

Positive.News

Annual Review 2020—2021

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I began the pandemic glued to traditional media and quickly felt overwhelmed by how awful the outlook was. Positive News was an absolute lifeline, reminding me that so many good things are going on in the world.

Nancy L



Good news in a bad year

Sean Wood, CEO

At the start of the pandemic, the World Health Organization issued mental health advice, which included: “Find opportunities to amplify positive and hopeful stories”. As soon as the crisis began unfolding, we knew that Positive News had a role to play in helping people to cope. Indeed, traffic to our website tripled as lockdown bedded in.

So, we increased our journalistic output online, ran a crowdfunding campaign to get free copies of Positive News magazine to NHS workers, and offered half-price gift subscriptions for people who felt our stories could benefit their friends and family during lockdown.

As such, while the context was an undesirable one, April 2020 to March 2021 was a year when we were grateful to be able to increase our impact. In this review you’ll find some of the messages of support that testify to how our journalism mattered more than ever.

Commercially, while many media organisations – especially those reliant on advertising income – struggled during the Covid-19 crisis, the growth of Positive News accelerated. It wasn’t easy; retail of our magazine ground to a halt as shops were shuttered, and our income from brand partnerships slowed as companies reigned in their marketing spending. We also adjusted as a team, to a permanent move to remote working.

But by doubling down on our journalism, and focusing on selling magazine subscriptions directly to readers, we responded effectively (even winning a small business award for how we adapted during the pandemic). By the

end of the year, we achieved a significant increase in online audience, magazine subscribers and financial turnover.

Whether you’re a monthly supporter, a magazine subscriber, a co-owner, or a reader of our website, as a community benefit society Positive News serves you. On behalf of all the team, thank you for your support as we continue in our efforts to benefit ever more people, as the world’s most uplifting news source. 📢

Martin Wright, Chair of the board

This hasn’t been an easy year, to put it mildly, but it’s also been really heartening to see how the whole Positive News community rose to the challenge. Whether it was the way in which our small staff team stayed cheerful and focused, or how readers championed our journalism and responded generously to our NHS crowdfunder, there was a sense that the circumstances brought out the best in Positive News. It made all of us on the board feel proud to be involved with something so vital for these times, and above all, grateful to all of you in the Positive News community. 📢

Below: The Positive News team on a video call



The year in numbers 2020–2021

Website visitors
1.8 million



Social media
followers
370,000



Magazine distribution
64,000 copies (annual total)



Magazine subscribers
9,400



Turnover
+27%





**During the
toughest points of
lockdowns and isolation,
when disaster-focused
media outlets had
exhausted my spirit,
Positive News was
like a warm hug!**

Nicola T



Light in the dark: Journalism highlights

Lucy Purdy, editor-in-chief

Responding to the Covid-19 pandemic

When the first UK lockdown came into force, in response to the huge need for hope we launched an online series about positive responses to the pandemic.

We covered stories such as: volunteers sewing scrubs for the NHS; the surge of community mutual aid groups; efforts to factcheck media coverage of the pandemic; entrepreneurs launching social enterprises during the crisis; online choirs and livestreamed DJ sets keeping culture alive; an architect converting shipping containers into intensive care units; and much more. One of the most popular articles was headlined: 'Hitting the pandemic wall? 10 ways to cope as the Covid crisis continues'.

In Positive News magazine, the cover story of our Jul–Sep 2020 issue looked at



predictions for positive change that could happen in the wake of the crisis – from more care in society to a greener economy and slower living.

Many readers got in touch to say our coverage had proved to be a lifeline throughout the pandemic.

In other news...

Our quarterly print magazine, existing outside the daily news cycle, offered respite from the overwhelming nature of news about the pandemic, and it kept readers up to date with progress in other areas of life. Taking a long view on the challenges facing the world, this year we reported on topics including racial justice, planet-friendly farming, children's mental health, and sustainable cities.



Human hope

We make a habit of hunting down optimists. In an interview, historian Rutger Bregman described how institutions – from prisons to workplaces – could be markedly different if we take a more hopeful, evidence-based view of human nature. And back in October 2020, when England's European championship final was still but a dream, we reported on the star

footballers who are challenging tabloid stereotypes by using their formidable influence for good. Earlier this year, we shared the inspiring story of how cancer survivor and charity founder Kris Hallenga has found happiness. And when the prime minister said "newt counting" was halting housebuilding, we met some of these ecologists to find out why their work matters.



Fresh formats

In April 2020, with demand for our journalism surging, we launched What Went Right – an online round-up of the most uplifting stories of the week in bitesize chunks.

Then, to kick off 2021, we introduced three new sections to the print magazine: 'For the Love of' dives deep into people's passions; 'Life After' finds out how people have adapted and

grown from tragedy, trauma or adversity; and 'The Rewrite' is a sparky collection of short, uplifting facts and ideas that challenge cynical assumptions about how the world works. **P**





**I'm an NHS nurse and
work in mental health.
When the pandemic struck,
my task was to support
people who were struggling,
frightened and isolated.
Positive News kindly donated
magazines for patients and
staff. It helped people to focus
on the good in the world, and
helped me to lift their spirits
and feel hopeful again.
Thank you.**

Madeline W



2020

APRIL 2020

- Positive News magazine, Apr–Jun 2020 (#101).
- Positive News magazine is distributed in 12 women's prisons across the UK, in partnership with the charity One Small Thing.



MAY 2020

- A campaign to distribute free copies of Positive News magazine to NHS hospitals and staff raises more than £16,000 from donors, funding 9,000 copies.
- Positive News features in an article by Journalism.co.uk about media outlets that are benefiting people during the pandemic.

JUNE 2020

- Positive News records its first profitable 12-month period, reaching its goal of financial sustainability five years on from its #OwnTheMedia community shares crowdfund.



JULY 2020

- Positive News magazine, Jul–Sep 2020 (#102).



SEPTEMBER 2020

- Our 'Positive people' marketing campaign features members of the Positive News community in illustrated form.



OCTOBER 2020

- Positive News magazine, Oct–Dec 2020 (#103).



- Annual Inspiration Meeting (AIM) 2020: Positive News co-owners elect Rebecca Allen to the board of directors.

DECEMBER 2020

- Our Christmas gift campaign sees a record number of subscriptions bought.



JANUARY 2021

- Positive News magazine, Jan–Mar 2021 (#104).

FEBRUARY 2021

- Free copies of Positive News magazine are offered to those struggling with pandemic fatigue, through our 'Stay positive' campaign.
- An article on how to cope as the pandemic continues is read by more than 30,000 people.



MARCH 2021

- Positive News wins Vodafone's Shout Out for Small Business competition, in recognition of our "inventiveness and tenacity" during the pandemic.
- Positive News partners with ActionAid to raise awareness of their She Is The Answer campaign, which empowers women in Cambodia to have a voice in the face of the climate emergency.

2021

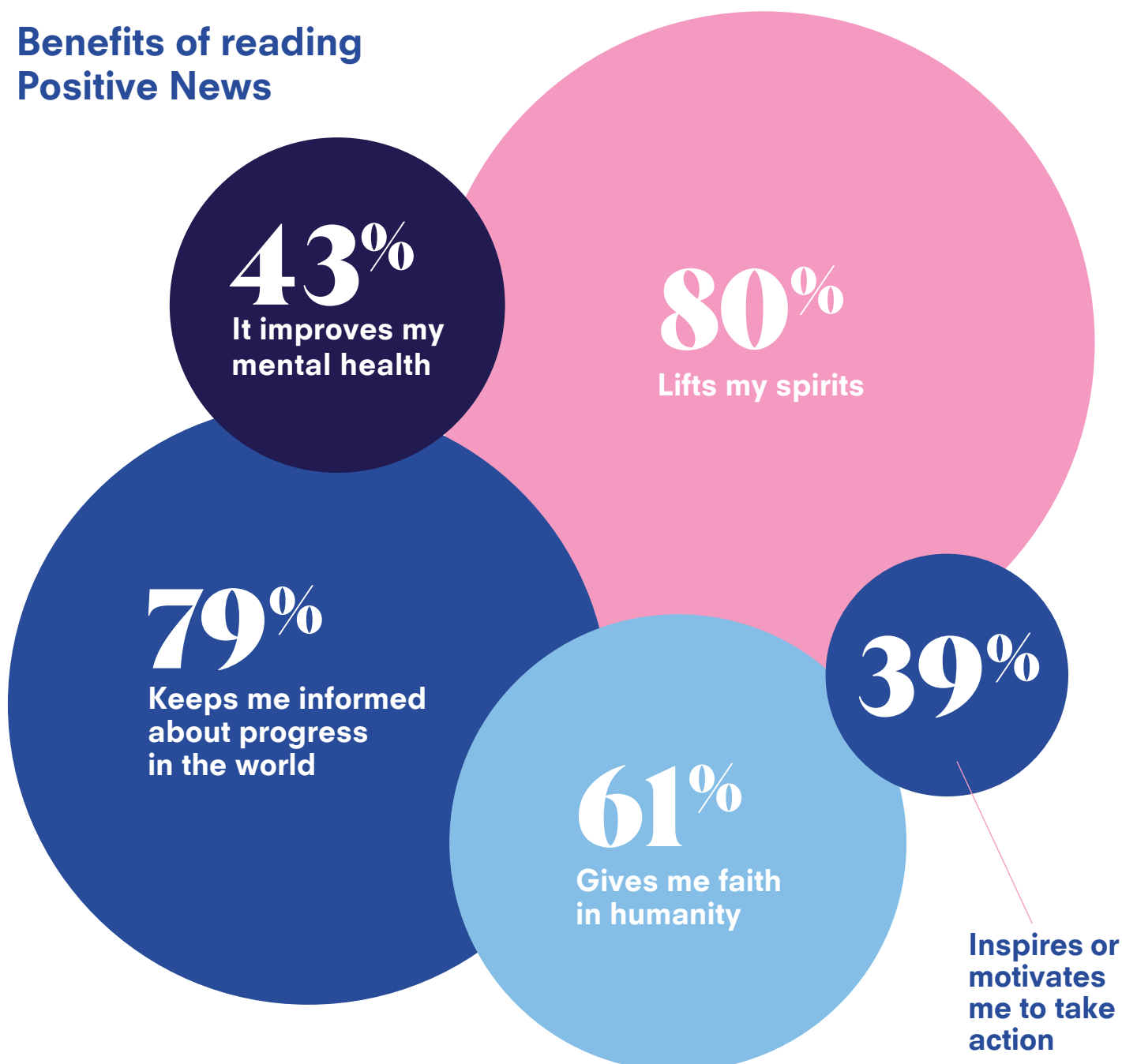
Lifting your spirits: our impact

We often hear from our community

about the difference that Positive News makes in your lives, and this was particularly so while everyone faced the stress and uncertainty of the pandemic. To understand more, we invited you to tell us how Positive News has benefited you during the past year.

We were thrilled to read all the responses, a selection of which are included throughout this review, and below is a snapshot of some of the most commonly stated benefits. In the coming year, we plan to find out more about the ways in which our journalism matters to you. 📌

Benefits of reading Positive News



We can inspire more people, with your help



Positive News is uplifting more readers than ever. But most people don't yet realise there's an alternative to the doom and gloom.

If you want to see more positive news in the world – and more people benefiting from it – please join our community of supporters who are backing our journalism. From just £1 per month, you'll be directly funding the production and sharing of more Positive News stories.

www.positive.news/support



**For 18 months,
I've felt myself wrapped
tightly in a thick grey
blanket of despondency.
It has, however, been
embroidered with bright
threads of hope, and
Positive News has
kept me afloat.**

Peter R

Positive.News



Solutions journalism

While most news is about what's going wrong, Positive News focuses on what's going right. Our independent reporting will keep you informed about progress, while boosting your wellbeing, too.



Community-supported

Positive News is owned and funded by readers worldwide, and our board of directors are elected by and from our community of co-owners. Our profits are reinvested in our journalism, for public benefit.

Positive News Ltd is a community benefit society registered with the Financial Conduct Authority, number: 7150. Registered office: 24 Greencoat Place, London, SW1P 1RD.





www.positive.news/support