**MIND IN MID HERTS**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES for THE YEAR APRIL 1ST 2019 TO MARCH 31ST 2020**

**Our Begining**

Mind in Mid Herts (MiMH) is a local mental health charity affiliated to national Mind. We were formed through the amalgamation of Mind in Welwyn Garden City and Mind in St Albans on 1st March 2007, with the ambition to support those with Mental Health needs across the Hertfordshire area. Mind in Mid Herts continued to expand with our Stevenage Wellbeing Centre opening in 2008 and our centre in Hertford opening in April 2009.

Our overarching approach is person centred. We believe and trust in the people who come to see us that they know what is best for them to recover and live well. We support people who are experiencing or who have experienced mental and emotional distress. We provide a positive, holistic approach to promote mental wellbeing, which is underpinned by a Recovery model which enables people to make well-informed life choices. Our primary service is aimed at adults and young people aged 16 and over.

**Our Vision**

“We will work to ensure the mental health of everyone in Hertfordshire is supported and respected”

**Our Mission**

**“**Providing prevention, recovery and support services in Hertfordshire to empower people to take control of their mental health.”

**Our Values**

* **Inspirational –** inspiring others to achieve their potential
* **Openness –** acting with integrity and transparency caring for staff, volunteers and the people who use our services
* **Altogether –** stronger in partnership
* **We Care –** listening and facilitating change
* **Passion –** caring for the people who use our services is at the heart of everything we do

**Our Services**

Mind in Mid Herts (MiMH) has continued to run a range of projects and services in furtherance of our objectives – you can read all about them in our annual report.

We also deliver training and work tirelessly to raise awareness of mental health issues in the community, in businesses and local district councils. Last year our training delivered 98 sessions to 1634 people

*“I hadn’t used the platform of Zoom before, however this is something I am now using regularly to check in with my colleagues, meetings and even socially to connect with friends and family. By using Zoom this has increased my confidence with connecting with people virtually as at first I found it difficult.”*

**Our People**

The services we provide are dependent upon the fantastic work of our dedicated staff and volunteers. Once again, we have been humbled by the work that is done, the commitment that is shown and the passion and energy that we see every day in ensuring our services best deliver on the Vision Mission and Values we have set.

Many of our staff began working with us as volunteers, of our current staff group of 37, 8 of them began as volunteers as illustrated below

*“I moved to St Albans three years ago. At the time I was out of work and felt that volunteering would help me get to know more people and support my skills development so that I could get back into work. I had my MSc in Occupational Psychology but not enough work experience therefore I decided to volunteer. A few months later when I was more confident, I applied for job at Mind in Mid Herts.”*

**Our Partners**

We are also very fortunate to work with other organisations who have supported our ambitions. To achieve what we have set out we need to work collaboratively with a number of partners and we are pleased that this has continued throughout the year. In particular we would highlight the North Herts, Stevenage, East Herts, Welwyn Hatfield and St Albans District Councils who bring partners together in the Community to collaborate and join forces to benefit the people in their districts. In addition to that, working with Commissioners to pioneer new services such as the Primary Care Mental Health project, which has allowed us to meet the GP,’s and work with the whole team in the new St Albans GP Federation.

**Our Future**

This report covers the period to March 31st, which saw the early stages of what is and continues to be the most challenging period that the majority of us have ever faced. The challenges faced globally by the Covid-19 pandemic have been nothing less than extraordinary and unprecedented, and we have all had to adapt to sudden changes and disruptions to our everyday lives.

Like so many organisations we have been overwhelmed by the response of our staff and volunteers in facing this and in ensuring that we continued to do everything, we could do fulfil our mission as set out above

Beginning in March, we have transformed, re-designed and developed our services in order to continue to support people through the covid-19 pandemic and lockdown. We have invested in laptops for every member of staff, we have 100 new telephone lines and we are supporting over 600 people remotely. A wonderful staff group has achieved this by changing overnight from working together in our centres and in the community to operating alone in their own homes. The early steps we took in March mean that we are now reaching more people now than ever. Comparing the number of people we supported between 1 April and 30 June 2019 we supported 538 unique individuals; between the same months this year (1st qtr. 2020-21) we supported 961 people which is nearly double.

We reopened two of our centres in September to people who need us and we will continue to work with people remotely. Our aim will be to expand what we do by this new way of working and resuming our face-to-face work where we can. This will give us the greatest agility to provide support during this ever-changing situation.

We have also seen in the last months a wonderful surge in people wanting to volunteer and we have developed our training to engage those volunteers in supporting individuals to stay well during these difficult times. We are now delivering counselling on the telephone by counsellors trained in telephone counselling; we have volunteers keeping in touch with people weekly just with a friendly chat and we are developing further training in order that volunteers can support people to get back to whatever they were doing before covid-19 lockdown as buddies/befrienders. Getting back to the things that make life meaningful, volunteering, socialising and work.

We have been very fortunate to be the recipients of a substantial donation of restricted funds with a further (£250,000) from a family in memory of their son who died at the end of 2016. This restricted money, which is so generously provided, is the foundation to fund our own freehold building to support the delivery of services in the Welwyn/Hatfield/St Albans area. This is an exciting opportunity for MiMH to create a much more secure future. Giving the people who use our services the confidence that we will support them for as long as they require us to. We know that the next months and years will bring great uncertainty and challenge and building a new centre providing a range of services will provide a bedrock of support to those who need it with a particular focus on supporting those who feel isolated or overwhelmed. We want to ensure that no one feels that the only choice they have is to take their life. To fully realise this ambition we will be launching a crowdfunding web page in November to raise a further £350,000. We are keen to hear from people who would be interested in supporting this development – particularly in the areas of Fundraising, Property Search and Management and Project Management. Our vision is that this building would encapsulate everything we currently run and more.

You will see within our financial report that our financial reserves have reduced in year as we have sought to expand the services we provide. We remain in a reasonable position financially but see 20/21 as an important year to strengthen our finances to provide greater headroom to respond in the future to new service needs and to invest further in our staff.

We are delighted that despite the unique and difficult circumstances, we have seen some early successes in our fundraising in 2020 with Computacentre sales force choosing us as their charity raising over £3000. We ran on our own virtual cycle between Suicide prevention day 10 September and World Mental Health day 10 October raising over £9000. We do know however we need to continue to build further upon this and more and more will have to generate our own funding as public spending needs to be realigned to recover from this period. In response, we continue to build upon our fundraising activity with our trustee subcommittee supporting the work of our staff.

The future is uncertain but we remain confident that we can continue to make a difference for those who need us. In particular;

1. The future impact of the pandemic on nation’s wellbeing is universally acknowledged and we will continue to lobby for the funding to help the recovery and healing that will be needed.
2. We will support our staff to remain resilient and continue to offer the courageous support they have provided throughout
3. We will collaborate and work openly with all our partners with the sole focus on the recovery of our community.

**Our Gratitude**

MiMH would like to thank the following for their support with grants and funding during the year: Integrated Health and Care Commissioning team for Hertfordshire County Council,

Hertfordshire Partnership NHS Foundation Trust (HPFT), Lloyds Bank Foundation, National Lottery with Her Majesty’s Government and National Lottery players, Garfield Weston, Edward Gostling, National Mind and the English Football League, Hertfordshire Community Foundation, North Herts District Council, Stevenage Borough Council, and East Herts District Council.

As ever, the Trustees wish to express their appreciation for the commitment and enthusiasm of all the staff and over 80 volunteers who give their time to the charity, and without whom MiMH would be unable to achieve its objectives. Volunteers are essential to the successful running of the organisation. When anyone wishes to volunteer with MiMH, a coordinator will interview them and complete the relevant forms to match their skills to the projects within the organisation. We have volunteers who support administration and all of the projects and activities mentioned in this report. We have links with Volunteer Centres and CVS in our areas and we continue to maintain the 6-point promise Accreditation Scheme.