkiest kind, who has taught her children that life is imperfect and full of challenges, but also ways through these challenges. There are still many struggles for this client and she herself recognises that she will always have to work hard to manage her mental health, but she has come so far. Seeing her back again at the Art Group cheerful and animated and enjoying the **support of other members who have got to know and accept her** was wonderful. She easily brings as much to these sessions as she receives. Being back in the group she recognised that she no longer needed the Wellbeing support, knowing that she could save any queries or questions till a Tuesday and work it through with me and others too.

And then there is the group member who has launched her new craft project by making everyone else fabric dolls and bunnies... and the member who just sits and knits and takes it all in.... and the new member who so **struggles with his anxiety that just turning up is a feat each week**, but he does, and has been warmly welcomed into the group....All of them so happy to be back, part of their own community of support.

These are what our groups do so well. Bringing people together, offering them regular and dependable support and friendship from others 'like them', and contact with professional mental health support if needed. **Mind Aberystwyth is now providing the Wellbeing Support for anyone, regardless of circumstances, and has also proved to be hugely appreciated by clients.** Most of my Wellbeing clients have not felt the need to continue their support once the groups have started again, but they have all said how incredibly reassuring it is to know that it is there if they hit a bad patch.

Mind Aberystwyth has permission to share these stories.

Please contact us on info@mindaberystwyth.org.uk or 01970 626225 if you require support.



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