



**BEE THE
DIFFERENCE**

BEE THE DIFFERENCE: LET'S CREATE CHANGE

**LEARNING FROM YOUNG SURVIVORS OF
THE MANCHESTER ARENA TERROR ATTACK**

IN COLLABORATION WITH



"The nine young and incredible minds behind this project, and the many more who have contributed, are an inspiration – turning significant personal challenges into positive change.

This report makes clear that young people who have experienced the trauma of terrorism have needs unique to their age. These are minds that need the space to have their voices heard and feelings acknowledged.

We must listen to their stories now, in order to learn for the future. I look forward to seeing the change that it creates."

HRH Prince William, The Prince of Wales



FOREWORD

WE ARE NINE OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE AFFECTED BY THE MANCHESTER ARENA TERROR ATTACK ON 22 MAY 2017 AND, LIKE THOUSANDS OF OTHERS, WE STILL LIVE WITH HOW THAT NIGHT CHANGED US; OUTSIDE AND IN.

Since the attack, some of us have received incredible care from our loved ones, teachers, doctors and mental health professionals. But sadly some of us have also experienced upset and difficulties with the way that help was offered to us. For some of us, the support we really needed never came.

In the six years since the attack there hasn't been an opportunity to talk about all of this. Nobody has asked about the help we have or haven't received. That matters because it means nobody can learn from what we, and so many others, have been through. The good and the bad.

This is why we dreamed up Bee The Difference. It is a research project by and for young Manchester survivors that aims to learn from their experiences to change the future for others. For the first time, it has given children and young people affected by the attack a chance to talk about the support they have received since, and reflect on their experiences.

The insights shared in this report show there are lots of ways we can improve care for future young survivors. Some are as simple as listening to children's wishes, whatever their age. Others are new steps or structures that could make a huge difference to young survivors' mental health.

We hope that you find this report valuable and would like to express our gratitude to every person and organisation who is willing to help to make change happen. It means so much to know we can turn our experiences of something so awful into something positive.

Lastly, we would like to sincerely thank the more than 200 young Manchester survivors who took part in the research because without you change couldn't happen. We hope that being a part of this project helps to reassure you that your opinions and feelings really matter. Your age does not.

Together we can make a difference to future young survivors of terror.

"I have often felt selfish for feeling overlooked as a victim of the Manchester Attack, when there were 22 casualties and many more injured. However, this project has helped me come to terms with the trauma I faced, and how this should have been dealt with at the time. Nobody should be ignored."



Abi Quinn, 17



Alicia Taylor, 19



Ava Turner, 16



Catherine Burke, 16



Ellie Taylor, 21



Libby Martin, 16



Lucy Jarvis, 22



Ruby Bradbourne, 17



Yasmine Lee, 18

ABOUT THE PROJECT AUTHORS

YOUNG SURVIVORS

RUBY BRADBOURNE

Ruby Bradbourne, 17, from Leeds is currently studying Media Make Up at a further education college in Leeds. Ruby was 11 years old at the time of the attack, when she attended the concert with her sister and was psychologically injured.

CATHERINE BURKE

Catherine Burke, 16, from Ashton in Manchester is currently studying for her A Levels. Catherine was 10 years old at the time of the attack, which she attended with her parents. All three were physically injured in the attack and spent time in hospital.

LUCY JARVIS

Lucy Jarvis, 22, from Wigan is studying TV and Radio production at Salford University. Lucy was 17 when she attended the Ariana Grande concert with her best friend. She was physically injured in the attack and spent time being treated for her injuries in hospital.

YASMINE LEE

Yasmine Lee, 18, from Stockport is training to be a teacher, studying at Leeds Beckett University. She was 12 when the attack happened and attended the concert with her friend and her friend's family. Yasmine was physically and psychologically injured.

LIBBY MARTIN

Libby Martin, 16, from Cheshire is currently studying A Levels at Sixth Form and was 10 years old at the time of the attack. She attended the concert with her mother, aunt and cousin and was psychologically injured.

ABI QUINN

Abi Quinn, 17 from Liverpool is currently studying A levels at Sixth Form and hopes to go to university this year. She was 12 when she attended the concert with her mother, and was psychologically injured by the attack.

ELLIE TAYLOR

Ellie Taylor, 21, from North Wales, is completing a degree in Music Performance and Industry at LMA specialist music college in Liverpool. She was 15 at the time of the attack, which she attended with her mother, and she was psychologically injured.

ALICIA TAYLOR

Alicia Taylor, 19, from Leyland, Lancashire is studying English Literature at Durham University. She was 13 years old when she attended the concert with her friend. Her mother was in the foyer waiting for her. Alicia was psychologically injured.

AVA TURNER

Ava Turner, 16 from Wigan is currently studying A levels and was 10 at the time of the attack. Ava attended the concert with her mother whilst her brother and father were waiting for them outside the arena. Ava was psychologically injured.

DR CATH HILL

Dr Cath Hill is a Lecturer in Social Work at Lancaster University, where she specialises in social work with young people. She is a registered Social Worker with practice experience in child protection and youth justice. Cath and her son, who was 10 at the time, survived the Manchester Arena Bombing and were psychologically injured. Nine months after the attack and on a voluntary basis, Cath co-founded Manchester Survivors Choir, a peer support group for young survivors and their families. Aware that many of the young people were struggling with their mental health and some were unable to access support, Cath provided them with an opportunity to engage in a positive activity, meet others who had experienced the same trauma and regain some of the confidence they felt they had lost. She is a member of the National Emergencies Trust's Survivors Forum and a member of the Advisory Board for New York based organisation Strength To Strength, which brings together survivors of terrorism from around the world.

THE NATIONAL EMERGENCIES TRUST

The National Emergencies Trust is an independent charity that was set up on the recommendation of the Charity Commission for England and Wales in the aftermath of the Manchester Arena attack, the Grenfell Tower fire and the terror attacks in London in 2017. When a UK disaster arises we act fast to raise funds for those affected to help them to meet their physical, psychological and financial needs. We share out funds to survivors directly, as well as to charitable groups that can support them. We launched in November 2019 and our first appeal, the Coronavirus Appeal, raised £100million for those affected by the pandemic. The Trust has been privileged to be a partner to the Bee The Difference project from its inception, and we are committed to transforming the insights into positive change. Find out more about the Trust and the Bee The Difference journey here:

LANCASTER UNIVERSITY

Lancaster University is a research-intensive university ranked in the top 15 in the three major UK league tables (The Complete University Guide 2023, The Times and Sunday Times Good University Guide 2023 and The Guardian University Guide 2023). Around 16,000 students from more than 100 countries choose to study at Lancaster because of our excellent reputation for research, teaching and student satisfaction. Lancaster is a truly global community with international collaborations all over the world. In the prestigious, international QS Stars rating system, the University has been awarded five stars in all categories for research, teaching, subject ranking, internationalisation, employability and environmental impact. In the recent Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2021, 91% of our research was independently rated as 'internationally excellent' or 'world-leading'.



ABOUT THE STUDY

BY THE AUTHORS



1. THE IDEA

"We knew from our experiences with the Manchester Survivors Choir that children and young people had very different experiences of support - good and bad. We had an idea to survey young survivors to create learnings - and change!"

2. THE TEAM

"We teamed up with UK disaster response charity, the National Emergencies Trust whose Survivors Advisory Forum tackles issues facing disaster survivors, and Lancaster University's experienced Sociology Department, to help turn our idea into a research reality."



3. THE WORKSHOP

"In February 2022 we held an Action Research workshop in Manchester which helped us to shape the initial questions for the survivor survey and sparked the idea for the project name: Bee The Difference - because it's all about improving outcomes for future survivors."





4. THE SURVEY

"It took a number of weeks to create the right set of research questions. Then we worked closely with Lancaster University's Ethics Panel to make sure we were recruiting people, and asking questions, in the most careful and compassionate way. This is especially important when approaching people who have experienced trauma."

5. GOING LIVE

"We launched the survey in August 2022 by collaborating with helpful stakeholders who could spread the word on social media, and contacting journalists who could help us raise awareness. We were so grateful to receive more than 300 media articles about the launch."



6. ANALYSING THE FINDINGS

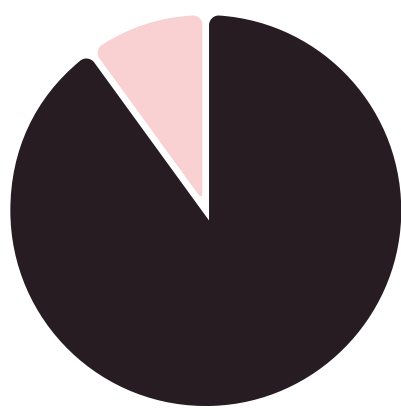
"The survey responses were more helpful than we could ever have hoped. Young people had spent time providing lots of insightful information that meant we could build a picture of people's different experiences - and spot opportunities for positive change."



7. THIS REPORT

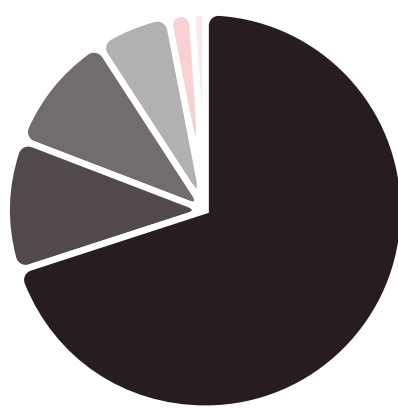
"And here we are today. Thanks to the contributions of more than 200 young people affected by the Manchester Arena attack, we have a unique new report and the chance to make a big difference to people's lives in the future."

ABOUT THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS



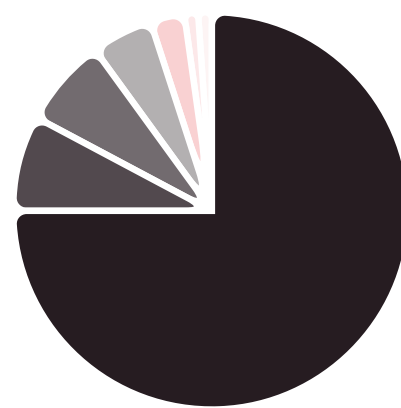
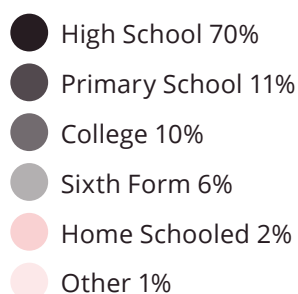
236 YOUNG PEOPLE PARTICIPATED IN THE SURVEY

90% of participants were at the concert or in the vicinity when the incident took place.



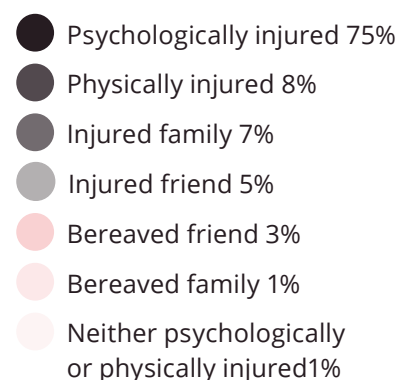
ALMOST 70% OF PARTICIPANTS

Were at high school at the time of the attack while 11% were in primary school.



THREE QUARTERS (75%) OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

Described themselves as psychologically injured by the Manchester Arena attack. 12% of participants described themselves as having an injured family member or friend and 8% described themselves as physically injured. 4% described themselves as bereaved, having lost a family member or friend.



SIX WAYS TO CREATE CHANGE

IF YOU JUST READ ONE SECTION OF IN THIS REPORT, MAKE IT THIS ONE

We know that for many people who experienced the Manchester Arena Attack, this report may be tough to read. It might bring back unwelcome thoughts, feelings and memories. To recognise this we've brought together the six key recommendations from Bee The Difference research onto one page - but without any testimonials from children and young people.

Below you will find six ways to create change identified by the research. As you will see, there are opportunities for a wide range of individuals and institutions to improve outcomes for future young survivors of terror.

1. BEE VISIBLE:

HELP YOUNG SURVIVORS AND THEIR LOVED ONES TO FIND SOURCES OF SUPPORT

The act of offering support to young survivors in the aftermath of a terror event can be incredibly valuable. It can help to promote take-up and normalise feelings at a very unsettling time. Putting the onus on young people or their loved ones to find support can be detrimental to their wellbeing. Signposting efforts by local authorities, schools, GPs and others could be invaluable, as well as proactive information campaigns about the help on offer.

2. BEE COMPASSIONATE:

LISTEN TO, VALIDATE AND ACCOMMODATE YOUNG SURVIVORS' NEEDS

Being a survivor of terror can be an incredibly isolating experience because it's not something that is readily experienced or understood by most people. A listening ear goes a long way and can help adults to take proactive steps, for example in schools, to anticipate and accommodate young survivors' new needs. But it is also vital that the person doing the listening validates how the young person feels. One of the unique and upsetting challenges that young survivors faced was having their opinions dismissed on account of their age or their particular survivor 'status'.

3. BEE EXPERIENCED:

MAKE SURE THAT SPECIALISED TRAUMA SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE AND ACCESSIBLE

The pastoral care young survivors receive in school can make a huge difference to their wellbeing, as well as the chance to connect with other young survivors with the same shared experience. But for many children and young people, this more general or informal care in isolation is not enough. Specialist trauma support is also invaluable so it is vital that this be more readily available to children and young people affected by future incidents. It should also be more readily accessible, wherever the young survivors and their loved ones are based.

4. BEE FLEXIBLE:

ENABLE YOUNG SURVIVORS TO CHOOSE THE SUPPORT THAT IS RIGHT FOR THEM

It is clear that young survivors benefit most when they can choose the type of support that works best for them, but this isn't always their experience. Some feel that adults have made the wrong choices on their behalf, while others have had very limited options because they have been unable to access private care. In the future, trusting young people to choose their support and ensuring more equitable access for everyone could help to significantly improve outcomes for young survivors.

5. BEE PATIENT:

REMEMBER THAT RECOVERY ISN'T LINEAR AND CAN TAKE TIME

For young survivors the path to recovery is highly personal and almost never linear. Their understanding of what happened to them, and their associated needs, evolve as they grow older. Meanwhile, triggers such as anniversaries can cause set-backs. Time can heal but also bring new harms, so acknowledging and appreciating this as a society could help us to plan the very best care for future young survivors.

6. BEE PROACTIVE:

ACT ON YOUNG PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES TO TURN THEIR CHALLENGES INTO POSITIVE CHANGE

Bee The Difference is uncovering the needs and experiences of young people affected by the Manchester Arena attack. But this is just the start of an important new story - the impact we can all make together will define how the story ends. We ask that individuals and institutions, including educators, healthcare professionals, government and public bodies, reflect on the research findings and consider how they can make a difference to the lives of young people affected by terror in the future.

75% OF YOUNG SURVIVORS SAY THEY WERE PSYCHOLOGICALLY INJURED BY THE MANCHESTER ARENA ATTACK

71% HAVE RECEIVED PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT AT SOME TIME SINCE THE ATTACK:

- Nearly a third (30%) received this within one month of the attack, with nearly half (47%) of young survivors accessing this early support from their school
- More than two thirds (69%) of young survivors received professional support within a year of the attack. Alongside schools, CAMHS (15%) and the Manchester Resilience Hub (15%) were the top sources of professional support

29% OF YOUNG MANCHESTER SURVIVORS HAVE NEVER RECEIVED PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT. THE REASONS FOR THIS ARE

- "It wasn't offered to me" (40%)
- "I didn't feel comfortable asking for it" (28%)
- "I didn't know where to find it" (14%)
- "I didn't feel I needed it" (18%)

22% OF YOUNG SURVIVORS WERE STILL RECEIVING PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT AT THE TIME OF THE BEE THE DIFFERENCE SURVEY, WHICH OPENED IN AUGUST LAST YEAR, MORE THAN FIVE YEARS AFTER THE ATTACK



1. BEE VISIBLE: HELP SURVIVORS AND THEIR LOVED ONES FIND SOURCES OF SUPPORT

The events at the Manchester Arena on the evening of 22 May 2017 changed many thousands of children and young people's lives forever, in ways both seen and unseen. While physical injuries caused by the attack are officially documented, the Bee The Difference research has offered a chance to better understand the mental health impact, which can be harder to quantify and understand.

These unseen impacts have been far-reaching and long-lasting, according to the survey findings, which show that three quarters of young survivors feel they've been "psychologically injured" by their experiences. 23% of them continue to receive psychological support today.

Thankfully, many young survivors have accessed professional support since the attack, albeit that for some this came belatedly. Others, however, have missed out altogether. The most commonly cited reasons for this were that support wasn't offered to them, they didn't feel comfortable to ask for it or didn't know where to find it.

The findings show a clear opportunity to make support much more visible to future young survivors and their loved ones. They also highlight how this could bring benefits on a number of levels.

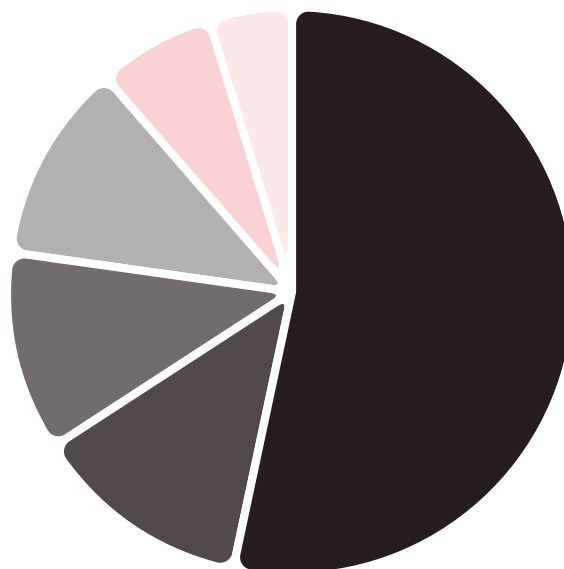
THREE QUARTERS OF YOUNG SURVIVORS SAY THEY HAVE BEEN "PSYCHOLOGICALLY INJURED" BY THE ATTACK

SCHOOLS CAN BE A VALUABLE SOURCE OF SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY IN THE EARLY WEEKS

70% of the young survivors surveyed have accessed professional support at some point since the Manchester Arena attack. The sources of this support have been wide-ranging; from counsellors and class teachers, to the police, doctors and Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS).

During the first weeks following the attack, schools played a vital role in connecting young survivors to professional support. Just 30% of young survivors received professional support within the first month of the attack, and nearly half (45%) of these accessed this via their school. They confided in school teachers (21%), their school's pastoral care team (21%) and the school nurse (5%). Some schools were also proactive in connecting young people with external experts.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT WITHIN A MONTH OF THE ATTACK



- 47% schools
- 11% Victim Support
- 10% the Police
- 10% from a hospital doctor or GP
- 6% CAMHS
- 4% from a privately paid for therapist

"My sixth form head of year was great at looking out for me and letting me talk or cry to her when I needed."

"A teacher took it upon themselves to support pupils in the aftermath and sought out support from the local health authority."

"My secondary school did a fantastic job at getting me support in school straight away by giving me access to the school counsellor."

"The support was offered to me by my head of year in school, she was my biggest help through that time. I didn't go to lessons for the first couple weeks, I stayed with her as I felt safe and comfortable with her which really helped me, she made the arrangements for me to see a school counsellor."



OFFERING SUPPORT EARLY CAN PROMOTE TAKE-UP AND NORMALISE FEELINGS

How helpful young survivors found the support on offer varied, often depending on the expertise of the professional, as we outline later. However, it is clear from young people's testimonies that those who benefitted from professional support early on did so because it was offered to them proactively. Schools made it easy for them to speak to a professional about how they were feeling, which was really helpful at a very traumatic time.

Offering professional support early on also had a positive halo effect: for some young survivors it helped to normalise what they were feeling during an upsetting and confusing period. The offer of support itself had a considerable benefit, even for those who didn't feel ready to take it up.

"I found it really helped that the support was there from the beginning and offered whether I needed it or not - it really helped in the immediate aftermath whilst I came to terms with what had happened knowing that the support was there when I was ready, and it made my emotions feel more normal."

"I wish I'd been offered more help at the time, as even though I'm now in a lot better place, I feel I could have reached that place a lot sooner given more support. It also took a long time to be able to speak to anyone at all following the attack."

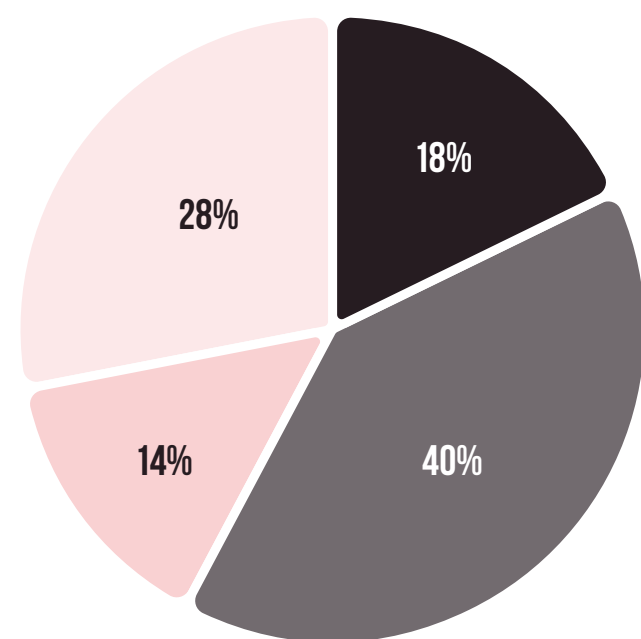
"Young people need to know that the help is there and how to get it but they also do need to be reached out rather than having to constantly reach out themselves as it can be difficult to do so when you're already struggling so much. Even just one person showing they care and want to help can make a big difference."

The value of normalising support early on is further reinforced by the survey data. This shows that a key reason survivors never accessed support was because they "didn't feel comfortable to ask for it."



PUTTING THE ONUS ON SURVIVORS TO SEEK SUPPORT CAN BE DETRIMENTAL

More than one in four (29%) young survivors have received no professional support since the attack with the most common reason for this being “nobody offered it to them”. Their testimonials suggest that the onus was too often on the young person, or their loved ones, to seek out help during a time of great trauma. It proved a barrier to seeking help at all for some, while others struggled to get the support they needed, which affected their mental health and sense of self-worth.



- I have not felt that I needed any professional support
- I would have appreciated professional support but it was not offered to me
- I would have liked professional support but didn't know how to seek it
- I would have liked professional support but didn't feel comfortable to ask for it

“I just felt like the options were quite limited and it was a matter of having to find it yourself and reach out for it yourself.”

“My parents were told that the school could not do anything to support me, leading my parents to seek outside support and advice from my borough’s school board as they felt this treatment was not adequate. This had a big impact on me as, for one I wasn’t received the support necessary to deal with my trauma in school throughout my GCSE year, and two I had to watch my parents fight a battle with the school to get me the support they knew I needed during school hours when they were not there to help me.”

“The only reason I am in therapy now is because I self-referred myself. I feel neglected from the government and the doctors at my practice all the pain I have been through dealing with my PTSD and survivors’ guilt. Getting help should not have taken five years especially if someone was so young when the event happened.”

“I was seeing a different counsellor but he was off work for some time due to illness, the centre didn’t arrange for me to see somebody else in his absence which left me feeling very isolated and like a burden constantly calling them to make an appointment. I ended up leaving it and didn’t receive any professional help until the end of 2021.”

“The school not giving me support was very unhelpful, it made me feel unworthy and invalidated. With nothing offered to me it prolonged my trauma, and an unannounced bomb lockdown practice exacerbated it. Looking back now it is horrific how they treated me and other survivors in my school.”



LOVED ONES OFTEN BEAR THE BURDEN AND MAY NEED SUPPORT TOO

Whether alongside professional support or in the absence of it, help from loved ones - family members, carers, friends and partners - has been critical for enabling young survivors to rebuild their lives. All of the young survivors have been supported by their personal networks who, in turn, could have benefitted from dedicated professional help, according to the testimonies.

"The informal support which I received from family members, close friends and my partner saved my life. Without them I would not have been able to survive day to day with the flashbacks, survivors' guilt or grief which I was dealing with everyday."

"It would be helpful if people were offered the right support even though they may not live in the immediate area of the terror attack. Also, better support for parents who were there with their children or are helping them to overcome their ordeal."

YOUNG SURVIVORS SUGGEST...

"If something happens again don't let them, who are affected, feel forgotten and helpless. Offer more support. **Advertise more support.** Billboards etc. Anything."

"Support should be made **available from day 1** and it should be clear exactly where to receive this support."

"Needs to be a better way of knowing about all the different help available as some will be unaware of something that could be good for them."

"Someone else supporting you in that process which I feel is necessary and needed because most people won't feel up to reaching out, especially within one year."

"Offer support as much as possible and make it well known that there is help out there, sometimes it's not easy to receive or ask for help."





2. BEE COMPASSIONATE: LISTEN TO, VALIDATE AND ACCOMMODATE YOUNG SURVIVORS' NEEDS



Young survivors who experienced the Manchester Arena attack talk about how their worlds changed - and how *they* changed - that night. Children and young people who returned to schools and colleges as early as the following morning looked the same as the day before, but felt very different on the inside. Many were grappling with anxiety, confusion, insecurity, loss and fear.

When they asked for help, or accepted help, they felt vulnerable, so it was critical that those who could offer this help behaved with care and compassion. Bee The Difference testimonials show too many cases where young survivors felt let down

by adults in authority, where their needs and feelings were dismissed on the basis of their age, or where proactive steps could have been taken by individuals or institutions to better protect their wellbeing.

It's important to both acknowledge and learn from these shortcomings and to spotlight and model the many acts of compassion that could make a world of difference to future young survivors.

"The day after the attack I was a completely different person and I'll never know the person I was before again and neither will anyone in my life. Even though I had no physical injuries I was a shell of a person so it is important to understand how bad the psychological injuries are in addition to those who suffered physical injuries"

A LISTENING EAR GOES A LONG WAY

One of the stand-out insights of the Bee The Difference research is just how isolating the experience was for many of the children and young people involved. After being part of such a traumatic event, many young survivors felt peers and adults simply couldn't understand what they were going through. As a result, they choose to keep their thoughts and feelings to themselves.

"I felt very alone for the first six months after the attack, and felt that when I did have a panic attack or felt that I was not safe, people did not understand, which then made me feel that I should stay quiet about things, as it is a very uncomfortable topic."

"When speaking to family and friends who weren't directly effected it was difficult hearing them give advice and relating to what happened as it is such a rare thing to happen and nobody was able to fully relate or understand exactly how I was feeling sometimes."

"The feeling of being 'broken' and not having anybody to understand or help you to understand it can feel really lonely and even though they may not realise it, they need somebody to be a listening ear."

For some young survivors, having someone to talk to - whether a friend, family member, teacher or counsellor - really helped to alleviate their isolation. Their testimonials point to how important it was to feel listened to. Listening is one of the most helpful things we can do for future young survivors. It's something that all of us can offer - and it's the reason that Bee The Difference was born.

"It has been useful to talk to family and friends about what happened as way to cope and process it. It can be hard sometimes because no one else really understands but talking about it helps understanding."

"Things like the peace foundation were very good for me. They listened to what I had to say and I felt like they were actually listening."

"The most helpful thing was talking about my fears and continuous struggles to an 'outsider' in my life. I didn't think I could talk to my friends and family as quite a lot of time had passed and I didn't want to burden them. So at the time I was very grateful to someone who could just listen and advise."

"Building a relationship with my therapist through CAMHS was massively important for me, having her listen to what had to say rather than telling me how she perceived what I was or should be feeling - which I found was the issue with adult counselling."

COPE HELP FEEL ATTACK
LIKE FEELING LONELY REALLY DIFFICULT
THINGS SOMETIMES FAMILY HAPPENED
LISTEN

UNDERSTAND

FRIENDS TALKING LISTENING FELT
ALONE TIME BURDEN
UNCOMFORTABLE PANIC DIDN'T TALK

IT'S VITAL TO VALIDATE YOUNG SURVIVORS' FEELINGS

When young survivors reached out to teachers and other school staff, GPs or counsellors their experiences and emotions were not always validated, which in turn often made them feel worse. Too many testimonials show that adults in positions of authority tried to downplay their feelings and experiences. While it's possible that some of this behaviour was well-intentioned, it was detrimental to survivors' mental health, and even dissuaded some from seeking further help.

"The tutor told me that I should take the attack as a positive experience - that this 'hardship' would make me a stronger person. He said not many young people experience hardships nowadays. This felt totally insensitive so I didn't return."

"The school pastoral leader walked into the chapel after twenty minutes of me being there and told everyone to go back to lesson and 'crack on with it' because the event was nearly a week ago and she had just come back from a school where unfortunately a girl had died in the attack, and they were all 'getting on with it' I think that was the worst bit of support I received."

"When I visited my GP he said "you're more likely to be hit by a bus than it happen again" and didn't provide me any further support."

"She highlighted the fact that I didn't look suicidal or anorexic and would only be able to help me sooner if I was either of those and with that stood up, wished me luck and held the door open for us to leave. I was devastated, I'd finally spoken to someone other than my mum and best friend about the issues I was encountering and the way the GP reacted made me feel insignificant and unworthy of help."



"Teachers and school pastoral team were not helpful at all. I was made to feel like a problem to them & was told I needed to get over it by my head of year in the September after the attack."

Young survivors' testimonials show that it was all too easy for adults in authority to dismiss their feelings or preferences on the basis of their age. Anxieties and troubling thoughts could be put down to hormones or life-stage, for instance. It meant some young survivors who were struggling received no care, or care they felt was wrong for them.

"... when I asked for help they brushed me off and put it down to just teenage hormones. To then just put me on antidepressants and that was only at 18 and didn't even think of referring me to a therapist."

"...because I was a minor they didn't listen to what I would have to say, they only wanted me to do what they thought was right for me, yet when my parent would ring in and ask the same as I did they would suddenly act on it or at least try to."

"many young people's emotions including mine are dismissed as being a teenager wanting attention and there is little help for that specific demographic."

"I poured my heart out to this random GP who totally dismissed everything I expressed [...] she said I was coping better than she would have been because I was 15 and in the two years it would have taken for her to get me into CAMHS I would then be 17 and probably feeling a lot better at that point."

BE INCLUSIVE OF ALL YOUNG SURVIVORS, WHATEVER THEIR NEEDS

In other cases, young survivors felt discriminated against because of their particular survivor status: those who were not bereaved or physically injured say they felt they were not seen as a priority. Taking care to be inclusive of all young survivors, whether their needs are visible or not, could help to greatly improve survivors' experiences in the future.

"People who saw it and didn't get injured seemed to be forgotten about. There is not a day in my life where I don't think about it. Being young, it made me develop depression, therefore leading me to be prescribed antidepressants. This shouldn't happen to anyone when it can be stopped and treated sooner."

"The people I spoke to didn't seem to know what to say, and often misjudged how quickly I should "get over" the event, I felt this was due to me or the person I went with not being physically injured."

"I felt like being a survivor who was only injured mentally meant I had to explain how I felt and justify my thoughts as there were people a lot worse than me."

"There was so much help / support for those who were physically injured but for as someone who only sustained psychological injury, I felt neglected."



TAKE PROACTIVE STEPS TO PROTECT YOUNG SURVIVORS' WELLBEING

The research also highlights how individuals and institutions could have been more proactive in recognising survivors' new needs and protecting their wellbeing. This was the case within schools and colleges, in particular, where many young survivors spent much of their time. Testimonials point to how more considered planning around potential 'trigger' events, such as fire drills and emergency practices, could really benefit future young survivors.

"It would have also been nice to have been told prior to school fire alarms and testing drills for extreme conditions because although to them a crowd of students in the halls and loud siren like noises were not a trigger, they were for me and I was made to feel really uncomfortable asking for what was in their opinion, 'special treatment'."

"A few weeks after my school did a 'practice drill' for if people broke in the school but they told us it was real and that it was a 'bomb threat' knowing full well that there was at least 10 pupils from the attack in the school."

"Our school had to do a 'mock lockdown' in case of a terrorist attack. They would not let me and my friend know when the mock lockdown would be or let us sit in a separate room, so bad memories were triggered all over again from that. We were also shown a video of the London Bridge Terrorist Attack in an assembly a few months after the attack. It was just little things - they just never really considered how we would be feeling in any of these situations."

"...there were many issues that occurred because things weren't thought about from my point of view [...] I was given a case study about the police failures of terrorism and it heavily focused on the Manchester attack, this was really difficult to read because of what I'd gone through and I didn't feel comfortable saying no to assessing it because my teacher was my head of year and we were told to just get on with it."

Additionally, as time passed after the attack, opportunities were missed to be mindful of young survivors' continuing needs. For instance, had future teachers or lecturers been made aware of what they had been through, they may have been able to take proactive steps to safeguard them.

"When I got upset in a lesson teachers wouldn't understand why which meant I had to explain which was hard for me especially in front of a class. The teachers wouldn't communicate to each other about what I was dealing with. I was shouted at for leaving a classroom because I was crying. I had to explain the whole story over and over which was hard."

"Struggled with some teachers as some just didn't understand, either never got info passed onto them or they didn't know how to handle certain situations."

YOUNG SURVIVORS SUGGEST...

"Schools need a better system in place for kids who have been through trauma with an understanding that the child's life is more important than the grades."

"I think training for teachers in schools is vital as survivors are in this environment the most after the attack happens and having people there who are trained to deal with it would be very beneficial indeed."

"Schools should have procedures implemented, and think of those who were there when doing assemblies, bomb drills and silences as these can raise emotions for those who were there."

"More awareness with schools for teachers around how to support children."

"Workshops and support for families and friends to help them understand how the victims are feeling, what they have experienced and how to support them but also how to support themselves with nearly losing a loved one."

"More organised and inclusive events for all survivors, not just physically injured survivors."

"We need to teach GPs not to ignore the experiences of young people that have experienced terrorism."

"There needs to be more funding and education on trauma and the effects of it and where people can go for help, with shorter waiting lists because the longer the wait the worse a person's mental health can get."



3. BEE EXPERIENCED: MAKE SURE THAT SPECIALISED TRAUMA SUPPORT IS AVAILABLE AND ACCESSIBLE



Seven in ten young people surveyed for Bee The Difference have accessed some form of professional support since the Manchester attack (70%). It is a welcome finding that suggests many have had someone they could talk to about their experiences.

More often than not, that someone was a teacher or school counsellor whose compassion made the world of difference to a struggling young survivor. There are shining examples of where pastoral care in schools went above and beyond. Alongside this, it is clear that people able to connect with other young survivors provided a lifeline to many who felt isolated from loved ones and peers.

But we must also acknowledge that non-specialised support wasn't always enough and in some cases fell short. Many young survivors' felt their needs weren't fully met because generalist support workers, like school counsellors and GPs, lacked specialist knowledge in trauma and PTSD.

Some felt that since young people were the target of an unprecedented and high profile terror attack against the State, the State should have stepped up to provide specialist and dedicated support.

The findings reinforce the role for specialised support alongside pastoral care. They also highlight how important it is for specialists to be readily available, wherever young survivors are based.

PASTORAL CARE IN SCHOOLS CAN MAKE A HUGE DIFFERENCE

Being able to access dedicated pastoral care in school made a huge difference to many young survivors. Their testimonials talk about how valuable it was to be able to turn to a trusted person, not just in the aftermath of the attack, but throughout their school career. It is a positive lesson we can learn for future survivors, and one that would be easy to replicate in future, if and when needed.

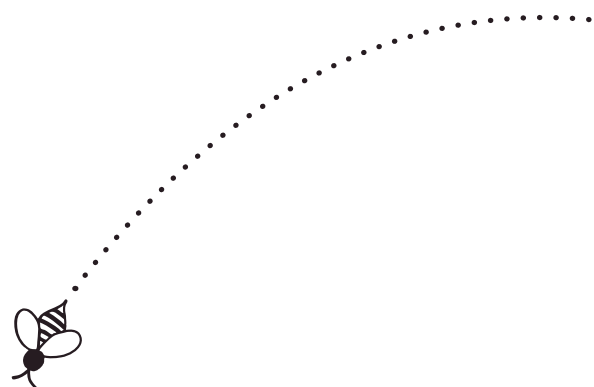


"My teacher was there for me when I needed to sit out of lessons or talk about what had affected me that day - it was good because she was there for another 2 years of my time at school so acted as a constant support that was semi permanent rather than a specialist that I could only see once or twice."

"My school teacher was incredibly supportive and gave me a place to go to when I was struggling at school, he made sure, with my consent, that my friends knew how I was feeling, as I struggled to tell them myself."

"I had one specific teacher who I'd go to and she'd let me sit with her and help teach her PE lesson as a distraction, I couldn't have got through school without her."

"My school counsellor was amazing as she was so relaxed and let me swear and cry and be as informal as possible! She taught me the 5-4-3-2-1 senses trick for when I was having a panic attack."



CONNECTING WITH OTHER YOUNG SURVIVORS CAN REALLY BE BENEFICIAL

Connecting with other survivors seems to have been one of the most helpful forms of specialised support. More than one in ten (11%) of the young people surveyed said they received informal support from fellow Manchester survivors. Their testimonials highlight the benefit of being with others who have had the same experience. They felt understood, less isolated and able to open up about their feelings without fear of judgement.

"I didn't want to burden my friends or family so speaking to other survivors helped me get things off my chest more comfortably."

"I felt that talking to other survivors was really helpful as they understood fully what I had been through."

"The support was amazing between other survivors all trying to help each other. We have a group chat on Facebook which really helped in the first few years and still continues to."

Young survivors talk about how they fostered these survivor relationships through social media, at dedicated survivor events or by being a part of the Manchester Survivors Choir. Given the valuable role that peer support can play, taking purposeful steps to connect survivor communities after future incidents could be highly beneficial to survivors' wellbeing.

"Reading other peoples experiences on Yammer, made me feel less isolated as other people were experiencing the same feelings I was."

"I was also in a group online with other survivors of the attack who were the same age as me and we always would go there and talk if one of us was having a bad day and it was a huge help and made me feel less alone."

"The resilience hub organised days where we could meet up. I had met other survivors online and this gave us a chance to meet. Helped us see some light in the situation which made it a lot easier to cope with. I used to look forward to these meet-ups and knowing I had people to talk to who understood really helped."

"Manchester survivors choir made me feel less alone."

"The Manchester Survivors Choir gave me a sense of belonging and judgement free support."

"Before joining the Manchester survivors choir, I lived in a sort of bubble, hidden away from society and we never turned on the news so never knew what was going on in the world. For the first time I met other survivors, and there was a sort of subliminal understanding - I didn't even have to say what happened to me at Manchester, but I was still greeted with open arms into a new, wonderful, kind safe space, where I was listened to and accepted for who I was."



SPECIALIST TRAUMA SUPPORT IS VITAL AND SHOULD BE COMMENSURATE WITH SURVIVING A TERRORIST ATTACK

But it is also the case that for many young survivors non specialised support was not enough. Children and young people felt let down by some school workers, GP and counsellors because they felt they lacked the expertise to give them the right support. In some instances, non-specialists provided poor advice, in others their approach made survivors feel worse.

"Pastoral workers at my school did their best but told me they had never had any training on how to deal with an incident like this."

"I sought help from my school nurse/ therapist a few months after the attack when I was experiencing nightmares (I used to have nightmares where I was trying to escape a terror attack, trying to rescue my family). She read from a printed stapled booklet and told me to have a bubble bath before going to bed to prevent the nightmares. This wasn't helpful."

"I think the school counsellor wasn't well enough equipped for something as serious as PTSD and the shell shock I was in for several months after, which is not at all their fault - that's why I ended up seeing a PTSD specialist at CAMHS."

"The help I got from the school therapist was ineffective. She had obviously never had to deal with this type of thing before on this scale and her nervousness made me feel worse."

"As I think teachers etc. weren't properly trained or advised on how to deal with this, they often said things that made us feel worse. A lot of what they were saying was 'time is the best healer', but straight after the attack we weren't really thinking about the long term, just trying to get through day by day."

"The first time I went to my local doctor, I had a full breakdown in regards to Manchester and all they did was offer my leaflets with websites to visit which is why I done research and found the Manchester resilience hub."

"When I first saw my doctor after the attack the doctor told me to "Google help on PTSD" and gave me a print out."

By contrast, young survivors talk about how helpful it was to get support from more specialised services such as the Peace Foundation (for an expert ear), the Manchester Resilience Hub (for connecting survivors with services) and some of the help from CAMHS (for specialised mental health support). They also note that GPs could play a valuable role referring to these services.

"After talking with my GP he recommended getting professional help which then lead to me getting counselling through school which was very helpful, through this I gained techniques to help me rationalise my fears, help me deal with my anxiety and survivors guilt."

"The resilience hub have been amazing, they are the only reason why I got seen by CAMHS for an assessment promptly..."

"The Manchester Resilience Hub had been amazing with me! They were so helpful and caring towards everything that had happened. They helped me get to speak to a counsellor."

"The Peace Foundation were also really helpful to me because they were the first people I'd been able to gain some understanding of how and why I was feeling the way I was, they also helped my mum and my sister with some of their own coping mechanisms and provided some insight into ways we could try to move on."

"Things like the Peace Foundation were very good for me. They listened to what I had to say and I felt like they were actually listening."

"Originally CAMHS was dealing with my PTSD from the attack however they helped with my mental illnesses that branched off from that such as depression and anxiety. My CAMHS worker introduced me to a mental 'safe space' which I still use now when struggling with my anxiety."

SUPPORT SHOULD BE READY AND ACCESSIBLE, WHEREVER SURVIVORS ARE

Despite immediate and urgent need, many young survivors were told they had to wait for many months to receive professional support. CAHMS waiting lists could be so lengthy that GPs advised it wouldn't be worth the wait. The Manchester Resilience Hub which is generally spoken of highly was fully operational within seven weeks following the attack. The fastest such response in UK history. More than 700 individuals were supported within the first few days of its launch, and included those people physically injured, bereaved families, and those on the police witness list. Following the then National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) PTSD guidelines, the Hub waited until 12 weeks post incident to communicate to all ticket purchasers, encouraging them to complete some online screening tools to see how they were doing. It initially acted as a triage service, and expanded its scope to encompass referral pathways and an escalation process to assist in timely support.

"My parent helped me get involved with my GP services, which I was told I couldn't get help until after 6 months had passed."

"We reached out to the doctor on numerous occasions, who told us we'd have to be put on a waiting list for over 9 months before we got any professional support."

"The support from the school was very minimal while it was appreciated it did not help. The support received from CAHMS was very helpful but it took far too long to gain that support."

"The incredibly long waiting list for mental health is horrible as many survivors were suicidal and being told to wait for over a year makes them vulnerable to losing hope and completely ruins their trust in the medical system."

"It is devastating when you are desperate for help but you're just a number in a queue of people waiting for help too."

Others felt unable to access the help on offer because it was concentrated in the Greater Manchester area. After future attacks it will be important to offer support as soon as young survivors need it, and ensure they can access it wherever they are based.

"Had to see GP day after attack but he wasn't very helpful and didn't offer any professional help. Was offered help from Manchester Police (special terrorism unit) but would have had to travel to Manchester for counselling which wasn't feasible."

"...after the Manchester attack support was focused in Manchester and surrounding areas and people who travelled to the concert were discarded and left to fend for themselves."

"Meeting another survivor and her kids who lived in the area was helpful as there wasn't many other survivors in my area as the support to Manchester felt too far away and inaccessible."

"The NHS residence hub which was part of CAHMS was unhelpful as it was during school time, was a 30 mile round trip away which was shared with 4 other child victims of different ages including 2 which were over 4 years younger than me..."



YOUNG SURVIVORS SUGGEST...

"I think there needs to be an initial plan in place for mental health support to be accessed immediately after a terrorist attack. It is no good being told by the GP that the waiting list for support is at least a year."

"The government or relevant authorities should enforce an immediate fast track application for CAMHS or specialist support to any young person affected by terrorism"

"There needs to be more support specifically for survivors as it takes way too long on the list for therapy and the type of therapy I was offered just made me worse."

"I think agencies such as the Manchester resilience hub should be put in place for all survivors of attacks as it is specialised for what happened and people know exactly how to help."

"Therapy should be offered to every survivor."

"From my experience, one of the most important ways to support people affected by terrorism is to make spaces for people to connect with other survivors."

"It would be helpful if people were offered the right support even though they may not live in the immediate area of the terror attack."

"Make sure provisions are in place that if something like this happens again that there is the support for both physical and psychological injuries for every child that needs it. It makes you feel worthless when you ask for support that you desperately need but are turned down because there is high demand and your situation isn't deemed high enough in the list."



4. BEE FLEXIBLE:

EMPOWER YOUNG SURVIVORS TO CHOOSE THE SUPPORT THAT IS RIGHT FOR THEM



Family members and loved ones have played a crucial role since the attack. Many have gone above-and-beyond to meet young survivors' complex needs, and their efforts - and the toll this has taken - are under-recognised. Young survivors describe their loved ones' support as "a life-saver". The fact it has been sustained and "always there" has clearly been invaluable.

In tandem, many young survivors point to the additional benefits of professional help. This has helped them to process what has happened, and given

them coping mechanisms to manage their feelings and panic attacks. Notably, they have often had to experiment with different therapies.

It is clear that young survivors benefit most when they can choose what works, but this hasn't always been their experience. Some have felt adults made the wrong choices for them, while those able to pay for private care have had access to more options, and more quickly.

In the future, trusting children and young people to choose their support and ensuring more equitable access for everyone could help to significantly improve outcomes for young survivors.

EMPOWER YOUNG PEOPLE TO EXPERIMENT WITH WHAT WORKS FOR THEM

Young survivors who have received specialist mental health support have often had to try out a number of different therapies before finding one that clicked. In fact, it seems to be rare that the first form of therapy they tried was the right one for their needs.

"I found and learnt through experts that talking therapies do not help with anxiety as they make the brain remember traumatic events and therefore strengthen the connections of remembrance. The Linden Method was the only treatment which helped me to forget the things I have seen."

"The resilience hub made sure that CAMHS gave me trauma based support which started with EMDR therapy and then trauma based CBT, EMDR didn't work for me."

"I found that CAMHS were not very helpful, and didn't listen to how bad things were. We had to push for medication after 4 years which finally helped things. I also tried private EMDR therapy, this also made situations worse at home and didn't help whatsoever."

"I attempted hypnotherapy and acupuncture for stress however this was not helpful. My therapists tried cognitive behavioural therapy and EDMR therapy however this didn't last long enough for me to tell if it was helpful or not."

"A therapy charity made me focus on the feeling of guilt and blame, the charity tried to make me place blame on random people around me, this made me feel awful."

As young survivors have grown older, their understanding of the attack and their feelings around it, have matured and changed. It is one of the key reasons that choice is vital for young people. It means they can benefit from different types of support at different stages of their lives.

"About 2 years after the attack I had 12 sessions of CBT and EMDR therapy again but with a private counsellor and it was life-changing. It really helped me process the trauma and stop it from controlling my life as much."

"The support from the sixth form and therapist made me feel worse. I think they would have been beneficial later down the line. But it was too soon for them in the first few months."

"I was in the midst of my GCSE's when I first received counselling through my school. It felt she was quite patronising and didn't really know how to deal with a traumatised child. I'm not sure whether it was still too raw to comprehend what had happened but when I went to sixth form and found my second counsellor it made all the difference."

"I received support from a counsellor in the first year of the attack however I quickly stopped attending these sessions as I was only young and I didn't really understand what was going on."

ENSURE EVERYONE HAS ACCESS TO CHOICE

Young survivors who had access to private care had far greater choice than those who did not. They were able to access professional support more quickly than their peers, and to experiment with different options that might work for them.

"I know how fortunate I am to have received counselling, however I felt 6 sessions of CBT were not enough and I needed more but couldn't get any more as my school would only give me 6."

"A lot of families cannot afford private therapy and therefore are left in the balance of sometimes life or death when dealing with a traumatised young person."

"My mum found me a private child's trauma therapist and luckily money from the Manchester Emergency Fund helped to pay for this - I was offered CBT as apparently too young for EMDR. Whilst going through the exposure therapy initially made my mental health worse, the long term outcome has been amazing."

"I had to source my own support, outside friends and family, there was no specialist help offered to me and my family had to pay for private talking therapy and specialist EMDR therapy."

"The (NHS) sessions are very limited and the waiting lists are long so if you don't fit with the therapist or type of therapy you receive, it can leave you feeling quite stuck [...] it often felt like I was going in circles with them and never really getting anywhere and when I was too anxious to attend, I often would get discharged from the service which obviously wasn't helpful and that has made me apprehensive to reach out for the help again."

One way to improve outcomes for future survivors will be to make sure that care is truly equitable. That those without the means to pay for private healthcare are also empowered with different support options.

TRUST YOUNG SURVIVORS TO CHOOSE WHAT FEELS RIGHT

Young survivors talk about how valuable it was to be able to choose the professional support that worked best for them, although not all felt empowered to do so. Some felt forced to take part in therapies that felt unsuitable and this was detrimental to their wellbeing. Their testimonials show that, while adults in authority may have a view on the 'right' path for the young person, it is vital for them to place the power to choose in young people's hands and to recognise that despite their age, they want to be offered the opportunity to articulate what they need.

"I was forced to be alone with the two counsellors with nobody I knew because they said they couldn't allow it. I was in school because I'd just started my GCSE exams that week and felt I shouldn't miss any work, I wanted to keep my routine the same so at least something was familiar. Little did I know that I would be forced to sit with these 'counsellors' to speak about what had happened on Monday and they were asking very intrusive and distressing questions regarding the attack."

"...it was clear the counselling was directed to younger kids as a method of drawing pictures with crayon and being unable to speak freely made the experience feel incredible condescending and difficult. Therefore it made my mental health worse and I was unwilling to continue."

"It honestly made me worse and I had to stop going and I'm scared to go back to therapy again."



It is also important to acknowledge that young survivors may not always be able to articulate their needs with the confidence of adults. Their testimonials point to where professionals could have been more mindful of this. Some young survivors were dismissed from therapy early for being seemingly unresponsive. Others developed negative relationships with their counsellor or therapist for seeming to be “difficult.”

“She told me to write down any time I was sad, why I was sad, what caused it and what could help it. This is not what I wanted to be doing when I was sad so made me not want to go. If I hadn’t written anything down she would tell me I wasn’t helping myself and wouldn’t be able to make improvements.”

“My counsellor would tend to get annoyed when I couldn’t tell her why I was feeling certain ways. She gave me lots of ‘homework’ which I wouldn’t like to do as it meant I was reliving the experience however she would then be unhappy that I hadn’t done it.”

“I saw a college counsellor who tried to accuse my mum of being abusive in the past to explain my mental health. She was not understanding at all and kept trying to link my struggles back to childhood.”

“I got diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder around 4 months after the attack and was offered to have sessions of EMDR therapy which was to try and help me process the trauma, however it didn’t work at all and after just 3 sessions of it, I was dismissed and basically told that I had to do it myself at home.”

“My therapist didn’t seem bothered about anything I had to say and just treated me like any other patient she had. Never felt personal and dismissed any time I actually tried to talk about my feelings. This has completely put me off therapy.”

Cases like these reinforce why young survivors need to feel empowered and their experiences validated - either to choose to continue their therapy, or to ask for alternative help.

YOUNG SURVIVORS SUGGEST...

“Many young people parents/teachers may have a one sided approach that there ‘child’ does not need help and that they will or are okay, however young people need to be listened to so that their true feelings are heard and understood.”

“Let people know how easy it is to get support if they need but do not force the information out. Allow time to process.”

“It is important that everyone has the option to try therapy or other options of support so that they can make the choice themselves of what’s best for them, without being forced into one as it’s the only option available to them.”

“Make sure support is available to everyone. It shouldn’t be a first come first serve service where if you miss out on the first spots you seem as if you’re pushed to the back of the line and forgotten.”

“Help should be offered to everyone [...] It should also be easily accessible especially for those who can’t financially afford therapy.”

“Albeit the NHS services are free, but more sessions should be available as not everyone can afford private therapy to get the full help they need.”



5. BEE PATIENT: REMEMBER THAT RECOVERY ISN'T LINEAR AND CAN TAKE TIME



For young Manchester survivors the path to recovery is highly personal and almost never linear. Their perspectives on the attack, and their mental health needs, have often evolved as they have grown older. Meanwhile, triggers such as anniversaries and media coverage can create set-backs.

Where some young survivors felt ready to open up to professionals in the immediate aftermath of the attack, others are only now ready to seek support. But as the years pass they can feel less comfortable to ask for help, while some of the sources of support are no longer available.

Nearly a quarter (23%) of young survivors continue to receive psychological support today. A further one in five have stopped receiving professional support (19%) but feel they would still benefit from it.

Every survivor's needs have a personal pattern, and time can heal as well as bring new harms where children and young people are concerned. Acknowledging and appreciating this could help society to plan the very best care for young survivors in future.

"Some family friends have said I should be grateful I wasn't worse off and that I should be over it by now because it has been five years."

SURVIVORS' MENTAL HEALTH NEEDS MAY EVOLVE OVER TIME

While many survivors suggest that support should be available straight away, it's important to also acknowledge that many either didn't feel ready to seek support in the aftermath of the attack or didn't feel that they needed to. For some survivors it took many months, and even years, to feel the mental health effects of their experiences. The survey data reflects this, showing that survivors sought support at different stages and have experienced new needs as their perspectives have matured.

TIMESCALES AT WHICH YOUNG SURVIVORS HAVE ACCESSED PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT (AND THOSE WHO HAVE NOT)



Within 1 month

30% of young survivors accessed professional support



Within 1 year

this had grown to 68%



Within five years

this had increased to 70%



30% of young survivors have **never received** any professional support

"I received support from 6 months after the attack and onward, as I was not sleeping due to having nightmares about the attack, and was noise sensitive."

"2018 was when I began to struggle and needed support. I really struggled doing things I used to be able to do such as watching fireworks and being in big groups of people. After bottling up my emotions for a year, after the one year anniversary I decided to speak openly and freely about my experience knowing it's the only way for me to move on."

"I filled out the annual survey by the resilience hub and then was referred to CAHMS after the first anniversary. I didn't think I could talk to my friends and family as quite a lot of time had passed and I didn't want to burden them. So at the time I was very grateful to someone who could just listen and advise."

"Originally CAMHS was dealing with my PTSD from the attack however they helped with my mental illnesses that branched off from that such as depression and anxiety."

"I reached out within the first month and doctors recommended to take home remedies and I later went back to the doctors in October 2017 where I was then referred to CAMHS where I then was later diagnosed with PTSD. CAMHS were really supportive and helpful. I then went on to the Manchester resilience hub in November 2021 and I am still undergoing therapy with them. Due to me moving to uni, my symptoms worsened and with the five year anniversary, I had no choice but to contact university for support as I really struggled and do struggle with that time of year."

SURVIVORS FEEL THE STATE SHOULD RECOGNISE AND SUPPORT THEM IN THE LONG-TERM

Thankfully, being a survivor of terrorism in the UK remains extremely rare. As one young survivor put it, when you become a survivor of terror, you become “part of a club that you’d never voluntarily subscribe to and unfortunately can’t unsubscribe to”.

Survivors who are part of this club are conscious that they have been targeted in an attack against the State. As such, there is an expectation that the State will be there to support their ongoing needs. However, testimonials show that this is very often not their experience. Survivors talk about feeling “neglected” and “overlooked” by the State.

“I feel neglected from the government and the doctors at my practice all the pain I have been through dealing with my PTSD and survivors guilt. Getting help should not have taken five years especially if someone was so young when the event happened.”

“The events on the first anniversary made me feel seen, supported, and hopeful. After this I felt forgotten about...”

More than five years on, there is significant and ongoing need for psychological support among young survivors. Nearly a quarter (23%) continue to receive psychological support today and a further 19% have stopped receiving this support, but still feel they would benefit from it. Young survivors express concerns that dedicated support resources, such as the Manchester Resilience Hub, are no longer available with no alternatives provided that can support young people under the age of 18.

“There needs to be something in place that is constantly available so that there isn’t such a drastic change from having regular support to none.”

“The Manchester resilience hub is closing as it has been 5 years since the incident, however, it is only this year which is 5 years later that I have felt comfortable to contact them and receive help, setting up a dedicated trauma hub for individuals who have been in terror attacks/similar may be beneficial. Also offering support at the time of the incident is great but this should also be followed up maybe a year later.”

Whilst the Manchester Resilience Hub’s work is scaling down, and regular six monthly screening surveys and follow ups ceased in 2022, it continues to provide support to anyone who contacts it.

“I would say that I am affected more now than I was 5 years ago. I receive support from family and friends [...] I struggle to comprehend what even happened that night.”

The consistency and stability that young people have been able to access from organisations such as the Peace Foundation has been a source of great comfort for those feeling anxious and unsettled, or experiencing set-backs. Having someone who knows their stories has meant that young people have not to re-explain and revisit their trauma time and again.

“Gone to the Peace Foundation for years and they have been consistent with advice and support.”

“I know that I could go to Peace Foundation if I felt I needed extra support at any point.”

Anniversaries and high profile media coverage can be triggering for young survivors, making it vital to factor these in when planning for their long-term care. We can learn positive lessons from schools, colleges, loved ones and others who have taken proactive steps to support children and young people through challenging reminders.

“School support - allowed me to leave classes if I needed, allowed me someone to talk to and allowed me private revision space for my GCSE’s the following year as my GCSE’s clashed with the one year anniversary of the attack.”

“They gave me a card which allowed me to leave class at any point if I needed to and they even helped me mark the first anniversary in the school prayer garden.”

“Although my best friends that I met through the attack and I don’t speak about it, the comfort is always there that they understand and we spend every anniversary together.”

YOUNG SURVIVORS SUGGEST...

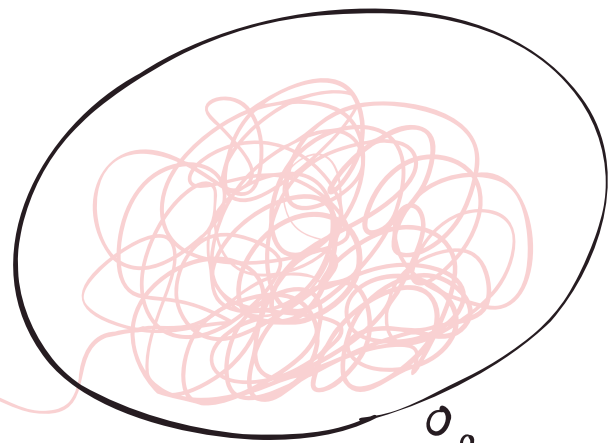
"Setting up a dedicated trauma hub for individuals who have been in terror attacks/ similar may be beneficial."

"Offering support at the time of the incident is great but this should also be followed up maybe a year later."

"Having a 8 week session limit such as through CAMHS is not beneficial. PTSD can take time so the service needs to be offered straight after the event for those who need it but also ensure the access is there at least up to 2 years later for people who have a delayed reaction or wasn't ready straight away to access support."

"On the anniversary each year it's always [nice to have someone check up on you.]"

"More events/recognition on the anniversary of this specific attack [...] more city based events on the anniversary would make me feel like I was more supported."



**6. BEE
PROACTIVE:
ACT ON SURVIVORS'
EXPERIENCES TO TURN
THEIR CHALLENGES
INTO CHANGE**

**BY DR CATH HILL,
MANCHESTER SURVIVOR,
LECTURER AT LANCASTER
UNIVERSITY AND MEMBER
OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCIES
TRUST'S SURVIVORS
ADVISORY FORUM**

"By uncovering the needs and experiences of young people affected by the Manchester Arena attack, Bee The Difference has broken new ground. But this research is just the start of an important new story. The impact we can all make together will define how the story ends.

That's why the sixth and last chance for change is a call to be proactive. An ask that individuals and organisations reflect on the research findings and consider how they can make a difference to the lives of young people affected by terror in the future.

EDUCATORS

CAN YOU OFFER MORE SUPPORT FOR YOUNG SURVIVORS THROUGHOUT THEIR TIME IN EDUCATION?

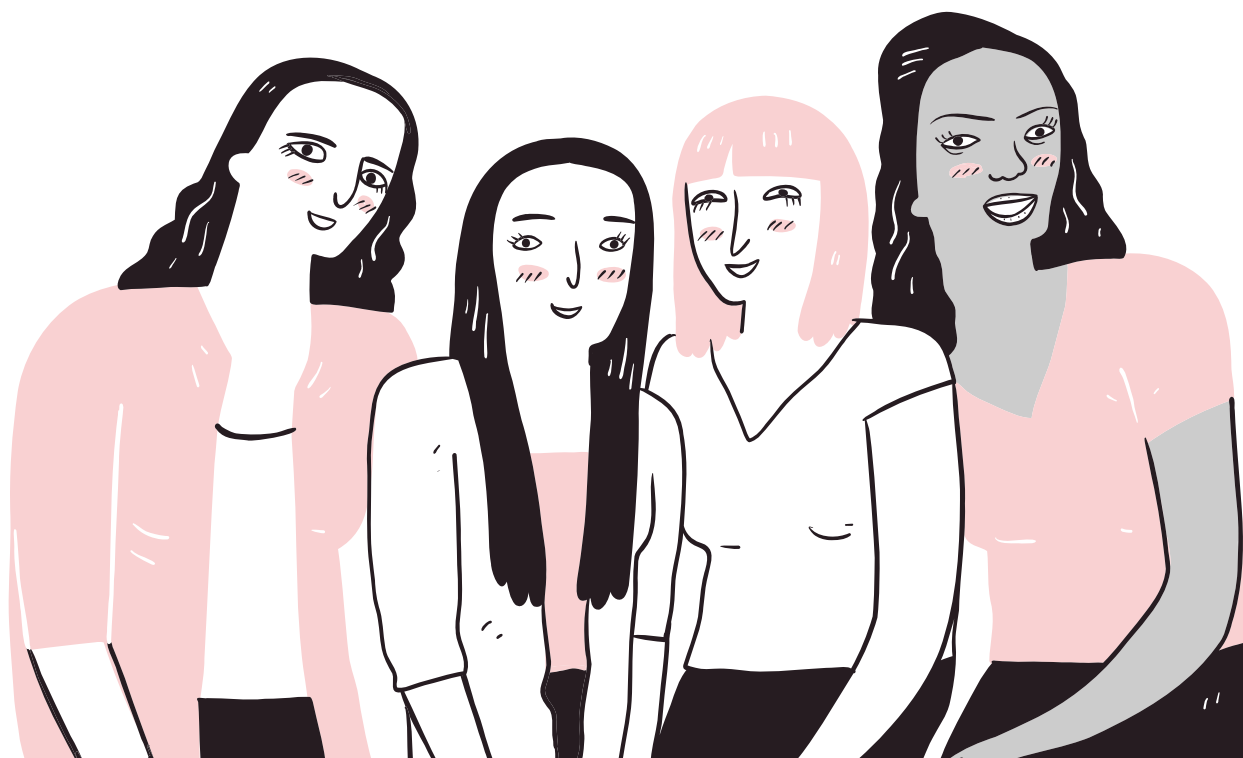
A key challenge they face is having to re-explain and relive their story and their trauma each time they enter a new class or education setting. An official acknowledgement of their status as a survivor on their school or college record would be one way to circumnavigate this very upsetting issue.

CAN YOU PROMOTE SPECIALIST SUPPORT SERVICES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES?

If government, local authorities, charities or other support services could provide relevant schools, colleges and universities with the signposting information in the aftermath of a terrorist incident this would be a fast way to reach those who've been affected.

CAN YOU TAKE EXTRA STEPS TO SAFEGUARD THOSE WHO MAY BE FEELING TRAUMATISED?

The young people involved in Bee The Difference would be keen to work with educators to develop information and advice on how education settings can best support young people affected by terror (or wider trauma) in the future."



HEALTHCARE PROFESSIONALS

HOW WILL YOU ACTIVELY LISTEN TO AND RESPECT YOUNG SURVIVORS' OPINIONS?

One of the most upsetting challenges young survivors faced was being made to feel that their opinions and feelings were not valid, on account of their age. Taking steps to ensure that children and young people are engaged in an inclusive way could make a huge difference to future survivors' wellbeing and outlook. There may be a role here for collaboration with the survivor community.

CAN GPs HELP SURVIVORS TO ACCESS HIGHLY SPECIALISED SUPPORT?

While general counselling and pastoral care worked wonders for some young people, many felt that specialist, trauma-informed support was vital. GPs can help to signpost young people to specialist care but consideration should be given as to whether the current criteria for referrals could be more inclusive of survivors' unique circumstances.

GOVERNMENT AND PUBLIC BODIES

CAN YOU HELP YOUNG SURVIVORS TO FIND THE SUPPORT ON OFFER?

Young participants have suggested that advertising campaigns and a digital hub that details all the relevant support services would be invaluable to future survivors. It would help them to find the right help at a very traumatic time.

Another consideration is whether NHS/Police data on survivors could be made available to select support services. Providing this data would require the permission of survivors but could significantly reduce the burden on young people and their families to research and seek out support.

CAN SUPPORT BE MADE AVAILABLE STRAIGHT AWAY?

Many young survivors spoke highly of the Manchester Resilience Hub and the Peace Foundation and many more acknowledged the importance of dedicated help being on hand straight away. These offer models to review and replicate aspects of for future disaster events.

CAN YOU PROVIDE SUPPORT AND RECOGNITION OVER THE LONG-TERM?

There is a need for long-term consideration and care for survivors, and in other countries steps have been taken to recognise the unique status of survivors of terror. These range from formal memorials and commemorative events, to faster access to professional support services.

From politicians and the police, to doctors, teachers, parents and carers - it is clear that almost everyone can play a part in helping children and young people affected by terrorism to receive the very best care. If you or an organisation you work with can help to make a difference please do get in touch with the team:

**beethedifference@
nationalemergenciestrust.org.uk**



HOW THE NATIONAL EMERGENCIES TRUST WILL HELP TO CREATE CHANGE



BY THELMA STOBER, 7/7 SURVIVOR, TRUSTEE OF THE NATIONAL EMERGENCIES TRUST AND CHAIR OF ITS SURVIVORS ADVISORY FORUM

Dr Cath Hill first approached us to collaborate on this project in 2021. As a member of our Survivors Advisory Forum she wanted to bring to our attention the unique needs and experiences of young survivors of terror because her experience of the Manchester attack was that these often seemed to go overlooked and underserved. This is something I had also reflected on after the 7/7 bombing.

During UK disasters the National Emergencies Trust offers the public one trusted place to donate to support those affected; whatever their age and wherever they are. We act fast to share out funds to survivors and loved ones, and also to charitable groups that can support their needs, from psychological to physical, to financial. It means all new knowledge about what these needs could be is invaluable.

It has been a privilege for our charity to work alongside Cath and the nine inspirational survivors whose courage and creativity have made Bee The Difference happen. With their stewardship and the vital contributions of so many young Manchester survivors, we have a far richer understanding of how to support children and young people in the future should the worst happen again.

We are busy planning how we can incorporate this new knowledge into our support for future young survivors, including:



Survivor information campaigns that make it as easy as possible for those affected to understand what support we, and other bodies, can offer to meet their needs - in the immediate and longer-term. These need to connect with children and young people directly, as well as with their loved ones.



Financial gifts that can help future young survivors to recover and rebuild their lives. It will be important to give them the flexibility to choose the support that is best suited to their needs, including as these needs change.



Funding for survivor-led projects following future disasters. This will take the onus off those affected to raise funds for informal support initiatives, like the Manchester Survivors Choir, which can clearly be incredibly valuable, including for young people



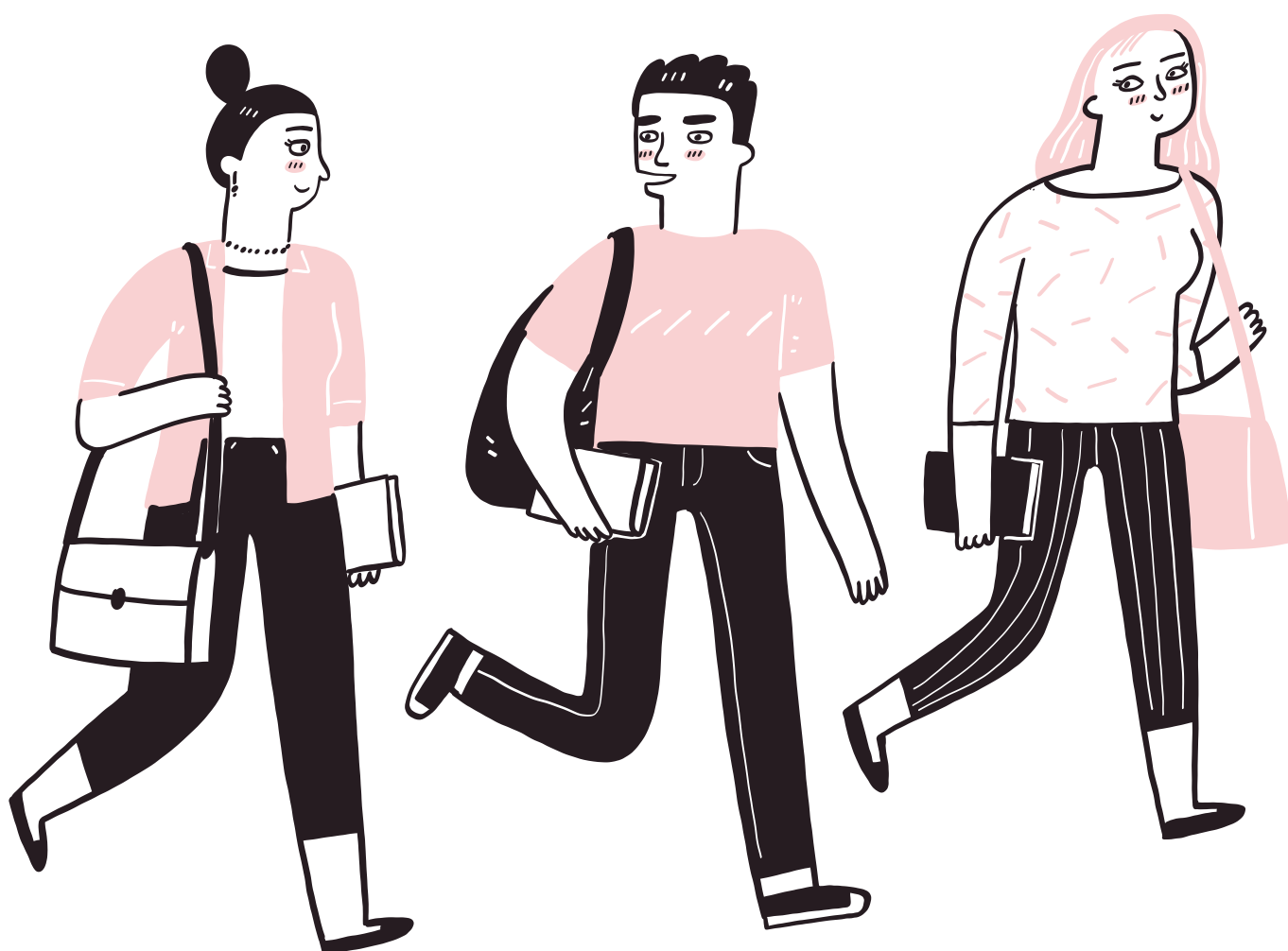
Funding for mental health specialists including those that could offer children and young people, or those that care for them, access to specialist mental health support



Building on Bee The Difference with further initiatives in collaboration with young disaster survivors. These will build on the insights from this project as well as respond to some of the opportunities highlighted by the findings

With ongoing support from our Survivors Advisory Forum, Equity Scrutiny Group and Board, we look forward to creating changes that improve outcomes for future young survivors. If you can help us to make a difference please do get in touch with the team:

**beethedifference@
nationalemergenciestrust.org.uk**



FINAL WORDS FROM THE AUTHORS



"This project is necessary because it highlights what support young victims of terrorism need if anything like Manchester happens again. It is good that our voices are being heard and we are pioneering this for our peers and other young people. It has been a big achievement and something I have been proud to be a part of." Ruby Bradbourne

"I am proud to be part of this group and it matters to me as I never want anyone to have to face the obstacles I had to. We are taking something that changed our lives in a negative way and hopefully turning it into something positive in the future should anything so awful happen again." Catherine Burke

"In the months after the Manchester Arena Attack, I, and so many other young people felt like the world as they knew it had shattered and been permanently changed. Before finding the correct support, in the darkness between the stars, one singular quote altered my outlook, gave me a flicker of faith. A quote I still hold dear to me. Oscar Wilde wrote that 'Behind every exquisite thing that existed, there was something tragic.' Through this project, we show that behind every beautiful, exquisite and courageous young person, there is a story. A story that they did not choose to write for themselves but now have to hold as their own. But now, these individual stories help in creating great change, and we cannot thank the participants enough for sharing them. My 13 year old self would be in awe of everything we have achieved through this project, and I cannot thank Cath enough for all her hard work and dedication in making this happen." Alicia Taylor



"After acts of terrorism you may assume that stable and sufficient support is easy to come by. Sadly, this was not the case for myself and many others who were struggling/ experiencing symptoms of trauma. The journey to recovery was always going to be difficult, but we never knew how challenging it would be trying to not only find the support but find help that wasn't more damaging and triggering. I had a really tough time finding the right services and people who could help me and make me feel like myself again. This project has given me hope that young survivors will never feel ignored, invalidated, and disregarded ever again. I'm so thankful to have been a part of this project, I have met some of the most amazing people and together we are hoping to change history." Ellie Taylor

"The project is so incredibly important as young people deserve to be listened to. I believe that future survivors deserve better, and therefore something must change. The positives must be maintained, and the negatives must be improved on. I am grateful to be involved in this project as I have been able to give myself a voice. I am glad that this conversation is starting and that this could be the start of change."

Ava Turner





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FOUNDING PATRONS ALCIMI**