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Problem-Solving Booths (PSBs)

Phase 1 – July 2017

Draft report v1.0

Alex Belsey, Thrive LDN

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Thrive LDN is undertaking a number of engagement activities to promote its citywide social movement around mental health and wellbeing and to raise the profile of mental health in London. We are working to ensure that our engagement is having the maximum possible impact and that we are reaching communities all over London. This draft report was conducted internally and provides a high-level analysis of the public and partner engagement levels achieved by Problem-Solving Booths in July 2017.

Further information on Thrive LDN can be found at <http://thrivedn.co.uk/>

and by following @ThriveLDN on Twitter



1. Introducing PSBs

1.1 Activity:

To coincide with the official launch of Thrive LDN, a citywide movement for mental health, by the Mayor of London on 4 July 2017, the Thrive LDN programme ran Problem-Solving Booths (PSBs) as a key public engagement activity at seven different London locations during two weeks in July:

- **4 July:** Hampton Court Flower Show
- **6 July:** Camden Market, North Zone
- **7 July:** Brixton, outside Ritzy Cinema
- **11 July:** Soho Square
- **12 July:** City Hall
- **13 July:** Kingston, Rose Theatre, as part of International Youth Arts Festival
- **14 July:** Piccadilly tube line, between Hounslow West and Acton Town stations

1.2 Description:

PSBs are the hyper-local arm of Thrive LDN and give strangers the opportunity or 'permission' to have conversations with each other about mental health and wellbeing.

The booths consist simply of two chairs and some signage, encouraging members of the public to sit and take the role of either the 'helper' or 'helped' and have a conversation about their mental wellbeing and anything that they would like advice on. A typical PSB is run by three or four volunteers for 90 mins.



Fig 1: Problem-Solving Booth in Camden Market

2. Partnership working

2.1 Developing PSBs:

Thrive LDN has been developing PSBs in partnership with Owls, a social enterprise led by clinical psychologist Dr Charlie Howard who had previously originated and tested the concept. Representatives from Owls were present at each of the seven PSB events listed above in section 1.1; they provided the 30 mins in situ training for volunteers (see section 4) and fulfilled the role of clinical leads on the day.

Through Owls, staff and students in the Design department at Goldsmiths College (University of London) were involved in designing and testing a ‘free-standing’ problem-solving booth (see section 3.2). Representatives from Goldsmiths were present at the PSB events in Camden Market, City Hall, and the Piccadilly tube line.

2.2 Other partnerships:

In addition to Owls and Goldsmiths, Thrive LDN worked in partnership with a variety of organisations as listed in Table 1 below.

PSB event	Organisation	Sector / type	Capacity
4 July Hampton Ct	Centre for Mental Health	Health; non-profit org.	Provided location
6 July Camden Mkt	Camden Council	Local government	Key partner
	Camden Market	Commercial space	Provided location and live performers
	Hive (Catch-22)	Social business	Volunteers
	New Horizon Youth Centre	Youth centre	Volunteers
	Castlehaven	Community assoc.	Volunteers
	Brandon Centre	CYP counselling	Volunteers
	Anna Freud Centre	Children’s charity	Volunteers
	Amy Winehouse Foundation	Performance arts	Live performances
	Fashion Meets Music	Pop-up store	Volunteers / location
	Camden Pathways	CYP support serv.	Designed t-shirts
7 July Brixton	Picture Houses	Cinema chain	Provided location
	SLaM	NHS Foundation Trust	Volunteers
	+ youth volunteers		
11 July Soho Square	House of St Barnabus	Homelessness charity	Secured location from WCC / volunteers
	+ youth volunteers		
12 July City Hall	GLA	Local government	Provided location
	Camden & Islington Mental Health Trust	NHS MH Trust	Volunteers
	UCL	University	Volunteers
	Catch-22	Social business	Volunteers
13 July Kingston	Creative Youth	CYP charity	Provided location
	London Borough of Kingston	Local government	Volunteers

14 July Piccadilly tube line	Hounslow MET	Police	Co-ordinating partners
	British Transport Police	Police	Volunteers
	TfL	Transport operator	Provided location
	Tavistock & Portman	NHS Trust	Volunteers
	Method	Design company	Volunteers

Table 1: Partner organisations at PSB events

3. PSB design

3.1 Original PSB concept:

The original concept by Owls was kept deliberately simple, comprising only of two chairs and handwritten signage drawn on cardboard boxes in black marker pen (see Fig 2 below). The home-made appearance of the original PSBs was integral to their appeal, making them seem approachable and not too professional in appearance.



Fig 2: Original Problem-Solving Booth concept

3.2 Goldsmiths design:

Staff and students in the Design department at Goldsmiths College (University of London) designed and tested a ‘free-standing’ PSB that could be quickly constructed with easily obtainable materials (see fig 3). The free-standing design was a response to the question of how a booth could be set up in an area without a wall or railings to which the signage could be attached. For example, the free-standing design was used in Brixton on 7 July (Fig 4).

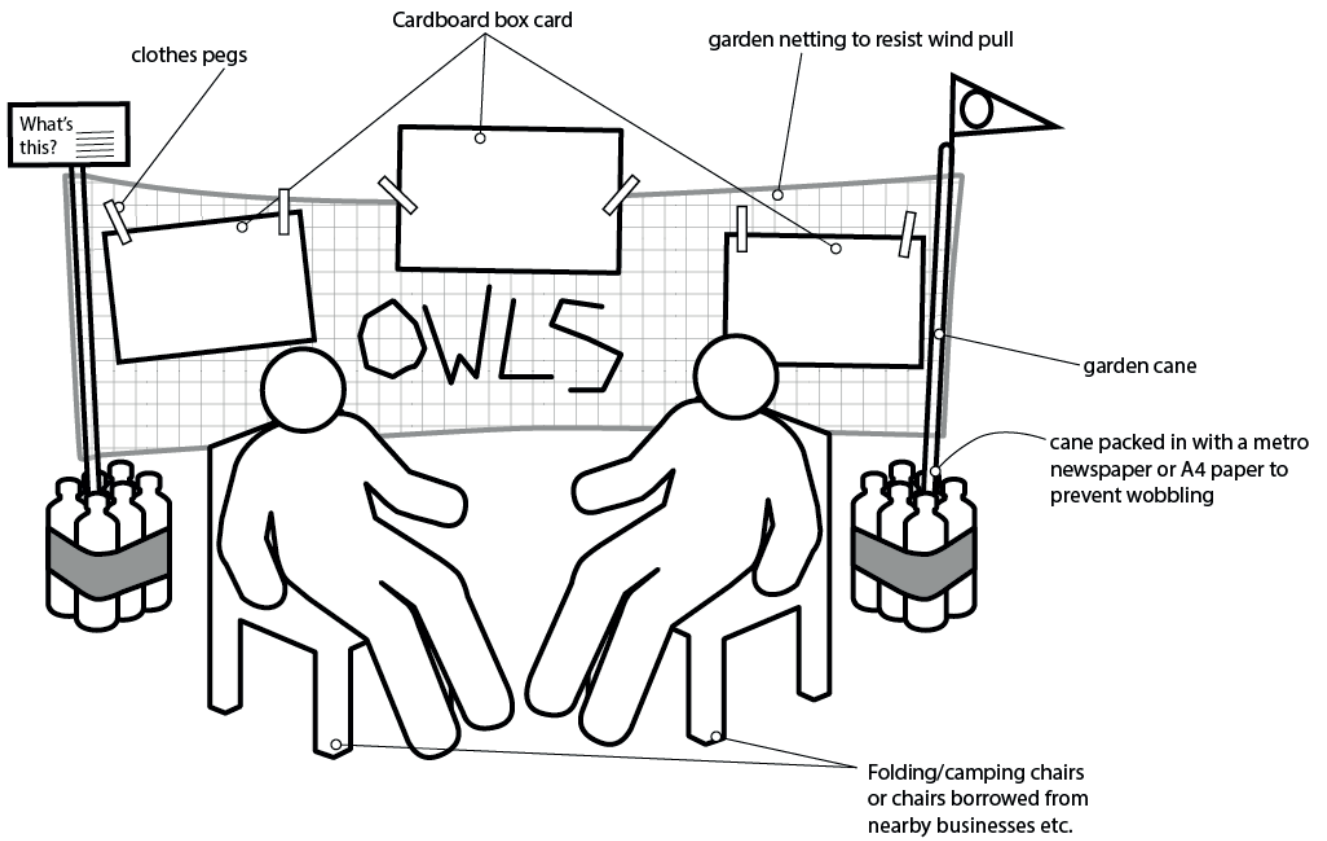


Fig 3: Schematic for free-standing PSB designed by Goldsmiths



Fig 4: Free-standing PSB in Brixton

3.3 PSB kits:

Informed by the Goldsmiths design, kits were assembled containing the necessary materials to construct a PSB. The kits include:

- Cardboard signage
- Bamboo canes and garden netting
- Gaffer tape, string, scissors, clothes pegs and pens
- ‘Comms clipboards’, to which are attached multiple copies of:
 - Quick guide for volunteers (see appendix I)
 - FAQs (see appendix II)
 - Data sheet (see appendix III)
 - PSB flyer (see appendix IV)
 - ‘Where can I get help?’ flyer (see appendix V)

3.4 Improvised designs:

Volunteers were also encouraged to improvise their own PSB designs based on the contents of the PSB kits; for example, the PSB illustrated in Fig 5 features the bamboo canes attached directly to the legs of the camping chairs, with the signage suspended on string.



Fig 5: Improvised PSB design

3.5 PSBs on the Piccadilly tube line:

In response to the space constraints preventing the set-up of camping chairs on a tube carriage, staff and students at Goldsmiths devised and fabricated a pair of ‘helper’ and ‘helped’ seat covers, behind which a cardboard sign could be propped (Fig 6).



Fig 6: Seat covers devised for PSBs on the tube

4. PSB in situ training

Volunteers were trained in situ for 30 mins prior to the PSB commencing. Training was primarily delivered by Owls with contributions from Thrive team members on the subject of comms and data capture.

The in situ training generally proceeded in the following order:

- Concept and origin of problem-solving booths
- Explanation of roles in and around the PSB (e.g. public outreach; flyering; comms role fulfilled by Thrive team)
- Role-play demonstrating:
 - how to approach and engage with passers-by (see also quick guide in appendix)
 - what a typical ‘problem-solving conversation may sound like
 - the role of Thrive team members in data capture and taking any photos/videos
- Q&A session
- Assignment of volunteers to different booth ‘teams’ if multiple PSBs, trying to ensure that one Thrive team member is present at each PSB and aiming, where possible, to mix volunteers from different organisations together.

5. PSB configurations at events

The table below details the various configurations of PSBs at the seven events:

PSB event	No. of PSBs	PSB configuration	Notes
4 July Hampton Court	1	1 x original fixed PSB	
6 July Camden Mkt	5	3 x original fixed PSB 2 x free-standing PSB	PSBs spread over a larger area and interspersed with live music performances arranged by Market organisers
7 July Brixton	2	1 x original fixed PSB 1 x free-standing PSB	
11 July Soho Square	2/3*	2/3 x original fixed PSB	* No. changed from 3 to 2 in response to heavy rain
12 July City Hall	4	4 x original fixed PSB	
13 July Kingston	2	2 x original fixed PSB	PSBs moved after set-up in search of increased footfall
14 July Piccadilly tube line	3**	3 x PSB seat covers	**Volunteers divided into 3 teams getting on and off tube trains

Table 2: PSB configurations at events

6. Analysis of public engagement

The primary means of tracking public engagement with the PSB concept and the Thrive campaign message was via the data sheets attached to each clipboard in the PSB kits (see appendix).

The data sheets were designed by Owls in consultation with Thrive and asked PSB participants for the following information:

- Name
- Email
- Age range
- Themes discussed in the booth
- Would you use PSBs?
- Thrive Q1: *Are we OK with two million Londoners experiencing poor mental health this year?*
- Thrive Q2: *Are we OK with 9 out of 10 people with MH problems being discriminated against?*

Table 3 below illustrates the varying levels of public engagement at the seven PSB events as measured by the data sheets. This table details the number of entries made on data sheets (i.e. one entry per participant) and the extent to which participants provided information and addressed questions.

Hampton Court Flower Show	No. of entries	19	
	Name (full name / first only)	16	3
	Email	16	
	Age	15	
	Themes discussed	19	
	Would you use PSBs? (detailed answer / just Y/N)	10	7
	Thrive Q1 (detailed answer / just Y/N)	8	7
	Thrive Q2 (detailed answer / just Y/N)	2	8
Camden Market	No. of entries	27	
	Name (full name / first only)	16	11
	Email	20	
	Age	23	
	Themes discussed	24	
	Would you use PSBs? (detailed answer / just Y/N)	8	17
	Thrive Q1 (detailed answer / just Y/N)	10	15
	Thrive Q2 (detailed answer / just Y/N)	9	13
Brixton	No. of entries	12	
	Name (full name / first only)	9	3
	Email	10	
	Age	11	
	Themes discussed	10	
	Would you use PSBs? (detailed answer / just Y/N)	9	1
	Thrive Q1 (detailed answer / just Y/N)	9	1
	Thrive Q2 (detailed answer / just Y/N)	7	1
Soho Square	No. of entries	15	
	Name (full name / first only)	11	3
	Email	11	
	Age	12	
	Themes discussed	9	
	Would you use PSBs? (detailed answer / just Y/N)	8	1
	Thrive Q1 (detailed answer / just Y/N)	13	0
	Thrive Q2 (detailed answer / just Y/N)	12	0
City Hall	No. of entries	26	
	Name (full name / first only)	18	7
	Email	20	
	Age	16	
	Themes discussed	23	
	Would you use PSBs? (detailed answer / just Y/N)	18	3
	Thrive Q1 (detailed answer / just Y/N)	15	3
	Thrive Q2 (detailed answer / just Y/N)	11	4
IYAF, Kingston	No. of entries	3	
	Name (full name / first only)	1	2
	Email	3	
	Age	3	
	Themes discussed	2	
	Would you use PSBs? (detailed answer / just Y/N)	2	1
	Thrive Q1 (detailed answer / just Y/N)	0	1
	Thrive Q2 (detailed answer / just Y/N)	0	0
Piccadilly line tube	No. of entries	25	
	Name (full name / first only)	8	11
	Email	10	
	Age	23	
	Themes discussed	23	
	Would you use PSBs? (detailed answer / just Y/N)	16	7
	Thrive Q1 (detailed answer / just Y/N)	6	8
	Thrive Q2 (detailed answer / just Y/N)	6	7

Table 3: Levels of public engagement as measured from data sheets

Whilst in some cases the sample sizes were quite small – e.g. at the International Youth Arts Festival in Kingston, where public footfall was minimal and data entries were gathered from only three participants – there are some trends worth commenting upon:

- The data sheets seem to have captured only a small proportion of interactions, e.g. it was estimated by the team and volunteers that the Brixton PSBs had involved between 50-60 interactions, yet this yielded only 12 data sheet entries (potentially capturing only 20%).
- At every PSB event, with the exception of the Piccadilly line tube, the majority of participants were happy to provide their email address so that Thrive could stay in touch.
- At every PSB event the majority of participants were happy to describe what they discussed in the booth.
- At every PSB event there was a greater engagement with Thrive Q1 than Thrive Q2. This could indicate a number of things: that Q2 was more specific and less inviting of an interpretive response; that Q2 was too similar to Q1 and that participants had therefore already partially answered it; that time constraints prohibited a more detailed answer.

There were also some notable results from specific PSB events:

- At Camden Market, there was a significantly higher proportion of data entries in which the participants had not provided a full name and had not answered the questions in detail beyond a ‘Yes’, ‘No’, or equivalent answer. This could indicate a less rigorous approach by a relatively younger pool of volunteers or more generally a more informal and therefore less structured approach to conducting PSBs and gathering feedback at this event.
- At Soho Square, the proportion of ‘Themes discussed’ and responses to ‘Would you use PSBs?’ was lowest in relation to number of data sheet entries, likely reflecting that many conversations took place outside of a booth (likely due to the booths being waterlogged by heavy rain and 1 being permanently occupied by filming by the BBC).
- The Piccadilly line tube saw not only the lowest proportion of participants providing their email address, but also the lowest proportion providing their name (whereas in previous PSBs either all or all but one provided a name). This could suggest that participants were more reticent to provide personal information in a more enclosed environment. It could also reflect a demographic skewed further towards non-UK residents and those for whom English is not a first language, given that the Piccadilly line is a key route to and from Heathrow airport.

7. Conclusion and next steps

Thrive LDN has continued to receive expressions of interest from potential partners and is currently compiling a schedule for Phase 2 of the Problem-Solving Booths to take place from August through autumn 2017. As part of this scheduling process Thrive will consult with Owls to ensure that as many potential partners can be involved as possible, and that as wide a coverage is possible across the many various boroughs and communities of London.

A more detailed thematic analysis of the data sheets from Phase 1 is forthcoming and this will inform any redesign of the data sheet for use in Phase 2.



Appendix I: Quick guide for volunteers



Problem Solving Booths

A Quick Guide for Volunteers!

1. Approaching the general public

"Hi there. We're testing this thing today called Problem Solving Booths. It was the idea of a young person, who when asked what would make a difference to his community, he said, a Problem Solving Booth right here on my street.

This is what we're testing today. It takes 5 minutes and I was wondering if you'd be up for helping me with a problem"

2. Asking for Help

Ask for help with something mental health related. If you can't think of anything or don't feel comfortable then ask something generic like...

"Lots of people in London struggle with sleep/anxiety/stress. Does this ever happen to you and what would your advice to them be?"

3. Have a conversation

Be a human being, not your usual professional role!

4. Swap roles if time

If there's time, ask if there's anything you can help them with

4. Thank them and tell them about Thrive

Tell them that this is part of Thrive London, the Mayor's social movement for mental health. Tell them that there are a few questions we are asking today in relation to Thrive and would they be up for answering one.

You can do this in or out of the Booth, depending on what feels right.

Pick one of these questions:

Are we OK with over one million Londoners experiencing poor mental health this year?

Are we OK with 9 out of 10 people with mental health problems being discriminated against?

5. Data Collection

Ask them if we can get their contact details to keep them updated on the initiative

Ask if they would be up for being filmed, repeating some of what they have said. This will go onto the PSB YouTube Channel, where we are collecting voices of Londoners across the whole city

Ask the Thrive staff to film them



Appendix II: FAQs



Problem Solving Booth FAQs

1. What are Problem Solving Booths?

Problem Solving Booths bring strangers together to have conversations about mental wellbeing

They give us permission to talk to each other

And help us to see that mental wellbeing is relevant to us all

And that we all have the potential to both have problems and to offer each other help

2. Can PSBs really solve people's problems?

PSBs enable us to get different perspectives

And to talk to people we would never usually talk to

Problems are the hook to get us talking

The primary purpose of PSBs is to spark conversations between people who wouldn't usually have them

Often we need permission to talk to strangers and PSBs give us this permission

PSBs aren't necessarily about solving problems – but it's great if they do!

3. Where did the idea of PSBs come from?

The idea for PSBs came from a young person on the streets of London, who, when asked what would make a difference to mental wellbeing in his community, said "a problem solving booth right here on my street"

We thought it was a really interesting idea and that's what we are testing here today

4. Where is the young person? Are they involved?

The young person didn't share any of their personal details and we don't even know their name

They might not even remember having had the idea as we have built on it quite a lot since then

But we are trying to track them down as they have instigated this whole thing to happen and that's pretty amazing!

5. Who is developing PSBs?

PSBs are being developed by Owls which is a new, London-based social enterprise

Owls is developing PSBs in close partnership with Thrive London, the Mayor's social movement for mental health

And with Camden Council, who are a lead partner

© The Owls Organisation, July 2017



6. Why is Owls called Owls and what does it do?

It's name came from a poem called "The Wise Old Owl"

A wise old owl sat in an oak
The more he heard the less he spoke
The less he spoke the more he heard
Why aren't we all like that wise old bird

Owls believes that we need to LISTEN to each other more and to build community solutions TOGETHER

It is passionate about doing this in the area of mental health

7. What are they trying to achieve? What happens next?

In these first 2 weeks of July, we are running PSBs all over London with lots of different communities and partners

They are being run as part of the launch of Thrive London

And to raise the profile for the PSB concept

Beyond this, we are looking for partners to join a 6-month rapid prototyping phase, where we test hundreds of iterations of PSBs until we find the best one possible

And then we will give the concept away to communities

8. I'm interested in getting involved with PSBs. How can I do this?

You can sign-up via the PSB website at www.problemsolvingbooths.com

9. Is there any evidence for PSBs?

Not really – other than buckets of anecdotal evidence from the last 6 months

PSBs are about "action research"

Which means we are developing them and understanding them as we go

Sometimes the best evidence comes from initiatives that start in this way

10. Are there other PSBs happening? Where are they?

Yes, they are happening all over London during the first 2 weeks of July

You can see the timetable at www.problemsolvingbooths.com @owls_org @ThriveLDN #problemsolvingbooths

Appendix III: Data sheet

Name	Email address (preferable) or Phone Number	Age: U18 18 – 25 25 – 50 50 – 70 70+	What were the key themes you talked about in the booth?	Would you use PSB's and if so how? If not, it would be helpful to know why and any suggested alternatives we might explore?	<u>Thrive Question1:</u> <i>Are we OK with two million Londoners experiencing poor mental health this year?</i>	<u>Thrive Question 2:</u> <i>Are we OK with 9 out of 10 people with mental health problems being discriminated against?</i>



Appendix IV: PSB flyer



Problem Solving Booths (PSBs) are being developed by new social enterprise, The Owls Organisation, as part of Thrive London: a citywide movement for mental health, supported by the Mayor of London. PSBs are the hyper local arm of Thrive and give us the opportunity to engage with Londoners at the grass roots, street level.

You can find out more online at:

www.problemsolvingbooths.com

www.thriveldn.co.uk

www.owls.org.uk

And join us on Twitter at:

#problemsolvingbooths

@owls_org

@ThriveLDN

Appendix V: 'Where can I get help?' flyer

Where can I get help?

Samaritans – 116 123

Provides 24 hour confidential emotional support.

Mindinfo Line – 0845 766 0163

Advice on mental wellbeing, help and alternative therapies.

info@mind.org.uk

FRANK- 0300 123 6600

Confidential helpline for advice on drugs.

<http://www.talktofrank.com/>