



St Giles

Turning a past into a future

Annual Review 2019/20

There are short
stories, then there's
life changing stories.

impact

series

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Thank you so much for your help. The funding that you helped me get will go a long way to help me pay for my course and to becoming a qualified accountant.

We want to see a society where everybody – no matter what their background – has a **positive future**.



Who we are and what we do

ST GILES is an award-winning social justice charity using expertise and real-life past experiences to empower people who are not getting the help they need.

People held back by poverty, exploited, abused, dealing with addiction or mental health problems, caught up in crime or a combination of these issues and others.

We show people there is a way to build a better future – for themselves and those they care about -and help them create this through support, advice and training.

The people we help each year have a diverse range of needs. These cover:

- Help for vulnerable young people involved in or at risk of criminal exploitation
- Services helping adults and young people facing unemployment and poverty
- Help for vulnerable women and families
- Prison and community-based support for people in the criminal justice system

Our objectives are:

- Building a sense of safety and stability
- Building aspirations, skills and positive futures
- Building connections to move forwards

We believe people have the power to turn their life around, regardless of their situation. Many of our employees have been in similar situations and use their lived experiences to inspire and support those living through it right now.

Our vision

We want to see a society where everybody – no matter what their background – has a positive future.

This is because when somebody turns their life around, everybody benefits – their families, their children, the community they live in and society as a whole.

Those we help are facing huge challenges which have been made more acute as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, we are working with our partners and local communities to do something about it – supporting people to turn their pasts into positive futures.

Our purpose

We believe strongly that, given the right support from someone who has been there, people can be empowered to turn their lives around.

It's not easy – we empower and encourage each person to overcome the adversity they face. If they stumble, we're there to pick them back up. We inspire people to think big for themselves and their families, helping them to build internal resilience and a place in society. We raise awareness of their situation and fight their corner, agitating the current landscape to ensure long term changes are put in place to ensure people succeed.

Our solution

We help our clients move their lives forward, then train and support them do the same for others. We know that they aren't defined by problems, they're trapped by them and we help them see their strengths and find a way forward. We can do that because many of our staff come from the same backgrounds and have overcome similar situations – they've been there, done that and speak the language of the people we support. That combination of lived experience and expertise means that our staff work with passion and quality throughout everything they do.



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Hi, I just wanted to inform you that I have got a new job in the security industry though I am still in training. **Thank you for all your help and support.**

Highlights of the Year

April 2019

To highlight the work of our services helping women, BBC's Victoria Derbyshire headlined a celebration event we held at the Old Bailey. At Inspiring Women, Inspiring Change guests heard personal testimonies from our clients and staff who had made positive changes to their lives and others.

August 2019

We published an evaluation into our knife crime prevention projects. It found that the peer-led approach using people with direct experience of the issue was a key factor in engaging children, young people and diverse communities (see page 27)

August 2019

In partnership with West Midlands Police, we launched a project working in two hospitals in the West Midlands to support young people in A&E admitted as a result of serious violence (see page 28)

September 2019

A report from the Mayor of London looked at the first year of the Rescue and Response project in which we are the main service delivery partner. It lifted the lid of the full scale on county lines exploitation in London (see page 27)

October 2019

BBC's Clive Myrie presented a 30 minute documentary on knife crime after spending weeks in the major trauma unit at the Royal London Hospital. Two of our team – Roisin Kelville and Laveen Smith – were featured speaking about their work helping young victims.

December 2019

We launched our London Peer Hub and marked the national launch of our network through an event at the National Gallery. The National Lottery Community Fund's Dawn Austwick was keynote speaker at the launch.

August 2019

In partnership with Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner, the SOS+ Service extended to Norfolk to help prevent young people from becoming involved in crime.

August 2019

The London-based Working Out Project launched, helping people experiencing barriers around substance misuse and having criminal records into employment.

September 2019

The new St Giles Peer Hub in Yorkshire officially launched with an event in Leeds which celebrated its ongoing work and marked the start of plans to expand its reach.

January 2020

Junior Smart, who established the St Giles SOS Project in 2006 on his release from prison, was awarded an OBE in the New Year's Honours List. The SOS Project and SOS+ Service are now national projects helping young people involved in or at risk of criminal exploitation.

February 2020

We were included in the Best Companies Top 100 Companies to Work For in the not-for-profit category for the 12th consecutive year.

March 2020

An evaluation into the Peer Circles Project found that it's peer-led approach was 'highly effective' in helping people overcome a complex mix of challenges.

A report into the Routeways project helping people experiencing in-work poverty found that it helped over 300 south Londoners improve their earnings and employment prospects. 50% of the clients improved their weekly pay – with one increasing his earnings from £80 a week to £673!

Statement from Denise Jagger - Chair

This has been a challenging year for all charities but one in which their contribution to society has never been more keenly felt.

Even before the pandemic, unstable employment, in-work poverty and lack of affordable housing continued to blight the lives of many of the people we help. It has brought these issues into sharper focus and our teams are working tirelessly to mitigate the impact of this on society's most vulnerable.

We have always been an organisation which can react quickly to meet new emerging needs and our ability to do this is now vitally important. The fallout from Covid will be felt most sharply by those who were already vulnerable and disadvantaged. Our teams on the frontline are already working tirelessly to mitigate this. Looking forward, St Giles is expanding its remit to embrace new areas which ensure our clients are equipped to navigate both the immediate and longer term challenges that all of us are facing. The basic necessities of employment and housing will obviously remain a key feature. However, combatting social isolation, promoting wellbeing and the importance of ensuring our clients are not digitally excluded will be areas of increased focus for us in the next year.

The lockdown helped bring these issues into sharp focus. Many of our clients would have faced lockdown totally alone, with little money or food and no access to technology if we had not been there to support them. The ability to learn, volunteer, apply for work and housing and even do a workout on line is just as important for our clients as it is for the rest of us as we adapt to an immediate future of periods of self isolation and possible future lockdowns.

During the last year we have recruited 4 new Trustees whose skills and experience complement existing skills on the board and will who will help to ensure that we

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Our ethos of engaging and enabling people with first-hand experience of the issues facing **the people we help** remains core to our work.

steer the charity through these uncertain times. We also undertook our first board effectiveness review to ensure that we are operating as efficiently and effectively as possible and are in the process of formalising some of our board sub committee processes to strengthen our governance. I remain very grateful for the time and dedication every one of our volunteer trustees commit to ensuring that St Giles maintains its strategic focus and has the correct people and processes in place to operate effectively.

Our ethos of engaging, upskilling and enabling people with first hand experience of the issues facing the people we help remains core to our work. Our National Lottery Community Fund supported network of Peer Hubs will help us expand this approach across the sector and enable others to benefit from the powerful combination of professional skills and personal insights that our Peer Advisors bring. Just as life is complex, the backgrounds of our Peer Advisors reflect this and they can now support a wide range of disciplines - from substance misuse to help for vulnerable young women.

We have bold ambitions for the future and believe we have the right team at St Giles to deliver excellence in what we do. We also have a strong financial base on which to support this having achieved another year of significant growth, both in terms of income and in the breadth of services provided to our clients, whilst

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Many of our clients would have faced lockdown totally alone, with little money or food and no access to technology **if we had not been there to support them.**

maintaining our free reserves in line with our reserves policy. Further details can be found in our Finance Review section in the report.

The challenges ahead spur us on to do our utmost to ensure that those who need our help feel supported, listened to and have the best chance of realising positive goals and ambitions. I would like to pay tribute to all the staff and volunteers at St Giles and my colleagues on the board for their fantastic work. I would also like to thank our supporters without whom none of this life-changing work would be possible.

Denise Jagger
Chair, St Giles





Statement from Rob Owen OBE - Chief Executive

St Giles was founded in 1962 to offer emergency relief to homeless people. Over the past 58 years St Giles has evolved to tackle new emerging needs - be they prison leavers or young people exploited by gangs.

In the midst of Covid 19, we are revisiting these roots - providing emergency relief. The Covid pandemic and lockdown has left those who were already struggling in potential freefall. Many of our caseworkers have seen their caseloads treble as former clients who had stabilised and resettled due to our support have returned to us, having become part of the first wave of Covid-related redundancies.

Some of them were facing dire circumstances so we had to act fast. In a matter of days, we repurposed our Brewbird Cafe to effectively become a food pantry, sorting food donations into healthy, substantial emergency parcels for these clients and others also in need. In just 3 months, we provided over 83,000 fresh, healthy meals to people who turned to St Giles as their first port of call. We launched an emergency appeal to support this and other emergency provision and will be forever grateful to everyone who generously supported it. You saved lives at a time of profound national crisis.

Even before Covid, these were challenging times and St Giles had adapted its focus to meet these new emerging needs. We remain committed to ensuring that people who have been there themselves - those with lived experience - are at the centre of our work. By empowering and mobilising people who come from the same communities as our clients we can effect positive social change from the grassroots. 389 people embarked on our Peer Advisor Programme in the past year and we will be harnessing their skills and insights to provide services through St Giles and the rest of the sector over the coming one.



Rob Owen OBE
Chief Executive

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We helped 699 people overcome major barriers to gain employment and many more experiencing in-work poverty were helped to improve their employment situations.

The availability of affordable housing for our clients remains a huge issue and a constant barrier for both our clients and our staff. I'm proud to report that despite these insurmountable challenges we have helped 5,568 people find a permanent place they can call their home over the past year. We helped 699 people overcome major barriers to gain employment and many more experiencing in-work poverty were helped to improve their employment situations.

I report these great results with trepidation. We should not sugar coat the fact that we are heading for challenging times for so many. Our focus going forward will be to ensure that our clients are not the ones who are forgotten and left behind.

I'm humbled by the resilience shown by them in the face of severe adversity. One of our caseworkers discovered that a 17 year old she had previously helped out of a county line last year had sold his XBOX to buy food and utilities during lockdown. We had mixed feelings when we heard this - pleased that our support had resulted in preventing him from going back to a county line but saddened that he had to sell his prized XBOX - something that also crucially kept him indoors and off the streets - to feed himself. Had we known about his situation, we could have ensured he did not need to do this. We are now working with him once more to help him achieve employment and financial independence.

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Our focus going forward will be to ensure that our clients are not **the ones who are forgotten and left behind.**

There are many more in similar circumstances who represent the new emerging needs that St Giles is responding to. I would like to pay huge tribute to the staff team here who have been so committed and creative in addressing these needs and ensuring that those who most need our help do not fall through the gaps.

In the midst of our Covid response, we were shocked and saddened when we heard about the death of George Floyd and events in the United States. Like many around the world, we expressed solidarity and support for the Black Lives Matter movement and took this moment to reflect on our own practices and structures. As an organisation, we have held frank, honest and soul-searching conversations to understand how we can be an example for best practice and a beacon of hope. Our staff team has not let us down and we are working together to identify new structures and opportunities to ensure inclusion and equality of opportunity.

The combination of creativity and wisdom from within the St Giles team puts us in an excellent place for the challenges ahead. All of us at St Giles are ready to meet them. I would like to once again say a huge thank to our partners and supporters who share our vision of creating a more equal society. If one good thing can emerge from the dystopia of Covid, it is that we can build communities which embrace people with a past, enabling them to use this to help themselves and those around them. Once all these pasts come together, they form a solid foundation from which people from the grassroots can help mobilise positive social action. We will continue to fight to have their voices heard by those in power.

For everyone who has supported us - a huge thank you. Your support means so much to us and you have helped someone in a profound, life-changing way.

Rob Owen OBE
Chief Executive, St Giles

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Our staff team has not let us down and we are working together to identify new structures and opportunities **to ensure inclusion and equality of opportunity.**





Our headline figures this year compared to the previous year

Last year, we helped 20,671 people across our services. This year, we changed the way in which we defined our clients and only included those with whom we had a caseworking relationship.

This report mainly relates to our work during the financial year of April 2019/March 2020. However, the COVID 19 pandemic has changed all of our lives and had a big effect on our team and their clients. Included here is an early insight into the way we are helping our clients through the worst of the COVID pandemic and beyond.

Headline figures 2019/20

2018/19
Figures

Peer Advice



389
New Peer
Advisors

2018/19
377



251
Peer Advisor
Graduates

2018/19
275



75
Peer Advisors
gaining jobs

2018/19
53

Employment



699
Clients found
employment

2018/19
1,054



313
Improved work
status

2018/19
NEW



597
Further training
or ETE support

2018/19
488

Young people



95,000+
SOS+ session
participants

2018/19
55K+



3,658
Built positive
relationships

2018/19
1,200



607
Reduced
County Lines
involvement

2018/19
NEW

Housing



5,568
Permanent
housing finds

2018/19
3,054

St Giles

Turning a past into a future

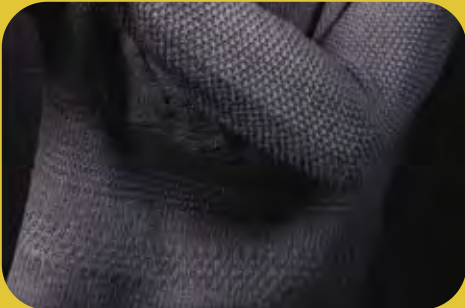
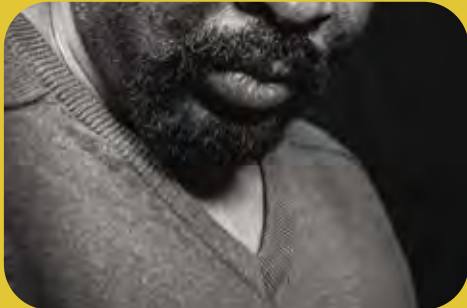
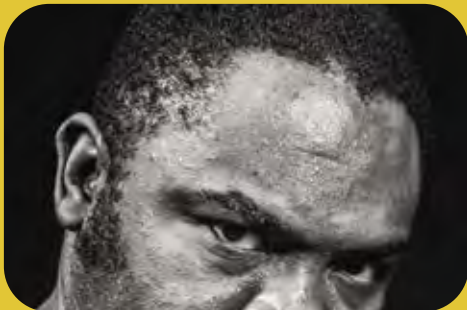


Peer Advisors

A journey in pictures

In 2019 we launched our national network of National Lottery Community Fund supported Peer Hubs. To accompany this launch, the Peer Advisors participated in a photography course. These powerful images reflect their journeys in life.

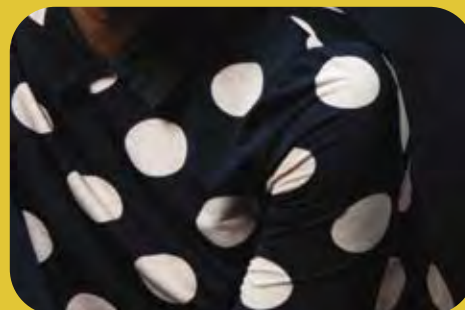
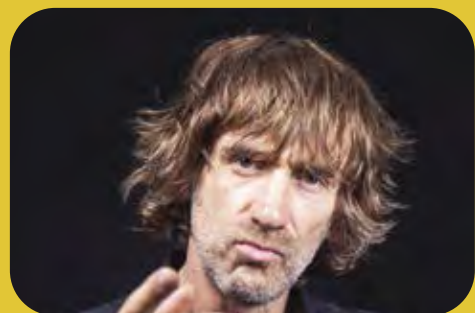
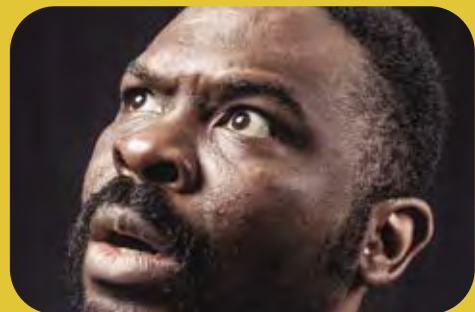






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I enjoyed gaining experience and learning, it has built my confidence and self-esteem hugely and I just feel like I've been able to take a big step forward in my life by having these skills and being on the programme.



**“I’ve been where you are”
- Supporting each other
side by side**



Peer Advice

Our belief in the importance of someone receiving support from someone who has been there themselves is at the heart of our strategic thinking. Over the last 20 years, the Peer Advisor Programme has offered people experiencing adversity and disadvantage the opportunity to train to a Level 3 and become Advice and Guidance professionals. The training gives them the chance to help others whilst moving their own life forward – increasing confidence, boosting employability and inspiring positive change in others.

Peer Advisor Network and Peer Hubs

This was the first year of a four year grant from the National Lottery Community Fund to develop and expand the Peer Hub network. It has enabled us to take our Peer Advisor model to a national level through the development of our Peer Advisor Network and Peer Hubs.

The Network brings together agencies in the sector who are already adopting or aspire to adopt peer-led services through sharing knowledge and promoting best practice.

The Peer Hubs deliver the frontline Peer Advisor Programme. We have now established Hubs in London, the Midlands, Yorkshire, North Wales and the East of England. We are in the initial stages of establishing Hubs in Scotland and Northern Ireland. These are in the heart of local communities and offer people the opportunity to train through the Peer Advisor Programme whilst undergoing supported work placements with partner agencies – usually grassroots organisations who can benefit from the added support our Peer Advisors offer.

It has a life-changing impact on both the individuals who are trained through it and the people they help. Through

offering highly credible, compassionate support our Peer Advisors can engage people whose needs are often left unmet by other services.

Support from the National Lottery Community Fund has upscaled this work and is helping drive sector change so that more providers addressing social exclusion and disadvantage can offer opportunities to people with lived experience of these issues.

Covid impact

At the end of this reporting period, we were entering the first lockdown in the UK. This effectively put a temporary halt on most face to face contact with our clients and, like many other charities and providers, we rapidly adapted to online.

Although this was a challenge at first due to the fact many of our clients initially lacked both digital devices and skills, it turned out to be an opportunity to help them become digitally upskilled as – along with the rest of us – they got to grips with Zoom and online learning and support. We launched an Emergency Covid-19 Appeal Fund which enabled us to purchase laptops for many of our Peer Advisors and clients meaning they could continue their progress and contact with us online and over the phone.

Covid 19 has had a disproportionate impact on the most disadvantaged communities in our society. This has been keenly felt amongst many of our clients and our teams have had to redouble their efforts to deal with the emotional and practical impact of these. Our Peer Advisors have been essential across the teams at St Giles and our partners during the pandemic as they have provided an added resource, offering highly professional support during particularly challenging times for us all.

Stories from St Giles

The Peer Hubs provide adults who have overcome adversity with the opportunity to help others who are going through similar experiences to them. Providing support and helping others offers mutual benefits, increasing levels of confidence and self-esteem in the people who train as Peer Advisors.

Madelaine* volunteers with vulnerable adults offering advice and guidance on housing, benefits and general day to day support, including wellbeing checks and being part of a support network for those with drug and alcohol misuse.

She has experienced substance misuse and mental health issues within her family. In her late 40s, she came to the Peer Hub looking for a way to move her life forward.

"I'm passionate about this work," she says, stating that supporting people with mental health issues is particularly close to her heart because of her family experiences. Within a short space of time, she has already had a life-changing impact on some of the people she has helped. These have included helping a man successfully appeal against a benefit decision and also helping a very vulnerable young man on his release from prison who would otherwise have been left withdrawing from drugs and with no access to medical help or benefits. Madelaine helped him get in touch with a doctor and sorted out his benefits. She notes, "In a short space of time, so much progress could be made on one day. It's rewarding... A lot of people ring up and ask for me, I have my own fan club and people start to trust you."

Alongside the impact she has had on others, the Peer Advisor Programme has helped her personally blossom. "My confidence has gone up leaps and bounds, it's really grown" The course has given her feedback on her

communication skills which she has now fine-tuned to enhance her work with her clients and also the way she communicates in her personal life..

Madelaine is progressing well with her NVQ Level 3 and is on track to complete successfully in coming months. She is also taking on extra courses on to improve her computer skills and training in Mental Health First Aid, both of which will help her in her role.

She is very proud to have been promoted to being a Senior Volunteer at her host organisation, and says "I'm really happy I've found something to focus on in my life. Why didn't I find it sooner!"

*Name changed.

**Get in touch to contribute
and discuss our projects**



info@stgilestrust.org.uk



020 7708 8000

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In a short space of time, so much progress could be made on one day. It's rewarding... A lot of people ring up and ask for me, I have my own fan club and **people start to trust you.**



The final step on the road to independence

Support towards sustainable employment

We anticipate that employment support will remain a pressing need for both our current and future clients as a result of the economic consequences of the Covid pandemic. Due to the disadvantageous circumstances many of our clients have experienced, not all will be ready for employment when they initially start work with us. Our aim is to support and encourage them, working with them at their own pace to build their confidence and skills to prepare them for paid employment.

Addressing work-related poverty

Our teams have provided support around access to grants, benefits and other forms of assistance when people have been struggling financially on low pay. In-work poverty has continued to be a key issue amongst our clients and our teams continue to work hard to address this.

“People are living pay cheque to pay cheque... their main concerns are will they be able to afford their next bills. They are blinded by all their issues so that by the time they come to the project those issues that could have been resolved months earlier have escalated.”

Feedback from Project Manager

The J P Morgan supported Routeways Project helped over 300 south Londoners into better paid employment with added benefits of helping people improve their skills and gain industry standard training. 47% of the project's clients were on zero hours contracts when they joined. Many were also experiencing issues around poor housing, mental and physical health and childcare difficulties. Routeways provided added support alongside employment help to address these and any other additional barriers.

Teams across St Giles have had the support of internal funds for when financial constraints are preventing their clients from achieving their employment goals. These have

included the Royal London Society Endowment Fund, the Crisis Fund and Accessing the Future fund (see page 31) for young people.

Peer Hubs

As reported on page 14, our national network of Peer Hubs have not only helped our clients improve their skills and confidence, they have also played a key role in helping them obtain paid employment. We have developed partnerships with other employers who have offered paid work placements to people training through our Peer Advisor Programme and also to people who come to us as clients of our employment support services. Employment support continues to be a key component of the Peer Hubs, helping both the Peer Advisors and their clients achieve a career and independence. For some, it will have been their first opportunity to do this.

Adults in the criminal justice system

In August 2019, we launched a partnership project with Southwark Works helping people who have experienced substance misuse and/or the criminal justice system into work. The people helped by the project face multiple barriers but personalised support has helped many of them increase their confidence, self esteem and progress towards employment. We also continued our successful projects offering similar support in Yorkshire and Ipswich.

Young people

Young people from all walks of life are facing an uphill struggle in finding employment. For those who have added barriers such as previous experience of homelessness, the care system, being young carers or having a criminal record the challenges can be particularly intense. We have a cluster of London projects providing specialist support to young people who are held back in this way.

Our teams have continued to offer specialist support to help young people gain the skills and confidence they need to kickstart their careers. Alongside help to find work, our support addresses any other issues the young person might be experiencing to help them achieve long term progress and stability.

Looking forward

The impact of Covid has had a big effect on our employment support services. Many former clients who had successfully gained steady employment returned to us once more as a result of job losses due to the economic effects of the pandemic and lockdown. Despite the extremely challenging circumstances, we have been able to help many of them back into employment once more. We anticipate that there will be a continued growth in demand for this area of our work, especially amongst young people given the looming youth employment crisis. We are fully aware that this will become a tough area as job opportunities retract further. However, we are determined to ensure that our clients are given the best possible opportunities out there and will work with our partners and employers to turn their aspirations into reality.

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You have brought me back from a bad place. I now have a CV for the first time at 47! I feel extremely positive about my future and appreciate all that you have done. **Thank you.**

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Thank you so much for your help. The funding that you helped me get will go a long way to help me pay for my course and to **becoming a qualified accountant.**

“

Concerns are will they be able to afford their next bills. They are blinded by all their issues so that by the time they come to the project those issues that could have been resolved months earlier have escalated. **Feedback from Project Manager**



Overcoming problems, not just managing them

Peer Circles

Since April 2016, the London-based Peer Circles Project has been helping adults overcome severe and multiple disadvantages to access employment opportunities. Typically, the people we help through Peer Circles will have experienced a combination of many different issues including homelessness, poverty, substance misuse, time spent in prison and mental health needs. Using our peer-led approach, Peer Circles trains people who have first-hand experience of these issues. They support others going through it right now, helping them make positive changes whilst continuing to build their own professional skills. Peer Circles aims to break down isolation, improve self-esteem, address practical needs and ultimately help people progress towards employment at their own pace.

In March 2020, we launched an evaluation into Peer Circles. It highlighted the project's peer-led approach as being key to its strength in helping people facing a mix of highly complex situations and challenges. Peer Advisors on Peer Circles commented on how they **“could reach the parts others couldn’t”** because of their lived experience. Clients echoed this with one commenting **“they have more of an understanding of how you feel and how hard it can be sometimes.”**

Since the project's start until September 2020, over 900 people have been helped by Peer Circles and a third of these have moved on into either employment or further training. Work is continuing with the remainder to help them take small steps towards independence.

Funding by the National Lottery Community Fund and European Social Fund's Building Better Opportunities Programme, the project had its funding extended until 2022 due to its success.

Covid impact

The social isolation of lockdown was particularly hard on many of our clients experiencing mental health and substance misuse issues. The Peer Circles team saw their work significantly increase as levels of needs rose amongst both current and former clients. They were on call 24/7 for many of their clients offering both emergency practical and emotional support to see them through this particularly challenging time. As a result, the project's clients remained motivated and engaged with the team's support. Going forward, our focus will be on ensuring that opportunities for training, volunteering and ultimately employment remain in place for adults who are facing complex barriers, enabling them to realise the potential they have to make a significant contribution to their communities and wider society.



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Thank you for all your help, It was really nice working with you, **thank you for encouraging me and motivating me.**

Stories from St Giles

Our work in the Major Trauma Centre at the Royal London Hospital aims to break the cycle of youth violence. We support the young people who are victims of serious violence to support them through the immense trauma that follows such an incident. The Trauma Caseworkers provide emotional and practical support to reduce the risks of young people going from victim to perpetrator. Here Team Leader Roisin Kelville explains the work.

"The day starts with discussing new admissions, i.e. what injuries they have sustained, their age, and which borough they are from and any known risks. Young people do not disclose much information when they are first admitted. They are waiting to see us before the doctors will discharge them as we need to assess if it is safe to do so and that there is a discharge plan in place. This could mean that we need to move the young person for their safety.

Most young people under 18 years will require a discharge planning meeting. If there are any known risks following their admission, we can develop plans to reduce these.

When we first meet the young person, it starts off with a hello, I will introduce myself and explain who I am and why I am visiting them. I'll ask them how they are doing (considering what they have been through!) and how they are feeling. This is the start of the conversation between the caseworker and the young person and from there we are able to risk assess if they will be safe for discharge and if they would like some support.

We ask many questions like where they were attacked, how close it is to where they live, and do they know

their attackers? If yes, do they know where they live? From the moment we meet the young person we are risk assessing to ensure when they are medically fit and safe for discharge there are no delays. Sometimes with patients that have been severely injured we give them some time to think if they would like support or not as they will be an inpatient for some time and they are often trying to get their heads around what has happened to them. It can be a lot to deal with and people deal with trauma in different ways.

Some young people have been attacked in or near by their homes, which can understandably make the young person and their family feel unsafe to return. We will advocate on behalf of the young person and their family with local authorities to ensure that they are given the best options, kept informed and do not have to endure any further upset.

If a young person declines our offer of support, that is their choice. But we always explain that if they change their minds they can still contact us. The offer does not expire when they leave the hospital; this is because we know that sometimes the reality of what they have been through does not always hit them until they have returned home or have seen the place of their attack which can cause great distress - but they don't always realise this until it happens and the emotional trauma hits them.

Due to the complexity of our role, the work cannot be summed up in a short report so this just touches upon it. You may be wondering why the young people engage with us and talk to us more than anyone else. I think it just comes down to the 'realness' that we present to them. Young people are good at knowing who they can talk to and who they can't. I believe that they see that we care.'

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Young people are good at knowing who they can talk to - **I believe that they see that we care.**

Providing a safe space for those with nowhere else to turn

Work with young people

Last year, the number of under 16s being helped by our services rose by 57%. These often very vulnerable young people were engaged by services across St Giles but particularly those helping address criminal exploitation and serious violence, as well as offering family support and targeted education, training and employment help.

Prevention

Our preventative work with young people in schools and other educational settings expanded further to meet growing demand. This was at a time of growing awareness around issues such as criminal exploitation of young people through county lines and an increased recognition that prevention is more effective than cure.

Last year, we reached over 95,000 people through sessions across the country delivered by our teams in London, Norfolk and Yorkshire. The sessions are delivered by trained staff who all have first-hand experiences of the issues being highlighted and examined. This credibility and authenticity enables them to really connect with young people and speak from their own personal knowledge and insights.

The sessions address issues around gang exploitation, weapons, drugs and violent extremism through the BRAVE project partnered with Connect Futures. Alongside the session delivery, the teams also offered one-to-one additional support to individual young people who are identified as being at a heightened risk.

Helping children and young people exploited through county lines

St Giles was one of the first non-statutory organisations to offer specialist support for children and young people

In August 2019 we published a report which evaluated our knife crime prevention projects in London, Ipswich and Leeds. It found the projects to be 'embedding positive approaches' to tackling knife crime and observed that the peer-led approach was particularly effective in engaging younger people and new communities such as rural, Eastern European and BAME communities.

involved in county lines and serious violence. Last year, we helped 607 children and young people either leave county lines or reduce their involvement in them.

Our ongoing partnership under the MOPAC commissioned Rescue and Response project, helping young Londoners involved in county lines rebuild their lives, has been a key focus for this work. Referrals to this service have been very high and the team have been at full capacity. In September 2019, the Mayor of London launched an evaluation into the first year of Rescue and Response. It found that over 4,000 children and young people in London were involved in or suspected to be involved in county lines. However, partnership work under Rescue and Response was making good headway in tackling the issue and helping young people get their lives back on track.

Projects in Cardiff, Leeds and Yorkshire have also helped address local needs around criminal exploitation. The teams have worked with young people in often very risky, potentially life-threatening situations. Many of the caseworkers have experienced similar situations in their own personal lives and are uniquely placed to identify potential risks and connect with the young people.

Partnership work with local authorities

We have long-established partnerships with local authorities in Greater London with St Giles caseworkers embedded in their teams to help address issues around criminal exploitation and serious violence. They offer a bridge between the young person, their family and statutory services helping to improve engagement, communication and enabling progress.

Work in hospitals

The teams working directly in hospitals helping young victims of serious violence and self-harm continue to be extremely busy. This reflects the ongoing issues around youth violence and the serious consequences it can have for young people and those around them. Last year, we expanded this work into the Midlands to work in A&E departments in Warwickshire and New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton and University Hospital in Coventry. Our caseworkers work alongside clinical staff to help the young person in recovery and offer follow up support once discharged. Typically, this involves helping them re-engage with education, skills and employment opportunities alongside offering emotional support to help them overcome their traumatic experiences. The BBC followed our partnership work with Barts NHS Trust at the Royal London Hospital and it was aired in a 30 minute documentary, highlighting the long term effects of weapons on both the young people and those around them.

Covid impact

The pandemic has had a direct impact on the young people we support and the longer term consequences of this are as yet unknown. Whilst we are very concerned about the impact of future unemployment and poverty on them. We are ready to be there to help cushion

them from being disproportionately affected. The first lockdown gave some of our young people an opportunity to escape harmful situations and make positive progress with education and skills. We helped many of them with IT hardware, education resources and phone data so they could take advantage of the safety from the streets offered by the lockdowns, free from the pressures of gangs and other influences.

School closures have meant that our preventative work through the SOS+ Service has moved online. We responded quickly to these changes, moving resources and delivering sessions online. We anticipate that digital delivery will be an ongoing need even after restrictions are lifted as it enables us to widen access and reach more children and young people.

Despite these positives, we are deeply concerned that some of the more vulnerable children and young people from disadvantaged backgrounds will be left behind as a result of the pandemic.

Going forward, we will be doing our utmost to support them and ensure that existing inequalities are not widened further.

St Giles was one of the first non-statutory organisations to offer specialist support for children and young people involved in county lines and serious violence. Last year, we helped 607 children and young people either leave county lines or reduce their involvement in them.

Stories from St Giles

Many of the young people we work with are on their own without the support of families. Basic needs around shelter and food need addressing before longer-term work around skills and employment can commence. Our Caseworker Simon helped his young client relocate to a new area after he faced threats from associates. Without Simon's support, it is highly likely that this young man would have been harmed.

"Theo* had recently been threatened whilst out shopping and was receiving intimidating calls. During a recent one, the caller had impersonated a police officer in an attempt to entice Theo out of his flat so he could be attacked.

Theo has learning difficulties and was initially referred to me because he was at risk of being exploited. He had spent a lot of his young life in care and had not received sufficient support since leaving.

Late one night, I received a call from Theo saying he was scared to be in his flat. He had barricaded himself and surrounded himself with weapons. He was threatening to kill himself. I spent the next four hours on the phone calming him down and convincing him not to hurt himself or anyone else.

After working with the authorities, we decided that Theo should be moved for his own safety. My role was to advocate on Theo's behalf and work with three local authorities and a supported housing provider to ensure he got the support he needed. Initially, Theo was given emergency accommodation in a hotel. He had no money or food and this was over a weekend when most support

agencies were shut. After numerous calls between myself and staff at the hotel I ensured Theo was delivered a takeaway so he at least had something sustaining to eat.

Unfortunately, a set back then occurred when the local authority Theo was due to be housed in refused to accept a duty of care. As he is a vulnerable young person with support needs fleeing violence, I knew that this decision needed challenging. I contacted the police in his original area to ask them to provide a letter highlighting the risks Theo faced and stating how vulnerable he was.

There was a week of to-ing and fro-ing. But thankfully, the local authority accepted this additional information from the police as enough to house Theo. He was moved into accommodation with an appropriate support package also in place. He is now settled in his new area and away from the threats he was receiving.

*Name changed to protect the young person's confidentiality.

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Addressing root causes to achieve lasting change

Support for children, families and specialist services for women

Behind each individual we help is often a family facing hardship. Our caseworkers look at the whole picture and address wider issues around poverty, bad housing, unemployment and any other factor which might be preventing a client and their family or other support network from moving forward. We also offer a small number of services which provide specialist family support.

Following a strategic review, we refocused these services to become the St Giles Future Proofing Families Service. It offers peer-led practical and emotional support to the most vulnerable families to help them realise sustained, positive changes.

Yorkshire

We help families experiencing crisis where one family member is in the criminal justice system. Our caseworkers' interventions often meet practical basic needs such as food, shelter and clothing. We also help children overcome the trauma of having a parent in prison, offering emotional support and working with other services to ensure the child's full needs are met.

Wales

Through the Early Intervention Youth Fund we have been helping children at risk whilst also offering support to their families. The aim of this work is to address problems early on and prevent them from escalating into more serious issues. The teams work in close partnership with other agencies to ensure young people and their families are safe and supported. We have had positive feedback from partners and parents, with reports of improved behaviour at home and in school.

One particular case the team helped was a young man being manipulated into accepting large sums of drug money for laundering through his bank account. After working with his family it became clear that he had learning difficulties. By working with partner agencies we were able to safeguard the young person and give him the support he needed.

South London

We were the lead service provider in projects commissioned by two local authorities which supported families facing issues such as being victims of crime and/or criminal justice system involvement, poverty, poor housing and other factors. Many families facing severe disadvantages were helped by this work which offered intensive one-to-one support joining up the dots which were often left by gaps in other services.

Help for young people through Access to the Future

Supported by the Credit Suisse EMEA Foundation, Access to the Future offers direct practical help to young people from disadvantaged backgrounds in order to help them achieve their career goals. Most of the young people we support have commitment and potential but are held back by poverty. Typically the project helps with practical needs such as clothing, tools, IT equipment and course costs.



Specialist services for women

Most of our services offer specific support for women and girls on their caseload. We also provide specialist services addressing the needs of women experiencing issues such as criminal justice system involvement, exploitation, poor mental health and substance misuse.

Mental health and housing needs are the principle issues being faced by many of the women and the type of housing on offer is often inappropriate. These issues usually need addressing before the women can consider progressing towards employment. Isolation and loneliness are commonly experienced by the women so teams have established group activity days to help them build confidence and meet other women experiencing similar issues. The activities – chosen by the women themselves – have included pilates, cooking and beauty sessions.

In Norfolk, the PCC funded Wonder + project continued to offer vital support to women in the criminal justice system. It addressed underlying issues and helped the women

move their lives forward in a positive way. By offering kindly, persistent support, Wonder+ has improved the confidence, resilience and wellbeing of many women who would otherwise have been trapped in circles of poverty and criminal justice system involvement.

Covid impact

Most of the families on our caseload were already experiencing poverty before the Covid pandemic took hold. Restrictions coupled with limited budgets and no internet access meant that many were only a few meals away from facing hunger. We acted flexibly and swiftly to ensure these families received the support they needed. We transformed our social enterprise café Brewbird into an emergency food distribution service sending food parcels to clients in need (see page 31 for further information). Without this help, many clients tell us them and their children would have really struggled.

Alongside nutritious food, we provided digital and educational resources to families so they could stay connected and homeschool.

We anticipate that providing for these needs around food and digital access will continue as the economic after effects of the pandemic take hold. Our aim is to ensure that our clients – who were already facing severe disadvantages – are not left behind.

Stories from St Giles

The Norfolk-based Wonder+ Project, funded by Norfolk Police and Crime Commissioner, supports vulnerable women who are involved in the criminal justice system. There is often a complex web of unaddressed needs driving the behaviour of the women. Our role is to provide patient, non-judgemental support to help them stabilise and move forward. Wonder+ Caseworker Claire Johns explains.

"I often have days where it seems to be all the same sort of issue... today turned out to be what I call "a mental health day". The area I cover has a very high proportion of people with complex mental health needs.

I have client who hasn't been engaging well and has serious mental health, alcohol/drug misuse issues and is very vulnerable. Myself, along with mental health worker, substance misuse support worker and probation officer met up to devise a support plan for her. Multi-agency working is an important part the job to ensure the wide ranging needs of the women are fully met.

I then took a call from a client who lives with horrendous delusions. These are particularly bad at the moment so a lot of the call was spent talking things over, looking at the great things she has achieved since she came out of prison. By the end of the call she was much happier. I will be calling her every week for a least the next month just to keep an eye on her. I liaise very closely with mental health services for this client and they often advise me how to deal with certain situations as, at first, I must admit I felt in way over my head as she is considered very high risk of being a danger to others. But I have supported her with practical things and we have built up trust. I always try to put myself in my clients shoes. She thinks she is constantly

being watched, filmed and abused by random people and it is then put on the internet and TV for people to watch. How frightening must that be?

I had a quick catch up with a client for whom I arranged some much needed furniture. She thanked me as she is over the moon with everything. This has made my week as this client doesn't give out thanks easily so it meant a lot to me!

I made a few calls to clients for whom I don't tend to set up planned appointments because it just doesn't fit with their support needs and chaotic circumstances. I didn't get hold of all of one of them but at least they know I am trying and someone cares. I have often found clients who have disengaged with Wonder+ then return at a later day, saying they remember I kept trying and knew I genuinely wanted to help.

I think on days like today you can feel like you aren't getting anywhere or haven't achieved much but writing this down today made me realise I have helped some very complex clients feel safe and supported."

“

I have often found clients who have disengaged with Wonder+ then return at a later day, saying they remember I kept trying and knew **I genuinely wanted to help.**

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Empowering through nutrition

Food and wellbeing support

Food can be a direct way of engaging our clients and keeping them motivated towards changing their lives.

Brewbird is a social enterprise café in south London offering training and employment opportunities to our London-based clients whilst operating as a busy coffee shop. The paid trainees at Brewbird gain experience in food preparation, cash handling, customer service and a range of other skills whilst being supported by their St Giles caseworker to look to their future and pursue long term employment goals. Brewbird trainees have progressed onto a wide range of areas – from retail, to offices and hospitality. It continues to play an important role in providing a stepping stone for our clients in moving their lives forward.

Food poverty has been a growing area of need amongst our clients in recent years. Our Pantries offer nutritious, high quality food to people who use them alongside added support to help address underlying problems such as debt, poverty, housing issues and unemployment. We opened our first Pantry in west London in 2019. The people who use it pay a very small subscription and can choose their food as they would in any other normal shop, retaining their dignity and enabling them to plan meals for themselves and their families.

Covid 19 Impact

Hunger was a very real possibility for many of our clients at the start of the first lockdown. At a time when supermarket shelves were stripped bare, our clients did not have the money, transport or online access to stock up or even buy basics. We swiftly adapted Brewbird to become an emergency food distribution centre offering food parcels to our most vulnerable clients. Throughout the first lockdown, we delivered 83,000 meals to 700 people. This has mobilised us to expand our Pantry offer and we

are now providing a network of Pantries offering nutritious food alongside added advice and guidance from our Peer Advisors who are embedded in them. Food poverty will continue to be a growing issue facing the people we help. We will ensure our clients get nutritious, healthy food to improve their wellbeing and progress their lives.



“

It is wonderful. I pay a small amount of money and I can plan a proper meal.
Client using the St Giles Camberwell Pantry.





Trusting people to make positive changes

Work in prisons and with prison leavers

Our prisons work has played a key role in developing the Peer Advisor Programme both across the prison estate and into the community. This has included much-needed work in the women's prison estate as well as the men's.

Over recent years, our ability to continue this has been curbed due to the way prison services are delivered. However, we are continuing our work helping prisoners address issues which could be holding them back from successfully resettling once released.

Housing support

We provide prison-based housing resettlement services. The continued shortage of affordable housing and high level of need for housing support amongst prisoners have presented ongoing challenges. Despite this, our teams have worked hard to ensure that prisoners get help so they have somewhere stable to live from where they can rebuild their life once released.

Resettlement in the community

Leaving prison is a particularly vulnerable time when the risk of relapse and re-offending can be high if the right support is not in place. Through partnership work with Community Rehabilitation Companies we have continued to provide meet at the gate support to prison leavers to help them successfully resettle in the community. Mirroring the challenges face by our prisons team, the scarcity of affordable, appropriate accommodation for prison leavers remains an issue. Despite this, our caseworkers are able to navigate often complicated structures and systems in order to secure vital housing for their clients.

Employment and training support

Having a job is one of the most important factors in helping someone leaving prison make a new start. We have continued to offer specialist employment support to both people in prison and those who have recently left. This has involved help with job searches, building CVs and forging networks with employers. We have also supported many into training and education, including a number onto university courses.

Going forward

Changes are afoot in the world of prisons and probation with the Transforming Rehabilitation 2 contracts on the horizon. We are strongly committed to retaining our presence in prisons. St Giles is well known amongst prisoners and many frontline staff. It is where our Peer Advisor Programme first developed and has created thousands of Peer Advisors of the past two decades. We will fight hard to ensure people in prison – some of the most excluded in our society – continue to have this opportunity to help themselves and help others.

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Our supporters

Alongside our statutory partners, voluntary support is a vital source of funding for St Giles. It enables us to innovate, pilot new approaches and address emerging needs. We are extremely grateful to all our funders, partners and individual supporters for their generosity. Without them, our work simply would not happen.

Some of our key supporters for 2019/20 are highlighted here.

The National Lottery Community Foundation

The National Lottery Community Foundation have been loyal supporters of our community-based Peer Advisor Programme. A £3.6 million grant awarded in April 2019 is enabling us to expand our network of Peer Hubs and mobilise sector-wide change to encourage others to adopt a peer-led approach in frontline service delivery. The award has enabled us to expand our work into Scotland and Northern Ireland alongside expanding our existing work in England and Wales.

Joe Ferns, UK Funding Director at The National Lottery Community Foundation

“Thanks to National Lottery players more people with real life experience of social issues will use their understanding to support others in similar situations. Through their Peer Hub networks St Giles Trust are not only helping people become qualified advice workers, but are also supporting communities across the UK to thrive.”

Caroline Courtois, Head of EMEA Corporate Citizenship, Credit Suisse

“Our Charity of the Year partnership with St Giles was a strong example of two organisations working together to bring about positive change. The relationship included raising funds and awareness with our colleagues and delivering skills-based volunteering, offering many of us an opportunity to educate and inform children about the dangers of criminal exploitation. St Giles’ incredible work, passion and critical messages had such a powerful impact on our employees and we will remain strong advocates of the charity. The partnership was able to support the work St Giles undertakes to help young people turn their pasts into better futures.”

Credit Suisse UK Charity of the Year Partnership

We were thrilled when St Giles was voted by employees as Credit Suisse’s UK Charity of the Year for 2019.

Thanks to the amazing commitment and efforts of Credit Suisse’s employees, 100,000 at-risk children are now better equipped to avoid getting lured into gangs and have the knowledge and tools to stay safe from criminal exploitation.

Our partnership saw a busy schedule jam-packed with events, from quizzes and cake sales to epic running and cycling challenges. We even managed a Rickshaw Rally! Together, Credit Suisse employees raised enough funds to support our SOS+ Service, which helps us extend our preventative work in schools across England and Wales, educating young people on the realities, dangers, and consequences of involvement in gangs and knife crime.

Credit Suisse staff volunteered over 8,000 hours of their time to support our work, and we are incredibly grateful for all their efforts to help us change the game for young people at risk of exploitation and serious youth violence.

St James's Place

Support from St James's Place helped us grow our Kent County Lines Intervention services. We first established this work under a Home Office funded pilot in 2017 and, alongside support from the Kent Police and Crime Commissioner, were able to continue it. The funding from St James's Place has enabled us to expand the service into new areas and provide support for more young people at risk of criminal exploitation. This highlights how corporate support has been more crucial than ever at a time when statutory services have been under immense strain.



On behalf of all our clients and staff, we would like to say a huge thank you to all of our supporters for your kind generosity. Without your help we could not provide our life-changing services.

Tampon Tax Fund

In recent years, there has been a steady increase in the number of women supported by St Giles. An award from the Tampon Tax Fund in 2018 enabled us to grow our services specifically aimed at women. This has been achieved through the development of two key projects -the Footsteps Project helping vulnerable women prison leavers and the Norfolk-based Wonder + Project helping vulnerable women in the community involved in or at risk of involvement in the criminal justice system. Alongside growing our services, the work has enabled us to raise the profile of the issues faced by the women we work with and celebrate their success.

In April 2019, we were delighted to welcome the BBC's Victoria Derbyshire to an women-focussed event we hosted at The Old Bailey called Inspiring Women, Inspiring Change. This special, one-off event celebrated the achievements of women from all backgrounds and guests heard from Victoria Derbyshire, Janet Hills MBE, St Giles Board Member and Chair of the Met Black Police Association, St Giles Chair Denise Jagger alongside moving testimonies from our frontline staff and their clients.

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This Annual Review is dedicated to the memory of our much-loved colleague Tyron Bailey who sadly passed away from lymphatic cancer in November 2020. Through his dedicated work on the SOS+ Service, Ty prevented thousands of young people from being put in harm's way. The cancer took away a life that was full, spirited and fun. Our work helping young people stay on a positive path continues in his memory. He is sorely missed.

Rest in peace Ty.

WE RELY ON THE SUPPORT OF INDIVIDUALS TO CONTINUE OUR WORK

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