

SETTING THE SCENE

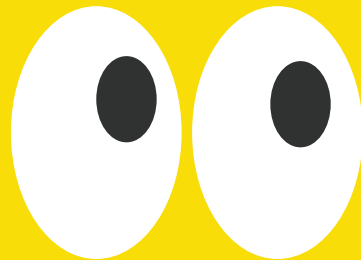
2021-2023

by Karen Black, CEO at OTR



LOOKING BACK AT OUR 2016-2021 STRATEGY

As we come to the end of our current **strategy**, it is important to reflect on how far we've come in these past five years. We are incredibly proud of what we have achieved, the changes that we have seen and the impact that our offer continues to have on young people's mental health and wellbeing, helping us reach approximately 14,000 young people every year.



Some highlights include:

- **Establishing our Peer Navigator programme**
This development means that we have young people at the centre of our services, both in terms of design and delivery.
- **Partnerships and partnership working are now embedded within OTR**
These are both formal and informal, local and national, and ultimately improve the offer for young people who are seeking support.
- **Our offer has adapted and developed**
This has ensured that we reach more young people, developing new ways of working that are more creative, more accessible and likely to be more sustainable in the long-term.
- **The development of the Hub model and website**
This has ensured young people have choice over what and how they engage with OTR. We have established a diverse offer that is driven by young people identifying what is going on for them.
- **We have evolved our internal structures and developed our expertise**
We have a greater understanding of what is needed to achieve our mission, and by investing in our people and systems we have a strong foundation for future growth.

2020

A YEAR LIKE NO OTHER...

At the beginning of 2020, we started a process to create a new strategy to guide our work and inform our decision-making. However, this was abruptly interrupted by COVID-19, which we are still in the midst of navigating.

This derailed the process for a number of reasons; primarily because we were unable to focus our efforts on this properly, but also because the direction of travel was no longer the one that we had anticipated - we were in unknown territory. We have spent the past year **responding to the global pandemic** (very well, we think!), continuing to offer choice to local young people, and also **supporting staff and volunteers** to be able to do this effectively without negatively impacting their own wellbeing.

This has led us to a slightly different place, arising from a different but collective process that is set out below. We have **created a solution that sets out our vision** to guide our direction. We have also given ourselves space to understand what young people will need from OTR whilst the world is recovering from COVID-19, and how we might go about achieving this.

2021

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS

There is no denying that 2020 was a year of change, of doing things differently and exposing the inequalities that we all know exist within our society but are often very easy to ignore or to give an alternative explanation. The global pandemic highlighted significant socioeconomic disparities that are present within our society and the murder of George Floyd has woken the world up to the structural racism that our society is built upon, in all areas - education, health, the criminal justice system - the list goes on.

At OTR, we needed to find a way to respond during the global pandemic and continue to **reach young people in a way that aligned with our core values and guiding principles**. We had to digitise our offer and consider who might not engage because of this. Whilst we were reforming our work in an incredibly short space of time, we were also trying to grapple with the impact of pandemic on our own individual lives. **We were thinking about and responding to changes in young people's mental health at the same time as trying to understand how we look after our own.**

Crucial to our success was our ability to be able to **connect with our beliefs and values along with each other**, particularly as many of us were working in isolation.

WHAT WE HAVE DONE TO SHAPE THE FUTURE

We have:

- Collectively reviewed and updated our **Beliefs**. These are core to how we make decisions about the way we do our work and how our offer shows up for young people. The whole of OTR engaged in this process, including a final review from groups of young people we work alongside.
- All teams at OTR (including those that directly support young people and those that enable us to do our work) have created individual operational plans. These highlight the areas of focus and development in the coming 12 months. These plans are not only crucial for individual teams, but also ensure that all parts of OTR have a shared direction of travel aligned with a number of thematic priorities which we have set. We have used these priorities and our team's plans to create an overarching 2021 **Operational Plan** ("Reaching Further") for OTR.
- Internally, we have established a Race and Equalities Group that will help and support OTR to become an actively anti-racist organisation. Membership of this group has been drawn from all levels of the organisation. This group will set the priorities for OTR that will ultimately benefit young people as well as the experience of staff and volunteers who work with us.

2021 AND BEYOND

What is set out above will shape the future year(s) of OTR. They will help us make decisions about the direction of existing services and build our thinking around new offers for young people. We will also put the experiences of our staff and volunteers at the heart of our internal operations in order to strive for better.

We have two key new projects that will take shape during the next 12 months. First, our new Mental Health Support Team (MHST) will enable us to improve our offer within schools across Bristol and South Gloucestershire. Second, we will start to deliver mental health services and projects in nearby North Somerset. Our starting point will be to design and test our offer with local young people, communities and delivery partners.

Alongside navigating our way out of COVID, we are excited for the coming year, involving more young people in shaping our services and **empowering them to be the change-makers of the future.**



Karen Black, CEO