

Trigger warning: discussions of suicide



Response magazine
for supporters of
Rethink Mental Illness

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My gift in my Will is my way to pay that forward. I want other people to be treated the same way.

Teresa

Inside...

The power of
in-memory
fundraising



Rethink
Mental
Illness.

Response is produced by the Fundraising team at Rethink Mental Illness.

Call us to chat about supporting Rethink Mental Illness on **0207 840 3131** or email us at: **SupporterCare@rethink.org**

Have you got an amazing fundraising tale to tell? Email your photos and story to **Events@rethink.org**

If you'd like to share your own experience of living with mental illness, then please send your story to **LivedExperience@rethink.org**



Leading the way to a better quality of life for everyone severely affected by mental illness.

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THANK YOU

**for making
a difference**

Hello, and welcome to your latest issue of Response magazine. We're so grateful for your ongoing support, and we hope that the stories and articles in this edition will highlight the real difference that your donations are making.

I also wanted to take the opportunity to introduce myself - my name is Tori, and I recently joined the Fundraising team at Rethink Mental Illness. In just a short time, I've discovered what an amazing charity this is. It's full of passionate and inspiring people who are determined to bring about meaningful change to improve the lives of those severely affected by mental illness. I'm so thrilled to be part of the team.

In this edition, you will find some of the vital work we have put in motion this summer, as well as updated ways to support us. We have been working hard on both our In-Memory and Membership offers to ensure your support has a long-lasting impact and you are kept up to date on what your donations fund.

We spotlight a unique comedy workshop that provided a creative outlet for at-risk men, and discuss the importance of suicide prevention and bereavement services. Please be aware there are discussions of suicide in this issue.

We also feature two important updates to our campaigning efforts where we discuss the shortfalls of the Right Care, Right Person initiative, and how we are implementing the Black Mental Health Manifesto.

It's thanks to you that we can continue to do all of this. Your generosity enables us to provide services that help thousands of people every year and campaign to secure lasting change.

So, from everyone at Rethink Mental Illness and our service users, thank you for your continued support.

All the best,

Tori Trigg

Individual Giving Manager - Fundraising Team



Leaving a Lasting Legacy: The Power of In-Memory Fundraising

Leave an unbreakable community of support in your Will

Being severely affected by mental illness can make our world smaller, limiting our interactions with friends, family, neighbours, and colleagues. However, we need each other now more than ever. Today, community takes on various forms, but regardless of how we access it, it plays a crucial role in our recovery and enables us to lead fulfilling lives.

Leaving a gift in your Will can help us expand our reach and build an even bigger community of support, ensuring that no one faces their struggles alone. Together, we can transform lives and offer solace to those in need.

Your legacy helps that community of care grow and get stronger, so it can never be broken. By leaving a gift in your Will, you become part of a small, essential group of givers making sure that everyone severely affected by mental illness is surrounded by people who understand and care.

"My gift in my Will is my way to pay that forward. I want other people to be treated the same way. And it's not just at a local or individual level that I want Rethink to be able to change lives. They're all about positive change and making things better for people affected by mental illness."

- Rev. Teresa Rutterford

Remembering helps

We want to support you in honouring your loved one's memory and preserving their legacy, while also encouraging reflection on how you wish to be remembered. The act of remembering is powerful. Remembering is not just a tribute to the past, but a way to shape a brighter future. Remembering helps us honour the true essence of our loved ones, navigate the depths of grief, foster understanding and empathy in society, and ultimately pave the way for positive change.

The profound impact of grief can often reshape our perspective on end-of-life planning and how we wish to be remembered, sparking a deeper reflection on the legacy we leave behind. Join us as we take you on a life-changing journey from providing a supportive space to grieve and feel less alone, to offering guidance on fundraising in honour of your loved one. We are here to walk alongside you every step of the way. Your unique journey of support starts here.

By including a gift in your Will or fundraising in memory of a loved one, you leave a community of support and a legacy of compassion and solidarity to ensure that no one faces mental illness alone. Let your legacy be a beacon of hope and inspiration for generations to come.

"My son's death changed my perception of writing my Will and the need to plan ahead. So many decisions were taken away from my son; it was unfair, and I want my family to know what I want when the time comes." – Rethink Mental Illness supporter.

If you would like to support, remember, or build your own community of support, please reach out to our team at RethinkRemembers@rethink.org, LegacyInfo@rethink.org, or call us at 020 7840 3131.



“
Rethink Mental Illness
saw all of us, my son,
carers, me, through
the whole situation.

- Rethink Mental Illness supporter

Unique journey of support

33 years and beyond

We are honoured to share that we are one of three charities left a gift in the Will of beloved author and illustrator Raymond Briggs CBE, a lifetime member of our charity.

The power of community-building stretches far beyond the confines of time, leaving a lasting legacy that resonates with the unique needs of our supporters. One such remarkable example is the inspiring decision of Raymond Briggs to remember Rethink Mental Illness in his Will, a testament to the enduring impact of building meaningful connections within our community.

Raymond Briggs, who died in 2022, was best known for classic children's books such as *Father Christmas*, *Fungus the Bogeyman* and *The Snowman*. He also wrote graphic novels for adults, like *Ethel & Ernest* and *Time for Lights Out*. His books have sold over 8.5 million copies worldwide in 24 languages, with many successfully adapted for the screen.

His connection to our cause dates back to the early seventies, coinciding with when the charity was founded as the National Schizophrenia Fellowship. Brigg's wife, Jean Taprell Clarke, lived with schizophrenia and references to the challenges of those times can be found in the pages of Raymond's work.

Jean, also a talented artist, sadly died in 1973 of leukaemia (a form of blood cancer), but Raymond's connection to our cause remained strong, and he became a lifetime member of the charity in 1991. Rethink Mental Illness will benefit from Briggs' legacy, alongside fellow charities Blood Cancer UK and Parkinson's UK.

“

The work of Raymond Briggs is instantly recognisable and treasured by us all, and we are honoured to be part of his legacy.

- Mark Winstanley, Chief Executive of Rethink Mental Illness



Our updated membership offer

In June we launched our refreshed membership offer, and we've been working hard to ensure it offers good value through a variety of useful benefits and regular, timely information.



What's new?

The same offer for all

Our membership offer now has two pricing tiers; waged (£27 annually) and unwaged (£6 annually). All members will receive Your Voice, our member magazine, in the post three times a year.

Welcome pack

New members are sent a branded tote bag, membership card, and information about the organisation and the wide variety of work we do.

Informative webinars

Our quarterly webinars cover topics like policy, advocacy and social inclusion, with our most recent focused on influencing the new government on mental illness. Members will receive invitations to these webinars via email, and each webinar is recorded and shared in the members section of our website afterwards if you're unable to attend live.

Creative Corner

We know many of our members are very creative, so as a member you can now submit your art or poetry to be showcased in a special section of our website or Your Voice magazine.

As a member you will be part of our community, facing mental illness together.

Through membership you can get involved in our work in a variety of different ways, at a level that suits you. If you have any questions about membership you can reach the team by calling **0121 522 7016** Monday to Friday 9:30am to 4:30pm or email us at membership@rethink.org

Members' Day

National Members' Day is our bi-annual day for all members to hear inspiring speakers from across the mental health sector, find out more about our work as a charity and to meet and spend valuable time with other members.

We'll also be presenting our Pringle Awards and Janey Antoniou Award which recognise individuals, groups and services that have worked tirelessly to improve the lives of those living with mental illness.

The day will be held as a hybrid event this year on Saturday 16 November at the Holiday Inn in Regent's Park, London and online. **To find out more, sign up to be a member at rethink.org/membership and claim your free ticket!**

Jake's taking on

100 marathons in 100 days!

My name's Jake, and I'm running 100 marathons in 100 days to raise money for Rethink Mental Illness. Why? That's a very good question.

Growing up, I always knew I would do a physically wild challenge. Having nothing to do and twiddling my thumbs just isn't for me. I like to be active and stay busy.

A few years back, while doing a cheffing gig on the Isle of Skye, I would join my hard-as-nails colleagues to do 10km mountain runs. That gave me the confidence to try a full road marathon. I didn't take care of myself though and just ran for 20 miles before even sipping some water, so the last six miles were just me screaming! But it showed me I had the endurance to do something big.

And then I read a book by Ross Edgley, the man who swam around Great Britain, that talked about Tendai Monks who do 1,000 marathons in 1,000 days. And that was my lightbulb moment.

I'm not athletic. I can't get a sub three hour marathon or anything, that's not me. But if you give me a point A to point B, no matter how long it takes me, I'll get it done.

So, last September I took on 30 marathons in 30 days. And I completed it! But I'll be honest, it was on those long runs that my mental health came to light. I had so much time to think, and it became obvious that it's something I've been neglecting for years.


My road to 100

I'll be kicking off this wild adventure at **the Dublin Marathon** on 27 October 2024.

And two other organised marathons I'll be taking part in will be **the Athens Marathon** on 10 November and **the Valencia Marathon** on 1 December - it'll be so exciting travelling around and ticking off such iconic events.

The remaining 97 marathons will be me stomping around my home of Cheltenham during the autumn and winter months. I can't wait to test myself and get into the daily ritual of work-run-eat-rest-repeat.

But the theme of this challenge is to spread the word about talking about mental health. So if you'd like to follow my journey or join me on one of my many runs, check out my Instagram [@jakeburnhampt](https://www.instagram.com/jakeburnhampt)



Then my mental health got worse after the challenge. I'd bigged up those marathons so much that, once they were over, I had nothing to hide me from my negative thoughts anymore. And so I spiralled into a thought pattern of, 'I'm never going to not feel like this' and 'what am I trying to not feel like?' and 'why am I trying to be something else?' and 'what's really bothering you?'

All these thoughts attacked the 'I'm all good' walls I'd built around me for years and I no longer had the energy to keep them up.

Luckily, in my job as a personal trainer back then, I opened up to someone I was working with about the thoughts I was feeling. And together we agreed I needed to talk to someone – quick sharp!

I thought I had the tools to fix any problem in my mind. Going to therapy has shown me I didn't, but it's helped me gather new tools to manage my mental health.

Speaking to that person in my gym, sharing what I was thinking to a human being, changed my life. And Rethink Mental Illness has a fantastic set of peer support groups all over the country that allow people to do what I did – share what they're going through with like-minded people. It's a crucial service.

That's why this 100 marathons in 100 days fundraiser has come about. I feel like I'm in a good place right now and I want to take on an even bigger challenge for a charity that does such great work. I want to push myself and have an adventure. I want to show people, no matter how cliché it sounds these days, that being prepared to be vulnerable about your mental health, to the right people, can improve your life. You don't have to fix everything on your own.

Spur Jake on with a donation on his [JustGiving page](#).

If you're feeling inspired why not sign up for our London 10 Peaks Challenge? Mark World Mental Health Day on 10 October with friends and family or go solo as you discover the hills of leafy outer London. **[Find out more.](#)**

Service Spotlight:



Suicide bereavement and prevention

Trigger warning:
This article contains
discussions of suicide

The impact of suicide on the loved ones left behind is devastating and vast. Gemma, who manages suicide bereavement services across the country, speaks of the effects of suicide and how Rethink Mental Illness can help. It's clear that prevention and postvention programs can be life changing, and Angie brings her passion for community support work and expertise in comedy together to create an engaging and uplifting workshop for at-risk men.

Gemma Bessant manages suicide bereavement services offering emotional and practical support across Surrey, Gloucester and Swindon. The team can support with organising funerals, inquests, counselling, peer support, suicide prevention and signposting to other helpful services. Gemma's team includes counsellors, suicide bereavement workers with their own lived experience and even an ex-police officer, so no matter what you're facing, the team can help. She said:

"Those left behind after suicide often feel guilty or responsible in some way. Everyone will experience the loss differently, and some people develop PTSD, anxiety disorders or suicidal thoughts. There's still a huge stigma attached to these conditions, which forces people into isolation. Our peer support services are a great way of overcoming this, and people find a lot of comfort in connecting with others who have had similar experiences."

“ Comedy, as an artform, can be a great way of working through trauma.”

A co-produced comedy course funded by North West London Integrated Care Board (ICB) provided that vital connection. Through the Health Services Journal (HSJ) award-winning North West London Suicide Prevention Programme, the course was developed and led by comedian Angie Belcher in partnership with two recovery colleges. The course was not advertised as a suicide prevention programme, but through comedy tools, the men were able to open up and explore their mental health in a new and creative way.

When asked more about what the course involved, Angie said:

“The first few sessions looked like group therapy – a lot of them were quite anxious to begin with so we focused on building relationships. We would talk about the bits of their lives they wanted to share through comedy, which as an artform can be a great way of working through trauma. I like to think of comedy like time travel – if you could go back in time to that situation, what would you do differently?”

We would go through the fundamentals of comedy, like how to write a joke and how to perform it as if you’ve just stepped on stage and thought of it on the spot. Once they were feeling more confident, I’d start ‘tricking’ them onto the stage with games! They all worked on a five-minute stand-up routine, and I’d give them tips and advice to improve. By the end of the program, they were all standing on stage at The Comedy Store, central London.

The feedback was fantastic, and some of the men said they used to pick up drugs, but now they pick up comedy and attend open mic nights. We’re now planning suicide prevention comedy workshops in Bristol, Exeter and Estonia!”

If you have been bereaved by suicide or are having difficult thoughts, **know that you are not alone.** We have a range of services and support groups designed to support you with whatever you are facing.

**Find out more about our
services and groups at
rethink.org**

A close-up portrait of a woman with long, light brown hair, wearing black-rimmed glasses and a denim jacket over a blue patterned shirt. She has a slight smile and is looking directly at the camera. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

Emma's story



**You're in a dark tunnel,
but the end is near and
there is light.**

Trigger warning: discussions of depression and attempted suicide

After an episode of depression and overwhelming suicidal thoughts, Emma contacted the crisis team for support. With the help from her family, the wellbeing team and Rethink Mental Illness' online community, Emma overcame the dark times.

Last year, I took the plunge of starting a degree to enhance my career. I wanted to make something of myself, wear that graduation gown, have that feeling of achievement and feel proud of myself. As I told people the news, some would say: "but you will not cope, you will have another mental breakdown, how will you fit it all in?"

I work full time, I'm a mum of two girls and have a home with two dogs and a loving husband. I wanted to prove that I could do it, but truth be told, my body could not cope with the stresses of it all.

I felt lower as the weeks went on - crying, not wanting to be around people, ringing in sick at work... It hit me driving to university that I needed to end it all. I was hysterical and had this deep heavy feeling on my heart. The pure sadness overtook my body. I needed this pain to stop.

I swerved up the curb and went to drive into a lamp post. At that moment, I didn't care who'd be hurt by my actions or leaving my family behind, but something did stop me as I slammed the breaks. I needed urgent help and rang the 111-crisis team but thought that I'd be sectioned or have my children taken away from me. I knew I needed professional help, but didn't know where to start.

With support from 111, I managed to bring my heightened self to a calmer place and drove home. My family was supportive, I got help from the GP (General Practitioner) and mental health team. I was offered online group CBT (cognitive behavioural therapy) from my GP which was great as I didn't need to be in a room or have my camera on. I could just listen to other people's stories and how they coped. Rethink Mental Illness has really helped me see that I'm not alone by sharing different stories too.

“
I soon got to realise I wasn't alone - so many people live through this. Some people recover - it is a slow process, but you do get there.

I like to think of it as if you're on a journey - that you're in a dark tunnel but the end is near and there is light, the light expands and you start to feel more happiness, self-worth and warmth. We are all human and it's okay to get help, and I know now having these thoughts is a way of our bodies telling us it's all too much.

I hope that anyone who reads this knows they are worth it and that their life is worth saving.

If you or someone you know is struggling with depression or suicidal thoughts, know that we are here to help. Find support at [rethink.org](https://www.rethink.org)

Is Right Care, Right Person *working?*

Last year, police forces across the country announced that they were changing the way they respond to 999 calls where someone needs urgent mental health support. They called this initiative 'Right Care, Right Person', and it aims to ensure those experiencing a mental health crisis are getting appropriate support in a timely manner.

However, there are inconsistencies across the country about when and how the police will respond to someone in mental distress. The necessary plans and resources for health services to cover the gap left by the police are not yet in place. This lack of integrated services is leading to tragic and avoidable deaths.

Right Care, Right Person is a framework for the police to decide what the appropriate action is when someone calls them in mental distress. It states that the only time police response is warranted is when there is an immediate threat of harm, or a potential crime. This framework was created because the police acknowledged that they are not always the right people to attend when someone is in mental distress (which we agree with), and because they could save a lot of police time by not responding to these calls.

This framework began to be rolled out across the country last year, following the lead of Humberside Police who have been using this approach for around four years. They have reported a significant reduction in police attending mental health calls, however it is unclear what this means for NHS services in the area or the mental health patients on the other end of the phone. The NHS have asked for £260 million to implement the necessary services nation-wide and work in a more joined-up way. So what is happening in the meantime?

We have been monitoring the situation, and it's evident the framework is not working. Due to severe delays in getting the appropriate support, the risks are getting higher for those in mental distress, and it is leading to avoidable deaths.



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discussions of suicide

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I think the whole
policy discriminates
against people with
mental illness.

Ricki was known to mental health services, however he struggled to get help because of his drinking. His ex-partner, Mark, explained how Ricki was let down:

“I was contacted by Ricki’s brother who couldn’t get hold of him on the phone or even by knocking on his door. We both called the police on 101, and Ricki’s mum called 999. I told them about his mental health issues, and they immediately told me to ring 111, which I did think was odd considering I was reporting him missing.”

Mark’s call to 101 took 47 minutes, and another 13 passed before the call was logged with the ambulance service. 3 hours later the ambulance was outside Ricki’s house, but had to wait for the fire service to gain access since Ricki was unable to answer the door. **It took five hours in total from Mark’s initial call to gain entry** and find Ricki’s body, meaning the police had to attend anyway. Mark commented:

“I wish I hadn’t said mental health, it’s one of my biggest regrets. It would have been dealt with as a police matter and not been palmed off to NHS 111. I think the whole policy discriminates against people with mental illness or a disability, because of the wait for a response from emergency services.”

Sadly, this isn’t the only case of someone living with a mental illness losing their life because this policy has let them down. We are working hard to ensure this doesn’t continue. Our seat on the National Oversight Board allows us to deliver reports to the people who can instigate change. We are engaging with police commissioners and as many people who will listen as possible, and we won’t be quiet until the needs of those living with mental illness are met.

Find out more at rethink.org

Redefining mental health support for Black communities

Rethink Mental Illness is part of the Black Mental Health and Wellbeing Alliance, which is a coalition of charities, grassroots organisations and individuals with lived experience.

The Black Mental Health Manifesto created by the Alliance was launched online in April and sets out key recommendations to improve mental healthcare for Black communities.

The official launch event took place on 1 August and was well attended by organisation representatives and parliamentarians. There was a phenomenal range of speakers, some of which used creative avenues such as poetry, illustration and film to discuss not just the key points from the manifesto, but their own experiences of mental health.

One of the event organisers, Ruqia, said:

"The day went so well - we had some great conversations about the implementation of the Patient and Carer Race Equality Framework (PCREF), which is the first NHS backed anti-racism framework that aims to improve experiences for racialised communities. One of the key demands in the manifesto is reform of the Mental Health Act, which we have been advocating for as an organisation, but it will be particularly pertinent in supporting Black communities."



Together we will build a society where Black people thrive and are at the forefront of redefining mental health support.



Thank you
for making a difference

Thank you
for donating

Your generous donations help thousands by funding our range of services. Donate via rethink.org

Thank you
for fundraising

We love to see the creative events our fantastic fundraisers undertake! To set up your next fundraiser email fundraising@rethink.org

Thank you
for campaigning

Change lives by campaigning for the fair treatment of people living with mental illness. Sign up at rethink.org

Need support?

Our network of groups, services and advice lines are on hand to get you the support you need. Find help today at rethink.org/services