

# BFRB

*Body-Focused  
Repetitive  
Behaviours*

# Conference

13-14 September 2024  
#OxBFRBConf

**Day 1: Symposium**  
*Oxford University Museum  
of Natural History*

**Day 2: Community Day**  
*Psychiatry Dept, Warneford  
Hospital*



# Conference Info



## *Welcome*

We are pleased to welcome you to the first ever Oxford BFRB conference, co-hosted by Prof. Clare Mackay (Psychiatry Department, University of Oxford) and BFRB UK & Ireland.

## *Venues*

Please note this event has two venues. Day 1 (Fri 13 Sept) is at the Oxford University Museum of Natural History. Day 2 (Sat 14 Sept) is at the University of Oxford Psychiatry Department, Warneford Hospital.

## *Posters*

We are pleased to be hosting scientific research posters by Julia Gehrich, Talia Mayerson, and Katie Webster. You will find these displayed in the refreshments area on both days of the conference.

## *Photography and filming*

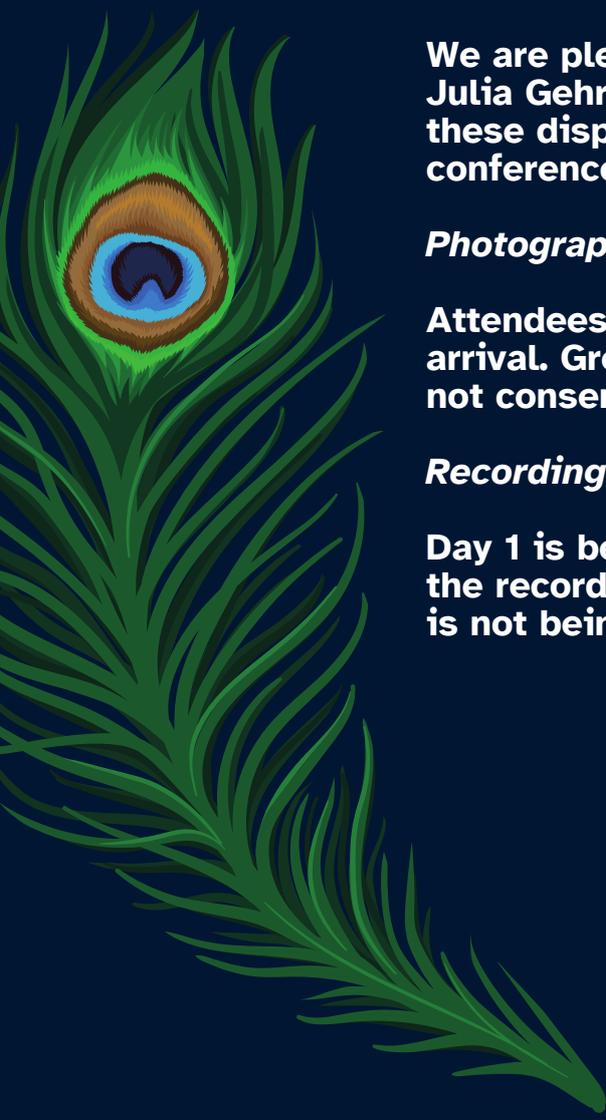
Attendees will be asked to select a green or red lanyard on arrival. Green = you consent to be photographed, red = you do not consent.

## *Recordings*

Day 1 is being recorded - all attendees will receive a link to the recorded talks, post-event after editing. Please note Day 2 is not being recorded.

### Questions or concerns?

Ask anyone wearing a purple lanyard (BFRB UK & Ireland team) or a University of Oxford lanyard. We have a large team of conference organisers and volunteers, all happy to help and wanting to make sure you have a great experience at the conference.





# Program

## *Day 1 morning*

**Arrivals and registration** **9:00-9:30**

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**Welcome remarks - Clare Mackay** **9:30-9:50**

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**The Power of Awareness - Aneela Idnani** **9:50-10:10**

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**BFRBs primer - Jude Stevenson** **10:10-10:30**

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**Session 1: Neuroscience** Chair: Clare Mackay **10:30-11:20**

- How do primates make decisions to act? - Matthew Rushworth
  - Affective touch and the neuroscience of skin/hair - Francis McGlone
  - Flash Talk 1 - Understanding how bodily-focused repetitive behaviours relate to habit learning - Kelly Donegan
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**Tea/coffee, posters & networking** **11:20-11:50**

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**Session 2: Psychological mechanisms and treatments** Chair: Bridget Bradley **11:50-13:10**

- An integrative approach to treatment: the importance of treating the individual as a whole - Pavitt Thatcher
  - Hair pulling in adolescents and the role of shame - Polly Waite
  - Flash talk 2 - Developing and evaluating a situated assessment instrument for trichotillomania: The SAM2 TAI - Courtney Taylor Browne Luka
  - Flash talk 3 - Body Focused Repetitive Disorders' treatment and professional training for Spanish-speaking individuals, the experience from México - Carolina Santillán Torres Torija
  - Flash talk 4 - Experiencing and Measuring Stigma Towards Individuals with Skin-Picking Disorder - Mallory Moore
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# Program

## *Day 1 afternoon*

**Sponsor talk - Hair Solved**

**13:10-13:15**

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**Lunch, posters, and networking**

**13:15-14:30**

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**Session 3: Anthropology & Attention**

**14:30-16:00**

**Chair: Arne Mould**

- **BFRB Biosolidarity: Understanding the social aspects of diagnosis - Bridget Bradley**
  - **Ethnic and cultural differences in the experience of BFRBs - Angela Neal-Barnett**
  - **A potential common mechanism for social networks, grooming and the 'trance-like state' - Robin Dunbar**
  - **Ordinary and altered states of consciousness: from neural mechanisms to function - Vlad Vyazovskiy**
  - **Flash talk 5 - BFRB: A manifestation in ADHD - Allyson Parry**
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**Tea/coffee, posters, and networking**

**16:00-16:30**

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**TLC and the Precision medicine initiative -  
John Piacentini & Suzanne Mouton-Odum**

**16:30-17:15**

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**Panel chaired by John Geddes**

**17:15-18:00**

**Researchers with lived experience: Bridget  
Bradley, Caroline Harbison, Marta Isibor, Clare  
Mackay, Arne Mould, Jude Stevenson**

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**Drinks reception**

**18:00-20:00**

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# Program

## *Day 2 - Community*

Registration and Tea/Coffee

**9:00-9:45**

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Welcome remarks

**9:45-10:15**

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Treatment / Research panel with:  
Pavitt Thatcher, Marta Isibor, Arne  
Mould, Clare Mackay

**10:15-11:15**

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Art workshop with Liz Atkin

**11:30-12:30**

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Catered lunch (in-person attendees) / break  
(online attendees)

**12:30-14:00**

Followed by choice of :

- Walk (in person)
  - Meditation with Alessandra Rossi (hybrid)
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Parallel support groups for adults / parents  
and loved ones / young persons hang-out

**14:00-15:00**

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Closing plenary, turning stigma into a  
superpower with Liz Atkin, Pavitt Thatcher,  
Jane Mackay, Aneela Idnani, and Kim On Skin

**15:15-16:45**

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Goodbyes

**16:45-17:00**

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# Bios

## BFRB UK & Ireland team

**CHAIR** - Bridget Bradley is a Lecturer at the University of St Andrews who has spent the last ten years doing research on BFRBs and collaborating with the BFRB community. She is co-founder of BFRB UK & Ireland.



**TREASURER** - Caroline Harbison is a PhD candidate studying decision-making and habits in Anorexia Nervosa at the University of Amsterdam. She has been on the committee of BFRB UK & Ireland since 2021. Alongside advocating for BFRB awareness, Caroline manages the BFRB UK & Ireland website and social media pages.



**SECRETARY** - Michelle Davidson is the volunteer secretary of BFRB UK & Ireland. Based in Edinburgh, Michelle is passionate about bringing people together and providing support for those affected by Body-Focused Repetitive Behaviours (BFRBs). Michelle's commitment to the BFRB community is driven by a deep desire to create a space where individuals can connect, share their experiences, and find the support they need.



**COMMUNITY AMBASSADOR** - Jude Stevenson is a lecturer in the School of Psychology and Neuroscience at the University of Glasgow. Her PhD investigated stigmatising attitudes towards, and attentional biases in, trichotillomania (hair-pulling disorder). Jude advocates for lived experience of BFRBs and she is a committee member and support group lead for BFRB UK & Ireland.



**PUBLIC OUTREACH OFFICER** - Tash Willson is an animation graduate and volunteers for BFRB UK & Ireland doing public outreach, communications and graphic design. Tash works closely with Caroline to manage the social media accounts and she recently designed BFRB U&I's beautiful logo!



# Bios



**Liz Atkin is an artist and educator. She reimagines her Compulsive Skin Picking and anxiety into drawings, photographs and performances and raises awareness for the disorder around the world. An archive of her advocacy for skin picking is held by the Wellcome Collection.**



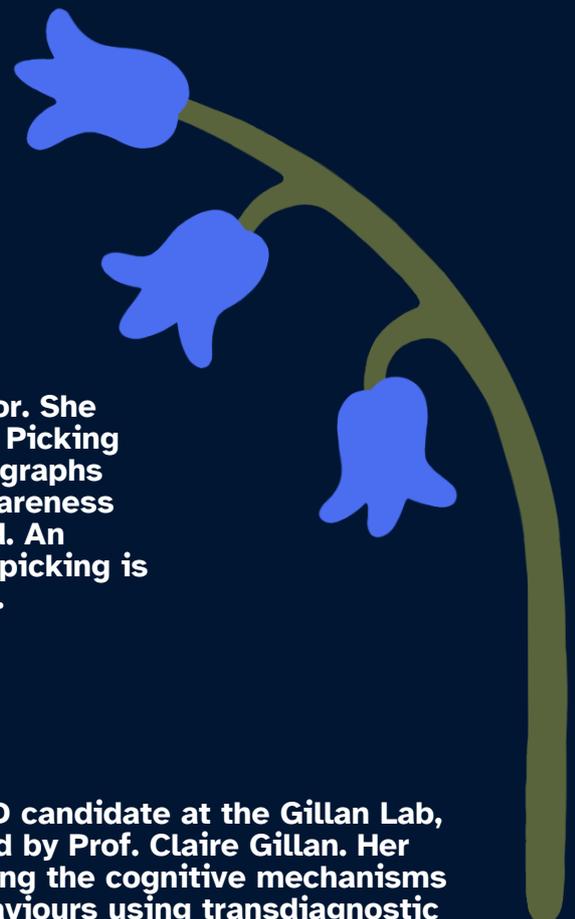
**Kelly Donegan is a final year PhD candidate at the Gillan Lab, Trinity College Dublin supervised by Prof. Claire Gillan. Her research focuses on understanding the cognitive mechanisms of restrictive and repetitive behaviours using transdiagnostic approaches.**



**Robin Dunbar is emeritus Professor of Evolutionary Psychology at the University of Oxford. His principal research interests focus on social evolution in primates and humans, with a particular interest in the cognitive and behavioural mechanisms that allow us to maintain close friendships.**



**John Geddes is the WA Handley Professor of Psychiatry and Director of the NIHR Oxford Health Biomedical Research Centre. His current research focuses on the development and evaluation of treatments for people with bipolar and mood disorders. John has developed new approaches to self management and monitoring, and conducted key clinical trials as well as influential research syntheses. By involving patients in research, his team has been able to characterize the nature of mood disorder more accurately. His research aims to use this knowledge to identify new targets for better treatments.**



# Bios

**Aneela Idnani turned her BFRB pain into purpose. As cofounder at HabitAware she co-invented a smart bracelet that brings real-time awareness to these trance-like behaviors. HabitAware is a TIME Magazine “Best Invention” and Fast Company “World Changing Idea.” As a TEDx speaker, award-winning leader and BFRB Changemakers Non-Profit founder, Aneela raises awareness of BFRBs and supports community healing. Her memoir with New Harbinger Publications arrives in 2025.**



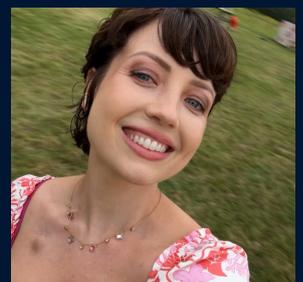
**Marta Isibor BSc (Hons) Psychology, MRes, MBPsS. Clinical Psychologist Assistant Practitioner in Addictions at NHS Lothian and Visiting Lecturer at Queen Margaret University. Lived experience researcher of body-focused repetitive behaviours, specifically skin picking.**



**Courtney Taylor Browne Luka completed her undergraduate, MSc and PhD at the University of Glasgow, UK. During her PhD, she investigated the role of social connectedness, support and loneliness in relation to trichotillomania (hair pulling). Her research has developed a measure for trichotillomania using the situated assessment method (SAM2) developed by Barsalou and colleagues.**



**With a social media following across Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, ‘Kim on Skin’ (Kimberley Hastings) openly manages and discusses her compulsive skin-picking disorder, dermatillomania. She aims to create a safe space on social media and has turned her greatest fear into her favourite conversation."**



# Bios



**Clare Mackay is a Professor of Neuroscience at the University of Oxford who has spent 30 years studying a variety of brain disorders, including epilepsy, psychosis and dementia, primarily using neuroimaging technology. She has led a number of major research and infrastructure projects, most recently setting up the 'Oxford Brain Health Clinic'. In 2023, she began to turn her attention to the disorder that had been with her all along – trichotillomania. She initiated a social media presence as @thetrichprof, and is developing new research questions and collaborations, as well as using her platform to raise awareness and reduce stigma for people living with BFRBs.**



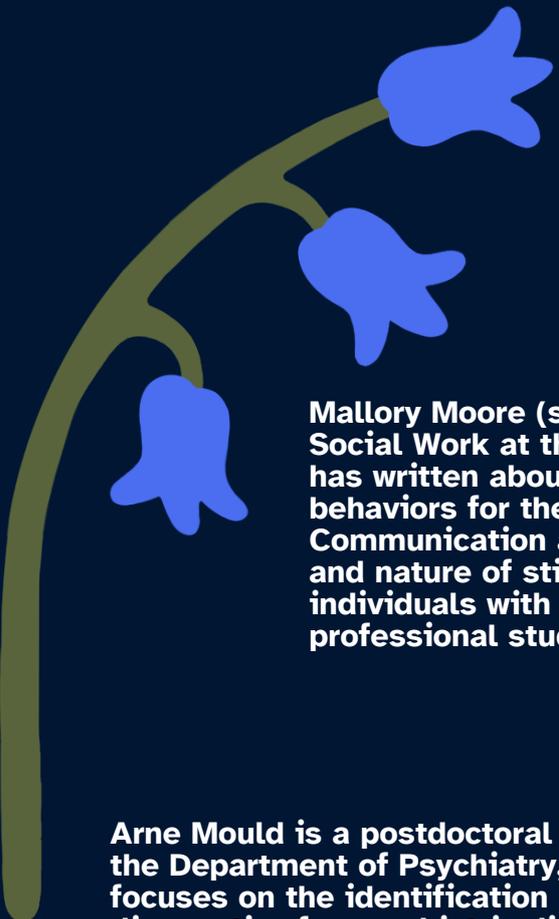
**Jane Mackay is a freelance consultant, trainer and facilitator specialising in mental health lived experience leadership, anti-stigma practice, equalities and inclusion. Website: [jemackay.co.uk](http://jemackay.co.uk), email: [jane@jemackay.co.uk](mailto:jane@jemackay.co.uk), social media: @jemackay.**



**Francis McGlone is Professor in Neuroscience, Visiting Professor, Manchester Metropolitan University, and Aalto University, Finland. He has a long-term interest in the function of the sensory nerves innervating the skin, particularly those that code for touch, temperature, pain, itch and the recent discovery of a population of unmyelinated gentle touch sensitive c-fibres that are hypothesised to be the neurobiological substrate for 'affective touch'. He has spent the past ~25 years characterising this system of nerves and their emerging role across the lifespan in underpinning physical and mental health. He is Founder & President of the International Association for the Study of Affective Touch (IASAT) <https://iasat.org/>**



# Bios



**Mallory Moore (she/her) is pursuing a Master of Social Work at the University of Pennsylvania. She has written about body-focused repetitive behaviors for the Harvard Center for Health Communication and is researching the prevalence and nature of stigmatizing attitudes toward individuals with excoriation among healthcare professional students.**



**Arne Mould is a postdoctoral wet lab research scientist based in the Department of Psychiatry, University of Oxford. His research focuses on the identification of novel therapeutics and diagnostics for psychiatric disorders. Recent interests include investigating the molecular underpinning of Trichotillomania.**



**Suzanne Mouton-Odum is a Clinical Assistant Professor at Baylor College of Medicine, the Founder and Director of Psychology Houston, PC: The Center for Cognitive Behavioral Treatment, and President of PsycTech, LLC. Dr. Mouton-Odum is Co-Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board of the TLC Foundation for Body Focused Repetitive Behaviors. She has published numerous scientific journal articles, presents at national and international conferences, and is co-author of four books for the general public and two books on BFRBs including “A Parent Guide to Hair Pulling Disorder” and “Comprehensive Behavioral (ComB) Treatment for Body Focused Repetitive Behaviors, A Clinical Guide.”**



**Angela Neal-Barnett, Ph.D., is a leading expert in Black mental health, emphasizing anxiety disorders among Black women and girls. Her latest efforts center around expectant mothers— Black women in particular—who may be suffering from PTSD or other stressors that can lead to increased pre-term births, infant mortality, and mother morbidity. Through her Spirit of Motherhood program, pregnant women and their preschool children receive a multi-level intervention for PTSD. Dr. Neal-Barnett founded and directs the Program for Research on Anxiety Disorders among African Americans (PRADAA) Lab.**



# Bios



**Dr Allyson Parry is a Consultant Neurologist at the John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford. She has a special interest in attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) alongside her long-established practice in general neurology. Allyson has written and spoken about the importance of diagnosing and managing ADHD given the impact this may have on physical health and non-ADHD mental health symptoms. BFRBs are a common feature in the patients that Allyson sees in clinic.**



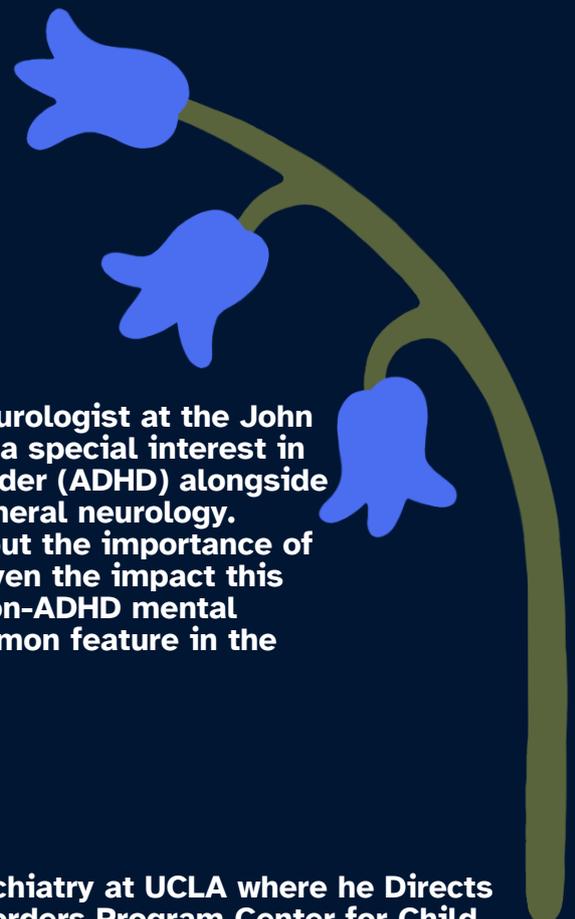
**John Piacentini is Professor of Psychiatry at UCLA where he Directs the Child OCD, Anxiety and Tic Disorders Program Center for Child Anxiety, Resilience, Education and Support (CARES). Among other positions, he is President of the Board of Directors and Chair of the Scientific Advisory Board for the TLC Foundation for BFRBs.**



**Alessandra Rossi is a long-standing friend of BFRB UK & Ireland. Ale is a trained yoga instructor who specialises in BFRB Yoga and Meditation, and runs monthly sessions with BFRB U&I.**



**Matthew Rushworth works in the Department of Experimental Psychology, where he is the Watts Professor and Head of Department, and the Wellcome Centre for Integrative Neuroimaging (WIN), University of Oxford, UK. His recent work has been concerned with the operation of brain circuits for decision making and social interaction. He is also interested in understanding connections and interactions between brain areas.**



# Bios

**Carolina Santillán Torres Torija, psychologist, graduated from the Bachelor's, Master's and Doctorate in Psychology from UNAM. Academic Supervisor of the Crisis, Emergencies and Suicide Care strategy of UNAM FESI.**



**Pavitt Thatcher (Birkbeck, University of London) is a trainee integrative psychotherapist specialising in OCD and BFRBs. As a co-founder of BFRB UK and Ireland, she advocates for mental health, raises awareness, and provides treatment and resources for those affected by BFRBs. Pavitt has a long-standing collaboration with The TLC Foundation for BFRBs. Additionally, she is a dedicated member of OCD Action's EDI Panel.**



**Vladyslav Vyazovskiy is a Professor of Sleep Physiology at the Department of Physiology, Anatomy and Genetics, a member of Sir Jules Thorn Sleep and Circadian Neuroscience Institute (SCNi) and a principal investigator at Kavli Institute for Nanoscience Discovery, University of Oxford.**



**Polly Waite is an Associate Professor of Clinical Psychology in the Department of Experimental Psychology and a Tutorial Fellow at New College at the University of Oxford. She is also an Honorary Consultant Clinical Psychologist at Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust. Her primary clinical and research interests are anxiety and related disorders in adolescents.**



# Sponsors

## *Event Sponsors*



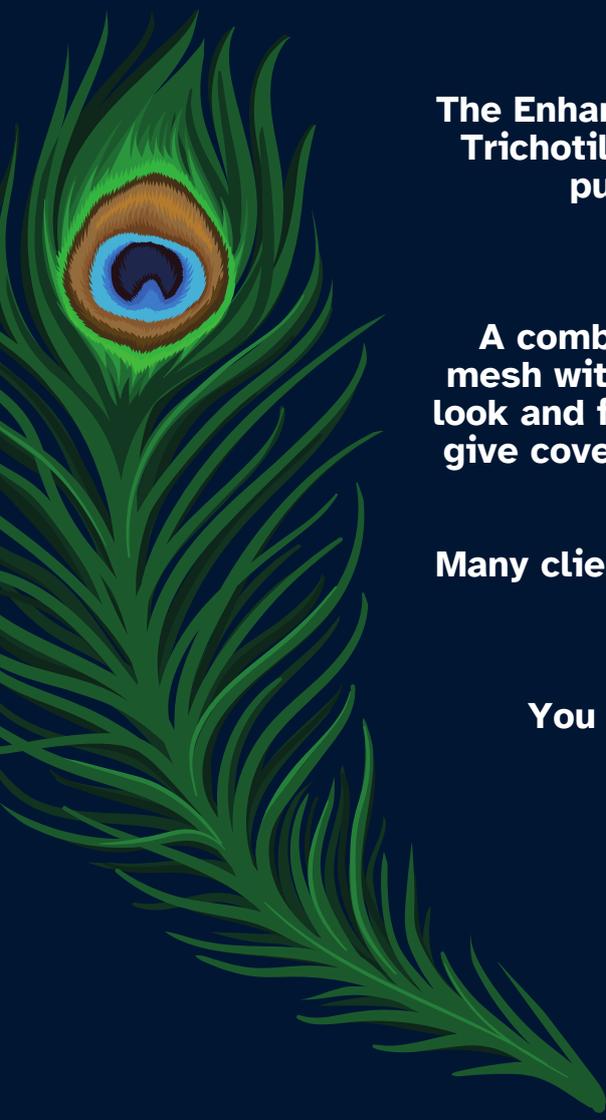
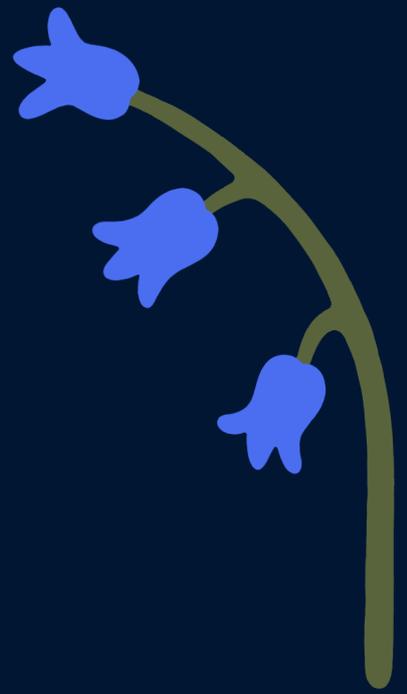
**Hair Solved are the UK's leading female hair loss specialists. They have devised the most natural, beautiful, durable and bespoke hair enhancement system and believe this innovative system is the best solution for Trichotillomania, helping clients to feel more confident and happier with their hair.**

**The Enhancer System can be highly effective for women with Trichotillomania because it can help to reduce the urge to pull hair and protect new hair while it grows.**

**A combination of 100% real hair extensions and a scalp mesh with unique and lightweight fixings help to create the look and feel of natural hair, each system can be designed to give coverage where pulling has occurred and is seamlessly integrated with a client's own hair.**

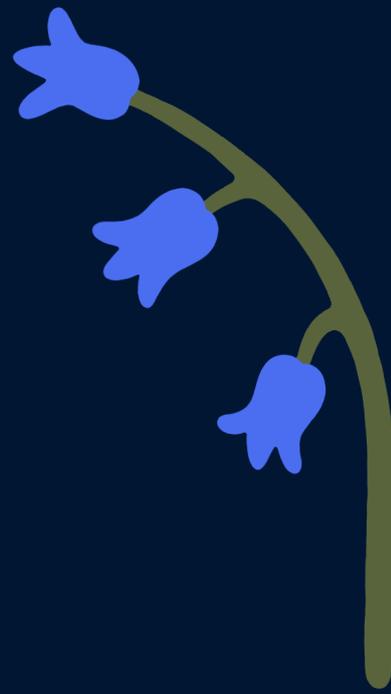
**Many clients say that the Enhancer System has played a part in breaking the cycle of pulling.**

**You can find their Salons across the UK in London, Manchester, Bristol and Glasgow.**



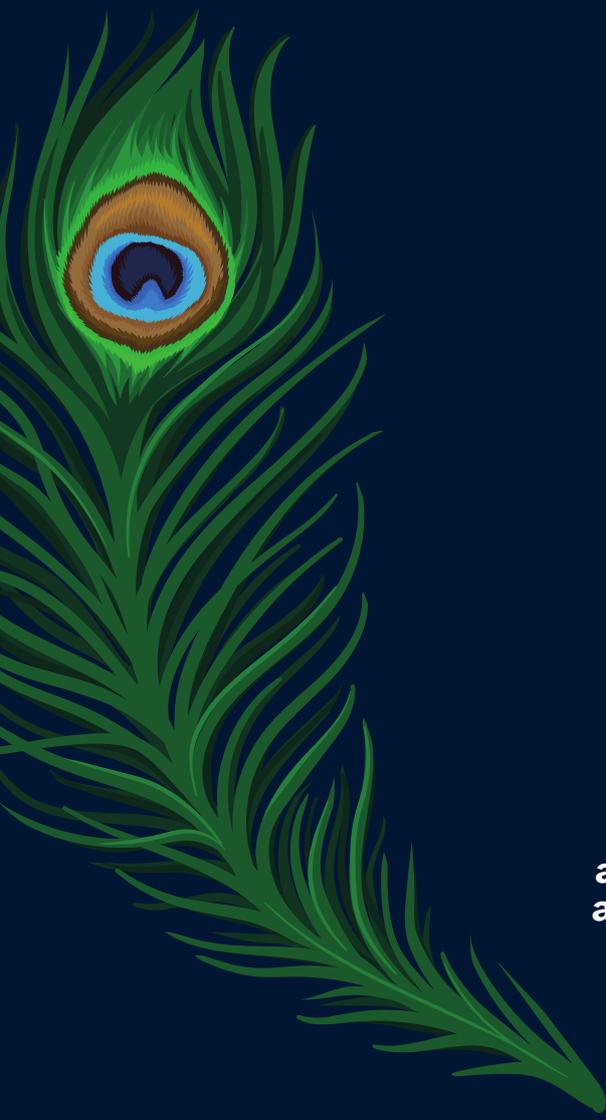
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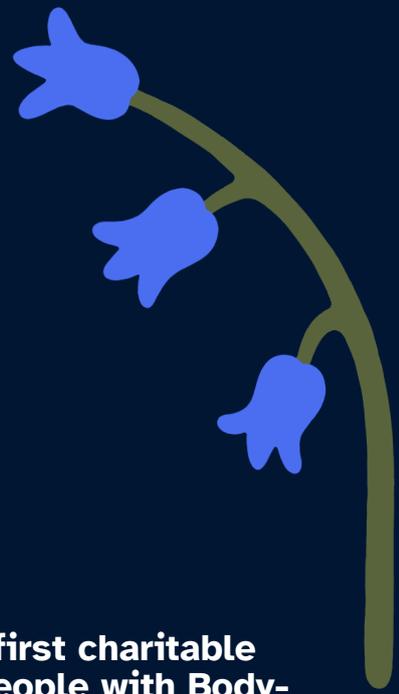
HABITAWARE

HabitAware serves the global Body-Focused Repetitive Behaviors (BFRBs) community with recovery resources. Our innovative motion detection technology, the HabitAware Keen2 smart bracelet, creates awareness of the hands so you can redirect to healthier soothing behaviors. HabitAware's Online Community, Virtual Peer Coaching, and eCourses provide ongoing support for lasting life change. Start your BFRB healing at [HabitAware.com](https://habitaware.com)



**BFRB Changemakers is a US-based non-profit on a mission to increase access to care, support recovery via online growth groups, reduce stigma and shame by educating outsiders through research and media attention. BFRB Changemakers organizes global entities to work together to uphold these pillars.**

# Charity Stalls



**BFRB U&I are the UK and Ireland's first charitable organisation to exclusively support people with Body-Focused Repetitive Behaviours (BFRBs), including hair pulling, skin picking, nail biting, and associated disorders. We have been supporting people living with BFRBs and their loved ones since 2015.**



**For over 25 years OCD Action has been delivering frontline services which make a tangible and long-term difference to the lives of people with OCD, their families, carers and friends. OCD Action has a vision of a time when OCD is well understood and everyone gets the treatment and the support they need, when they need it. With the OCD community, we are fighting for this.**



**OCDIRELAND**

**OCD Ireland is a national organisation in Ireland dedicated to supporting individuals affected by Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), Body Dysmorphic Disorder (BDD), and Trichotillomania (TTM), as well as their families and friends. Its core mission is to provide both online and in-person support groups for those impacted by these conditions.**





Thank you for coming - please keep in touch!

[www.psych.ox.ac.uk/BFRBs](http://www.psych.ox.ac.uk/BFRBs)



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Donate!

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With additional contributions from:



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