

**Dear all,**

It's certainly been an odd year for us all, but we are very grateful to have been able to ease back into something a little closer to normality this term here at TRAIN...

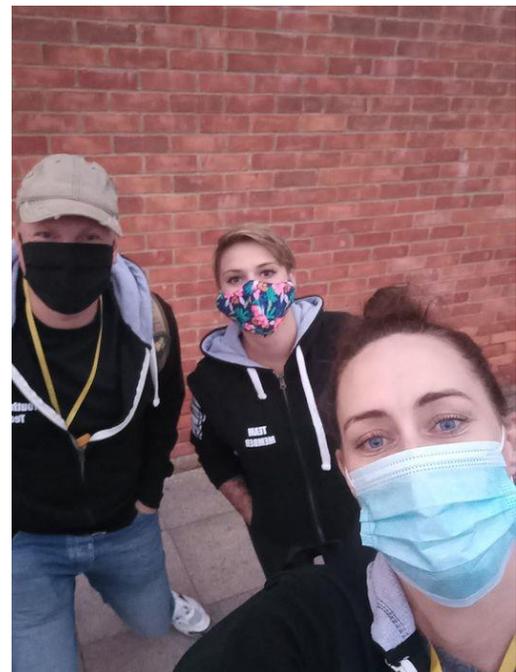
## Youth Work

It's been really wonderful to have been able to slowly reintroduce face-to-face aspects of our youth work provision since the Summer, in line with National Youth Work Agency [Guidelines](#). This follows the need we were faced with in March to quickly adapt to transferring our provision to digital platforms.

## Detached

Since recommencing back in September, our Detached work around Didcot has continued to be valuable for enabling us to re-engage with young people out and about. Although many sessions have been quite quiet, considering the darkening evenings and social distancing restrictions in place, sessions have still proved beneficial, for example for...

- Reminding and informing young people who have been met of our wider provisions.
- De-escalating incidents of antisocial behaviour.



- Holding conversations around risks and coronavirus guidelines and positively role model physical distancing, which young people have responded to positively.

### **Mentoring**

As national guidelines have adjusted and following our work to ensure we have firm risk assessments in place, we've been really pleased to recommence mentoring in a face-to-face capacity since October half term.

Considering our sessions at the Methodist Church, it has been brilliant to have been able to open these to all young people again since the easing of the second lockdown, although limited to a maximum of 15 in line with [guidelines](#). Young Women's Group, Dinner & Debate and a Friday check in session have helped for example in...



- Bringing a little more normality back into a number of young people's daily routines.
- Offering a safe, positive space for those particularly at risk of exploitation or other risky behaviours.
- Providing opportunities for open discussion about experiences of the past months. This has been particularly important in supporting staff's awareness of young people's personal circumstances and challenges faced and in planning means of better supporting them in line with these into 2021.

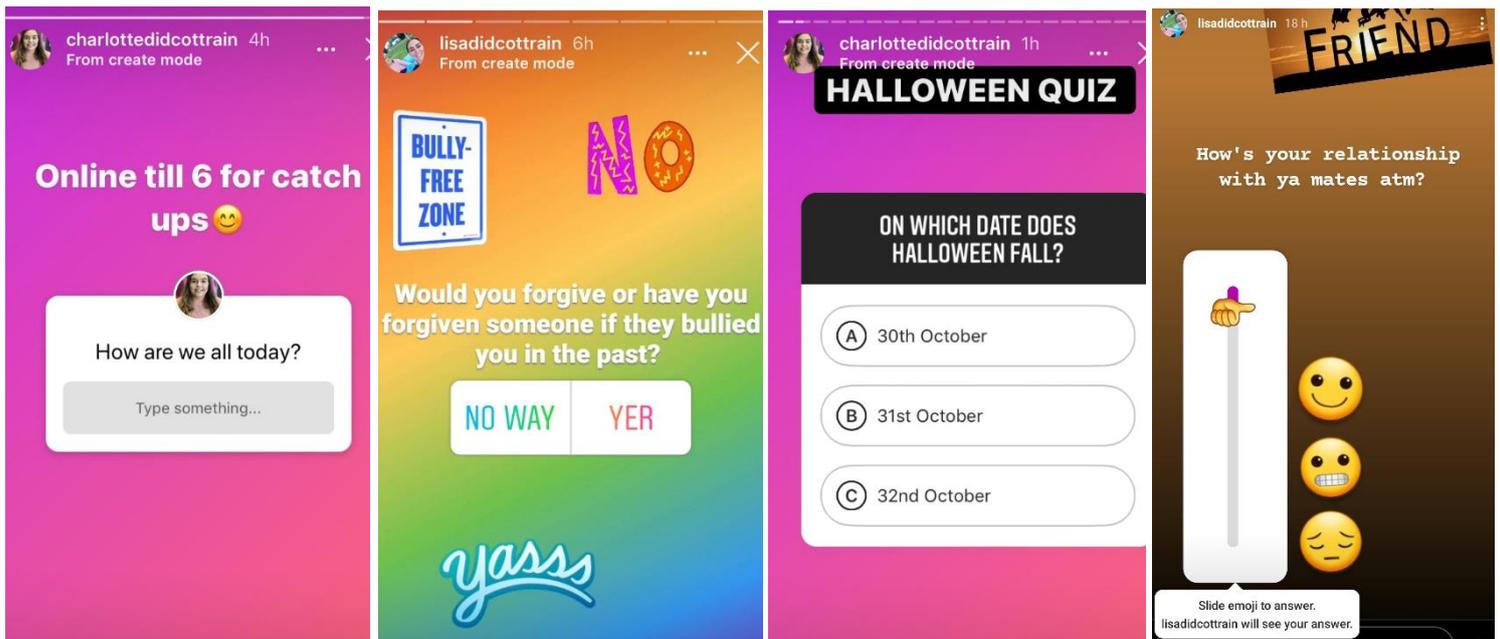
Lucinda has then enjoyed meeting new young people at UTC and local primary schools to deliver her ALMT funded group and 1:1 mentoring over the past weeks. It has been brilliant to have received feedback from teachers highlighting the progressions they have seen in young people's sense of emotional wellbeing since receiving the mentoring.



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## Digital Provision

Whilst the Youth Work team were still running the majority of their sessions through their social media platforms at the start of the term, as we have gradually been able to reintroduce our face-to-face delivery, this has correspondingly led to the need for us to reduce our virtual activities. Recognising the value digital youth work has also had over the past months though enabling us to reach out to new young people and offer an alternative means for young people to access our support, we have been continuing to offer a degree this month through our Virtual Hangouts periods and Charlotte's Wednesday night Virtual Youth Club.



## Other News

### Staff Update

As we have eased back into our in-house delivery, young people have been met with a couple of new faces! As we said goodbye for now to Justina in September, we welcomed Lucinda, who has stepped into her role as Senior Youth Worker over

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her maternity leave. Since beginning Lucinda has been working incredibly hard and with admirable enthusiasm in organising and delivering our school mentoring programme in 4 schools, as well as re-establishing our Children in Need funded Young Women's Group.

It was then also brilliant to be joined by new Youth Work Delivery Manager, Alex in October. As with Lucinda, Alex has been doing a fantastic job in getting stuck into things incredibly proactively and again particularly admirable considering the obstacles and uncertainties of the times with covid. Whilst he's been busy getting to know young people by supporting with sessions, he has also been hugely supportive to us as a staff team from day 1.

### **Trustees Update**

Matt Bezzant has recently joined the Trustee Management Committee as Secretary, being fantastic support towards the decision making behind our operations since commencing – welcome Matt!

This month we say a huge thank you to Luke O'Neil for the exceptional commitment he has shown throughout his time as Trustee for TRAIN, standing down this week after 4 years.

Working with great dedication to secure critical funding to sustain and grow our youth work, as well as guiding many other aspects TRAIN's operations, we have been really very fortunate to have him on board. A true asset to TRAIN. Wishing you all the very best for the future Luke and that you will allow yourself an incredibly well-deserved rest!

### **Didcot Mini Festive Market**

We had a great day at Didcot Mini Festive Market on the 6<sup>th</sup> December! A number of young people enjoyed taking part in Lisa's Scavenger Hunt around the town and it was really great to meet those of you who visited us. We're really grateful for your support whether through buying Nicole's (Trustee) handcrafted gifts, donating or having a go on guess how many sweets in the jar. Also a big thank you to our

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volunteers Rhonda and Darren for helping out and to Play2Give and Didcot Events for organising the event!



## Our provision over Christmas

Our sessions will be pausing over the next couple of weeks till January, but by adding staff on Facebook and Instagram, young people will be able to see posts they'll be releasing with details of crisis lines and services for the Christmas period, alongside the occasional activity and Virtual Hangout during which young people will be able to get in touch for chats.

Please staff's TRAIN Facebook and Instagram names on the poster on the following page alongside a few brilliant support services open to young people, for your awareness over the Christmas period. For a fuller list head to the following [page](#) of our website.

We will be open for enquiries till 23rd December so please feel free to get in touch if you have any questions for us through [info@didcottrain.org.uk](mailto:info@didcottrain.org.uk).

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### Young people...

**Friend** @LisaTRAIN



@CharlotteTRAIN

@LucindaTRAIN

### Follow

@charlottedidcottrain

@lisadidcottrain

@trainlucinda



### Support services:

**YoungMinds – free 24/7 text support for young people across the UK 85258 (crisis messenger service, text YM)**

**Shout – free, confidential, 24/7 text messaging support service for anyone who is struggling to cope 85258 (text SHOUT) <https://giveusashout.org/>**

**The Mix (free support for people under 25) 085258 (crisis messenger service, text THEMIX) 8088084994 [themix.org.uk](http://themix.org.uk)**

**Samaritans 116 123 (free 24 hour listening service) [www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/](http://www.samaritans.org/how-we-can-help/contact-samaritan/)**

**Anxiety UK 03444 775 774 (helpline) 07537416905 (text) [anxietyuk.org.uk](http://anxietyuk.org.uk)**

Head to [www.didcottrain.org.uk](http://www.didcottrain.org.uk) > News > Support For Young People This Christmas for further services

## Reflections of the year

It has been a challenging year for us all. However we have much to feel very positive about and be thankful for here at TRAIN too, from expanding our accessibility through developing our youth work digitally to the new faces who have joined us.

As highlighted in Young Mind's Autumn Coronavirus [report](#), the pandemic has unquestionably had a considerable impact on many young people's mental health, with the disruptions to routines, social isolation and experiences of trauma brought about. These challenges have remained at the forefront of our minds, through our work to sustain relationships and reach out to young people in new ways.

Whilst it has been a tough year for young people, it has been really positive that many have also appeared to cope fairly well throughout. We have been inspired by the resilience and truly fantastic things young people engaging with have achieved, particularly considering the past challenges many have faced since accessing TRAIN – from small signs of confidence boosts and positive decision making to passing exams and securing apprenticeships.

We have approached the changing circumstances over the year with care, balancing associated risks to physical and mental health and adapting in line with

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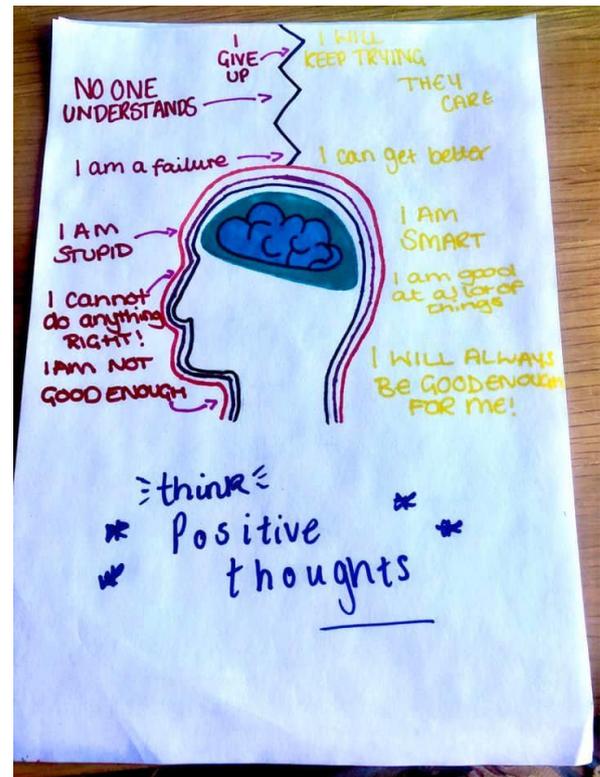
national guidance. Although it was a great shame to have to pause our face-to-face sessions and cancel much looked forward to usual events, adapting to offer our activities through virtual means has grown our understanding in this area considerably.

In just the first 3 months of switching to fully virtual we engaged with over 100 young people. Whilst there have been difficulties in supporting young people in quite the same way as when face-to-face, our general check-in's have had clear value for many, alongside our open quizzes/polls/worksheets etc, young people have told us have supported developments in their confidence, wellbeing and communication skills.

Offering our provision digitally has also been hugely worthwhile in enabling us to connect with more who likely would not have come to access our in-house sessions. With this, our learnings over the year have supported our ability to grow TRAIN's accessibility going forwards, through continuing to incorporate a degree of virtual delivery into our overall programme.

As I think we can all agree that talking through a screen or over text just isn't the same as an in-person conversation, it has been exciting to have slowly been able to ease back into our face-to-face sessions since the Summer and meet with young people again. This gradual edging back to our former schedule has thereby certainly brought us hope going into the new year.

Covid aside, we must also remember the couple of sad goodbyes we said across our staff team and Trustees over 2020, including to Alice, Director of Youth Work Services, leaving a lasting legacy at TRAIN following her 4 years here.



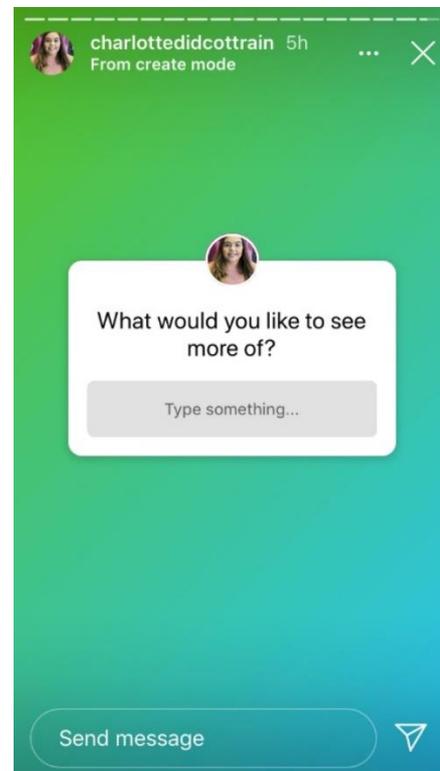


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## Thank you:

We are always incredibly grateful for all who support us, but even more so this year, considering the hardships it has brought for yourselves as well as for those we support. In no particular order our thanks going to:

- TRAIN's wonderful volunteers with their ongoing dedication to support our sessions where they've been able to.
- Those who have granted us funding, crucial to the sustainability of our work including: Angus Lawson Memorial Trust, Oxfordshire Community Foundation, Churches Together in Didcot and District, The Thames Valley Police & Crime Commissioner, Children in Need, The National Lottery, South Oxfordshire Housing Association, South Oxfordshire District Council, South Oxfordshire Community Safety Partnership, The Good Exchange, Oxfordshire County Council, Society of the Holy Child Jesus, Tesco, PJT Partners.
- Independent donors and fundraisers – your contributions mean so much.
- Didcot Methodist Church for their ongoing kindness to us in offering us a room in their premises as an office space
- The teachers, local services and community members who have worked with us to, together, look out for young people this year has been particularly tough for.
- Pryor's Didcot for their generosity in providing us a storage room for 6 months.
- Greggs, for being happy for us to re-start collections of pasties and treats for Dinner & Debate!
- TRAIN's Trustees for the hard work they have put in over the months to manage the obstacles covid has brought.
- Yourselfs - whether you are one of the above or are simply reading!
- .... and all the young people we have engaged with over the year! For inspiring us through their achievements and helping us in adapting over the pandemic through their feedback offered, to better meet their needs.



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## **Ways to support TRAIN:**

### **Rhonda's New Year Challenge!**

A huge big up to Rhonda (Volunteer) for setting herself the brilliant challenge of walking 300 miles before April, to motivate herself in getting her daily dose of fresh air in the new year, and for choosing TRAIN as her charity for fundraise for! Good luck Rhonda and thanks so much. To support her (and us!) please head to:

<https://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/fundraiser-display/showROFundraiserPage?userUrl=RhondaWilson1&pageUrl=1>

### **Spread the word!**

One of the biggest ways to help is simply spreading the word! From talking about what we do with others, to sharing our Facebook and Twitter posts, this all helps us reach as many young people as we can in the area.

### **Amazon Smile:**

We appreciate not everyone is in a position to donate at the moment. If you're a regular Amazon user, you can choose *Didcot TRAIN Inspiring Young People* as your chosen charitable organisation and a percentage of your order value will be donated when you shop through [Amazon Smile](#) at no cost to you at all!

### **Donations/Fundraising:**

We're incredibly grateful for donations of any size. As a small charity, these donations directly support our ability to offer a diverse range of activities to benefit the development of young people's self-esteem, life skills and motivations to pursue positive futures. Considering the challenges these times are bringing for young people, your support is appreciated more than ever. More information on making a single or regular donation, or fundraising for TRAIN [can be found here](#).

### **SO Charitable Lottery:**

Another fun, easy way to support is by signing up to the [SO Charitable Lottery](#). Tickets for the weekly lottery cost £1, each with a 1 in 50 chance of winning a prize of up to as much as £25,000! From every £1 ticket, 60p goes to the registered cause of your

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choice and another 10p then distributed to other good causes in South Oxfordshire. Scroll down to the orange Find a good cause button on the homepage and type in Didcot TRAIN to be taken through to how to support us!

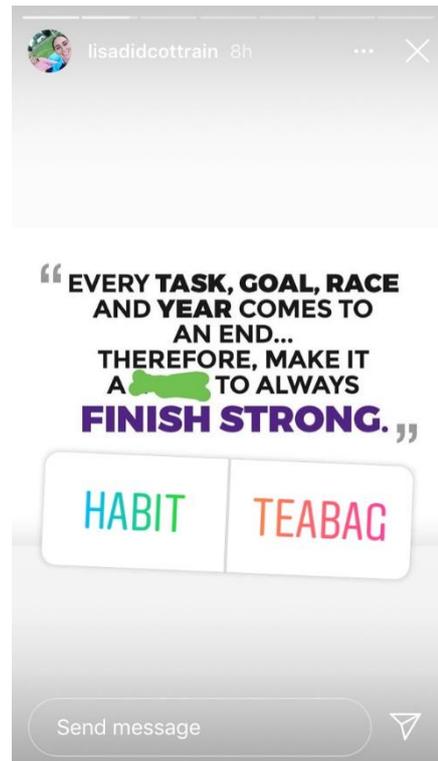
### Thank you for reading

We are sending our very, very best wishes to everyone this Christmas. Whilst things have been hard, we hope you can find many things to smile about looking back on the year too. We wish you all a well-deserved rest for managing and simply being over the past months and hope you all have enjoyable Christmases', even if different to usual. Here's to 2021 and let's end it on a high!

Thank you for your support, take care and Happy Christmas!

Best wishes,

The TRAIN Team



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