



There is no doubt that Mental Health awareness has risen. News highlighting the need for mental health support for both adults and young people abounds but sadly this is not the case with mental health provision, despite the rhetoric. Thresholds are continually rising for access to services. The increasingly stringent criteria mean that individuals deemed as having less severe needs are unable to access support through the NHS and those who do meet the exacting criteria have to contend with long waiting lists.

This is borne out by the increase in numbers of individuals contacting us. Year on year more people are seeking support for their mental health and statistically this is replicated throughout the country. Last year we saw an increase in enquiries from 331 to 443 with November being our busiest month. Riverside carried out a total of 3695 sessions for adults and young people during the course of the year. Due to increased demand we have increased our number of counsellors from 44 counsellors 50 to enable us to work through the waiting list.

From our CORE statistics (the clinical outcomes evaluation system that we use) responses indicate that 93% of our adult clients show improvement and that out of a possible 10, our clients rate us at 9.04 and from responses for young people all clients have demonstrated an improvement in results. Knowing our clients benefit from and value what we offer is the most significant force behind what we do.

From the statistics last year, we can see that although the number of client sessions we are offering is increasing, our income from fees is going down. This is because the amount clients can pay, has been decreasing as we are, in line with the aims of the charity, increasingly working with those who are less affluent and are only able to make a minimal contribution.

Due to the impact of Covid-19 we have adapted to offer video and telephone counselling to clients. Indications are that the effect of the pandemic will continue to impact on people's mental health for some time afterwards, as people face losses and changes in circumstances which are long lasting. We continue to adapt to these changes in line with our aims and make counselling accessible to the community.