

student
minds

Impact Report

2019/20

Contents

3

5

7

21

31

Dear Friends and Supporters,

This has been an unprecedented year, with 2020 creating many new challenges for student mental health and the charity sector.

I am a third year medical student, and a member of Student Minds' Student Advisory Committee. In March, within the space of days, I saw my university experience move online and my flatmates move back home, resulting in me spending over twelve weeks of lockdown living entirely alone, with my only social contact being through a screen.

Like all students, this was a period of immense adjustment, and not always easy.

Mental health difficulties thrive in isolation, and without the university routine and our usual support networks as students, it was to be expected that existing mental health problems might resurge, or that new ones would arise for others.

The emotional and psychological impact of Covid-19, therefore, cannot be minimised, and it is imperative that we take action to support mental health. It is tempting to think that mental health is trivial in the face of a pandemic, but the contrary is the case, and mental health is more important now than ever. We have also moved beyond the need for mere mental health awareness, and must now focus on tangible action.

I am now coming to the end of two rewarding years of being a part of Student Minds' Student Advisory Committee, one of the highlights of my university experience. It has enabled me to meet an incredible group of like-minded individuals from across the UK, and work together to try to enact change on issues that we are passionate

about. The fact that I have been asked to write this introductory letter by Student Minds' wonderful CEO, Rosie Tressler OBE, highlights how Student Minds truly values the student voice.

As we face a second wave of coronavirus, I, therefore, cannot highlight the value of Student Minds for students enough. Student mental health, too, is a national crisis and it is crucial that there is a body who lobby for the change, and support students throughout the UK. The flexibility and creativity that Student Minds have shown in their endeavours to continue to support students in this time, developing new and innovative resources to support student wellbeing and mental health such as Student Space and their Covid-hub, only further highlights the continued importance of Student Minds.

Mental health is a critical issue for students, but alongside being students, we also hold many other identities, including, but not limited to, race/ethnicity, gender, sexuality or disability status. For example, we must note the emotional impact of global events on Black students. In the upcoming year, we must, therefore, continue to talk about these critical issues, and how these intersect with mental health.

We have come a long way, but there is still work to be done, and I hope that Student Minds has your continued support.

A thank you to all the inspirational individuals who make Student Minds what it is – volunteers, fundraisers and partners. We must continue to make noise and aim to change the landscape of student mental health for the better.



Marina Politis

Student Advisory
Committee



What we do

Student Minds is the UK's student mental health charity. Our goal is to transform the state of student mental health so that all in higher education can thrive.

We support students to develop the knowledge, confidence and skills to look after their own mental health, support their peers and create change. We also work collaboratively with institutions, students' unions and other organisations involved in higher education, supporting them to take a whole-university approach to mental health. In addition to providing well-resourced mental health services, a whole-university approach recognises that all aspects of university life should support and promote positive mental health and wellbeing.

60% of students described their psychological health during the Covid-19 lockdown period as being poor or very poor.*

48% of students said they were anxious about returning to university in the new academic year.*

18% of students said they were not receiving the support they needed during the pandemic.**

Our Values



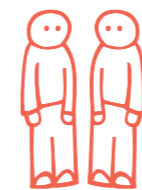
Collaborative

Teamwork and strategic partnerships help us to achieve better results.



Courageous

We are willing to challenge the status quo and be decisive to shape a better future.



Empowering

We invest in people, in the belief that they hold the key to effecting real change.



Innovative

We strive for the best solution and the highest quality, using expert knowledge and evidence.

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Like many organisations, the Student Minds team have been listening, learning and reflecting this year. We fully support initiatives aiming to recognise and combat the impact of privilege, in its myriad forms, across the charity sector. This includes Charity So White and other groups working to address racial inequalities in particular.

The tragic global events affecting Black communities this year have served as a strong reminder of the impact of racism on the wellbeing of Black students and other minority ethnicity student groups. Tackling health inequalities is, and will continue to be, one of our main strategic priorities. As well as doing this through dedicated projects such as our work with international students and on male students' mental health, we are committed to ensuring that the impact of inequalities, and intersections of inequalities, is a core consideration in every area of our work.

We recognise that there is much more to be done to ensure that our organisation is truly representative of the communities we serve, and we will continue to work diligently towards this goal.



Supporting and Empowering Students



Peer Support

What we achieved:

- We trained student facilitators to safely run peer support programmes for their fellow students with low mood (Positive Minds) or eating difficulties (Motivate Me). The groups provided students with a space to listen and talk without fear of judgement.
- Facilitators were supported by the Student Minds team, student supervisors and a clinical advisor - meaning there was always someone to turn to if difficult situations arose.
- We launched a new programme, Thrive, designed to help all students work out what good wellbeing looks like for them.
- We had to pause the rollout of Thrive due to the pandemic so we've been unable to share the course with as many students as we would have liked. Our other peer support groups sadly had to put their activities on hold in March, too.
- We're currently working on how to safely facilitate digital peer support and are looking forward to being able to get the groups going again soon!

'I know people here are willing to listen to me.'

Positive Minds peer support group attendee

What the impact was:

We worked with an external researcher to evaluate the impact of our peer support groups and learn how the groups can be improved to better meet the needs of students. We found that students were significantly more confident in their ability to look after their own mental health after attending two or more peer support sessions. They also had significantly higher wellbeing scores.

Attendees told us they appreciated being in a safe and supportive space where they could talk openly. They also benefited from meeting others with similar experiences and being able to share ideas.

'It's very easy to talk about your thoughts here.'

Positive Minds peer support group attendee

12 universities hosted peer support groups.

20 students were trained to become facilitators.

87 students attended our peer support groups.

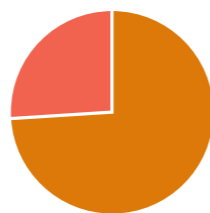
A mix of UK and international students of undergraduate and postgraduate level attended our groups.

Student status (where known):



UK Student - 51% ●
EU - 15% ●
International - 34% ●

Level of study (where known):



Undergrad - 74% ●
Postgrad - 26% ●

'I am one of the student Peer Support Facilitators within my university's Student Minds group.'

My role is to listen, to guide the conversation and encourage group discussions on possible interventions in improving mood and wellbeing; finally, to explore current issues impacting on their mental wellbeing with them.

It has helped me not only within everyday life but within my course too. My skills in communication and leadership have been developed and I now feel more confident in discussing mental health within the spectrum of wellbeing, from good mental wellbeing to low mood to crisis point. I now feel I have a toolbox in how to show empathy and best help someone in need. I now have more insight into the working of things, how to organise with fellow students and how to promote the group and sessions. Through training and discussions, I have gained new perspectives of mental health and wellbeing and how it can impact upon lives and functionality.

[Over the next academic year], I plan to continue my work as a peer support facilitator, and in my daily life continue to check up on friends and family members' mental wellbeing, bringing mental health to the forefront of conversations and doing my part in removing the stigma.'



Mae Morgan, Peer Support Facilitator.

Student Workshops

What we achieved:

- We trained university staff nationwide to run one of our two workshops for students; Look After Your Mate and Mental Health in Sport. These workshops give students the knowledge, confidence and skills to support their peers and teammates experiencing mental health difficulties, whilst making sure they are looking after their own wellbeing, too.
- We supported our existing network of trainers to run regular workshops on their campuses.
- Sadly, the closure of universities in March put our activities on pause for the remainder of the academic year. However despite this, the number of students attending our workshops increased by an incredible 149% compared to last year.
- We've since developed an online workshop, which trainers will be delivering remotely to students in the 2020/21 academic year.
- We'll also be delivering training remotely, to bring more staff at more universities into the network and reach more students. We can't wait to get the next cohort on board!

'I will feel much more confident when supporting friends who need help - I have always wanted to help friends but this has helped me know what to say because at times it can be difficult ground to tread.'
Look After Your Mate attendee

What the impact was:

When asked what they would do differently following the Mental Health in Sport workshop, the most popular answers given by students were:

- Be more aware of the signs that someone is experiencing mental health difficulties;
- Initiate more conversations;
- Listen and respond better to those who seek help;
- Be more inclusive;
- Signpost those who are experiencing difficulties to further support.

University and students' union staff at over 115 higher education institutions nationwide are now trained to deliver one of our student workshops.

Look After Your Mate

74 staff members trained, bringing our total network to 278 trainers nationwide.

1,576 students attended the workshops.

Mental Health in Sport

29 staff members trained, bringing our total network to 113 trainers nationwide.

535 students attended the workshops.

92% of students said the Mental Health in Sport workshops were useful or very useful.



89% of students said the Look After Your Mate workshops were useful or very useful.



'[I chose to work in higher education because] I had some very positive experiences as a sports club member when I was at university so providing that to others was important to me.'

The students I work with are incredibly enthusiastic and are always looking to support their peers. It's really inspiring to see the lengths they go to to make their sport an enjoyable and safe space for so many.

I got involved [with Student Minds] through my workplace. My organisation delivers the Mental Health in Sport sessions, and I was interested as I wanted to try and support our students become better equipped to support each other. I've read a lot about different mental health practices and I feel like with any subject matter, there is never a limit to the amount of learning you can do. From a personal point of view it was great to learn about some different techniques and methods of understanding that Student Minds have.

I have received really positive feedback [from the students who have attended the workshop]. The session gets to people at a really accessible level and the feedback has reflected that. No one ever seems lost or overwhelmed with the information. It seems to provide the students with a vocabulary to a set of thoughts and experiences they've all had.

[Looking forward], I have created a resource document for our Welfare Officers. This is a flow chart for the students to understand the most common issues and the different permutations that can unfold and which avenues they should pursue for each set of circumstances.'

Neal Hickey, Mental Health in Sport trainer. Neal is a Sports Development Coordinator at the Students' Union of UCL.



Men's Mental Health

What we achieved:

Through Well Lads, our men's mental health programme (funded by Comic Relief), we have empowered male students to create interventions to support other male students. With this project, we are aiming to increase the numbers of male students accessing mental health support at university, improve wellbeing outcomes and reduce stigma.

We trained 16 volunteers at three universities to run programmes of their choice. Students from the University of Manchester chose a podcast, those at the University of Huddersfield decided upon peer support groups and those at the University of Leeds focused on a tailored version of our Look After Your Mate workshop.

However, the closure of universities in March forced a change in approach. The volunteers came together to focus solely on creating a podcast, as this can be delivered remotely and have a nationwide impact. Students across the UK will be joining the programme in Autumn 2020 and the podcast will be launching in line with International Men's Day in November 2020. We can't wait to share it with you!

What the impact was:

Although the project is still in a relatively early stage, it has already benefited many other areas of our work:

- The information gathered has informed our work with students' unions and the University Mental Health Charter, providing information on the different ways male students may seek support.
- We used insight from this project to inform our volunteer recruitment and marketing to ensure that male students feel that our work is for them and is representative of their experiences. As a result, we have seen an increase in the number of male students sharing their stories on the [Student Minds Blog](#).



Spreading the word:

Our volunteers shared their experiences at the [Men and Boys Coalition](#) Annual Conference, and the project has since become formally affiliated to the coalition.

We supported several of our volunteers to talk about their mental health experiences and the project on BBC Look North.

65% of volunteers

were the first in their family to attend university.



29% of volunteers

are from Black, Asian or other minority ethnicity backgrounds.



24% of volunteers

are international students.



'I first started struggling with anxiety in my first year.'

I was very unequipped to deal with my mental health as it was not something I ever had to address or be conscious of, so I had a very hard period of coming to grips with it. I ended up in a bad cycle of not attending university, staying in my halls flat for days at a time and only socialising when I was drinking.

I was quite embarrassed and didn't want to speak to anybody. A few of my friends convinced me to go to a GP to seek advice. I was very apprehensive but eventually decided to start anti-depressants/anti-anxiety medication. However, this was at the end of the academic year and so that also became a hard experience of being on medication and living back at home, so after a few months I eventually stopped them.

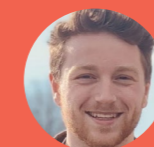
After second year I decided to go to therapy. This ended up being one of the best things for me as I finally had an opportunity and the facilities to have a more active role in my mental health and wellbeing.

I got involved with Student Minds after I saw the position advertised through the University of Leeds page and thought it would be a great opportunity. I knew it would be a really great fit as it would allow me to contribute and assist with implementing some change and input into the discussions around men's mental health.

I found that working with Student Minds has been incredibly rewarding. When I first started volunteering, I was coming to grips with understanding my own mental health and wellbeing. Through volunteering I've been able to apply my experiences in so many ways. I've learned so much from Student Minds and been given the opportunity to apply my personal experiences with mental health to help others, which itself has consequently helped me.

Working on the committee has really shown me I have an interest in communication and outreach, and helped me to narrow down the areas I'm interested in for a future career.'

Billy, Well Lads Volunteer



Digital Resources

The Wellbeing Thesis

What we achieved:

In 2020 we launched [The Wellbeing Thesis](#), a website providing specialist support for postgraduate research students, in collaboration with the University of Derby and King's College London. The site offers written and visual resources on topics ranging from [Addressing Conflict](#), to [Finding Balance Under Pressure](#), to [Overcoming Imposter Syndrome](#).



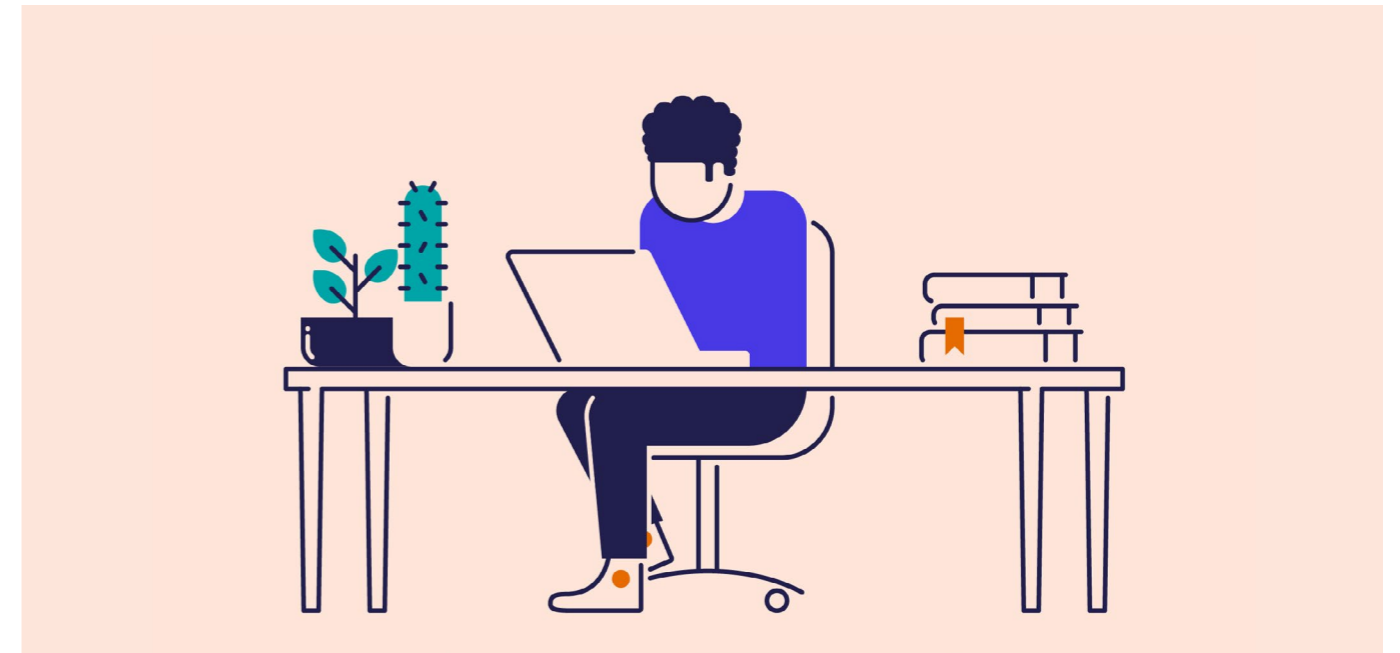
What the impact was:

Postgraduate students have told us that the site has been very helpful. They also shared that many of the issues covered reflect their experiences, and that it helps them to know that others have the same anxieties about the process.

37,500 people

viewed the site this year, with the resource [Debunking Postgraduate Research Myths](#) being particularly popular.

'I've bookmarked it to my web browser and set it to open by default every time I go on the internet to remind me to care about me!'
Postgraduate student's feedback on The Wellbeing Thesis



Support Pages

What we achieved:

When the Covid-19 pandemic hit, we immediately provided [resources](#) for students on student-specific issues such as [managing assessments and exams from home](#), created by the Student Minds team and students in our network. Over 11,000 people viewed our Covid-19 resources during the lockdown period.

In August 2020, we expanded on this support through [Student Space](#), a bespoke online platform to support students through the difficult start to the 20/21 academic year (funded by the Office for Student and the Higher Education Funding Council for Wales). As well as information and tools to help students through the challenges of Covid-19, Student Space provides access to dedicated phone, text, email and web chat support. It also helps students to find out what support is available at their place of study.

We continued to provide free resources on issues that are faced by students year-on-year. During the year, our [Exam Stress](#) page was accessed over 2,000 times

We used our social media to share these resources. With an increase in followers across all our platforms, including a 96% increase on [Instagram](#), we can be confident that more students will have been reached through this medium.

What the impact was:

We know that building health literacy and early-intervention are effective measures in preventing students from reaching crisis-point. Providing students across the country with access to free, evidenced-based and clinically-approved materials tailored towards their specific needs as higher education students - and making sure they are aware these resources exist - helps to achieve this.

The Student Minds Blog

What we achieved:

[The Student Minds Blog](#) provides tips for students on dealing with mental health difficulties and navigating university life. We empowered a team of 10 student editors to support students and recent graduates to share their stories on the platform throughout the year.

What the impact was:

Behind these numbers are thousands of students who will have identified with the bloggers' stories. They will have been given a reminder that they are not alone in their struggles, and that recovery is possible and achievable.

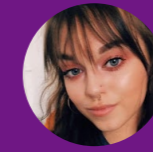
The student editorial team have gained skills in editing content, collaborative working, publicity and creative development - as well as an increased understanding of mental health.

144 inspiring blogs were published this year, with 38 in our [Covid-19 series](#).

29,000 unique users visited the blog, with 64,000 total page views.



How to start university with pre-existing mental health conditions



Kayleigh's advice on starting university with pre-existing mental health conditions is just one of many excellent blogs shared this year.

Disclose your condition to the university, sooner rather than later

The sooner that the university is aware, the sooner they are able to provide the appropriate support and organise the right adjustments for you. This can be done through your UCAS application and when you officially register with the university. It is recommended that you still disclose your condition to the university, even if you are not currently experiencing any issues, as this will save time later on. It is good to be prepared in advance!

Research the support available, both at university and in the local area

Before you start university, it can be helpful to research the support available at the university and in the local area. All universities will offer a counselling service, so it might be helpful to see how the application process works and how many sessions they offer. There will also be a mental health advisory team at your university, which provides support for students who are experiencing long term mental health conditions.

Support is also available in the local community.

Make sure you register with a local GP at the beginning of term, especially if you need to sort out any prescriptions. Your GP can also give you advice on accessing therapy as well as advising on medications. In an emergency, contact your local GP for an emergency appointment or call NHS 111 or 999.

Accessing DSA

DSA is the Disabled Students Allowance, which can be accessed through Student Finance England. DSA can help with the costs of hiring a non-medical helper, getting specialist equipment and funding travel costs. The application process requires medical evidence, and once processed it can be used to gain further support throughout your time at university. If you're struggling with the application process, don't be scared to ask the mental health team at university for help. After submitting your application, you will have an independent assessment to see what provisions can be put in place.

Remember that you aren't alone

Starting university can be scary, especially with pre-existing mental health conditions. But, it's important to remember that you are not alone.

There are lots of other students going through this same process, and many have made it through university despite their struggles. There are lots of people you can talk to including teachers, other students, friends and family. It can be helpful to keep your loved ones in the loop when you are struggling so they can offer you support.

It can be hard talking to new friends about your mental health, but you can go into as much or as little detail as you feel comfortable with. You will never be forced to talk about your experience, but it can be helpful to remember that many students have their own experience with mental health conditions, talking about this with them can help remind you that you don't have to fight this alone.

There is no right or wrong way to prepare for university. But having the support in place from the offset can make the transition to university a lot smoother. Look after yourself and remember that you are not alone. Starting university is the next chapter of your life - you can do it!

Student Voice

University Mental Health Day

What we achieved:

Every year, we can't wait to see how people will engage with and creatively support University Mental Health Day, and this year was no exception.

What the impact was:

Students openly shared their experiences, both positive and negative. This increased understanding of the impact of experiencing mental health difficulties at university.

The NHS, Department for Health and Department for Education championed the cause online on the day. Lots of other charities who share our passion for supporting the mental health of young people got involved, too.

This all helped to reach a huge number of current students, prospective students, university staff and parents across the country, and remind them of the importance of making mental health a priority at universities.

On Thursday 5th March:

67 events were registered on campuses across the UK;

Over 6,000 individuals joined the movement on social media;

25 million+ people were reached through 9,00 shared tweets, helping the hashtag to trend throughout the day.



Student Advisory Committee (SAC)

What we achieved:

We are grateful to have been supported by a fantastic team of 16 students and recent graduates from a diverse range of backgrounds and institutions this year.

The SAC met quarterly to give thoughtful and insightful feedback on various areas of our work and advised us on a number of topics, including:

- The development of our new [Student Space](#) platform, which is here to help students find the support they need during the Covid-19 pandemic;
- Our Thrive peer support programme;
- Our process for listening to students' experiences during the pandemic;
- The launch of the University Mental Health Charter.

What the impact was:

Students are experts by experience, and therefore the SAC's input has been a vital component of developing our understanding of what the current student mental health landscape is like, and what changes students want to see.

The SAC has enabled us to improve several of our projects. For example, they provided guidance on promoting the Thrive programme to students in ways that make the purpose clear, and on making the Charter accessible to students.

The Leaders Movement

- A Learning Experience

In 2019, we took a new direction in our support of student campaigners by launching The Leaders Movement. Through the movement, we aimed to empower students nationwide to be the next generation of leaders in advocating for improved mental health for students.

We launched a crowdfunding campaign with the help of student volunteers, and recruited a student organising committee.

When the pandemic hit, it soon became apparent that it would not be possible to make this movement happen in the way that we had hoped, and so we took the difficult decision to indefinitely postpone The Leaders Movement. Thank you so much to everyone who generously supported our appeal. The money you donated has been used to support our wider campaigning work.

We can't wait to apply what we learnt from this experience as we continue to support student-led activities in new and exciting ways in the future. Watch this space!

Listening

What we achieved:

When the Covid-19 pandemic began, we knew that students would face unique issues, such as being isolated in halls, entering a stressful graduate job market and having their academic studies interrupted or altered.

To be able to advocate for their interests and best provide support, we needed to get to the heart of which issues were being most commonly and deeply felt, and how the pandemic was compounding difficulties for student groups who already faced inequalities.

Between March and June we surveyed 107 students through frequent pulse surveys. We gathered their perspective on how certain issues were affecting them in that moment, the support they had received, and the impact on their mental health.

We also surveyed 128 higher education staff members to find out what they thought the impact on their own wellbeing and that of their student bodies had been.

What the impact was:

Our listening provided an evidence base that has contributed to the development and improvement of all areas of our work, from our work with higher education institutions and government bodies, to our online resources for students, to our training for university staff.

Over 1,000

external sources were analysed, bringing together a wide range of research and case studies exploring the experiences of students and young people nationwide.



Supporting the Higher Education Sector



Sector Improvement Programmes

University Mental Health Charter

What we achieved:

In December 2019, we were extremely proud to release the University Mental Health Charter - the culmination of two years of research, consultation with students and higher education staff, and collaborative analysis. Overall, the Charter has been downloaded over 2,000 times.

The Charter provides universities with guidance on how they can take a whole-university approach to mental health and wellbeing that is preventative and proactive, takes into consideration all of the factors that influence student mental health, and is beneficial for both students that engage with formal support and those who do not.

It covers a wide range of themes from transitioning into university, to pathways to external support from the NHS and beyond, to staff wellbeing, to where students live.

We held a launch event at Leeds University Union. Staff and students from across the sector were able to ask questions to an expert panel and find out how the Charter could be most useful for them. The launch was covered by BBC Look North, increasing awareness of student mental health with audiences across Yorkshire.

In 2020, we moved on to the next phase of the Charter. The Award Scheme will evaluate institutions' current practice and recognise and

reward those that promote good mental health and demonstrate best practice. This year we began pilots at three institutions; the University of Derby, Hartpury University and Glasgow Caledonian University.

100% of participants in the award scheme pilots told us that they felt able to be honest and open about their experiences.

What the impact was:

Although we can't trace the journey from our recommendations to every change that has been implemented, we do know there has been a high level of engagement with the Charter. We were delighted when staff members at the University of East London, Staffordshire University and Keele University chose to share their positive experiences with using the Charter to achieve a whole university approach at an event run by the AMOSSHE, The Student Services Organisation.

We hope that of those who have downloaded and engaged with the Charter, there will be many other professionals from across the sector who will have gone on to share the ideas that resonated most with their colleagues, and started to make changes.

Staff members at the universities involved in the Award Scheme pilots have told us that the process has helped them to reflect on their practices, to understand how their roles contribute to the overall picture, and has inspired them to make improvements.



University
Mental Health
Charter

Together
for thriving
futures



Student Engagement

We recruited a student panel whose role was to create ways to empower other students to use the Charter to create change on their campuses. The tools they have been working on will be used in the upcoming academic year. One panel member told us the experience made them more confident in sharing their opinions, whilst another told us 'I really feel like my opinions have been valued and I've helped to make a difference.'

Our Work with Students' Unions: A Whole-Union Approach

What we achieved:

We launched the pilot year of our students' union programme in 2019, working with 11 students' unions across the UK. Partner benefits included a series of network events, mentoring and tailored training programmes.

The network events were responsive to changing circumstances. An event on the topic of responding to Covid-19 was added to the programme and delivered online for partners, enabling them to share their experiences and tips with one another.

What the impact was:

Attendees of our network event on health inequalities told us that they appreciated the chance to find out what was being done by other students' unions. They also learnt about what the data tells us about different experiences, and the specific approaches likely to work for particular demographics.

Our fantastic students' union partners in 2019/20 were:

York University Students' Union
Hull University Union
Durham Students' Union
University of Westminster Students' Union
Swansea University Students' Union
Oxford SU
University of Portsmouth Students' Union
Sheffield Students' Union
Bristol SU
Liverpool John Moores University Students' Union
Leeds University Union

90% of those who attended our network event on health inequalities said that the event fulfilled the aim of providing them with up-to-date evidence on the mental health of different demographics.



'The work that Student Minds is doing with students' unions is invaluable.'

The training day I attended gave me a great insight into how to use co-production in developing a mental health strategy, and how to effectively listen to the student voice to shape it. Through the mentoring programme I have been able to utilise Student Minds expertise to develop my objective that is based around Suicide Prevention, which has been vital in ensuring our campaign is both sensitive and impactful. Not only has this benefitted my work as an officer, I have also been able to work on personal development skills such as conflict resolution, dealing with disclosures and how to build an effective officer team. I would wholeheartedly recommend working with Student Minds to any Students' Unions.'

Jess Carrier was Welfare and Community Officer at Leeds Beckett SU 2018-2020 and participated in our support programme for students' unions.

Planning for a Sustainable Future

What we achieved:

In June 2020, we released a guide for universities and students' unions on how to make mental health and wellbeing an institution-wide priority in the context of Covid-19.

This guide, [Planning for A Sustainable Future](#), has been downloaded over 250 times.

We held a [companion webinar](#), which was attended by 100 attendees from across the sector, and was streamed live on YouTube by over 150 others. We also held a separate [companion webinar](#) for students' unions, on practical steps for promoting mentally healthy universities.

What the impact was:

Many of those who attended the Planning for a Sustainable Future webinar told us that the most useful aspect was the chance to learn from others, and acquire reassurance that others were taking similar approaches.

Other attendees felt they learnt vital information about the importance of co-production with students and developed a further understanding of a whole-university approach to wellbeing. Some found the reminder that there is no typical student useful, whilst others appreciated the insight into the additional issues that certain groups of students, such as Black students, have faced.

Over 60%

of attendees told us they would put actions into place following the webinar. The most common response was that they would share their learning with colleagues, whilst others said they would incorporate more co-production with students or develop their internal processes.

*"A brilliant session from @StudentMindsOrg on "Planning for a Sustainable Future: the importance of university mental health in uncertain times". Absolutely vital for all of us working in HE; thank you to the amazing panel for their wealth of experience and expertise."
- @ViannaRenaud*

Accommodation Training

What we achieved:

Accommodation staff can often be the first point of contact for students in distress, and without training it can be difficult to know how to respond. This year we provided our Introduction to Student Mental Health in Accommodation Settings training for staff at two student accommodation providers.

The training equips staff to notice signs and symptoms of poor mental health and wellbeing. It also provides them with the knowledge and confidence to engage in a conversation about mental health difficulties and to signpost students to further support.

'[After the training, I will] actively discuss mental health with my colleagues [and] ask residents what we can do to assist and support them with their mental health and wellbeing.'

Introduction to Student Mental Health in Accommodation Settings training attendee

What the impact was:

Staff members from one organisation we worked with this year reported a 70% increase in their knowledge of student support services after the training.



Policy and Advocacy

What we achieved:

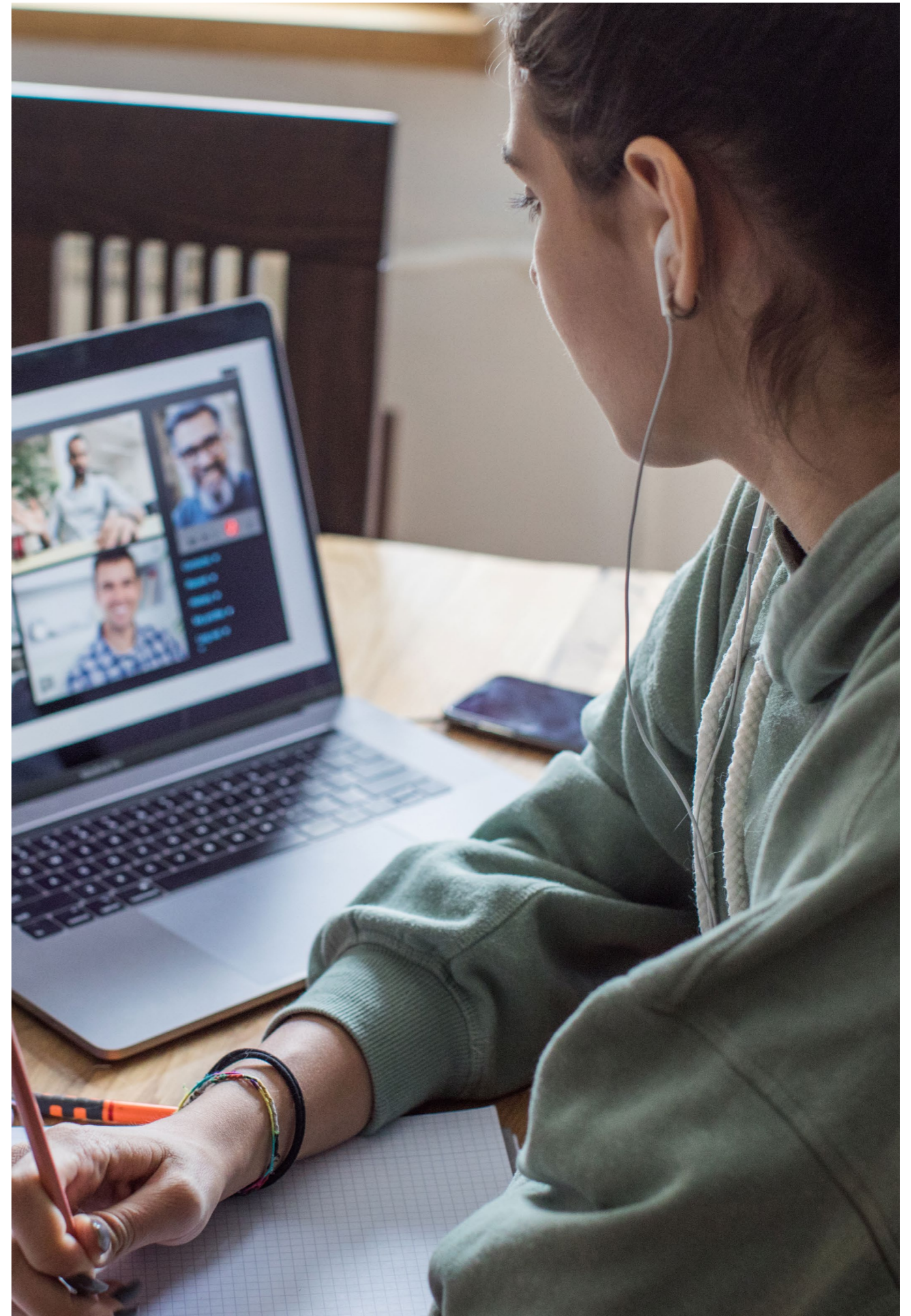
One of our key priorities is to use our insights to advocate for the interests of students at a national level. Some highlights from this year are as follows:

- We opened a ministerial roundtable on student accommodation in October 2019, demonstrating the relationship between a student's accommodation and their mental wellbeing.
- We attended the SMaRteN (Student Mental Health Research Network) conference in December 2019, with a keynote speech from our CEO, Rosie Tressler OBE. Our team also co-led sessions on intersectionality in student mental health and the University Mental Health Charter.
- In January 2020 we opened the inaugural meeting of the All-Party Parliamentary Group for Students, talking about the University Mental Health Charter.
- We joined the SMaRteN Student Team's training in February 2020, delivering a session on the latest developments in student mental health policy.
- Our CEO attended 10 Downing Street for a roundtable event on young people's mental health.
- Findings from our thematic analysis and listening work into the impact of Covid-19 on students in higher education were shared with the Department for Education and the Office for Students in Spring 2020.

- We contributed to the Office for Students' briefing note on student mental health in the Covid-19 pandemic.
- We contributed to UCAS' review of the clearing process for disabled students.
- We shared our insights with national media organisations, including contributing to a [VICE](#) article on permanent student withdrawals due to poor mental health. We also wrote a blog for [Wonkhe](#), explaining the University Mental Health Charter and how it could be used by students and staff across the sector.
- We also supported students to share their tips on long-distance friendships at university with [BBC Bitesize](#), and on starting university as an introvert with [The Guardian](#).

What the impact was:

Our insights have been gained through extensive work listening directly to students, university staff and clinical professionals, and collating research being done across the sector. In our policy and advocacy work, we have therefore acted as an amplifier of students' and university staff members' voices. We have ensured that they have reached those with widespread influence and responsibility for creating national change.



Collaborative Projects

What we achieved:

Working with other organisations enables us to share our expertise and insight to create better outcomes for all. This year we've been involved in several multi-year projects with external partners.

Eating Disorders Audit

We are working with King's College London and First Steps on an audit looking at the provision of care for students with eating disorders at universities across the UK, funded by GlaxoSmithKline. In April we held the first expert panel for the audit, which brought together academics, clinicians and experts to discuss the impact of experiencing eating disorders at university.

Office for Students Challenge Competition

We are involved in three projects as part of the Office for Students' Challenge Competition to achieve a change in mental health outcomes for all students. In these projects, the role of Student Minds is to ensure student involvement and bring the expertise in co-producing interventions with students. This is important because students bring meaningful and unique insight when they are involved in the creation of strategies to support their wellbeing. You can find out more about our approach to co-production in our [Co-Production Guide](#) (2019).

The projects we are involved in are as follows:

- **International Student Mental Health – Good Practice Guidance and intervention case studies.** This project aims to discover what interventions and practices work best in supporting international students' mental health and to develop a toolkit to support institutions. It is being led by University of Nottingham in partnership with University of Nottingham Students' Union, SOAS (The School of Oriental and African Studies) and SOAS SU, University of Leeds and Leeds University Union, and Campus Life.
- **Student Mental Health Partnerships.** The project aims to improve efficiency of partnership working between universities and the NHS locally, and between regional partnerships and the national level. It is led by University of West England, in partnership with University of Bristol, University of Sheffield, University College London, Imperial College London, University of Manchester, University of Liverpool, Universities UK, NHS England and NHS Confederation Mental Health Network.
- **Education for Mental Health: Enhancing Student Mental Health through Curriculum and Pedagogy.** This project will create an online toolkit for academics that provides evidence-informed guidance on creating curriculum and assessments that facilitate better student mental health while improving educational outcomes. It is being led by University of Derby, in partnership with Kings' College London & SMaRteN, Aston University and Advance HE.

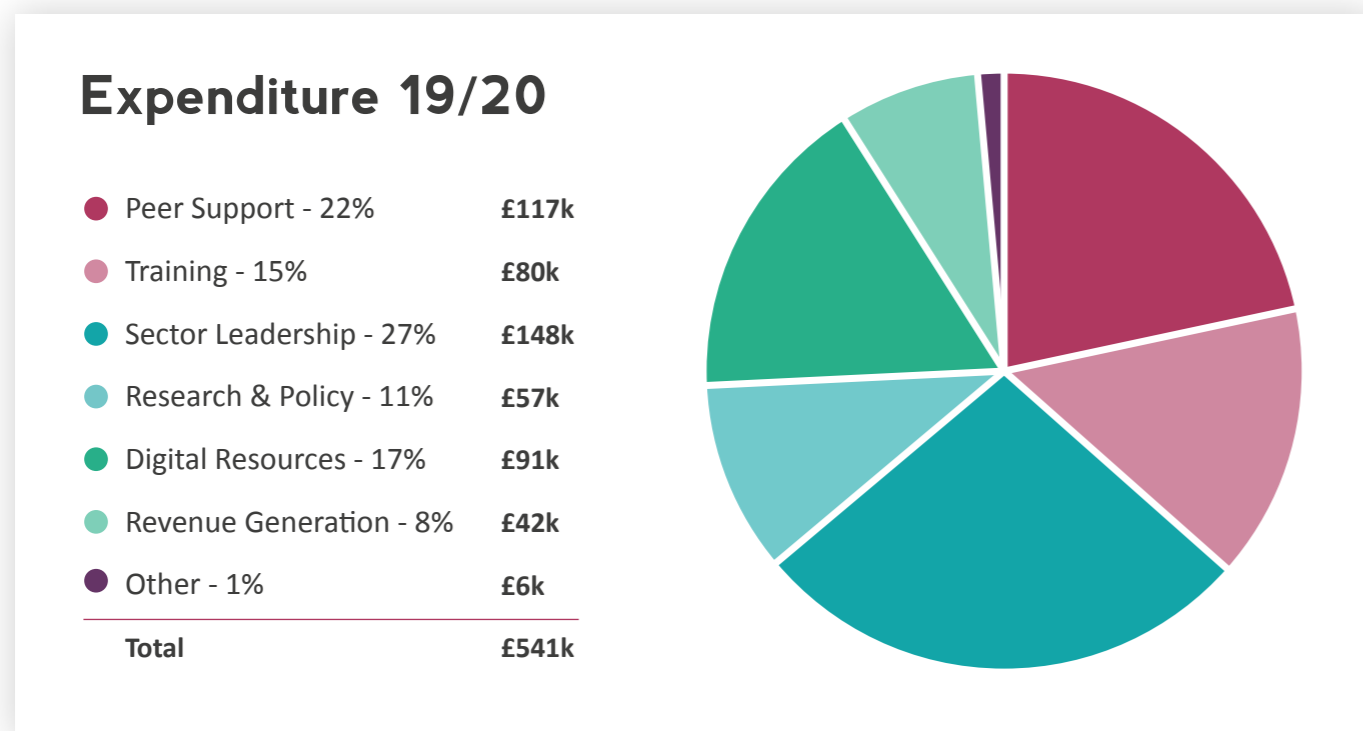
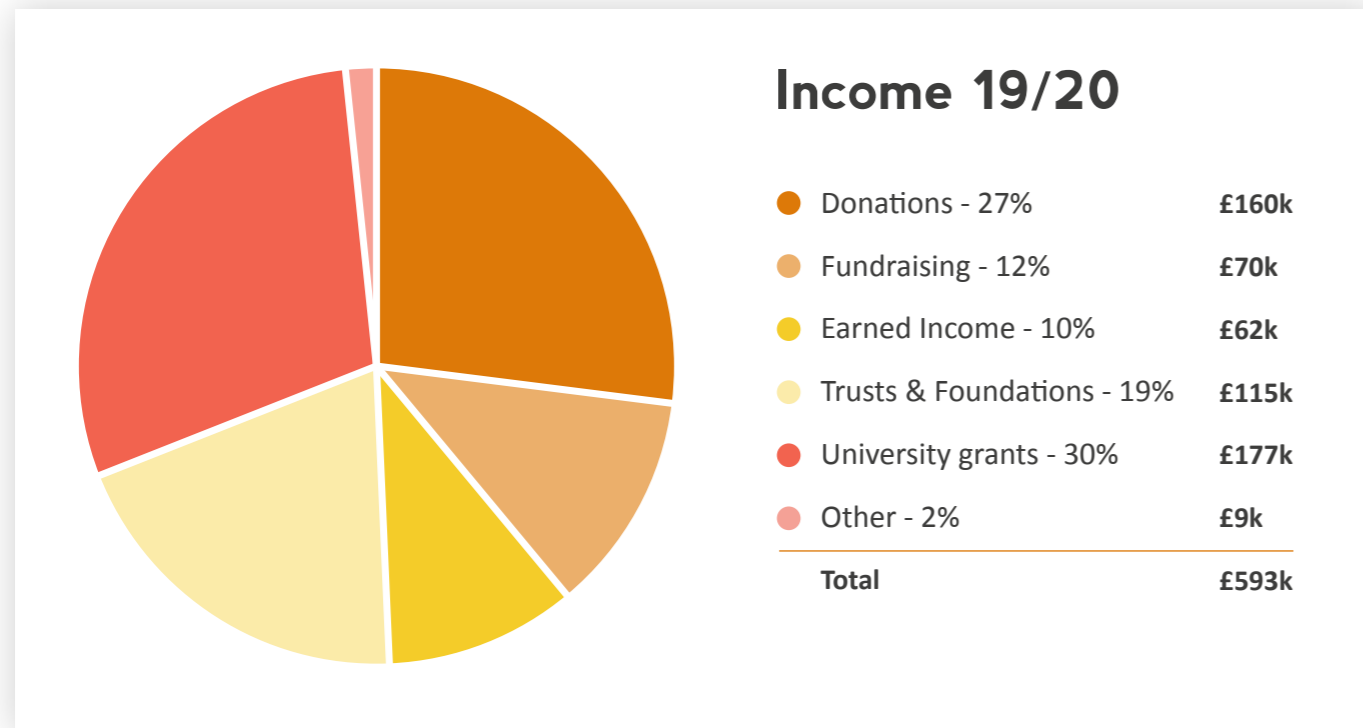
What the impact was:

These projects are all ongoing and will continue over the year ahead. We look forward to updating you next year on the impact they have!

Finances



Finances



These are provisional unaudited figures. The final figures will be published in our Trustee's Annual Report and Accounts for 2019 - 2020.

Thank you

Thank you to the following organisations and groups who donated to, fundraised for and partnered with Student Minds in the 2019/20 financial year:

Derwent FM
Property Week
Scape
The Student Energy Project
ASK4
Host
Split the Bills
Red Brick Research
Unite Students
Rooms4U
Fusion Students
Recognised
Outgoing
CRM Students
Consortio Security
Invasion
UniHomes

GlaxoSmithKline
Comic Relief
Office for Students
The AIM Foundation
The Matthew Elvidge Trust
Ambrose and Ann Appelbe Trust
Sandra Charitable Trust
UPP Foundation

The University of Newcastle and Newcastle University Students' Union and
Sheffield Hallam University
University of Leeds

Bristol RAG
Carnival RAG (University of Birmingham)
Exeter RAG
Durham University Walk On Fashion Show
St George's Day Club

Thank you also to all the individuals and student societies who have generously donated your time and money to Student Minds this year - you are the fuel that keeps Student Minds going. We were particularly inspired by Barry Murphy's Channel Splasher, raising an incredible €5,000 for Student Minds. You can read about his epic journey across the English Channel on the [Student Minds Blog](#).

Please see our [website](#) for an up-to-date list of current funders.

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