



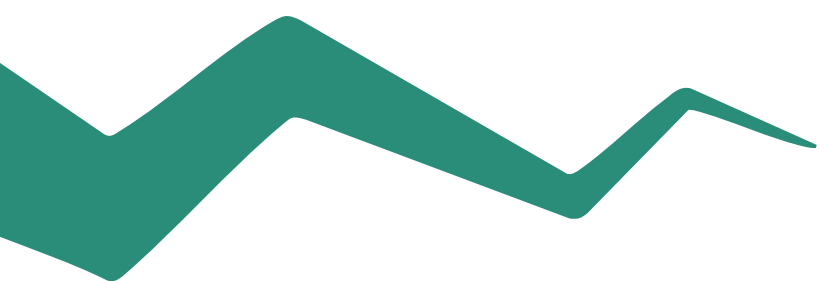
EGGTOOTH IMPACT REPORT

Young Peoples' Mental Health and Wellbeing
March 2025



Contents

Introduction	3
Eggtooth’s Impact Key Findings:	5
Section 1: Value for Money, Volume of Need and Efficacy	6
Section 2: An Alternative, Creative Offer for Therapy	12
Section 3: Local Embeddedness and Local Trust	17
Concluding Note	23
Appendix	25



Introduction

In October 2024, Helena Dollimore, MP for Hastings and Rye, spoke at a Parliamentary debate for Mental Health Support, expressing her concern at the state of mental health services in Hastings¹. As of 2022, Hastings has the 5th highest rate of emergency hospital admissions for intentional self-harm across England². For young people, aged 10-24 years, the hospital rate for admission of intentional self-harm in Hastings is 55% higher than the England average³.

Dollimore shared a story of a young person in Hastings that recently died by suicide, who had been on the waiting list for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) for seven months, and expressed that young people in Hastings are waiting too long to receive mental health support. Specifically, Dollimore expressed her concerns, as well as those of local healthcare practitioners, and constituents, that the future of Eggtooth, a charity that is working to provide necessary and life-saving mental health care to young people both on and off CAMHS waiting lists, was under threat of being defunded.

In Hastings, where demand for accessible and tailored mental health support continues to grow, Eggtooth remains steadfast as a vital service provider. Rooted in a relational, creative, and locally-led approach, Eggtooth offers innovative and unique interventions designed to meet the needs of young people and their families in their journey to better mental health. By prioritising trust-building and long-term engagement, Eggtooth plays a crucial role in bridging the gaps in statutory mental health service provision.

Hastings performs below the national average in multiple indices of deprivation. As of 2019, Hastings is the 14th most income-deprived local authority in England, with household income 17% less than national average⁴. As of 2021, 15% of Hastings

working-age residents (16-64) had no qualifications, compared to the national average of 7%⁵. The rate of young people in drug and/or alcohol treatment per 10,000 population is 70% higher in Hastings than the East Sussex Average⁶.

The social determinants of mental health, such as income, education, and social support, significantly influence mental well-being and contribute to health disparities⁷. In contrast, indices of deprivation, which combine multiple factors like income, employment, and housing quality, provide a broader measure of societal disadvantage and are closely linked to increased mental health risks⁸.

For Hastings, the multiple factors of deprivation combined result in a significant issue of poor mental health in both adults and young people. Given the context of mental health support needed for residents of Hastings, Eggtooth's services are necessary and vital in filling the gaps in already overstretched and resource-poor statutory services; as well as providing an alternative, creative, and cost and time effective offer to young people in crisis.



Eggtooth was founded in 2011 in response to the high number of young people leaving school with low GCSE attainment in Hastings. Many of these students faced socioeconomic barriers, were young carers, or had undiagnosed neurodivergence and mental health challenges. Eggtooth aimed to address these issues by helping young people's self-awareness and confidence through creative methods like art, music, and outdoor activities.

Funding and local changes required Eggtooth to continuously adapt to meet emerging community needs. It became increasingly clear that access to mental health support in the local area was shrinking, despite rising demand. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated this crisis.

As Eggtooth emerged from the pandemic, its focus had shifted from group-based creative interventions to providing high-quality, one-to-one therapy for young people, as local mental health services were increasingly unable to meet demand.

Since 2021, Eggtooth has concentrated on expanding its therapy services. After securing their most recent PCN/(NHS) contract in 2021, Eggtooth supported 768 young people through the PCN pathway between 2021-2024; 250 young people annually. Eggtooth acts as a vital service in the landscape of mental health services in Hastings, complementing and working in tandem with statutory services in the area to alleviate the mental health crisis in Hastings.

Since 2022:

2,155

individuals have been supported by Eggtooth (768 via PCN)

17,000+

session have been delivered by the Eggtooth team

15

schools currently working with Eggtooth

Eggtooth's Impact Key Findings:

90%

of parents surveyed indicate that their child's mental health has improved after working with Eggtooth.

4 out of 5

the average score respondents (GPs, Parents, and Practitioners) rate Eggtooth's positive impact on the community of Hastings.

+83

Eggtooth's Net Promoter Score from both Parents and GPs. The NPS provides an indication of how likely a person is to recommend Eggtooth to others.

73%

reduction in parents reporting their child's mental health as **poor** or **very poor** following their work with Eggtooth.

100%

of GPs surveyed indicate that without Eggtooth, young people in Hastings would experience a much greater level mental health distress (anxiety, depression, and self-harm).

100%

of GPs surveyed indicated that **long wait times for specialist referrals** is one of the top three biggest challenges for statutory clinicians in providing mental health support in Hastings

68%

of Eggtooth's service users have identified, diagnosed, or suspected neurodiversity (Autism Spectrum Disorder; Attention Deficit Hyperactive Disorder; Dyslexia; Dyspraxia)



SECTION 1.

Value for Money, Volume of Need and Efficacy of the Eggtooth Service

“Eggtooth provides music therapy sessions for my daughter which have been invaluable. My daughter was withdrawn and depressed, and she now seems much happier and will engage in family life. I believe that having this support from Eggtooth has been key to her recovery.”

Parent of Service User

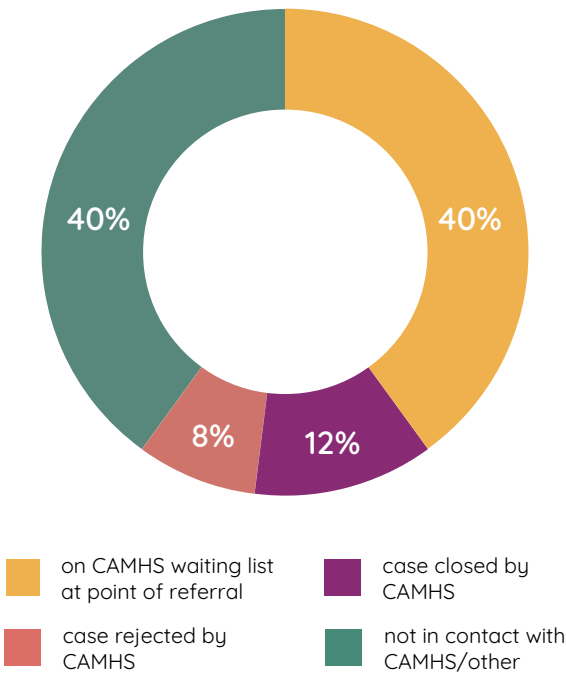
Value for Money, Volume of Need and Efficacy of Eggtooth service

Volume of Need

In Hastings, the demand for mental health support is growing, and placing immense pressure on statutory services, such as GPs and CAMHS. The maximum waiting time for a CAMHS referral varies widely across regions in the UK. In Hastings, young people are usually seen within 6 months of referral. However, for many young people and their families, this wait is too long, and they have to seek alternative forms of mental health support. This is evident in the status of Eggtooth’s service users. 60% of all Eggtooth service users have had some contact with CAHMS, with **40% of clients referred by GPs on a CAMHS waiting list** at point of referral.



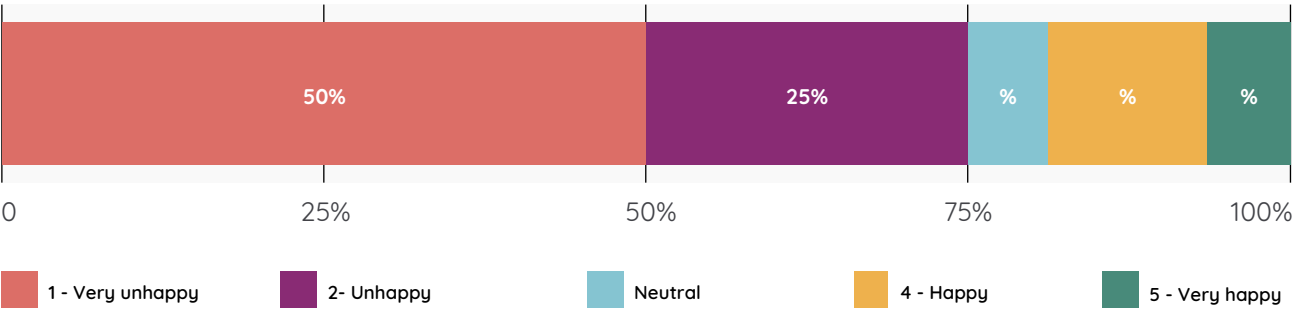
Status of Eggtooth service users:



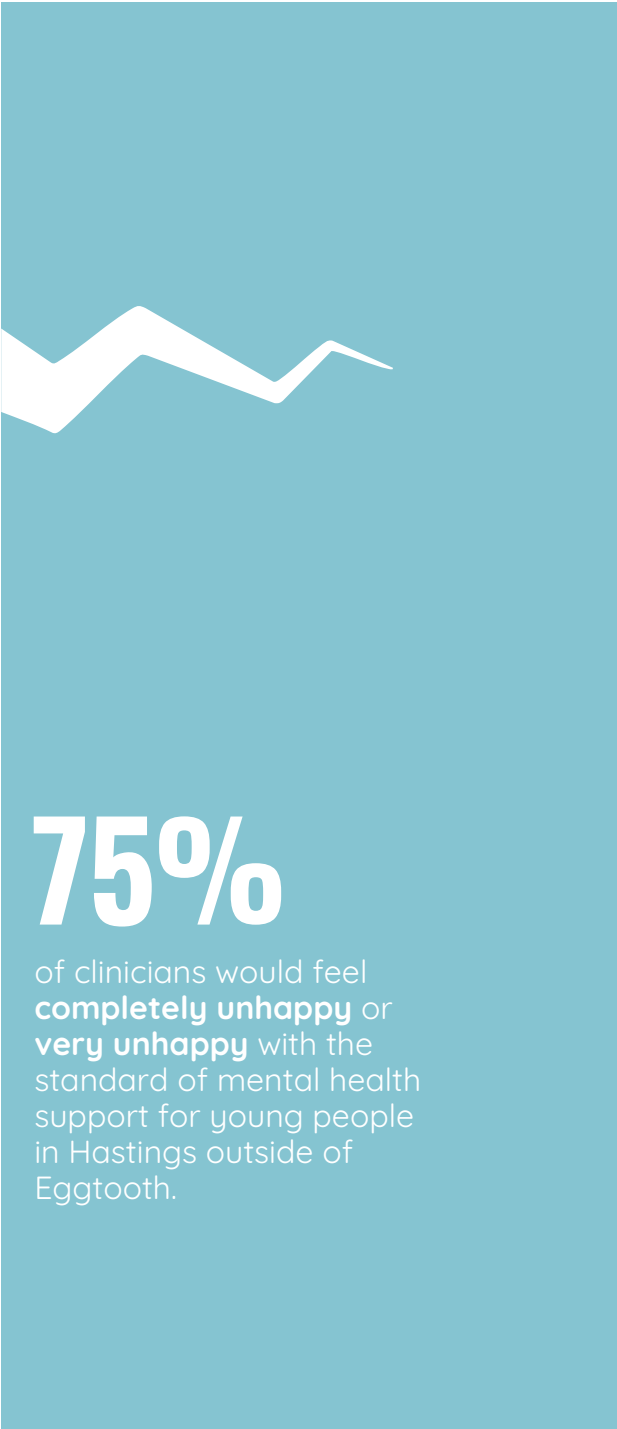
The overrepresentation of individuals using Eggtooth’s service that are waiting for their CAMHS intervention, with their case closed or rejected is, in part, explained by over-burdened and under-resourced statutory services. 100% of local clinicians that were surveyed indicated that **long wait-times for specialist referrals was one of the top three most pressing challenges** that clinicians are facing in providing mental health care for young people in Hastings. 88% of the clinicians also identified either high caseloads and limited capacity or high severity thresholds as one of the three biggest barriers to providing care.

Clinicians in Hastings are currently experiencing high caseloads, but cannot give the appropriate level of care to certain individuals through specialist referrals to young people due to a high severity threshold.

On a scale of 1-10, how happy would you be with the standard of mental health support for young people in Hastings (outside of Eggtooth) if your friend or family member needed treatment?



(Source: AKOU, GP and Clinicians Survey)¹⁰



This can mean that young people are either left waiting without statutory support, or fall through the cracks of service provision. This is further exemplified as 75% of clinicians surveyed indicated that they would feel ‘Unhappy’ or ‘Very Unhappy’ with the standard of mental health support for young people in Hastings, outside of Eggtooth, if a friend or family member needed treatment.

All clinicians that have been surveyed are very clear that they feel that overburdened and under-resourced services in the area need the support of charity and third sector organisations, like Eggtooth, in order to address the volume of need for mental health support in the area. Eggtooth’s service is therefore necessary to the functioning of overall mental health services in Hastings, and the absence of Eggtooth would put much greater strain on already stretched services.

Eggtooth acts as a vital and front-line service in the landscape of mental health services in Hastings, complementing and working in tandem with statutory services in the area to alleviate the mental health crisis in the area. From 2022 to 2024, **Eggtooth has supported 768 young people through the PCN pathway** alone. They have supported hundreds more through their other referral routes.

65%

increase in number of referrals to Eggtooth between 2023 and 2024.

Currently, the average time for individuals on the waiting list for CAMHS in Hastings is 6 months; whereas the maximum wait time for young people accessing Eggtooth services is 4 weeks⁹. Between 2023 and 2024, there was a 65% increase in the number of referrals made to Eggtooth, with the total number of referrals between 2022-2024 totalling to 985. Indeed, 68% of parents feel that due to overstretched resources, Eggtooth provides vital, accessible care for their child who otherwise has little recourse to alternative mental health care.

It is clear that due to a growing overall demand for mental health services in Hastings, Eggtooth's services are concurrently in high demand. Eggtooth remains a crucial resource for young people and families struggling, not only with their mental health, but accessing timely and effective support.

“Eggtooth fills a massive void in the provision of tailor-made support for children and young people with mental health and neurodiversity issues. Without it, we will see more parents/carers in need of further support from their GP, CAMHS and the Emergency Department who are already at breaking point as we all know”

Mental Health Nurse
Practitioner at Station Practice

Value for Money

Eggtooth is a cost-effective alternative to CAMHS referrals. **The average cost of a CAMHS referral is £2,238 per child**, whereas the average cost per 8 weeks of assessment and therapy at Eggtooth, per child, is £775. Eggtooth, therefore, delivers effective mental health support at just 34.6% of the cost of a CAMHS referral. This significant cost saving not only makes Eggtooth a more affordable alternative, but also helps alleviate pressure on CAMHS. With a higher level of resourcing given to Eggtooth, it can be assumed that they will be able to reach a higher number of young people, still at a fraction of the cost of treating the same number of young people through CAMHS.



Eggtooth's strength lies in their ability to provide early intervention and a timely offer for mental health support. 81% of GPs surveyed indicated that they felt that Eggtooth fills gaps in statutory youth mental health services specifically related to early intervention. Whilst around 20% of parents surveyed indicated that their child went on to access further care from CAMHS after their time at Eggtooth; Eggtooth provides a fast, fairly immediate first-line of service for young people who are presenting symptoms at the various stages of poor mental health - from daily anxiety to crisis point.

An interview with an SEN Manager at a local school that co-ordinates with Eggtooth to support young people at the school highlighted that **"once a young person is presenting that they need support...that's usually a point at which they've already reached a crisis. They can't wait on a waiting list for a long time."** In these cases, the school reaches out to Eggtooth first to get support for the young person, as this support is usually "immediate," especially for neurodivergent individuals who have been refused mental health support from CAMHS before their autism or ADHD assessments¹¹.

The projected cost saving from early intervention for mental health cases varies across sources. A study led by Oxford Health NHS Foundation estimated that early community interventions for psychosis could save approximately £63 million in NHS and social costs¹². The Centre for Mental Health estimated that the **childhood mental health crisis could result in over £1 trillion in lost lifetime earnings across the generation**¹³. By reducing waiting times and offering a cost-effective early intervention model, Eggtooth not only supports young people in need but also helps prevent cases from escalating to crisis levels. This, in turn, may alleviate both the short and long-term financial burden on the NHS and wider society.

Efficacy of Service

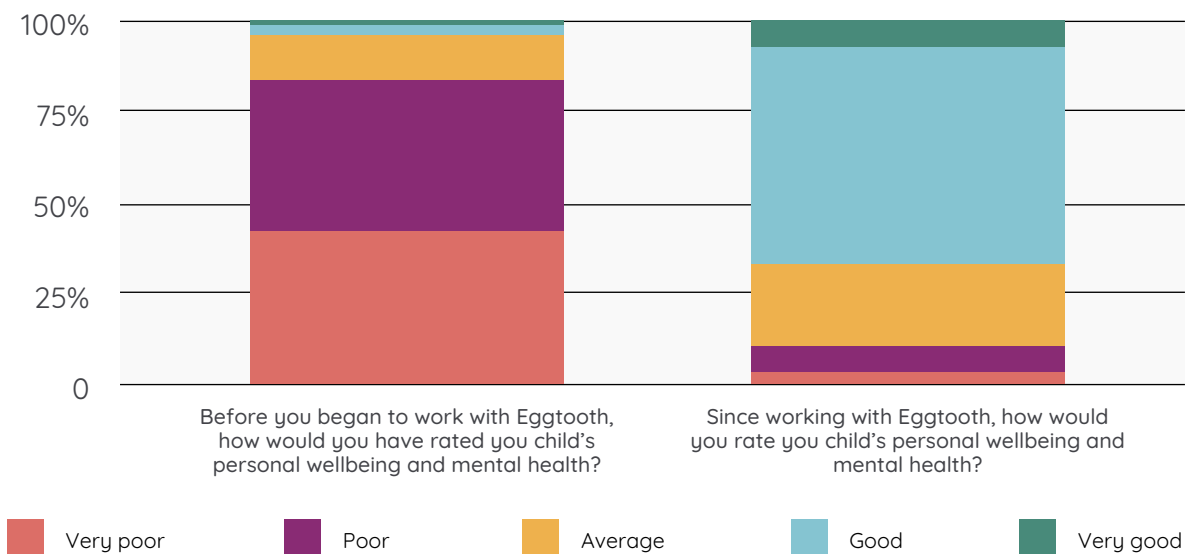
Eggtooth’s service is of a high quality and has been shown to improve mental health outcomes for the young people that they support. It combines traditional therapeutic and creative methods to provide a holistic approach to mental health support. Parents and guardians of young people using the service have indicated that they feel that their child’s mental health has improved greatly since their baseline before using the Eggtooth service.

Here, data shows that **83% of parents surveyed rated their child’s personal wellbeing and mental health as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ before working with Eggtooth.** After working with Eggtooth, 67% of parents rated their child’s mental health as ‘good’ or ‘very good,’ whilst only 10% described their child’s mental health as ‘poor’ or ‘very poor’ following Eggtooth intervention. 62% of parents identified that the main improvements in their child’s mental health following work with Eggtooth were, greater confidence, improved mental wellbeing, and new ways of coping and dealing with the mental health. Others cited that the main improvements were feeling less isolated, and being able to talk more honestly about their mental health. These findings highlight

the significant positive impact Eggtooth has on children’s mental health, with the majority of parents reporting substantial improvements in wellbeing, confidence, and coping strategies. It is clear that working with Eggtooth is an effective alternative route for young people and their families to receive good quality mental health support in Hastings.

Eggtooth plays a vital role in bridging gaps in statutory mental health service provision, offering a high-quality, cost-effective, and time-efficient alternative for children and families in need. By delivering personalised, relational support, Eggtooth reaches those who might otherwise struggle to access timely care, ensuring that children receive the help they need before their challenges escalate. The service’s strong outcomes, as evidenced by improvements in wellbeing, confidence, and coping strategies, demonstrate its effectiveness in addressing mental health concerns where statutory services may fall short. In doing so, Eggtooth not only alleviates pressure on overstretched public services but also provides a crucial, community-driven solution that creates long-term positive change.

Personal wellbeing and mental health before and after working with Eggtooth:



(Source: AKOU, Eggtooth Parents Survey, 2024)¹⁴

SECTION 2.

An Alternative, Creative Offer for Therapy

“We were struggling to find anyone to help us and didn’t know where to turn. Luckily, our Doctor suggested Eggtooth and arranged a referral. My daughter did a weekly session over 10-12 weeks walking with horses. She loved it - she could be herself and talk to her practitioner while walking. There was no stress or pressure.”

Parent of Service User

An Alternative, Creative Offer for Therapy

Bespoke and Personalised Service

Eggtooth's strength lies in offering personalised and bespoke care to young people. Eggtooth's service combines traditional one-to-one therapeutic models with creative therapy and activities, such as music, cooking, art, woodland and walking with horses. 57% of parents surveyed indicate that the biggest differences between Eggtooth's service and statutory services is either more personalised care or the creative, alternative practices that Eggtooth provides.

Referrals come either via GPs for the PCN, schools and statutory services or from individuals through Eggtooth's website.

A referral form is completed, followed by a conversation with a team member to understand the young person's needs. The case is then reviewed in a referral team meeting, which includes safeguarding professionals. The young person is assessed for risk and matched with an appropriate intervention (e.g., cooking, equine therapy, psychotherapy, or music therapy). Once an intervention is decided, the practitioner contacts the parent, and session details are arranged. The sessions are scheduled, tracked via an internal system, and then delivered.

An interview with a local Hastings-based Clinical Psychologist highlighted that CAMHS is under pressure to offer evidence-based interventions through their various pathways, which often results in offers of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) to young people. However, for many young people in the local Hastings area, these pathways do not meet all of their needs.

Eggtooth currently has multiple referral routes for young people seeking support:

- **Primary Care Network (PCN) Referrals** – The most recent route, where a young person visits their GP and is referred for eight funded therapy sessions. This route has unique data-handling processes as referrals come directly from GPs.
- **School Referrals** – Schools can refer students, and Eggtooth may work with them one-on-one or in groups.
- **Virtual School Referrals** – Eggtooth receives referrals from East Sussex's Virtual School, which supports looked-after children.
- **Alternative Provision Referrals** – For children who cannot access mainstream education and require creative educational activities.
- **Kinship Team Referrals** – Supports young people living with relatives other than their parents.
- **Interim Provision Service Referrals** – For young people with complex needs who are out of mainstream education.
- **Private (Fee-Paying) Referrals** – Families with the means to pay can make independent referrals and access Eggtooth's services through this route.

Consequently, despite an emphasis on evidence-based interventions, there will be limited effectiveness if CAMHS cannot get young people to remain engaged in the process¹⁵.

However, whilst some practitioners offering more traditional therapy at Eggtooth are drawing on evidence-based interventions and offering evidence based therapies, some creative practitioners, by definition, are not¹⁶.

Despite this, by offering alternative modes of intervention, such as a safe one-to-one relationship with a practitioner, or a creative outlet, Eggtooth is able to offer individualised care based on the needs of the young person. The efficacy of this offer is reflected in the data. Whilst many types of creative therapy are not evidence based practices, parents of young people undertaking creative therapy with Eggtooth feel that their wellbeing has improved significantly.

69%

of parents report their child's personal wellbeing and mental health as either **good** or **very good** following sessions.



Before working with Eggtooth, 87% of parents whose child has since undertaken creative therapy reported that their child's personal wellbeing and mental health was either 'poor' or 'very poor.' Since the creative sessions with Eggtooth, 69% of parents reported that their child's personal wellbeing and mental health was either 'good' or 'very good.' Only 8% indicated that their child's mental health remained poor or very poor¹⁷.

These findings suggest that while traditional evidence-based interventions like CBT remain the standard within CAMHS, alternative approaches offered by Eggtooth can play a crucial role in supporting young people who may not engage effectively with conventional talking therapies. By prioritising individualised care and creative interventions, Eggtooth provides a valuable component to existing mental health services, which ultimately addresses certain gaps in provision, and successfully meets the diverse needs of local young people.

In this case, it is also important to not recognise Eggtooth only as alternative care for individuals who remain on long waiting lists for CAMHS; but a valuable and effective offer for many young people in Hastings who may not seek help from statutory services.

Neurodivergent Individuals

The creative and flexible approach that Eggtooth offers is a crucial component to the support that they are able to offer to neurodivergent individuals. **68% of the young people that Eggtooth support have identified, diagnosed, or suspected neurodiversity** (Autism, ADHD, ADD etc.).

A quarter of Eggtooth practitioners surveyed felt that without Eggtooth, effective support for all neurodivergent individuals in Hastings would not be possible through CAMHS, and the CBT and other modes of therapy that it offers. Interviews with both the local school SEN manager and the Hastings-based Clinical Psychologist highlight this point. In their experience, many neurodivergent young people in their care have been refused support from CAMHS if the individual is on a waiting list for an autism assessment, which can take a maximum of up to five years to get¹⁸. This relates back to the issue of high severity thresholds and the various criteria set by CAMHS regarding the requirements to access their support¹⁹.

As a result, neurodivergent individuals can be left without recourse to statutory support for months or years, which in part, explains the overrepresentation of neurodivergent individuals in Eggtooth's care.

However, Eggtooth's holistic and tailored approach to mental health support is also important for neurodivergent

“Eggtooth’s deep understanding of how to engage with neurodivergent children and families plus their personalised approach and the respect given made a huge difference to my daughters mental health.”

Parent of Eggtooth Service User, 2024

individuals who may not engage fully with the traditional modes of therapy, such as CBT or group therapy offered by CAMHS. In conversation with the local school SEN manager, she noted that group therapy offered by CAMHS, for instance, has not been appropriate for some neurodivergent students at her school as they simply do not feel comfortable talking in groups²⁰.

Similarly, though CBT may be suitable for some neurodivergent individuals, the flexibility in approach that Eggtooth practitioners operate under allows them to individually tailor an intervention plan to a young person. Similarly, the Hastings-based Clinical Psychologist also noted the importance of setting and environment for neurodivergent young people accessing support.

The setting for CAMHS in Hastings at the Conquest Hospital is clinical and medicalised. Features of a clinical setting such as bright lights or loud medical equipment may make the space inaccessible for neurodivergent young people with sensory issues²¹.

Alternatively, Eggtooth provides multiple environments for mental health and therapeutic support, such as walking with horses, which is responsive to the needs of the young person and neuro affirmative spaces. This adaptability ensures that neurodivergent young people can access

68%

of the young people that Eggtooth support have identified, diagnosed, or suspected neurodiversity.

support in a way that feels safe, comfortable, and conducive to their needs. By offering a range of therapeutic environments and approaches, Eggtooth is able to address barriers to care that traditional services may not be able to accommodate.

In addition to the range of therapeutic approaches, individuals are also able to attend Social Sundays. Launched by Eggtooth in May 2023, they offer a welcoming weekly social space for neurodivergent adults, whether pre- or post-diagnosis. With an average attendance of around 15 people, they provide an opportunity for individuals to relax, be themselves, and connect with others in a supportive environment. Each session, of which there have been over **60** since launch seeing nearly **70** adults attending in total, includes an optional creative activity and is facilitated by two experienced Eggtooth Practitioners.

The benefits of Social Sundays extend beyond providing a social outlet; they are seen by many as a safe and supportive environment and an invaluable resource to help prevent social isolation at difficult times. Parents have reported significant improvements in their children's confidence and social skills. One parent noted, 'Our son has only recently joined the Sunday afternoon group, but we have already seen a difference in his self confidence and his desire to leave his bedroom to attend the group'.

“For a young autistic person whose world can shrink with how he feels - it's been nice for him to connect with the creative care and he began to open up and deal with things.”

Parent of Eggtooth Service User, 2024

“Most people are neurodiverse, but the session doesn't exclude those who are neurodivergent. Everybody is so friendly. I have met amazing people, the kind of people you don't normally meet at a bus stop - like future inventors and mad scientists. All of the artists are very talented and everybody has something wonderful about them.”

Social Sundays attendee

Eggtooth's person-centred and flexible approach to mental health support fills a critical gap in existing statutory services, particularly for neurodivergent young people and those who struggle to engage with conventional therapeutic models. By integrating creative and relational interventions with more traditional therapeutic practices, Eggtooth ensures that young people receive support that is both effective and accessible. The data highlights the tangible impact of this approach, with significant improvements in wellbeing reported by parents.

Crucially, Eggtooth is not merely a stopgap for those on long waiting lists but a vital and distinct service that meets the diverse needs of young people in Hastings—offering a level of care, understanding, and adaptability that many statutory services are currently unable to provide. However, a further study must be conducted to understand the outcomes of Eggtooth's practice, specifically on neurodivergent individuals in their care.

Eggtooth offers a weekly Parent Support Group for parents and carers of neurodivergent young people. Further information about its impact can be found in [section 3](#).

SECTION 3.

Local Embeddedness and Local Trust in Eggtooth

“Through working with the Parents Group, I now feel able to advocate for my son until he is able to advocate for himself, and to ensure that his mental health is protected from being damaged as much as possible in a society and education system which do not automatically support neurodiverse people.”

Parent of Service User

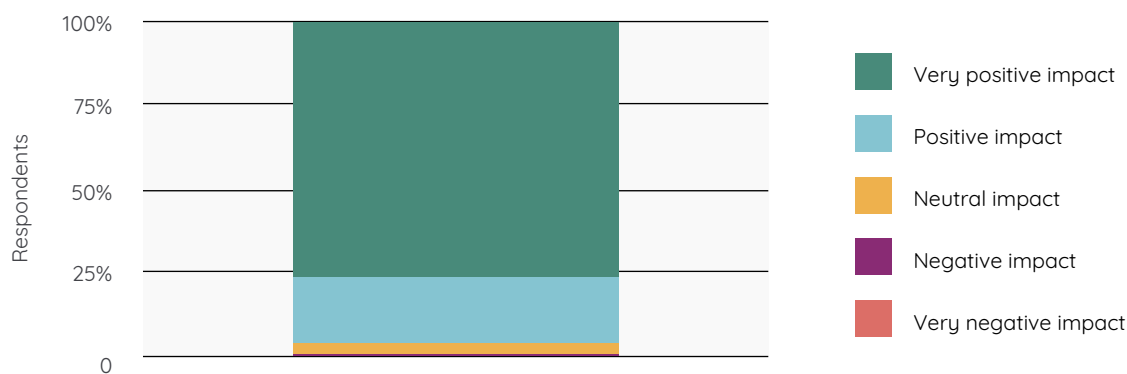
Local Embeddedness and Local Trust in Eggtooth

Eggtooth plays an important role as a trusted service provider and employer in the local community. Through their work with families, schools, and local creative practitioners, they have embedded themselves into the local community, which allows them to create an impact that reaches further than the individuals and families that are receiving mental health support.

This sentiment is reflected by 96% of all stakeholders surveyed, who rate Eggtooth's impact on the community as 'positive' or 'very positive.'

The strength of Eggtooth's networks in the local area has enabled them to develop collaborative, trusting relationships with partners. Their connections with local families, schools, and creative professionals have not only strengthened their ability to deliver tailored mental health support but have also contributed to the wider wellbeing in the community.

How would you rate the impact Eggtooth has had on the community in Hastings?



(Source: AKOU Parents and Practitioners Surveys)²²

Impact on Families

Eggtooth recognises the crucial role that families and familial support systems play in shaping the wellbeing of young people. As part of Eggtooth's holistic approach to mental health support, they provide essential resources to help parents and caregivers navigate these issues. As well as offering family therapy and counselling services, Eggtooth works towards supporting families to build resilience as they collectively work through the mental health difficulties that their child is working through.

Practitioners surveyed indicated that the top three ways that they personally work towards supporting local parents are:

1. Supporting parents in understanding their child's mental health needs
2. Providing emotional support to families and guardians
3. Organising community events and family support groups²³

The Parent Support Group, is a weekly offering for parents and carers of neurodivergent young people (such as those diagnosed with autism and ADHD). Supporting 60 families monthly it provides an important, dedicated space for parents to learn about how to navigate their child's mental health difficulties, as well as a safe and comfortable space to discuss worries, concerns and celebrate successes. It allows them to connect with other parents and carers going through similar experiences, and provides access to resources and

60

families are supported monthly via the Parent Support Group.

“The Parents Support group is also a huge help to my mental wellbeing. As someone who has struggled with depression and long-term illness, having people to talk to and unload the ongoing issues has reduced my anxiety and helped with my long-term mental health. I know losing the group would have a hugely negative impact on everyone who attends it. We all need the support and advice that the group provides.”

Parent Support Group Participant, 2024²⁴

information so they can better support their children. Parents in the Support Group have fed back that the group is an important resource in supporting their own mental health, as they navigate the often difficult and isolating experience of supporting a child with mental health difficulties and neurodiversity. Through their outreach and support, Eggtooth creates a ripple effect that benefits parents and guardians who are not directly receiving therapeutic or creative support. By helping to strengthen the resilience and wellbeing of parents and caregivers, families can gain the tools, confidence, and emotional support to manage their challenges. Eggtooth's positive impact extends beyond the individual service user, contributing to a broader sense of overall family wellbeing.

“In short, this group has given me a sense of hope and optimism through the empowerment that only education and community solidarity can bring. I was stressed and anxious for my family members all the time, before. Now I feel supported and, with the knowledge that there is a community of people who understand my precise situation and are able and willing to help/advise me, my anxiety is all but gone.”

Parent Support Group Participant, 2024

Work Alongside Local Schools

Eggtooth extends its reach in the community through strong partnerships with local schools. These networks enable them to support a greater number of young people in familiar and accessible environments. By working closely with school staff, they can identify emerging mental health needs early, provide targeted interventions, and create a network of support that reinforces their impact beyond individual therapy sessions.

Currently, Eggtooth works with 15 schools, and coordinates with SEN and Inclusion departments to create a coherent, and joined up system of care for young people experiencing difficulties. The SEN Manager of a local school emphasised Eggtooth's ability to work within the constraints of stretched school resources, while still providing crucial support to vulnerable young people. The trust built through strong communication and collaboration with schools and families means that Eggtooth is able to stretch

their reach beyond mental health support. For instance, the SEN Manager noted that Eggtooth goes beyond traditional service delivery by arranging transport for young people to attend therapeutic activities, or providing sessions within schools for young people who are unable to come into Eggtooth's venues. Despite the additional pressure this flexibility creates, Eggtooth remains dedicated to liaising effectively with schools and families to prioritise the needs of each young person that they work with²⁵.



Within the context of a large number of people needing mental health support in schools, the trusted relationships that Eggtooth has developed with school staff, and their robust recruitment and safeguarding policies, means that staff allow them to work independently with students. This helps ease pressure on already stretched school resources while ensuring students can still access the support they need²⁶.

Similarly, the SEN Manager highlighted that Eggtooth provides a visible safe space for young people in the local area who have felt unsafe and were unable to get into school, so instead went to an Eggtooth Hub to be

with a trusted adult or practitioner²⁷.

It is clear that Eggtooth's work in the local community extends beyond structured sessions, offering a crucial safety net for vulnerable young people. Their presence as a trusted and accessible service means that schools, families, and young people themselves view Eggtooth as a reliable source of support in times of crisis.

Eggtooth have worked to embed themselves in the community though developing strong relationships with schools, families and young people, and thus create an environment where young people feel comfortable seeking help.

Under-served Communities and Raising Awareness

Eggtooth's visibility in the local community means that they are able to engage with young people who would otherwise find accessing mental health support challenging.

As discussed in relation to their support of neurodivergent individuals, Eggtooth provides alternative care to individuals for whom traditional therapy is ineffective or

inaccessible. 63% of clinicians surveyed indicate that Eggtooth fills a crucial gap of statutory services in reaching marginalised children or under-served communities²⁸.

Though it is clear from the data that the main barrier to accessing care in Hastings is related to a lack of resources and long wait-times for statutory support, recent research shows that nationally, the stigma associated with receiving mental health support is also one of the biggest barriers to getting help²⁹.

As the local Clinical Psychologist noted, as Eggtooth offers a mix of creative and targeted therapeutic services, young people are able to receive mental health support through Eggtooth or go to The Nest (one of Eggtooth's therapeutic hubs in Hastings) which may be less stigmatising than informing friends or family that they are seeking support through CAMHS³⁰.

Though further research is needed to understand the impact of Eggtooth's work in changing local attitudes towards receiving mental health support in Hastings, it is clear that Eggtooth is striving to create a safe, accessible service for all to receive support.



63%

of clinicians say Eggtooth fills a crucial gap of statutory services in reaching marginalised children or under-served communities.

A Future without Eggtooth?

As part of our research, we asked all stakeholders to consider a scenario in which Eggtooth ceased operation. They were invited to reflect on what impact they believed would occur in the wider community as a result. 100% of Eggtooth Practitioners, 100% of Clinicians and 74% of parents indicated that one of the most significant impacts would be a much greater level of mental health distress for young people in Hastings, leading ultimately to crisis in the community overall.

Specifically, parents, practitioners and clinicians cited that they felt that there would be a higher level of instances of self-harm, depression, and anxiety for young people³¹. Alongside this, 68% of parents noted that they felt that local support for young people would be more inaccessible due to long wait-times and reduced capacity in statutory services.

These findings underline the crucial role Eggtooth plays in the community, not only in providing direct support to young people but also in preventing wider crises in mental health provision. The overwhelming concern from stakeholders highlights that without Eggtooth, many young people would face worsening mental health challenges, with fewer accessible alternatives for support.

In a landscape where statutory services are already overstretched, Eggtooth acts as a crucial safety net, bridging gaps in provision and ensuring that vulnerable young people receive the timely, high-quality care they need. Stakeholders feel that their absence would leave a significant void, with profound consequences for both individuals and the wider community.



Concluding Note

Conclusion

Research presented in this report indicates that currently, Eggtooth is performing a vital role in supporting the mental health and wellbeing of young people in Hastings.

Eggtooth is an essential service that fills critical gaps in the mental health care landscape for young people in Hastings. Through their timely, accessible, and cost-effective support, Eggtooth is working to address the growing demand for mental health services whilst easing the strain on overburdened statutory services like CAMHS. The positive outcomes demonstrated through improved mental health and wellbeing, as well as the reduction in the need for more intensive, crisis-driven care, highlight the long-term impact of Eggtooth's approach. Eggtooth's work not only benefits individual young people and their families but also contributes to the overall efficiency and sustainability of the local mental health system.

A creative and bespoke approach to therapy provides a valuable alternative to traditional mental health services, offering personalised care that is not only accessible but highly effective for a diverse range of young people. Eggtooth addresses the specific needs of neurodivergent individuals and those who may struggle to engage with more structured therapeutic approaches like CBT by integrating creative therapies with conventional methods. The service's adaptability ensures that young people, particularly neurodivergent individuals, receive support in an environment that is conducive to their wellbeing. With strong evidence showing improvements in mental health and wellbeing, Eggtooth plays a crucial role in filling gaps in the statutory mental health provision, offering a much-

needed solution for those who may otherwise fall through the cracks. It is clear that Eggtooth's holistic, person-centered approach is essential in meeting the evolving mental health needs of young people in Hastings.

Eggtooth's impact extends far beyond the individual service users it directly supports. By embedding itself within the local community, building strong relationships with families, schools, and local practitioners, Eggtooth has created a ripple effect that strengthens overall community wellbeing. Their holistic approach to mental health, which includes supporting families and offering flexible, accessible services, ensures that young people receive the care they need while fostering resilience in their caregivers.

The trust and collaboration that Eggtooth has developed with local schools further amplifies their reach and effectiveness, making them a crucial resource in the fight against mental health challenges for young people. In an area where statutory services are overburdened, Eggtooth plays an indispensable role in filling gaps and providing timely, tailored support.

The overall sentiment from stakeholders underlines the importance of Eggtooth's work, and without their presence, the local community would likely face a crisis in mental health provision. Eggtooth's continued existence is vital to maintaining the wellbeing of young people and families in Hastings, ensuring that support remains accessible, responsive, and impactful.

Appendix

Methodology

Eggtooth commissioned AKOU to evaluate and report on the impact of their services on young people in Hastings.

Over five months, we have engaged with **137** key stakeholders through surveys and interviews in order to develop a robust dataset through which we are able to assess the efficacy, reach, and impact of Eggtooth's work in the local area.

We have also worked with the Eggtooth team to access internally gathered financial and feedback data to supplement the information collected across the last five months. Stakeholder outreach was conducted through Eggtooth's established channels to ensure broad and relevant participation due to the short-span of the research.

Secondary Data

Further place and social context desk research was conducted within the team to contextualise the data gathered within Hastings and nationally.

About AKOU

AKOU is an independent research and social impact agency. Since 2017 we've been supporting teams and third sector organisations across the UK to better demonstrate how they make positive change in the lives of their service users.

Our experienced team apply a range of qualitative and quantitative research methods to help our clients to better tell their impact stories.

You can find out how we prove can the good you do at akou.co.uk.

Important Note

This report was authored and developed by AKOU for Eggtooth. It is intended for general informational purposes only; no responsibility can be accepted for its contents being used by any third party.

The findings are based on the assumptions and data outlined throughout the report. While the sample sizes are sufficient for analysis, it should be noted that the responses do not cover every individual engaged with Eggtooth's services; therefore, the reasonable assumption has been made that the results are representative of the total.

The findings should be considered valid for a limited period and reviewed at regular intervals. All references and sources used in the development of this report are cited in the appendix or footnotes.

Published: March 2025

End Notes

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