

United Response Impact Report 2019/20



**United Response
is a top 100 charity
committed to
making life better
for people with learning
disabilities, autism and
mental health needs.**

**Find out more about our
work in this Impact Report
2019-20**

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Quality and Best Practice

In 2019/20, we continued to empower more people across England and Wales to live happy, confident lives. Our strong, nationwide CQC ratings reflect the hard work and passion of our dedicated frontline staff.



Close to 95% of our services are rated as 'Good', which puts United Response well above the national sector average.

But we're also being recognised elsewhere for our innovative and creative approach to service delivery.

In September 2019, our Head of Health and Safety, Shonagh Methven, scooped an industry award for her work towards transforming fire safety advice for vulnerable people living at registered care homes, following on from the Grenfell Tower tragedy.

We've also taken huge steps to reduce the amount of restrictive interventions being used to support people with behaviour that's more challenging.

United Response specialises in improving life for people with more complex support needs. Our in-house Practice Development team are continuously working on new and better ways to support the small percentage of people who – as a last resort – need to have a planned restrictive intervention in place.

These interventions are only used when all other approaches fail, and are designed to keep people safe and out of harm.

But we still don't really like using them.

Which is why we're working hard to make restrictive interventions a thing of the past. We're developing our workforce and increasing expertise, boosting leadership at all levels, using better data, tools and strategies and making sure the people we support and their families or advocates are always kept in the picture; helping, sharing and advising.

In 2019/20, we were thrilled to be able to safely remove restrictive interventions from the plans of 22% of the 49 people we support who needed them.



Working with the Government



An important part of what we do is speaking out with and on behalf of people with disabilities and mental health needs about the ways decisions made in Parliament affect their daily lives – for good and bad.

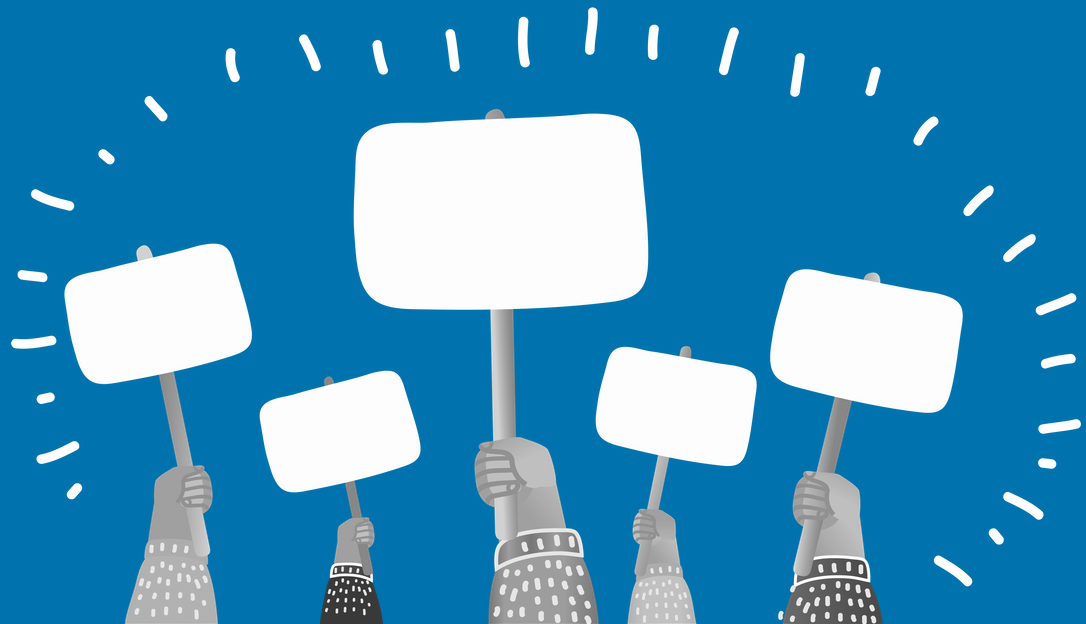
With Brexit grabbing so much of the Government's attention, we had to work even harder to make sure the voices of the communities we represent weren't ignored in 2019/20.

We have repeatedly pressed them on the much delayed Social Care Green Paper and its failure to reduce the numbers of disabled people in inappropriate institutionalised care settings.

Our campaign to make long-term institutions a thing of the past is helping more and more people start new lives in the community. Together, we are proving how people of all disabilities can smash through expectations and live more independently when given the confidence, skills and support to do so.

Our long-standing campaign on the ‘sleep ins’ issue has been a core part of our work with Government.

Our efforts, along with those of the wider sector, culminated in a Court of Appeal ruling and a postponement of the looming threat of a back-pay liability which would severely damage the sector’s finances. We still await the outcome of a Supreme Court judgement at the end of 2020.





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Fundraising

Clothworkers' Foundation and Small Sparks

The Clothworkers' Foundation continued its generous support of our Small Sparks programme with a grant of £35,000.

The programme helps people we support with disabilities forge new friendships and connections with others in their local area. The events and activities Small Sparks fund are a big help in combatting loneliness and isolation, and can make a real difference to people's lives. We provided grants of up to £1,250 to local services to set up initiatives in their community.

Last year's grant was allocated to support 39 different projects during the year. These included:



A weekly football group for people we support in Somerset

A series of yoga classes in Devon for people we support and their friends

Creating flower planters, which won a 'Thriving' award in the Blackpool in Bloom competition



The ROC5K



£17,000 was raised by 500 runners pounding the streets of Truro for the annual ROC 5K charity fun run.

Holly, who attends a ROC Wellbeing Club, and Chloe were taking part for the third year running and explained why they keep coming back:

“

We've had an amazing day. It's really good to get the community together and everyone to raise money together as well. And of course it goes to all the local clubs, which my sister goes to, and we love donating to them!

The annual London Marathon is our biggest fundraising event each year. Our 28 runners in 2019's race together raised over £62,000 - the highest amount we've ever received from the event.

Our team of runners included Frances, whose son Finn has a disability. Finn helped his mum train for the marathon by running the 26.2 miles distance with her over eight (and a bit!) park runs. Throughout all of their training though, Finn was adamant that it didn't make him a runner!

The London Marathon



Ride London



Our team of twelve cyclists raised over £5,000 in the 100-mile Ride London bike ride in August. After the race, cyclist Nick told us that he was:

“

...feeling proud of myself for getting fit, for cycling the distance, proud of my sponsors... and proud of United Response for the hard work they do supporting people with learning difficulties like my sister Ali.

The Teddington Pram Race



This year, United Response organised the annual Teddington Pram Race that has been a fixture at the Teddington Village Fair since 2004. A group of 25 volunteers, which included people with learning disabilities, helped to facilitate the race and promote our vital contribution to the local community. Nine teams of between three and five people donned crazy costumes, pushed prams along a designated route and helped raise almost £1,500.

We received just under £30,000 from the Trafford Housing Trust to fund our Pathways to Employment project in the town. The project supports adults with autism from across Trafford to give them the confidence, skills and experience they need to find a job.

One example is Rachel (not her real name), who had been bullied in her previous job and lost her self-confidence and self-esteem. We helped Rachel find a volunteer role in a local charity shop to boost her skills and confidence, and she's now looking forward to starting a new job as a teaching assistant working with children with disabilities.

**Trafford
Housing
Trust**



Penny from Yorkshire took on the challenge of the Great North Run this year.

She raised over £1,400 for our Boot Shop in Easingwold, York, which supports people with disabilities to learn new skills and develop their own business ideas.

The money Penny raised will help create a much needed outside area for people to socialise and relax, learn new skills, hone their talents, and work on projects together.



Campaigning for change

Our ongoing efforts to raise awareness of disability hate crime remained front and centre of our campaigning work during 2019/20.

Disability hate crime: these mindless crimes remain a significant issue for people we support and we are now recognised for our attempts to not only reduce the number of incidents but empower victims to spot the signs and speak out.

A core part of this work is a yearly national campaign, complete with dedicated resources for people with learning disabilities, their support workers, families or friends.

Our disability hate crime campaign in 2019/20,
launched once again for Hate Crime Awareness
Week in October, focused on a sharp rise in crimes
but a worrying fall in the number of prosecutions.



In May we also launched a new campaign called 'Am I Your Problem?', challenging the indifference, hidden discrimination and hostility often faced by people with learning disabilities.

Using public polling data, surveys of people we support and video case studies based on real-life accounts, our campaign called on the public to think about how they interact with people with learning disabilities in a range of social settings – with the ultimate aim of putting an end to these damaging prejudiced attitudes.



Accessibility

We are always looking for ways to make information accessible to everyone and are proud to lead the way with our expertise in creating easy-read materials.

The backbone of this approach is a firm commitment to ensuring people with learning disabilities are informed – both about the news and world which surrounds them.

Easy-read publications

Our flagship easy-read publication, Easy News, is written by people with learning disabilities – for people with learning disabilities.

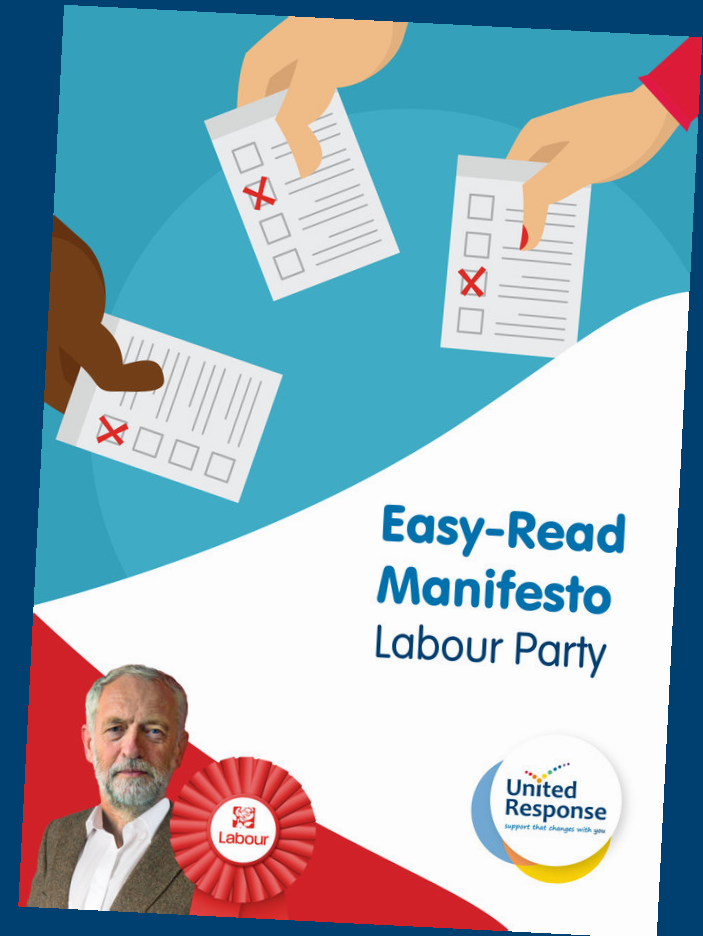
Easy News is read by almost 5,000 people and is the first accessible news magazine of its type.

Its simplified text and pictures create accessible and impartial summaries of important news stories to encourage discussion and to keep readers informed about the world around them.



Ahead of the December 2019 General UK Election, we produced easy-read versions of each major political party manifesto to help people with learning disabilities learn about the policies and cast informed votes.

Each manifesto was produced in the same style as Easy News, with easy words and pictures.



Down in Devon, our popular accessible cooking video series, called CookABILITY, produced a six-part Christmas special.

The recipes were created by people we support and gave easy step-by-step instructions on how to cook together and make festive favourites, such as these easy peasy mince pies.





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Investing in
people's lives

We do everything we can to help people dream big and think ambitiously about what they want in life.



We help people learn the important life skills they need to be as independent as possible, give them the support they need to bag their dream job, and encourage them to express themselves creatively.

The Boot Shop in Easingwold, Yorkshire has been hosting workshops in arts, crafts, drama, DIY, cooking, health and wellbeing to help people with learning disabilities get closer to reaching their goals for over twenty-five years. It's popular and well-respected by locals thanks to its community-focus and the strong partnerships it's built with other local businesses.

Tatiana is just one success story of many to have arisen from United Response's Supported Employment program.

Tatiana, who uses a wheelchair and communicates with sign language, was supported to achieve a paid role working in retail at John Lewis in Exeter.

This video detailing her success was also a hit on social media: it reached over 183,000 people on Facebook.



DRAMA GROUP LIKE NO OTHER



ROC Creative is an arts project located in Devon that gives people the chance to express themselves through music, dance, photography and crafts.

At the end of 2019, its drama group was ecstatic to finally show the world the culmination of two years' worth of work, performing two completely original pieces, which - with the support of United Response facilitators - were created and written by the people we support.

And they didn't stop there - they also got to take a bow for creating the music, costumes and set design, showing everyone what a talented bunch they are.



In York, DJ Harrison FB has long harboured a dream to have his own radio show.

Supported by United Response, Harrison has developed his skills and now presents and produces a professional broadcast regularly.

> [Listen in to Moon Beat Radio here](#)



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Satisfaction across the board

We're passionate about providing high-quality, safe and inspiring support. But to make sure we're getting things right, we regularly ask the people we support and their families to tell us how we're doing.

In 2019/20, we completed our sixth annual satisfaction survey among people we support and their families. They told us that:

96%

of people we support feel safe when with their support staff

91%

of people we support say their support workers listen and talk to them

92%

of families rate the quality of our care as good or excellent

97%

of families think that our staff are caring and have the right values

88%

of people we support say they like where they live