



Islington Mind Impact Report

2024-2025



Our Vision

We are Islington Mind, an independent charitable organisation, part of the Mind network. We want everyone in Islington to get the respect and support they need to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Our Values

- > We listen with care, respect and provide reassurance to everyone we encounter.
- > We are committed to easy and equal access to mental health services and support for everyone in Islington.
- > We amplify people's voices, and we focus on skills and assets.
- > We develop and deliver services with the people we support.
- > We work to influence and improve mental health services, challenging stigma and discrimination in Islington.
- > We actively seek opportunities for collaboration, working together with stakeholders within the community.

Our Objectives

We support people experiencing mental distress to lead fulfilling, empowered lives, by:

- > Improving self-esteem and confidence.
- > Progressing towards living independently in their communities.
- > Reducing the need to access secondary mental health services, so that mental health crisis and hospital admissions are reduced.
- > Increasing social inclusion.
- > Improving their capacity to represent their own needs and making their voices heard.
- > Improving interdependence, financial security and resilience

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Please click the video above to see service users testimonials

Gwen Williams

Chair of Trustees

“Together, we remain committed to building a stronger, more resilient, and compassionate community, ensuring that no one in Islington is left behind”



This has been a busy and transformative year for Islington Mind, and I was proud to chair the Board of Trustees. Working alongside our CEO, Sigal Avni, and our dedicated staff and volunteers, we navigated challenges and achieved successes that strengthened the organisation’s sustainability. A major highlight was securing the Mental Health Recovery Pathway contract with the London Borough of Islington, ensuring the continuation of vital services. We also expanded projects and services, reflecting our growing impact, even as funding cuts and increased demand posed ongoing challenges.

We continued to gain the trust of long-standing and new funders - including Islington Giving, Cloudesley, Compass Wellbeing, the Department of Health and Social Care, the National Lottery, and others - enabling us to sustain mental health services and provide urgent, person-centred support to those most affected by the cost-of-living crisis, including emergency grants, food bank vouchers, housing assistance, and welfare benefits guidance.

Our specialist services continued to flourish, meeting the diverse and complex needs of our community. At the same time, we strengthened our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, embedding co-production in all our work, maintaining the highest standards of service quality, and ensuring financial stability to sustain and expand our impact.

Looking ahead, our new strategy will guide our work, including strengthening LGBTQI+ awareness and advocacy, expanding support for young adults, collaborating with grassroots and community organisations, embedding co-production across all activities, and maintaining engagement with the wider Mind network.

I would like to thank our staff, volunteers, trustees, and all supporters - through donations, fundraising, or moral support. Together, we remain committed to building a stronger, more resilient, and compassionate community, ensuring that no one in Islington is left behind.



Sigal Avni

CEO

“We continued to put lived experience at the heart of everything we do, making sure the people we support help shape decisions, services and delivery”



In 2024-2025 despite uncertainty and change, we stood strong in our commitment to mental health. We provided direct support to over 1,700 people facing severe mental health challenges and reached many more, including their friends and families. The year began with a major milestone: the retendering of our largest contract with Islington Council – the Mental Health Recovery Pathway. It was a challenging period, but our team worked tirelessly to develop a new model while ensuring uninterrupted care for those who rely on us. Securing the contract highlighted our team’s dedication and expertise. However, the year also brought challenges: increased strain on the people we support, driven by societal division around immigration and rights, led to more complex needs and higher demand against a backdrop of funding cuts and increased competition, alongside the difficult loss of the Reablement Service and the Crisis Café. Yet, through every challenge everyone at Islington Mind - staff, Coproduction Group, volunteers, service users and Board of Trustees came together with dedication - refining strategic and operational plans, redeveloping assessment processes, and introducing

a new outcome tool to enhance our impact. We continued to put lived experience at the heart of everything we do, making sure the people we support help shape decisions, services and delivery. What people told us directly informed action, helping us respond to gaps in mainstream support and strengthen specialist services such as Freedom From Fear To Love for LGBTQIA+ asylum seekers and refugees, the Welfare Benefits Clinic, and the Mother to Mother Project for mothers and women carers of children experiencing mental health challenges. Our Co-Production Group met regularly throughout the year, reviewing policies and procedures, bringing the voices of service users to the forefront, and identifying gaps and barriers in service provision. We were proud to see members of the group co-chair and contribute to key local commissioning and strategic initiatives, helping shape system-level decision-making. Collaboration remained at the heart of our work, especially amid funding cuts and rising demand. By working together, we ensure everyone can access the specialist support they need. We welcomed six local subcontracted partners to the Mental Health Recovery



Pathway and strengthened relationships with key statutory and voluntary organisations, locally and regionally, creating a more connected and effective support system for our clients. We also deepened our ties within the Mind Federation, opening new opportunities for shared learning and collaboration across Mind in London and NCL.

We remained committed to tackling inequalities across the borough. This year, we completed the LGBTQI+ Best Practice chapter of the Islington Progressing Inequalities Toolkit, helping local services provide more inclusive care. Our EDI Champion led workshops and presentations, and alongside Healthwatch Islington, we promoted the toolkit and continued to advance our own equality pledges.

Our LGBTQIA+ services continued to thrive with the support of key funders. The programme expanded to provide direct support, advocacy, education, and campaigning for better LGBTQI+ mental health practices.

Our counselling service grew, developing specialist expertise for carers and LGBTQI+ clients, while peer-led projects like Hand in Hand strengthened connections and support across the borough.

As the year ended, we focused on the future, shaping a new strategy around four key priorities: Equity, Diversity and Inclusion; Lived Experience; Early Intervention and Prevention; and Sustainability and Partnerships.

We are now putting these priorities into action to guide everything we do.

Despite the challenges, we delivered, collaborated, evolved and thrived.

None of this would have been possible without our creative, committed, and courageous team of staff and volunteers. They rise to every challenge, fight for mental health, and ensure that

no one experiencing mental distress in Islington is left behind. To our partners and funders - we are deeply grateful. Your support makes this work possible, and together, we look forward to making an even greater impact in the years ahead.



1,774
people supported by our
services

80
volunteers

£355,000.00
the value of work done
by our volunteers

1,369
new referrals

814
are from BAME
Communities

496
identify as LGBTQI+

49
employees

8
trustees

33%
of service users were
aged under 30 years

£641,215.00
funds raised through
charitable trusts and
foundations

The Mental Health Recovery Pathway

The Mental Health Recovery Pathway (MHRP) is delivered on behalf of the London Borough of Islington. This Service provides community based early intervention and prevention support for **960** Islington residents from 3 buildings across Islington. The service includes open access therapeutic drop-ins, daily wellbeing and skills activities, communal meals, community outings, and structured 1:1 mental health support.

**“Islington Mind is such an amazing place for us residents of the borough to have a safe supportive environment to go to”
(Service User, 2025)**

Activities included art and music drop-ins, group music therapy, creative and skills-based sessions, gardening and off-site activities, film, chess and computer gaming sessions, peer and therapeutic groups as well as targeted groups and social spaces for young people, men and women, meditation sessions and welfare advice.

**“I've always been given the space to tell staff I'm not well and to get supported. To explore how I'm feeling and not be judged. To be accepted, to be understood and to get the support when I so badly have needed it on so many occasions. I've never been let down by any of the team”
(Service User, 2025)**



Crisis Café

The Crisis Café was part of the MHRP contract with LBI until November 2024. The service operated weekday evenings and weekends from our Despard Road Centre. It supported **179** Islington residents at risk of mental health crises, helping prevent hospitalisation and providing an out-of-hours drop-in space. The team developed close working relationships with the North London Mental Health NHS Partnership and Camden & Islington Foundation Trust’s Crisis Team. Activities included creative and art therapy sessions, music listening, board games and quizzes, the Living Well group, access to a sensory room for relaxation, and therapeutic support from five placement psychotherapists.



Structured one-to-one Support Services

Structured 1:1 Support services provide focused, one-to-one support for clients with more complex needs. These services use our internal referral pathways to Day Opportunities and specialist services, ensuring clients access the most appropriate interventions to support their recovery. Our Structured Support services include:

The Reablement Service

This service supported **229** individuals to resettlement in their homes and re-engage with their communities. Support included housing and tenancy sustainment, access to food, appropriate physical and mental health services, and community connection. This service closed in October 2024 as it was no longer commissioned under the Mental Health Recovery Pathway.

Structured Psychosocial Support

This service provided regular 1:1 key working for up to **12** months, supporting **57** clients to address challenges including housing, finances, food security, family relationships, employment and antisocial behaviour, while working towards practical, emotional, social goals.

Enablement Service

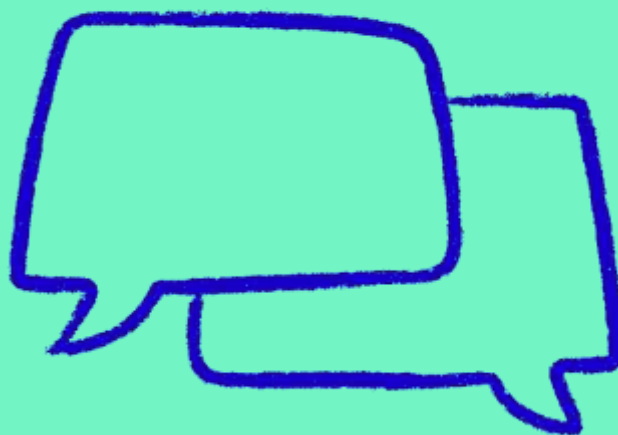
Supported by the National Lottery, the Enablement Service helped **246** clients re-engage with community resources, treatment, education, training and employment and/or volunteering opportunities, supporting greater independence. Following assessment, service users receive a flexible, personalised 8 week programme delivered by trained volunteer mentors, offering practical and emotional support.

Mind the Gap Enablement Housing

Enablement Housing operated one day a week, offering eight weekly 1:1 sessions to address housing issues. Islington

Giving funding supports homelessness prevention, specialist referrals, help settling into new accommodation, assistance with clutter and repairs, and access to emergency cost of living grants and financial guidance.

- > **31%** of clients received support with tenancy sustainment, housing options, hoarding/cluttering
- > **66%** service users received support with welfare and poverty-related issues
- > **20** clients accessed clothing and furniture through the Cloudesley partnership.



The Cost of Living Support

Through a Cost-of-living grant from National Mind, **35** clients received tailored, person-centred one-to-one support, helping clients with mental health problems to understand and

access their options for financial support and resources. The project provided effective short-term support to service users at risk of crisis.

Counselling Service/Talking Therapies Clinic

Supported by Cloudesley, the Counselling Service provides 10 and 20 week 1:1, face to face therapy for residents who face barriers to mainstream mental health care. In the past year, **103** clients accessed the service. New partnerships with Age UK, Outcome, and funding from Islington Giving have expanded access to vulnerable groups, including carers and the LGBTQIA+ community.

“Consistent support has reduced my anxiety and overwhelm. This service is invaluable and I hope it continues to be funded as it provides care that’s hard to find elsewhere” (Service User, 2025)

The Psychosis Therapy Project

The Psychosis Therapy Project provided **35** clients with access to psychotherapeutic treatment from a team of psychoanalytically trained practitioners specialising in psychosis. This service closed in November 2024.

Subcontracted by Age UK Islington, VCSE key working element in Core Team Central. Two keyworkers supported **65** clients with psychosocial needs alongside the clinical team, aiding with housing, finances and grants and community integration. Several clients were connected to Islington Mind groups and open-access services, including drop-ins, creative therapies and specialist support.

Supported Self Help

Supported Self Help is a Mind early intervention programme providing accessible mental health support. Over the past year, **80** individuals received tailored support to build coping strategies, confidence and autonomy.

“I’d definitely recommend it to anyone needing mental health support” (Service User, 2025)



Specialist Services

Our specialist projects provide personalised support for service users with marginalised identities or specific needs. Our services include the following:

Outcome LGBTQ+ Support

Outcome is a London-wide specialist LGBTQI+ mental health provision, run by LGBTQI+ staff and volunteers. It provides a safe, inclusive space for socialising, support, with clients involved in operations and long-term planning through peer volunteering and house meetings. Outcome supported **325** individuals facing social exclusion, domestic abuse, homelessness and destitution in the last year. The RSPL programme, funded by the Department of Health and Social Care, provided talking therapies and outreach focused on suicide prevention within LGBTQI+ communities.

The Women Only Space

Our specialist women only weekly space offered a safe, therapeutic women-only social group and activities one day a week to **31** self-identifying women. We have worked in partnership with The Maya Centre, who Co deliver the women's only day with our Islington Mind team. The Maya Centre source group work activities to enhance the wellbeing offer.

The Mental Health Welfare Benefits Clinic (WBC)

The WBC project, funded by the Fishmongers Company helped **57** Islington Mind clients navigate the welfare benefit system. Service users

were assisted with Personal Independence Payment (PIP) forms, Mandatory Reconsiderations or to log an Appeal, alongside being provided with practical and emotional 1:1 support. The additional income from all welfare benefits application and appeal outcomes received during the year was **£200,000**

The Hand in Hand Project

A Volunteer Peer Buddy scheme that recruits, trains and supports volunteers with lived experience of mental health concerns to accompany residents with mental health problems to other locations in the borough for appointments, courses and training, green spaces and events. It was delivered in collaboration with Manor Gardens Welfare Trusts, the Camden & Islington NHS Foundation Trust and the Side By Side Network. **69** individuals benefitted from the project this year.

The Mother to Mother Project

Supported by Islington Giving/Cripplegate Foundation, the Mother to Mother project provided therapeutic sessions including a therapy group, peer support groups, a program of activities, a communal lunch, outings and ad-hoc support to **50** women parents and female guardians of people with mental health problems



Advice and Information

Our offices handled an average of **28** calls per day, over **12,000** across the year, from clients, carers, and members of the community seeking advice and information about mental health issues and local services. Through the provision of these services, we aimed to address loneliness and isolation, poor mental health and crises, poverty and deprivation, employability, distress experienced by carers, over dependence on statutory services, and the need for accessible information, advice and signposting.

Grants to Individuals

Through partnership funding, including Cloudesley Partners grants, and the support of trusts and foundations such as the National Lottery, Islington Giving/Cripplegate Foundation, and National Mind, alongside private donations, we provided cost of living welfare grants to help clients access essential items such as food, fuel, and household appliances. Welfare support was provided this year through grants totalling **£25,079.00**.



Campaigning, events and outings



- > We participated in an inspiring **International Women's Day** event in collaboration with the **Maya Centre**, celebrating women's strength and resilience and launching a new phase of our partnership.
- > We hosted a well-attended support event with **Octopus Community Network, Help on Your Doorstep**, and **Age UK Islington**, providing access to essential services, expert advice and referral pathways.
- > We took part in the **Bright Lives housing network**, sharing insights and strengthening partnerships to improve housing outcomes for vulnerable residents.
- > We hosted an in-house bowel health session with **University College London**, equipping service users with practical, preventative health knowledge.
- > Supported by **Islington Councillors' Local Initiative Fund**, our Christmas events brought people together through meals, games, and music, including specialist projects such as **Mother to Mother** and **Outcome**.
- > We delivered inclusive events throughout the year, including **Pride Month, Migrant Queer Fest, LGBTQI+ History Month** open days and a **LGBTQI+ Women Only Day**.
- > **Outcome** celebrated queerness and community on **Valentine's Day**, hosted by **Migrants' Rights Network** and **Queer Migrant Mutual Aid**.
- > We marked **Black History Month** with a vibrant celebration featuring music, food, storytelling and shared reflection.



Our Formal Partnerships

Islington Minds formal partnerships include

- > Subcontracting arrangements with Age UK Islington to deliver together the VCS key working role within the North London Mental Health NHS Partnership
- > North London NHS Foundation Trust three mental health core Teams across Islington
- > Subcontracting arrangements with Age UK Islington to deliver a counselling service for their Carers' Hub clients
- > Joint working with Health Watch Islington in developing and promoting the Islington Progressing Equalities Toolkit
- > Islington Mind responsible for developing the LGBTQI+ Chapter.

We work with six subcontracted partners

- > The Maya Centre: Co-delivering the Women Only Space, now at Despard Road.
- > The Stuart Low Trust: Leading nature and cultural outings.
- > Key Changes: Providing music sessions.
- > Nafsiyat Intercultural Therapy Centre: Delivering Women Arabic Speakers and Men Refugee groups.
- > Manor Gardens Welfare Trust: Conducting outreach to minoritised communities, especially refugees.
- > Jannaty: Delivering outreach to women from minoritised communities.
- > We also collaborate closely with primary and secondary health providers (e.g. North London NHS Foundation Trust, Public Health), the Integrated Care Board (ICB) (e.g. Recovery College) and various VCFSE organisations including Hillside Clubhouse, Help on Your Doorstep and Age UK Islington



With thanks to Nafsiyat who hosted a visit from Baroness Merron focussing on our partnership Suicide Prevention project, funded by DHSC

Co-production and Service User Involvement

Our strategic Co-Production Group (CPG) continued to grow. This year the group have been involved in some large projects this included:

- > Supported Islington Mind with shaping elements of the Mental Health Recovery Pathway tender
- > Contributed to the London Borough of Islington strategic co production standards
- > Contributed to Islington Mind 5-year strategy
- > Supported the implementation of new Mental Health Recovery Pathway – listening to SU and raising concerns at the CPG, discussing solutions such as partnership

work to increase hot meals which was implemented.

- > 2 CPG members took a lead role in the LBI project group- creating a vision for mental health services in Islington. The whole group supported and contributed to the process. This project included facilitating 4 workshops, analysing feedback, creating feedback, Co-chairing borough wide meetings and 2 workshops.



Other co-production practices included:

- > **50%** of trustees have lived experience of mental health service use
- > **70%** of trustees, staff, and volunteers have lived experience
- > Co-production is a standing item on all Board agendas
- > Regular service user meetings for every project

- > Peer volunteering, tailored to individuals' needs
- > Suggestion boxes, feedback forms, and an Open Door Policy
- > A clear Complaints and Compliments Policy
- > An Annual Survey



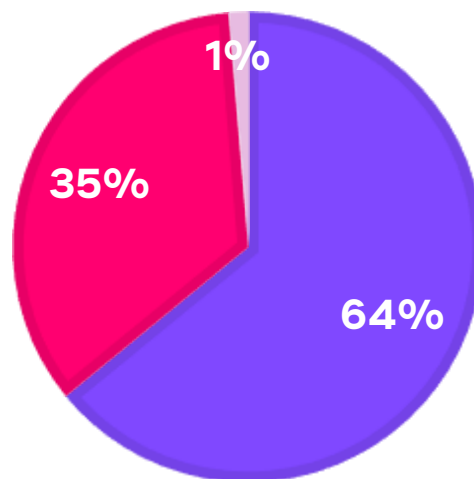
Our Music Therapy Group

Finance

Our main source of income remains **The Mental Health Recovery Pathway** contract from London Borough of Islington. We have been working on diversifying our funding streams and working on building our reserves, so we are in line with our reserves policy.

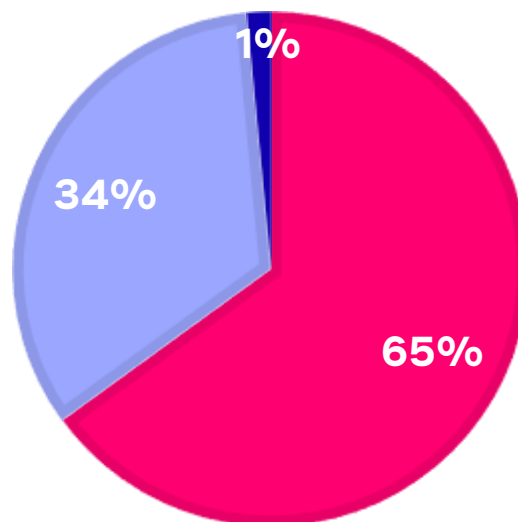
Total Income

- LBI Contract
- Trust and Foundation Funding
- Individual Donations



Total Expenditure

- Salaries
- Direct Costs
- Grants to Clients



Thank you

We couldn't do what we do without your support.



*Cripplegate
Foundation*



Sir Halley
Stewart Trust



Rayne
Foundation



NETFLIX



The **Percy Bilton** Charity

Donations

Your generosity enables us to continue providing essential mental health support to our community. Simply click the button on the right.

[Donate!](#)

Volunteer with us

We offer a wide range of opportunities to suit different skills and interests.

[Volunteer!](#)

**We thank
you.**

