



# **Our impact 2017-18**

Eating disorders are serious mental illnesses: anorexia, bulimia, binge eating disorder, other specified feeding or eating disorders.

At least 1.25 million people in the UK suffer from an eating disorder.

Eating disorders do not discriminate, and can affect anyone of any age, gender or background.

There is no one single cause of an eating disorder: genetic, biological, psychological, social and environmental factors combine in their development.

On average, people wait three years before seeking treatment for their eating disorder.

Once treatment starts, the average person will be caught in a cycle of relapse and recovery for six years.

Eating disorders cost the economy £16.8 billion per year, including £4.6 billion to the NHS.

Anorexia has a higher mortality rate than any other mental illness.

34% of the UK's population cannot name a single symptom of an eating disorder.

Full recovery is possible. The sooner someone gets the treatment they need, the more likely they are to make a fast and sustained recovery.

### Beat is the UK's eating disorder charity.

Our purpose is to end the pain and suffering caused by eating disorders. We do this by working directly with sufferers and their families, and by using that experience to highlight the challenges they face and campaign for change.

Our vision is a society where people with eating disorders experience care and understanding, and where they can quickly access treatment that supports a rapid and sustained recovery.

### Our core goals are that by 2021:

1. We will be directly helping over 60,000 people every year.
2. We will achieve measurable political and practical change that makes real differences to people affected by eating disorders.
3. The UK public will understand the harm caused by eating disorders to both sufferers and their families.

# 2017-18 Highlights

17,802

people supported by phone, email, message boards, social media, one-to-one webchat and online support groups.



919,831

visits to [beateatingdisorders.org.uk](http://beateatingdisorders.org.uk).



17,573

people joined our campaign to improve treatment for people with eating disorders.

212

education professionals trained as 'Eating Disorder First Responders'.



- the average time between falling ill and starting treatment, according to Beat's research.

98%

increase in visits to our webpages about binge eating disorder.



175

Beat Ambassadors spreading hope of recovery at

417

events.

Over

600

participants at Beat conferences.

A record-breaking

£45



raised by people running, jumping, shaving, baking, climbing, cycling, crafting and generally socking it for Beat.

2

political debates in Westminster and Holyrood.

# Contents:

Key messages	Pg 02
2017-18 Highlights	Pg 03
Contents and welcome	Pg 04-05
Directly supporting those affected by eating disorders	Pg 06-09
Our work in focus: empowering and supporting carers	Pg 10
Changing government policy and healthcare practice	Pg 11-13
Ending stigma and increasing awareness and understanding	Pg 14-17
Our work in focus: working in localities	Pg 18
Funding our work and thank yous	Pg 19-21
Can you support us?	Pg 22-23



# Thank you – you're incredible

For me, the highlight of 2017-18 was when I found myself on a podium giving the closing speech at Beat's conference for carers and frontline health professionals. I was trying to pay tribute to the huge energy and enthusiasm that had been evident over the previous two days. And I was completely failing – partly because I couldn't find the words to express my admiration both for the conference participants and for Beat's staff, but mostly because the emotion got too much.

You – Beat's supporters and beneficiaries – are truly amazing. You have to cope with so much as eating disorders pull your lives apart, yet you still have the energy to drive Beat forward and help shape our work to bring closer an end to the pain and suffering of these terrible illnesses.

On the back of that conference, we started a new phase in Beat's strategy. The jargon calls it co-production – it means that we are in this together. Nobody knows better than the people directly affected by eating disorders what Beat should be doing, so we started a new conversation with you. Over 550 people have taken part so far, and you can see their views starting to shape Beat's future as you read this report.

We've also worked together on Beat's new logo and the new look to our publications, while groups of Beat supporters are shaping our campaigns, developing new services and promoting local action.

You'll also read in this report about the shocking results of our investigation into the delays experienced before people start treatment, which made us ever more determined to bring about the political and social changes needed so that nobody has to wait years before they start getting better.

While we're pleased that our Helpline helped two times more people this year than last, we know that it's not enough. So we're aiming to help an additional 20,000 people in the year ahead.

And while you like the leaflet we've created to make sure people get a referral when they go to their GP, you've also told us that too many bad decisions are being taken about you and your loved ones, denying you the treatment or involvement that you have every right to expect. So Beat will soon launch a service that helps people challenge and change bad decisions.

So I'm pleased with the impact that Beat has had over the past year, and I hope you'll value reading about it in this report. And, like you, I know that so much more is needed – more change, more funding, more research, better support. The good news is that, together, we are on our way.

**Andrew Radford, Chief Executive**



# Beat's services used 27,439 times to support eating disorder recovery

## Highlights:

1. Over 17,000 people found support through our telephone and online helpline services to empower their recovery.

2. The addition of one-to-one webchat and direct messaging via social media gave sufferers more options to access support.

3. Three online peer support groups now run every day for individuals and carers supporting a loved one.

## Two extra services to support 17,802 people, including the most isolated

In 2017-18, Beat helped 17,802 people, almost double the number we helped the previous year. Demand for our support continues to grow: in April 2017 we supported just over 900 people, but by March 2018 this had grown to over 2,100 people – a 136% increase. In total, we helped people on almost 27,500 different occasions, where service users used our telephone and online support to guide and reassure them through the often bumpy path into treatment and towards recovery.

A key part to this success has been the introduction of new ways to contact the Helpline online. Recognising that reaching out for support for your eating disorder can be daunting, we made the Helpline service available through social media direct messaging and one-to-one webchat. By opening these new channels, we reach people who haven't previously been likely to contact us. Many people report that communicating in this way is easier or safer than picking up the phone. So, for example, 38% of people contacting us via webchat were talking about their experiences of binge eating disorder, compared to 20% of all service users.

Our 'BeatEDSupport' Twitter and Instagram accounts have more than 2,000 followers, and to date we have run nearly 1,600 support sessions through direct messages on social media. Our one-to-one chat opened its doors in 2018, and allows people to talk via webchat to a Beat-trained Helpline advisor.

# 17,802

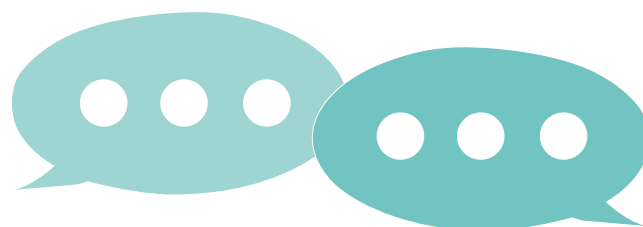
people supported by the Beat Helpline

# 1,592



people using direct messages through social media to directly access support

Through our Helpline services, people affected by eating disorders can share their experience with others, reducing isolation through peer support. In May 2017, we started to run an online peer support group every evening of the week. In the first month we saw 55 people accessing the service a total of 72 times; in March 2018 that number had grown to 280 people and a total of 639 sessions.



# 2,249

one-to-one webchat sessions run

# 4,923

## visits to our online support groups

" I love this group! You help me to feel so much less alone and isolated in terms of my eating disorder. I'm so grateful for the huge benefit of the empathy and mutual support that I find here. "

*Nightingale (binge eating) group participant.*

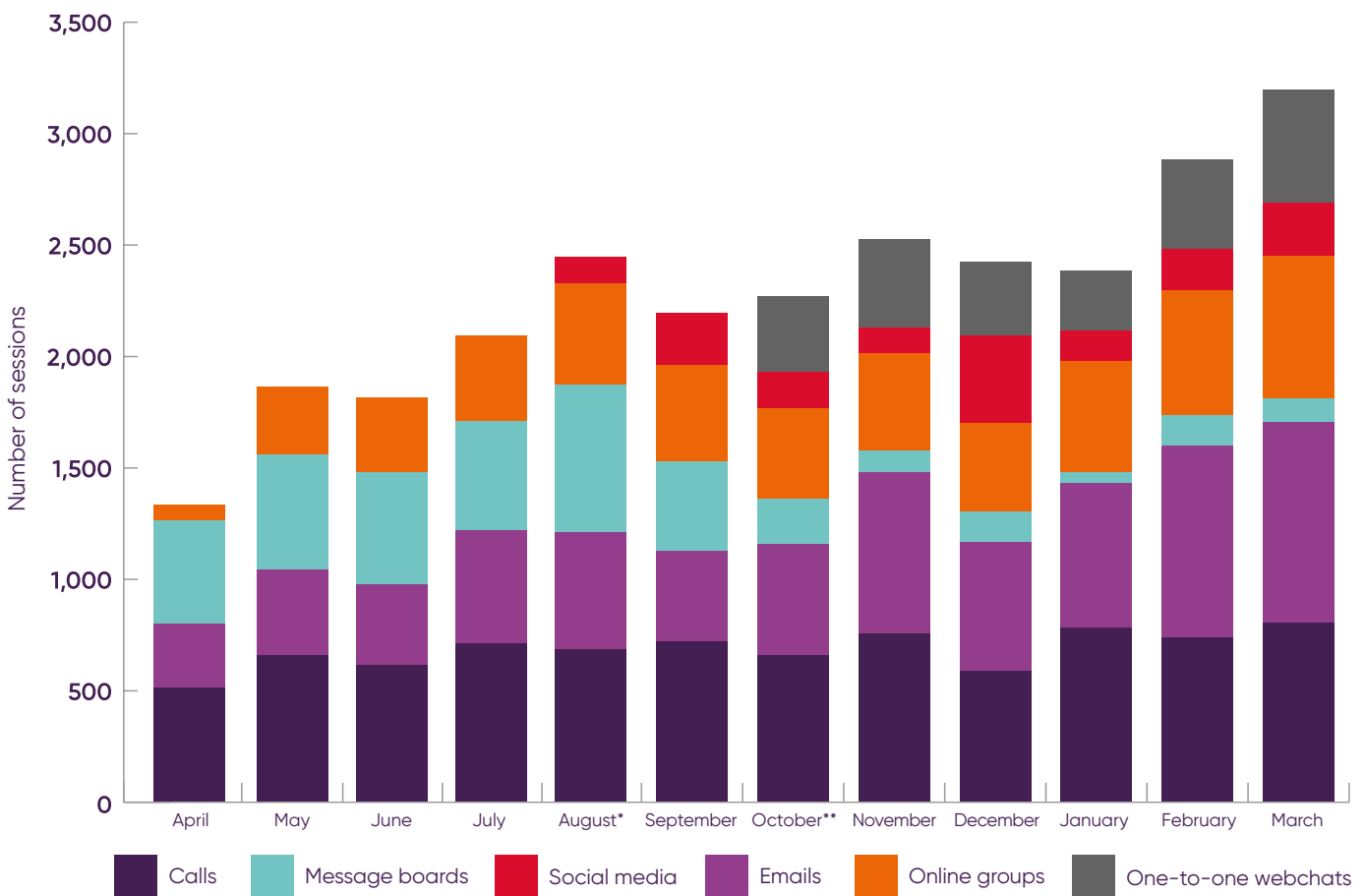
" I think I've just found a way to help me feel less alone and that positivity is such an empowering thing. "

*Swan (anorexia) support group participant.*

" It was great to join in the chat last night and hear from some truly amazing individuals. It made me feel so much less alone, and more positive about the prospect of continuing recovery. I look forward to chatting again next week. "

*Phoenix (under-18s) group participant.*

## How and when Beat's services were accessed in 2017-18



\*In August, we opened our 'BeatEDSupport' Twitter and Instagram accounts, giving people the opportunity to message our Helpline team directly through these channels as well as direct messages on Facebook.

\*\* October saw the introduction of our one-to-one webchat function.

We would like to take this opportunity to give particular thanks to the generosity of the Garfield Weston Foundation which has had a huge impact on the transformation of our Helpline services and to ASOS for their continued funding of our online peer support groups.



# Knowing I might have made a difference is an incredible feeling

Supporting the most isolated on Beat's new one-to-one webchat service.

Sarah has been volunteering with Beat on our one-to-one webchat service since January 2018 while she completes a degree in psychology. She spoke about her role and her experiences of supporting people affected by an eating disorder:

"Working alongside the Beat Helpline as a volunteer responding to one-to-one webchat requests has been hugely fulfilling. Knowing that I might have made a difference to that person at the other side of the screen is an incredible feeling.

"The chats I've been involved in have been a real mix of experiences, but one thing that sticks with me is the isolation people experience – when I ask if they have anyone to talk to, it's not unusual for them to tell me that their family and friends can't understand what they're going through. I can't imagine how difficult it would be for someone who doesn't feel like they have that network close to them.

"There's one webchat in particular that I will carry with me forever. It was with a lady who was really struggling – she had been put on a waiting list after seeing her GP and she was finding it hard to cope. She'd taken the decision to find some treatment privately, but the cost was starting to take its toll. I was able to tell her about some of the other services that Beat could offer while her name got to the top of the waiting list, like our message boards and online support groups, and I used Beat's HelpFinder directory to find a free face-to-face support group within travelling distance of her home.

"Our conversation felt so natural – this lady was able to really talk about how she had been feeling, and without this service being here, she might not have been able to do that. It wasn't until the end of the conversation when she said, 'Thank you, you don't realise how much that's helped me' that it really sunk in: the reason why she could go away feeling so much more positive about her next steps was because this service had been there for her when she needed it."

We have secured some funding to recruit, train and manage even more digital volunteers like Sarah to support people through one-to-one webchat, email and online support groups, and will look to increase this funding in 2018-19 so we can help even more people who need us.

Thank you so much for your help – what a wonderful resource this is. Take care too and thank you.

Adult service user via one-to-one webchat.

This chat has really helped – thank you! I understand what you're saying – making that step and going to the doctor is going to be hard.

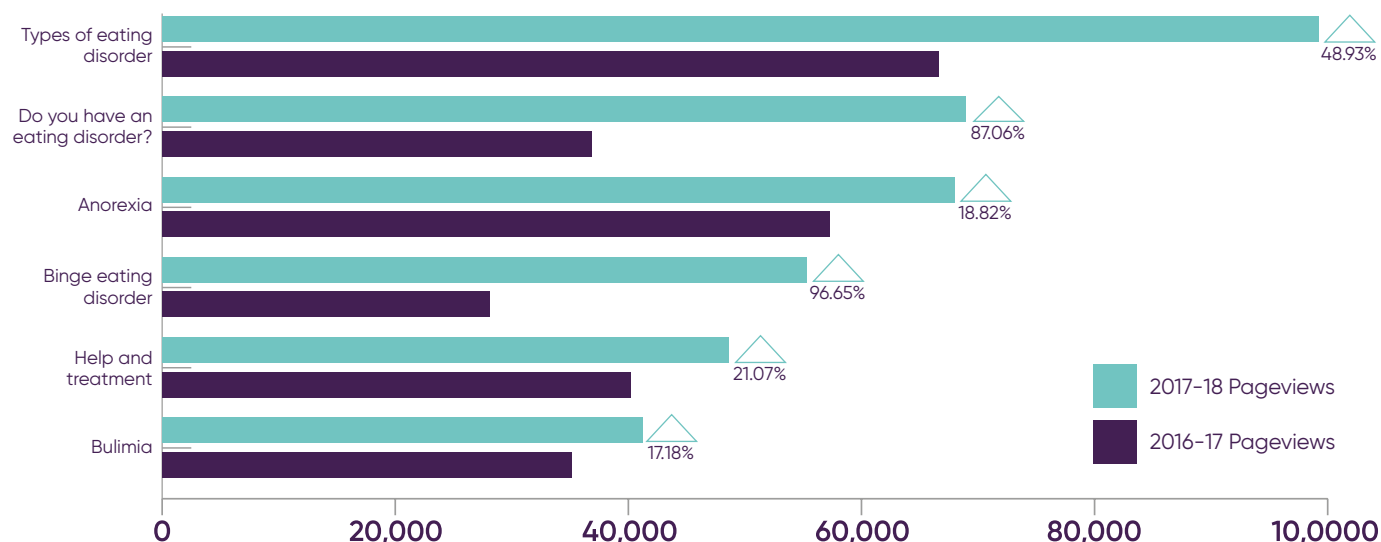
Under-18s service user via one-to-one webchat.





# Helping people to understand their eating disorder

In October 2017, we launched a new website with increased and refreshed content about eating disorders. With our newly designed pages appearing at the very top of internet search results, over 615,000 users have visited our pages 919,831 times in the past year, 35% more than in 2016-17. As well as people reading about their own eating disorder, our pages for loved ones supporting someone in their recovery are accessed regularly.



**35%** increase in the total number of visits to Beat website

**98%** increase in the number of times people read about binge eating disorder

**99,236** visits to our 'types of eating disorder' page

Website users worried about their loved ones visited the 'How to talk to someone' page

**17,305** times.

Thank you so much for all the information – I really appreciate the guidance for me and my husband too.

Via email

I love your new website; it's given me such hope for recovery.

Via Twitter

## What's next? In 2018-19 we aim to:

Support 29,000 people through our telephone and online support services, increasing to 37,000 if we can fully fund our goal of recruiting 200 digital support volunteers.

Develop and launch 'Echo', a telephone peer coaching programme, with at least 25 volunteer coaches supporting 25 carers in a pilot phase, before we roll this out nationally.

Begin to provide an advocacy service, guiding and supporting people to challenge decisions when they are denied the treatment or information they should reasonably expect.

# Our work in focus: empowering families to support recovery

Eating disorders devastate families. It is difficult to comprehend the pain they must go through as they watch loved ones wrestle with their eating disorder, not knowing how to support them or how to stop the eating disorder from taking hold.

In 2016–17, we focused our work on intervening early, concentrating on the very first signs of eating disorders and empowering people to seek treatment quickly. We have come a long way but, on its own, this is not enough. So this year, we added a new strategy line, focusing on empowering families to support recovery.

The new strategy recognises how family members can be key in recovery, and how they represent a huge untapped resource that, if fully supported, can enhance treatment outcomes: promoting faster recovery, maintaining positive behaviours, and helping prevent relapse.

## Direct access to support services

17% of all contacts to our Helpline are from people supporting others. As well as being able to talk to our Helpline Advisors, they can find peer support in our online support groups where family members can get together to share experiences and talk about successes and ways to overcome challenges. Soon we will be adding a new project called Echo, where parents will be coached via telephone by another parent who has supported their loved one through recovery.

**1,700** carers contacted our Helpline

**3** online support groups for families every week

"I rang today for advice for my little boy who is in recovery with anorexia. The lady I spoke to was calm, helpful and lovely. Thank you; it has really helped."

*A carer via phone.*

"Positive support and mutual care. Just knowing other mums are out there feeling the same, doing the same, trying the same. It's so good we can listen and support each other."

*Blue Jay (for mums) group attendee.*

## Welcoming Carer Ambassadors to the programme

In 2017–18, we opened our Ambassador programme to carers (read more on pages 14 and 15). They have spoken passionately at events, helped gain media coverage for eating disorders, and campaigned to improve services. Sian told about her experiences as a Beat Carer Ambassador:

"My daughter was diagnosed with anorexia five years ago, aged 16, during her AS exam year. We became very involved in her treatment because despite medical recommendations to admit her to hospital, the nearest available bed was over 400 miles away from our home.

"Every day we would support her through her meal plan of three meals and snacks a day. It was painful watching her struggle. I worried about every detail and, at the beginning, felt that I needed detailed advice on everything, which wasn't easy to find. It was bewildering and frightening.

"We found support in a family group at the clinic. I'm a real believer in peer support and the group was a real relief; I felt like my life was just too bizarre to explain to someone who wasn't going through the same thing!

"Once my daughter had recovered, one of my main reflections was that there must have been a better way to cope with what had happened. I thought there must be something I could do to help. I came across Beat and the Carer Ambassador programme. Being able to give my time as an Ambassador, to let people know that they aren't alone and that there is hope for recovery, is really important to me.

"One of my first experiences of the Ambassador role was giving one of a series of talks at Sky's Headquarters. Only afterwards I realised the impact I'd had when I was approached by people with significant concerns about those they knew and loved. Since then, I've given a further talk followed by a Q&A with a group of carers, responded to consultations about clinical policy, and campaigned with Beat.

"In my experience, it's the family that is best placed to help the person get well again. On her own, my daughter didn't have the strength, to fight this thing that was taking her over, to drown out her anorexia voice, but once we knew how, we could help. I'm looking forward to helping Beat empower families to support recovery in the future."

# Changing government policy and healthcare practice

## Highlights:

1. Published research exposing the shocking delays people experience before starting treatment.

2. Increased pressure on Government to act, including two parliamentary debates.

3. Beat supporters took almost 40,000 campaign actions calling for change.

All too often, the thousands of individuals reaching out to our Helpline tell us about their struggle in finding timely, high-quality treatment close to their home. We've used these experiences to identify areas where changes in government policy and healthcare practice would make a significant difference to our beneficiaries, giving them faster access to better treatments. We want to ensure:

- Anyone seeking help for their eating disorder receives appropriate treatment quickly, irrespective of their age or location.
- Allocated budgets for eating disorders are increased and effectively spent on frontline services, which tackle the problem quickly in the community.
- Newly qualified GPs exit their training with the knowledge needed to support patients with eating disorders.

## Increasing pressure on the Government and influencing members of Parliament

The foundation for our campaigning work this year has been our report 'Delaying for years, denied for months', a project generously funded by a consortium of concerned business people. The report highlighted the importance of intervening early and detailed the consequences if that did not happen. We launched this report in Westminster in November 2017, at an event kindly sponsored by Luciana Berger MP where Jeremy Hunt, Secretary of State for Health gave his response with 17 MPs in attendance, including Justine Greening, then Secretary of State for Education.

## People wait too long to find treatment, and these delays have a significant impact emotionally and financially.



People with eating disorders face, on average, a three-and-a-half-year delay between falling ill and starting treatment.



When eating disorders are treated early, the cost to the NHS' purse is significantly reduced. The report shows that tens of thousands of pounds per sufferer could be saved if people are treated sooner.

x2

**Adults wait almost twice as long for treatment as children and young people.**



Eating disorders have a significant impact on the whole family: 44% of mothers and 31% of fathers described themselves as 'extremely badly' affected by the wait for their child to access treatment, and on average they spend £32,000 in supporting their loved one back to full health.

Statistics taken from 'Delaying for years, denied for months', full content on our website.

In December, the Parliamentary Health Service Ombudsman published a report on its investigation into the failures of care that led to the tragic death of 19-year-old Averil Hart in 2012. The report further highlighted the poor provision of treatment for adults. The PHSO report followed a dogged campaign for justice by Averil's dad, Nic, and Beat was honoured to have been able to support him. Following the publication, we launched a petition calling for the Government to introduce minimum waiting time targets and related funding for adults with eating disorders. This, combined with Nic's determination and Beat's political lobbying, has increased pressure on the Government to act.

We are increasing awareness of eating disorders through our work in Parliament. During Eating Disorders Awareness Week, we helped bring about debates in both Westminster and Holyrood, sponsored by Edward Argar MP and Clare Haughey MSP respectively. Beat's work, including the report 'Delaying for years, denied for months', was regularly cited, alongside mentions of our Ambassadors and support services throughout. Our increased impact in Parliament is also highlighted by frequent mentions of Beat in ministerial replies to Parliamentary Questions and MP letters.

In Wales we have successfully raised awareness and campaigned for better treatment. Recently the Government have announced a review into eating disorder services in Wales, which we will be contributing to. When announcing the review, the Cabinet Secretary for Health specifically asked for it to consider the need for waiting time targets, and highlighted Beat's campaign in raising this issue.

We have responded to seven policy consultations this year, with a highlight being our response to the draft NICE Quality Standard for Eating Disorders, leading to an increased focus on early intervention and quality of care for everyone with an eating disorder. As a direct consequence of our involvement in a project with NHS England looking at how money is spent across inpatient and community-based services for eating disorders, Beat volunteers will shape the future of eating disorder spending and ensure it is focused on early intervention. A Beat Ambassador will sit on NHS England's steering group for the evaluation of pilot projects, and a panel of volunteers, recruited by Beat, will help to shape the design of the evaluation.

"Last year I accepted an invitation from Beat, the national eating disorder charity, to the launch of its important report, 'Delaying for years, denied for months'. It is a piece of research I will draw on extensively today.

*Edward Argar, MP for Charnwood, speaking at the debate in Westminster during Eating Disorder Awareness Week.*



Chloe Smith MP with Beat staff members at the launch of 'Delaying for years, denied for months' in November 2017.



**7** Responded to policy consultations to advise on treatment of eating disorders.

**17** MPs attended the report launch of 'Delaying for years, denied for months'.



## Using the voices of our campaigners to support our policy asks

In 2017-18, 17,573 people took 39,232 campaigning actions online. 78 campaigners met with their MPs to highlight the inadequacies in care for eating disorder sufferers, or informed our responses to policy consultations.

One of these 78 was Beat Ambassador Chloe Evans. Chloe's MP, Margaret Greenwood, mentioned the meeting they had during the Westminster debate in Eating Disorders Awareness Week 2018. Read Chloe's story:



Margaret Greenwood MP with Chloe Evans, Beat Ambassador.

My path into treatment was a difficult one and was one of the main reasons I wanted to become a Beat Ambassador and meet with my MP.

"It takes an awful lot for somebody to admit they have a problem. It's essentially relinquishing the control you've based your life on. So reaching out for help showed how desperate I was. Looking back now, I didn't think I was ill enough, or worthy of help – I know now that was what my eating disorder was telling me. When I went to see my GP, their response didn't help me out of this mindset – they told me to come back in three weeks. It felt dismissive, and I reasoned that I must be fine. I didn't return.

"Beat's campaign for early intervention really resonated with me due to my own experiences, so I took part and emailed my MP. Beat had suggestions to make it easier to write a letter, and I think highlighting my own experience really helped my case. Initially my MP responded with figures from the Clinical Commissioning Group, who said that there had been 29 referrals in my local area. If anything, this highlighted the issue that so many people were being turned away without referral, so I wrote back to her and she asked to meet with me.

"The meeting was definitely nerve-wracking to begin with, but exciting too. It went really well – I quickly felt relaxed, and even though I still find it difficult to talk about my experiences, we covered a lot and I highlighted what still needed to be done.

"When I heard Margaret Greenwood had mentioned our meeting in Westminster it was quite overwhelming. I wasn't even sure she would reply to my first email! It's baby steps, but mental health and eating disorders are finally beginning to get the recognition they deserve.

"I really hope Beat's campaign for waiting times for eating disorders is successful. I really hope it helps people in the future who, need and deserve treatment – just as I now understand I did.

## What's next? In 2018-19 we will:

Call for funded access and waiting time targets for adults and children across the UK, to match the existing English targets for children.

Recruit and empower volunteer campaigners to support our policy asks and hold decision makers to account.

Press the General Medical Council and relevant medical school boards to prioritise the teaching and assessment of eating disorders for medical students.

# Ending stigma and increasing awareness and understanding

## Highlights:

1. 50 more people joined our Ambassador programme, sharing their experiences and supporting Beat's message of hope and recovery.

2. 212 'Eating Disorder First Responders' trained to support students and school, college and university.

3. Over 600 delegates inspired, empowered and informed at conferences to support recovery.

Eating disorders are secretive illnesses, leaving those who suffer from them in isolation. To counteract this, we work to end the stigma individuals face by increasing awareness and understanding of these serious mental health conditions. We hope this work will encourage people to reach out for support and increase the understanding of families, friends, colleagues and professionals so they are able to empower them towards the first steps in recovery.

## A warm welcome to new Ambassadors to spread their message of recovery

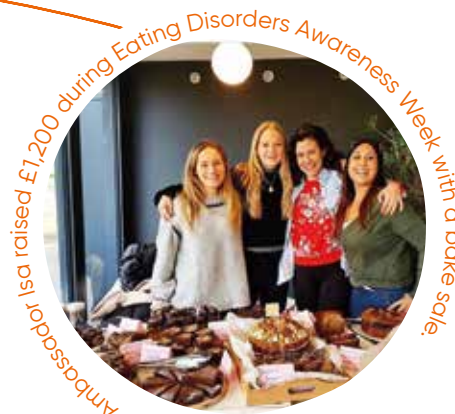
In 2017-18 we welcomed over 50 new Ambassadors to the Beat Ambassador scheme across England, Scotland and Wales. This year, we expanded our Young Ambassador programme to add people who have cared for someone with an eating disorder and people over the age of 25, taking our total number of Ambassadors to 175. They've taken part in 417 engagements, talking in workplaces, schools and at training for professionals, raising funds for Beat, meeting with politicians and much more.



50 new Ambassadors were welcomed to the Beat Ambassador scheme

Our Ambassadors took part in

417 engagements



# Breaking down the stigma men face

**Matt trained as an Ambassador last year. He hopes that his involvement in the scheme will break down the stigma men with eating disorder face, and by being open with people about his own recovery, he hopes others will feel able to be curious, and ask him the questions they want answering.**

"My spiral into an eating disorder began, you could say, as a cliché. I'd broken up with a girlfriend, and physically started to feel inadequate. I was at university, and while I never actively decided I was going to lose weight, not feeding myself properly, coupled with late night partying fuelled by drugs and alcohol meant weight started to fall away. And as my weight fell, the number of compliments I received about my appearance rose. I was trapped in a cycle of over-exercising and undereating and I didn't know how to maintain my weight in a healthy balanced way, but I knew I couldn't 'let myself go again' – no one would value me anymore.

"My degree in animation was supposed to propel me where I wanted to be, but my eating disorder robbed me all of my creativity and energy. I ended up back at home in a job I hated, brutally miserable – exactly what I'd spent twenty thousand pounds and three years trying to get away from.

"I considered taking my own life.

"When a close friend died, I decided I had to make a change. But treatment wasn't easy with an hour and a half's drive or more each way to get to a therapist who could cope with

what I was going through. I was borrowing my mum's car, barely able to afford the petrol and so tired I once fell asleep at the wheel on the way home. No one knew I was suffering and I was keen to keep it that way.

"To this day, I've still never met a male with an eating disorder – or not one who has opened up to me about it. Everything I came into contact during my recovery was female orientated: the examples people told me about, other sufferers, my psychologists. And this was the reason I wanted to get involved with Beat – this has got to change. If you see something you don't identify with, your eating disorder is very quick to tell you to dismiss it – 'that's not you', it says.

"As a Beat Ambassador, I've reflected back on my experiences. It was a part of my life that felt pretty 'hazy', but strangely, going into a chronology of events has helped me to find some meaning and order. It feels a more coherent part of my history now, rather than a part of my life that made no sense. I hope my work with Beat will make a difference to men like me in the future."

Everything I came into contact during my recovery was female orientated: the examples people told me about, other sufferers, my psychologists. And this was the reason I wanted to get involved with Beat – this has got to change.

I hope my work with Beat will make a difference to men like me in the future





# Spotting the signs and symptoms of an eating disorder during Awareness Week

Our 'Delaying for years, denied for months' report (see page 11) showed that it takes almost three years for people to reach out for treatment for their eating disorders. Given that the earlier someone finds treatment, the more likely they are to make a full and fast recovery, we focused on the theme of 'Why Wait?' during Eating Disorder Awareness Week in February. Our aim was to encourage people to seek treatment as soon as their eating disorder develops. As part of our activities, we commissioned YouGov to conduct a survey about the UK's population's understanding of the signs and symptoms of an eating disorder. Here's what they found:

- 34% of adults could not name a single sign or symptom of an eating disorder.
- People were twice as likely to list 'weight loss' or 'being thin' than any other sign or symptom.
- 79% of adults did not name a psychological symptom of an eating disorder.

**600** information packs were sent out during the week

During the week, we sent over 600 information packs with our 'tips' for spotting the early signs of an eating disorder and our newly developed '#WhyWait' stickers for display in local communities. More than 1.5million people saw our campaign messages on their social media channels. As a result, our Helplines saw a spike in the number of people coming forward about their eating disorder and getting support to take the next step towards recovery.

**1.5m** people saw our campaign messages on social media



## Raising the knowledge and understanding of professionals supporting students

Those working within education are in a unique position to be able to encourage early intervention for eating disorders. With this in mind, we developed a new training course and since September 2017, have trained 212 'Eating Disorder First Responders' in secondary schools, colleges and universities throughout the North West and West Midlands. Armed with the knowledge of the early signs and symptoms of an eating disorder, information about available local support, and empathetic understanding of what eating disorder sufferers are going through, they leave able to support pupils and their families to seek and get treatment quickly. In the new academic year we'll start training First Responders in every secondary school across Yorkshire and Humberside and in and around Tunbridge Wells.

**212** 'Eating Disorder First Responders' trained in schools, colleges and universities.

An essential training if you are supporting a young person within school with an eating disorder. Raising awareness around eating disorder support is so important within schools.

*Training course attendee.*

This was a very informative course that provided resources to take away and generated a confidence that we can help to support young people with eating disorders.

*Training course attendee.*

## Encouraging learning and empowering support networks at our conferences

In November 2017, 130 carers and frontline support staff gathered to attend the inaugural 'Eating Disorders: Support for the Frontline' conference. Across the two days in Birmingham, participants heard from expert clinicians encouraging and empowering family support, as well as from Beat Ambassadors providing advice from their perspective. Carers and frontline staff were also able to network with Beat staff members.

The Frontline conference also saw the launch of our co-production project, ensuring that all Beat's strategies and projects are shaped and driven by the opinions and needs of experts by experience. 550 people subsequently contributed their views, many of whom continue to help turn some of their ideas into reality.

In March 2018, we turned to our sixth Eating Disorders International Conference (EDIC). Held biennially, more than 500 eating disorder experts from over 25 countries came together in London to discuss the latest developments in eating disorder treatment and research. From keynote lectures about modern management of eating disorders and DNA to plenaries covering different approaches to treatment and organising services, participants had the opportunity to attend workshops, review research posters, network with experts in the field, and hear more about Beat's work.

"It's definitely one of the best and most inspiring conferences I've been at and I didn't want it to end! Not very often you can say that about a conference."

*EDIC participant.*

"This was such a positive conference for me. Meeting others who have loved ones with the illness who have similar stories to tell made me feel less alone, and I came away feeling stronger about recovery for my daughter."

*Support for the Frontline Conference participant.*

500

participants attended  
EDIC from

25  
countries

Delegates listen to keynote lecture at Eating Disorders International Conference



## What's next? In 2018-19 we will:

Ensure we fully reflect the diversity of eating disorders, from the different diagnoses to the people who suffer from them, in all our communications.

Recruit and support volunteers to lead groups in universities and local communities to raise awareness and funds for Beat's work locally.

Publish evidence for the benefits of full involvement of families in the treatment of their loved ones, and call on service providers to adopt best practice as a result.

# Our work in focus: working in localities

A lot of the impact achieved by Beat is a result of work at a local level and this year we developed a new strategy to support local communities to ensure all sufferers are treated quickly after falling ill, and all families are fully engaged in that treatment.

The strategy can be applied at a town, county or regional level, and we were successful this year in raising the funds to start delivering it in two very different locations – the Borough of Tunbridge Wells (population 116,100) and the Yorkshire and Humber region (population 5.3million).

This means that we will:

- Deliver our 'first responder' training programme to one professional in every secondary school, and others working in education, including colleges and student unions.
- Ensure all GP practices know this training is happening, that more people will be seeking treatment as a result, and how to make good decisions when they do.
- Encourage and support all services to follow best practice in involving families in the treatment and care of their loved ones.
- Provide effective peer support and training for carers.
- Increase awareness of eating disorders, the importance of early intervention, and of local and national sources of support.
- Build strong local networks of carers and activists to co-deliver the strategy and ensure that the results are sustained.

## Our team working in their local community

In 2017-18, our team of Regional and National Officers were joined by a colleague in Cardiff, meaning we now have a presence in Wales, Scotland, the North West and London and the South East, with an Officer for Yorkshire and the North East to follow soon. Our goal is to have officers across the UK, driving forward our work locally so that everyone affected by an eating disorder can benefit. We spoke to Michela, Sara, Jo and Hayley who work locally across the UK.

### Your wish for the year ahead?

To create a strong network of volunteers across the South East through local volunteer groups so people who share our vision to end the pain and suffering of eating disorders can get together and achieve even greater results – fundraising, campaigning and fighting stigma! **Michela (London and South East)**

To establish contact with every university in the North West, making sure that there is at least one link between Beat and the university. **Hayley (North West)**

### Your biggest achievement this year?

Securing a Scottish Parliament members debate, where Beat and our research was mentioned 17 times, the Ambassador scheme named and commended and Beat's support services highlighted as best practice! **Sara (Scotland)**

The expansion of Beat's Ambassador Network in Wales from four to ten Ambassadors. **Jo (Wales)**

Regional Officer Hayley at the North West's Walk & Talk in February 2018.



National Officer Jo with Ambassador Zoe, one of a growing number of 10 Ambassadors in Wales.





# Funding our work

## Walking 530 miles to raise funds and remember Laura

In September 2017 Ric Piper set off on an incredible journey, a "Bucket List" idea that became a reality to commemorate his youngest daughter Laura.

530 miles and 34 walking days lie between Ric's starting point in St Jean-Pied-du-Port in the foothills of the French Pyrenees to Finisterre out on the Atlantic Coast of Spain – a trail often referred to as The Camino. To date, Ric and his family and friends – some 25 of whom joined him for part of the walk – have raised over £30,000 for Beat and three other charities close to Laura and his hearts.

"Laura's struggle with balancing eating and exercise began in her early teens, but by March 2016, aged just 26, Laura lost her fight with the relentless, wicked opponent that is anorexia.

"I have so many, many memories of Laura to cherish, but if I had to pick only one, it would be walking. Over the years Laura and I did hundreds of walks together. Following her death, I wanted to do something to remember her by. The Camino challenge seemed fitting, so I bought a guide book, set a date and started training.

"Laura was with me every step of the way, as every time I looked down I saw her favourite pink laces in my walking boots. Through the long days and the hot afternoons, she encouraged me up the steepest of hills.

"The walk gave me time to reflect. Laura and I had often talked about some advice a friend had given me years before: 'Treat life as a never-ending exam. You must answer every question'.

"My walk has helped me answer my most burning of questions: 'Could I have helped Laura more?'

"One day, I walked alongside a lady from the Ukraine called Yana. I was worried about her as she looked so very frail. We stopped for a breather and I noticed Yana had decided not to eat. The Camino is physically demanding. Walking 15 miles and burning over 4,000 calories a day for a month requires maintaining a healthy diet. Looking down at my laces, I knew Laura wanted me to say something, even if in truth, middle-class rather reserved Englishmen of a certain age didn't regularly give out advice to Ukrainian ladies. So, I said, rather falteringly, 'Yana, you know you are not eating enough. You will eat properly, won't you?' Yana replied: 'I promise you, Ric.' I don't know if those words helped Yana, but as I reflected further on my question I realised I needed to re-phrase it. It wasn't 'Could I have helped Laura more?' The question really was 'What more can I do to help others?'

"On my 530-mile journey I carried a pebble from the beach near Brighton where Laura and I walked so often. At my journey's end right out at the edge of Europe I cast it out into the Atlantic Ocean and promised to myself that whenever I next meet Yana – whoever they are, wherever they come from, whatever they need – I'll offer them help.

"And I ask that you do too. And why? Because Laura told me to."

Ric's family and friends.



Laura, Nicole, Dianne and Ric.



In 2017-18, our brilliant fundraisers raised more than £450,000, compared with just over £300,000 in 2016-17. This incredible total amounts to the cost of running the Beat Helpline for an entire year.

We wish we had the room to thank each and every person who has raised funds for us, or given regular or one-off donations, but here are just a few of the activities they have been up to:

# 253

**Beat running vests crossed a finish line**



# 12

**mountain peaks conquered**

Hannah shared

# 125

**photos to raise funds and 'Sock It to Eating Disorders'**



**Our fundraisers travelled to**

# 21

**different countries**



# 38

**skydivers jumped**

# 380,000ft

**- that's more than the distance to the edge of the earth's atmosphere!**

We would also like to take this opportunity to pay thanks to the generous corporate supporters, foundations, trusts and individuals below, without whom our work would not be possible.

The Abba Charitable Trust

Anon

Anthony and Catherine Smith

ASOS

Barnham Broom, Hotel, Golf and Spa

The Childwick Trust

Elysium Healthcare

The Evan Cornish Foundation

The Fuller Endowment Fund

The Garfield Weston Foundation

The Goldsmiths' Company Charity

The GMC Trust

Inner Wheel of Great Britain and Ireland

The Jordan Charitable Foundation

The Leathersellers' Company Charitable Fund

Mr. Nick How

OneNineEightFive

Sainsbury's, Pound Lane Norwich

Sovereign Health Care Community Programme

St James's Place Charitable Foundation

The Steel Charitable Trust

The Technology Enabled Care Grant Scheme

UKAT

We would also like to thank the many individuals, companies and trusts that chose to give anonymously this year.

# Walk & Talk in support of eating disorders

Almost 200 people took part in 'Walk & Talk', a newly designed event to encourage supporters to raise funds while talking about eating disorders and walking away from secrecy, stigma and misunderstanding.

"The day was very meaningful for me given I was pretty much at my worst point exactly a year ago, and I'd never have thought then that I'd be able to take part in such an amazing day as this one year later. Thank you, thank you, thank you."

*Took part in Walk & Talk Warrington.*

"I was really nervous about setting up a page because, even though I shouldn't be, I still feel embarrassed and don't like to talk about it much. In the end I asked my close family and friends for a donation. The support I've gotten is more than I'd ever imagined. I'm so glad I plucked up the courage to do so."

*Took part in Walk & Talk London.*

"I did my Walk & Talk for Beat to make those suffering from eating disorders like me feel as though they aren't alone. I wanted to raise awareness of mental illness and raise money for such a good cause and walk away from my eating disorder!"

*Organised their own Walk & Talk event.*

Walk & Talkers atop Pendle Hill, Lancashire.



## What's next? In 2018-19 we will:

Seek funding for new major transformation projects at Beat, including support to radically expand our training programme to 'first responders' such as teachers, and enhancements to our Helpline.

Build a national network of university and local groups to increase awareness and raise income to deliver our programmes in their communities.

Continue to innovate, finding new and better ways towards our goal of an end to the pain and suffering of eating disorders, and engage our supporters in shaping and funding them.



# Can you support us?

## Invest in our strategy

Generous donations from individuals and grant-giving trusts have allowed us to develop significant and impactful projects at Beat, one notable example being the group of business people who came together to fund the 'Delaying for years, denied for months' report, which has had a tremendous effect on our work to influence decision makers.

If this document has encouraged you to think about the difference you could make, and you would like to invest in our strategies to end the pain and suffering of eating disorders, then please contact Philip Roethenbaugh (01603 753308 or at [p.roethenbaugh@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:p.roethenbaugh@beateatingdisorders.org.uk)) who will be able to discuss with you the new projects we would like to fund, or areas we are looking to expand into.

For example, you might like to invest in delivering our Eating Disorder First Responders training to your local schools. Each session we run trains 20 new Eating Disorder First Responders, and the total cost to Beat, including the ongoing costs of the specialist Helpline is approximately £5,000 per session. You can help us to reach the schools in your town, county or district to ensure those at highest risk are given the best chance of a fast and sustained recovery from their eating disorder.

## Remember Beat in your Will

We are incredibly proud of the impact we have made over the past 12 months, and we hope that you are as excited about our next steps as we are. We would not have been able to take these steps on the journey to achieve the aims in our five-year strategy without the significant investment we have recently received in legacies.

Legacies are generously pledged to charities by people from all walks of life, not just the very wealthy. They account for nearly £2billion-worth of charities' income each year. Beat is no different in this respect, and over the past four years, 50% of our funds came from legacies.

They have enabled us to be much bolder in our ambitions, which we hope you see described in this impact report.

The generous donations have enabled investment in our campaigning, which as you will have read has put us on the map with decision makers at Westminster and beyond, helping us push for early intervention and better treatment. The impact of our Ambassadors has also been greatly increased as we roll out a programme that establishes a Beat presence across the regions and nations with new local Beat officers in the North West and Wales. And not to mention the transformation and expansion of our Helpline and online services, through which we are helping more people than ever before.

**Leaving a legacy is a very special way to make a lasting impact, far into the future. If you would like to know more about including Beat in your Will, contact Philip Roethenbaugh on 01603 753308 or at [p.roethenbaugh@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:p.roethenbaugh@beateatingdisorders.org.uk).**



---

## Give by Direct Debit, become a Beat Champion



Beat Champions donate regularly to Beat and provide us with a consistent income stream to help fund our core activities, directly supporting people with eating disorders and campaigning to ensure access to high-quality treatment is timely.

In return, all our Beat Champions are kept up to date with our activities via email and UpBeat, our biannual supporters' magazine, have opportunities to take part in fundraising and hear about participating in research into eating disorders.

Visit [beateatingdisorders.org.uk/donate](https://beateatingdisorders.org.uk/donate) or contact Sian on 01603 753308 or [fundraising@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@beateatingdisorders.org.uk) to sign up.

---

## Raising money in your community or workplace



Fundraising in your local community or at work not only helps fund our services but gives you an opportunity to educate people about eating disorders and break down stigma and misunderstanding.

Whether you are holding a quiz night, bake sale, taking part in our annual Sock It to Eating Disorders fundraising campaign or taking on a challenge event, we can provide you with all the advice and materials you need to make your event a success.

Visit [beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-involved/fundraise](https://beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-involved/fundraise) or contact Andrea or Emily on 01603 753335 or [fundraising@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:fundraising@beateatingdisorders.org.uk) to find out more.

---

## Campaign for fast access to better treatments for eating disorders



Beat campaigns to make sure your voice is heard. Whether you're affected by an eating disorder yourself or know someone with an eating disorder, we want to make sure that our campaigning helps to improve the quality and timeliness of treatment and services for all.

You can help us reach key decision makers, influential bodies and policy and government representatives. Take part in online campaigning by engaging with our petitions and writing a letter to your local MP or take your action offline and meet with influencers in your local area.

Email [campaigning@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:campaigning@beateatingdisorders.org.uk) or visit [beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns](https://beateatingdisorders.org.uk/get-involved/campaigns) to read about our current campaigning work.



 @beatED

 beat.eating.disorders

Unit 1 Chalk Hill House, 19 Rosary Road,  
Norwich, NR1 1SZ

0300 123 3355

[beateatingdisorders.org.uk](http://beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

[info@beateatingdisorders.org.uk](mailto:info@beateatingdisorders.org.uk)

A charity registered in England and Wales (801343)  
and Scotland (SC039309).

Company limited by guarantee no 2368495