

Ordinary Magic

IMPACT
REPORT

2024

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Ordinary Magic 2024 Impact Report



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Message from the Founder

Dear Friends and Supporters,

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the strides we have made in supporting children's mental health in Solihull. Our journey has been one of dedication, collaboration, and unwavering commitment to the well-being of our young people.

This year, we have focused on integrating our services more deeply within the community. By working closely with schools, healthcare providers, the local authority, and local organisations, we have created a robust network of support that ensures no child is left behind. Our holistic approach addresses not only the immediate mental health needs of children but also fosters an environment where they can thrive emotionally, socially, physically, and academically.

I am proud to say that our organisation is now recognised as an institution of good practice within Solihull. This recognition is a testament to the hard work and passion of our team, the trust of the families we serve, and the invaluable support of our partners and funders. Together, we have built a foundation of excellence that will continue to benefit our community for years to come.



As we look to the future, we remain committed to our mission of improving children's mental health. We will continue to innovate, advocate, and expand our reach to ensure that every child in Solihull and beyond has access to the support they need.

Thank you for being an integral part of this journey. Your support and belief in our mission make all the difference.

With heartfelt gratitude to all our supporters,

Katie Washbourne
Founding Director.

Our Mission

At Ordinary Magic, our mission is simple yet powerful: to provide children and families with the early support they need to thrive. We break down barriers to mental health access and ensure every child receives the care they deserve, when they need it most.



Resilience: Building Stronger Futures

Resilience is the key to overcoming life's challenges. We help children develop this strength by creating environments where they feel supported, confident, and empowered. Our work ensures children can bounce back from adversity and grow into their best selves.

Driving Factors behind the Mission

As a system, we are acutely aware that the mental health of our children is deteriorating overall. However, the scale of change needed to make a significant difference is still lacking. While we work from the ground up with as many children and young people as our resources allow, we recognize that sustained change must be driven from the top. To this end, we have committed dedicated time to strategy development to ensure long-term improvements.

Over the past year, we have identified several key areas of concern:

Mental Health is Underfunded and Overwhelmed

Children's mental health services are severely underfunded and saturated, creating a domino effect that overwhelms other systems such as education, youth justice, social care, and the Voluntary and Community Sector. This inability to provide timely support exacerbates the mental health issues faced by children, as highlighted in the Big Young People's Mental Health Survey (2021).

Contextual Understanding of Mental Health

Our brains, bodies, and community systems do not function in isolation. Effective support for children often involves practical assistance or indirect support through their caregivers. We must develop systems that recognize the principles of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943), understanding that a child cannot achieve psychological stability or learning without first having their basic physiological and safety needs met.

Collaborative Efforts for Holistic Care

Meaningful progress in children's mental health depends on integrated, seamless care. By working together—across services, roles, and boundaries—we create a system that places the child at its heart. Through creativity, collaboration, and cost-effective solutions, we ensure no child falls through the cracks. True change happens when we see ourselves as partners in each child's journey, aligning our efforts to achieve lasting impact.



What we Offer

Ordinary Magic are currently providing a catch all mental health and wellbeing service for children and young people who have asked for help and are unable to access it elsewhere in a timely manner. We believe that no child should feel fear, loneliness, sadness, hopelessness or desperation and not receive the help they deserve.

Week in and week out we work within the community and schools across the whole of borough providing a range of prevention, intervention and trauma support including:

Our Weekly Groups

- Anxiety Rock Climbing Group
- SEND Groups
- Parent Support Group
- Enrichment Activities

Our Targeted Interventions

- 1:1 Emotional Wellbeing Support
- Nurture Groups in Schools
- Nurture Group Support in the Community
- Family Support
- EHCP Support
- Disability Support
- Training Programs

Our Therapy Support

Ordinary Magic provides various therapeutic services, including Counseling, CBT, Play Therapy, Psychotherapy, Thera Drama, and Animal Assisted Therapy. Each child receives a minimum of 10 sessions, with the option to extend up to 18 sessions if required.

Community Support

Each year, Ordinary Magic mobilizes its team and volunteers to address identified needs within the community.



Our Impact in 2024

This year, Ordinary Magic has profoundly impacted the mental health and well-being of nearly 2300+ children and families.

Through the Reaching Communities Fund, we have delivered targeted interventions, workshops, therapy, and community events. Our dedicated team and volunteers have worked tirelessly to support vulnerable children and their families, ensuring they receive the help they need.

65%

of our children live in the top 15% deprived areas in the UK.

10

workshops have been delivered within the community to 548 children and young people.

109

children have received counselling and therapy who were identified as requiring this level of support through the Reaching Communities Grant.

38%

of our children and young people identify as having a disability or an additional need.



22%

of our children have experienced a traumatic life event.

2392

Children supported in Solihull this year. This marks a significant rise from previous years, with around 60 new referrals for support each week.

Impact Reported by Children, Young People (CYP), and Families

1 Wellbeing, Confidence, and Resilience

55%

average improvement in wellbeing for children and young people receiving Level 2 support.

28%

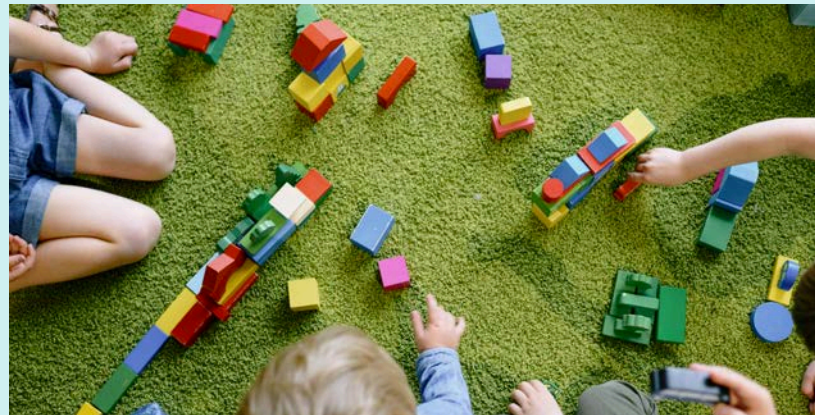
improvement in mental health for children receiving Tier 3 therapy, with most showing a decrease in distress levels.

89%

of children reported positive changes in their wellbeing. For those who showed no improvement, we referred them to other statutory services with appropriate evidence.

The support I received has been really helpful, I feel more able to cope with things and I know now I can be happy in life."

– AB Client



2. Educational Attainment and life outcomes

191 children per week

supported in community settings across the borough, making a significant impact on educational attainment and life outcomes.

92%

of children referred to us for educational and life chance concerns showed a positive difference after completing clinical scoring (YP Core Tens).

50%

of the first 10 cases tracked by Solihull Council showed significant improvements in school attendance. This tracking will continue for all cases where attendance is below 90%, focusing on long-term improvements.

Impact Reported by Children, Young People (CYP), and Families

3. Community Engagement and Connectedness:

61%

Reduction in loneliness and isolation reported by clients, showing significant improvements in their sense of community.

54%

Improvement in clients' ability to make friends and build connections, highlighting stronger social engagement.

2000+

Signposts to external services provided over the past year, ensuring clients have access to additional support beyond our organisation.

4. Supporting Parents:

100% of parents

whose children receive Tier 2 and Tier 3 services have been offered support, including weekly parenting groups, telephone advice, home visits, signposting, and advocacy.

“You have all been so helpful, honestly nothing has been a bother..... its been so nice not feeling judged and being able to ask questions. Thank you for your support 😊”

LW – parent of client

“I no longer feel alone. I've made new friends and feel more happy than I was – Thank You”.

-AB (Client)



The Development of Our Team

Our team has experienced remarkable growth, transitioning from a small to a medium-sized not for profit organisation.

This expansion has been driven by our unwavering commitment to excellence and the dedication of our team members. We are working tirelessly to ensure that this growth is managed positively, with the correct infrastructure in place to support our evolving needs. The grant we received has been instrumental in this process, allowing me, as the CEO, to focus on strategic initiatives and ensure that our expansion is both sustainable and beneficial for everyone involved. This support has enabled us to build a robust foundation here, fostering a culture of innovation and resilience as we continue to grow and thrive.

Training

Our team has had an exceptional year, significantly enhancing our skills and knowledge through a wide range of training programs. In addition to our foundational training in equality and diversity, health and safety, safeguarding, GDPR, children's mental health, first aid, food hygiene, and record keeping, we have embraced numerous specialised training opportunities. These include training in becoming a sleep consultant, domestic violence, neglect, child sexual exploitation, managing challenging behaviors, risk assessing children at risk of self-harm,



organisational safeguarding, whistleblowing, LEGO therapy interventions, counseling skills, self-harm and suicide prevention, grief and bereavement, leadership and management, supporting families in multi-agency settings, and understanding autism.

We firmly believe that the continual development of our team is crucial to ensuring we provide the highest quality of care and support to the children and families we serve. This commitment to ongoing professional growth not only enhances our expertise but also fosters a culture of excellence and dedication within our organisation and we plan to continue offering developmental opportunities in the coming years.



A 12-year-old girl, whom we'll call Emily, struggled significantly with educational-based school avoidance. Her anxiety around attending school led to frequent absences, impacting her academic progress and social development and her attendance was less than 20% when she was referred to us as a service.

A Case of Community Support

Our team implemented a comprehensive support plan to address Emily's needs. This plan included:

- **Community Activities:** We engaged Emily in various community activities to help her build confidence and social skills in a less formal setting. These activities provided a sense of belonging and enjoyment, which was crucial for her emotional well-being.
- **Emotional Wellbeing Support:** Emily received regular emotional support from our trained counselor and our emotional wellbeing practitioners helped her learn new skills. Through one-on-one and group sessions, she learned coping strategies to manage her anxiety and build resilience.
- **Family Support:** Recognising the importance of a supportive home environment and how stressful it can be both emotionally and financially when your child is not at school we worked closely with Emily's family. We provided them with resources and guidance to better understand her challenges and how to support her effectively as well as helped with referrals and signposting to other agencies for support.
- **Multi-Agency Liaison:** We coordinated with multiple agencies, including her school, healthcare providers, and community and voluntary organisations in her area, to ensure a holistic approach to her support. This collaboration was vital in creating a consistent and supportive network around Emily and her family.

We are incredibly proud of Emily's progress. She has successfully returned to school on a part-time timetable, allowing her to gradually reintegrate into the academic environment. Additionally, Emily continues to participate in our community activities on a weekly basis, maintaining her connection with peers and support networks.



Alex, a bright and energetic 9-year-old, faced a devastating loss when his mother passed away unexpectedly. This tragedy left Alex struggling with profound grief, which significantly impacted his ability to concentrate and perform at school. His father, John, was also deeply affected, grappling with his own grief and mental health challenges. The family dynamic changed drastically, with both Alex and John finding it difficult to manage daily routines and responsibilities.

Case Study: Navigating Grief and Rebuilding Life

Our team implemented a comprehensive support plan to address Alex's needs. This plan included:

Challenges in Detail

- 1. Emotional Struggles:** Alex dealt with intense sadness, anger, and isolation, while John struggled with anxiety and depression, leaving him unable to support Alex effectively.
- 2. Academic Decline:** Alex's grades dropped, and he became disengaged at school. His attendance was inconsistent, further impacting his progress.
- 3. Disrupted Routines:** Household stability deteriorated. John, overwhelmed by grief and practical responsibilities, found it difficult to maintain structure for Alex.

Key Interventions

- 1. Grief Therapy:** Individual and family therapy allowed Alex and John to better express and understand their grief. Alex found comfort in a peer support group, while family sessions improved their communication.
- 2. Practical Support:** A Family Support Worker helped manage finances, service provider transitions, and funeral costs. The school offered tutoring and adjusted deadlines to support Alex's learning.
- 3. Community & Family Support:** Friends and extended family provided practical and emotional support, while participation in local community events helped the family build new connections.

Outcomes:

Therapy helped Alex build emotional resilience and reconnect with his peers, while John became more present and engaged. Alex's school performance improved with continued academic support, and household routines became more stable. The family stepped down from Tier 3 support and now benefits from ongoing Tier 1 and 2 services, including school support, community activities, and regular family events. Together, Alex and John have found healing, stability, and renewed hope for the future.

The Reality of Mental Health Challenges in Solihull: Areas for Improvement

The 2024/2025 outcomes framework for children in Solihull has highlighted that we still have a long way to go.

Prevalence of Mental Health Issues

The framework highlights that a significant number of children and young people in Solihull experience mental health challenges. This includes anxiety, depression, and behavioural disorders and that for primary aged children as a local authority area we have the most prevalent mental health issues for primary school children out of 14 local authorities in the West Midlands.

Access to Services

There has been lots of ongoing efforts to improve access to mental health services for children and young people. However, challenges remain in terms of waiting times and availability of specialised support due to the sheer volume of children and young people in Solihull who are struggling with their wellbeing.

Impact of Socioeconomic Factors:

Children from disadvantaged backgrounds are more likely to experience mental health issues. The framework emphasises the need to address these inequalities to improve overall mental health outcomes.

Areas for improvement:

Early Intervention:

Early Intervention: The framework stresses the importance of early intervention to prevent the escalation of mental health problems. This includes providing support in schools and community settings – at present we see 191 children in a week in over 80 locations across the borough.

Integrated Care

There is a need for better integration of mental health services with other health and social care services to provide comprehensive support for children and young people. Our project the Connected Care Network is here to make a huge difference and we are excited to be working hard with the NHS, the VSCE and SMBC to make truly integrated working a reality.

Awareness and Education

Increasing awareness about mental health issues and reducing stigma are crucial. The framework suggests implementing educational programs and community initiatives to promote mental wellbeing, this is something that Ordinary Magic has become known for and an area we are branching into more formally to help us sustain our services by trading our expertise and in turn providing more educational opportunities for CYP and their families too.



Our Growth

Being supported by the National Lottery for 3 years enabled us to sustain a service so that we could concentrate on growth. What we have learnt about growth in the first 2 years of our project is that as our team grows, so does our ability to respond to more complex needs, and this drives the need for more support.

We are very proud of what we have achieved; however, we are sombre about both the national and the local statistics which show things are getting worse, not better, with more and more children presenting with mental health needs. Ordinary Magic has decided this year to think not only at an operational level to provide support but also at a strategic level so that we can make changes to the systems children operate in. It is now time to start working on what is igniting our mental health crisis rather than solely firefighting.

After linking up with a local GP – Dr Rizwan Rafi – and consulting with professionals borough-wide over several months about how change can happen, we have helped to create the Connected Care Network. The Connected Care Network is a network of support for professionals who are working with children and young people who have complex needs. Our network works on the premise that to solve issues, true integration between professionals needs to happen and that this support requires push and pull on both sides.

Ordinary Magic have brought together a consortium of organisations and clinicians and lead on assessing the needs of children and young people locally who have been referred in by professionals who are struggling to make change for children and families. After assessing each child, we then bring together place-based resources and statutory services to provide place-based support. We do not just signpost but support the family to access each service and go back to the drawing board if the original offer hasn't worked.

We could not have led the Connected Care pilot to create systemic change without the support of the National Lottery, which has helped us sustain our core services and given us the capacity to think 'Blue Sky.' We are proud of what we have achieved here and have been recognised as an organisation of excellent practice within NHSE research. We have also won several awards in this field and have attracted interest from multiple commissioners, with whom we are in regular discussions to make our holistic way of assessing and supporting the whole child business as usual in Solihull!



We couldn't have done it without your generous support.

We are incredibly proud of the achievements made possible by our grant from the National Lottery Reaching Communities fund. Our growth, both on the ground and at a strategic level, has been substantial, making us the largest voluntary sector provider of mental health and wellbeing support for children across the entire borough.

While this progress is remarkable, sustainability during times of austerity remains a challenging topic. Ensuring sustainability through contracts has become our top priority to continue delivering essential services and support, making a real difference in the mental health and wellbeing of all children in Solihull. We are hopeful that successful continuation funding for this project will soon give us a little more time to enable our vision to become a reality.



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Solihull



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