

# Our impact through COVID-19 2020/21





# Welcome to our Impact Report 2020/21

This year has been extremely challenging for our community and for us as an organisation. We've supported almost 4,000 people - double the number we helped the year before. It's a fantastic achievement but we never lose sight of the fact that every person we help has their own individual needs, wants and wishes.



We're in a unique position to be able to provide financial, practical and emotional support all within Wimbledon Guild. So someone may initially contact us for help living independently, and then go on to receive financial support or join one of our weekly activities.

The pandemic and lockdown meant we had to adapt our services, in some cases overnight, to make sure that we could continue supporting people in Merton.

For instance, when our HomeFood Café had to close, we offered a meal delivery service instead, delivering 3,261 freshly cooked and frozen meals to customers in our community, with help from staff and volunteers who were redeployed to the Café.

It has been an incredible team effort. Our staff and volunteers really stepped up, as did our supporters which we are so grateful for. And, even though our building was closed for much of the year, we were able to support more people than ever - proving Wimbledon Guild isn't just a building, we're a real community.

Wendy Pridmore, **CEO**

## Wellbeing Support

Our Wellbeing support team became the front line of our response during the Covid-19 pandemic. As well as providing ongoing support to our most clinically extremely vulnerable clients, the team also answered calls to the Merton Covid-19 Community Response Hub.

The Hub was set up by Merton Council to provide Covid-19 information and support and our team made and answered 1,662 calls over the year, helping with everything from arranging prescription collections and emergency food parcels, to checking in on people who were shielding.



"If it hadn't been for you I don't know what we'd have done. We'd run out of food and an emergency food parcel arrived the same day."



"There are no words to express how grateful I am to my befriender - I couldn't have survived without them!"

## Befriending

Loneliness became one of our biggest concerns during the pandemic. Three national lockdowns and many more weeks of restrictions meant that we saw a huge 60% increase in people contacting us for help because they felt lonely or isolated. Our Befriending volunteers began calling their friends instead of visiting in person and they became a lifeline during lockdown, especially for people living alone or shielding. Our Befriending scheme carefully matches people based on shared interests so that they develop genuine friendships. We hear from both our volunteers and clients how much they benefit from their regular visits.



## Activities

In a typical year around 450 people would take part in our packed programme of clubs, classes, talks and trips. When the first lockdown was announced, our Activities team set up and coordinated ringing every Activities customer to check they were safe, well and had supplies. Staff from across Wimbledon Guild and volunteers called over 100 people in total to check they were ok and to see if they needed ongoing support. By June the team had moved our activities programme online. It was extremely challenging to set up, and the team provided extra support to customers unfamiliar with the technology. It's success meant that we could lift people's spirits during a challenging time.



"Wimbledon Guild Activities on Zoom has been my main contact with the outside world since lockdown."



## Talking Therapies

Lockdown had a major impact on our community's mental health, triggering mental health conditions or making existing conditions worse. Our Talking Therapies team provided low-cost individual and group counselling, and emotional support groups online and over the phone to 138 clients. We are still seeing the effect of the pandemic on our community's mental health, and expect to for some time. We're currently expanding our counselling capacity so we can support more people. Our Counselling Training CPD courses went online for 2020/21, with 601 Counsellors and Therapists attending.



"Still being able to have face to face contact with my counsellor online really helps."



## Grief Support

Our Grief Support service provides a safe place for people who are grieving to come to terms with their loss and hopefully move forward in their lives. This support became even more important during the pandemic. Whether people were grieving due to a Covid-19 related loss or not, they often weren't able to come together to mourn in the way that they would have wanted and, in many cases, they had been unable to say goodbye. Our Grief Support team provided comfort and support via telephone and video calls to 167 people over the last year. 100% said that they felt more hopeful about the future after their sessions had finished.



"Right from that first call, it really helped having someone who understood what I was going through." - Nikki



"Thank you - you've been really kind and have helped my family through thick and thin."

## Financial Assistance

We saw an increase in people needing immediate financial help during the pandemic. In some cases this was as a direct result of Covid-19 - they'd lost their job or were unable to work - but in other cases we were helping people who were already struggling, but the pandemic had made their situation worse. We provide financial help with food, bills and household appliances when people have nowhere else to turn. The biggest challenge we helped with over the last year was putting food on the table. We gave out 365 Food Bank vouchers and 179 emergency food vouchers which could be spent in supermarkets. At our busiest time we were giving out one voucher every half an hour.



## Wimbledon Guild Financial Summary 2020/21

Total income: **£1,595,599**

Total expenditure: **£2,419,542**

This has been an exceptional year for us in adapting the way we work and deliver our services in light of the impact of the global pandemic. We've continued to support and meet the needs of people in new and innovative ways.

With the increase in clients who needed our support, no staff were furloughed and additional staff were recruited to cope with demand.

We're fortunate that we were able to manage our costs and remain incredibly grateful to everyone who donated to support our work.

A copy of our full set of statutory accounts is available at [www.wimbledonguild.co.uk](http://www.wimbledonguild.co.uk).



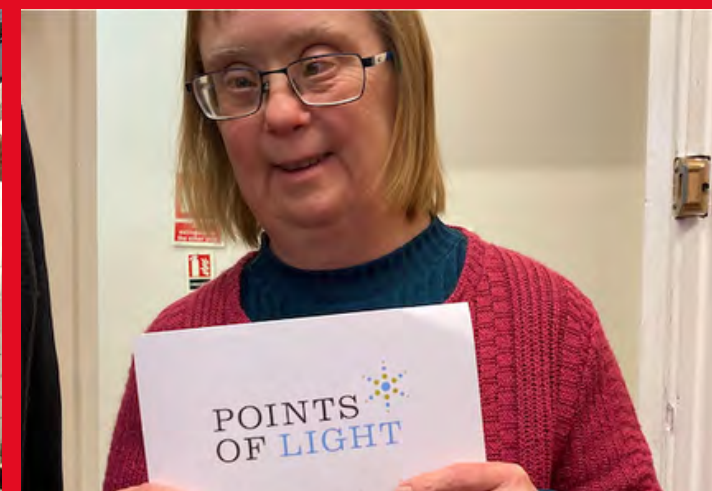
**84p of every £1 goes directly towards helping people in Merton.**

## A special thank you to our volunteers!

We couldn't have achieved everything we have over the last year without the help of our wonderful volunteers. Over 300 volunteers were directly involved in our Covid-19 response - a mix of new volunteers and existing volunteers who offered to take on new roles. We're incredibly grateful to every single volunteer, thank you.



**Although a difficult year, there were still plenty of moments of joy:**







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