



# Listening Post Annual Report

## Counselling and Training

1 February 2023

31 January 2024



### Contact us

Tel: 01452 383820  
[www.listeningpost.org.uk](http://www.listeningpost.org.uk)

#### GLOUCESTER

St Mary de Lode Church  
St Mary's Square,  
Gloucester, GL1 2QT  
[lpostcounselling@listeningpost.org.uk](mailto:lpostcounselling@listeningpost.org.uk)  
t: 01452 383820

#### CHELTENHAM

Hester's Way Community Resource  
Centre, Cassin Drive,  
Cheltenham, GL51 7SU  
[lpostcheltenham@listeningpost.org.uk](mailto:lpostcheltenham@listeningpost.org.uk)  
t: 01242 256060

#### STROUD

Northcote House, Middle Street,  
Stroud, GL5 1DZ  
[lpoststroud@listeningpost.org.uk](mailto:lpoststroud@listeningpost.org.uk)  
t: 01453 750123

## Listening Post Counselling Service Limited

(Limited by guarantee and registered in the UK)

Company Number 2619615

Charity Number 1013442

**Registered Office** St Mary de Lode Church, St Mary's Square, GL1 2QT

Telephone Number 01452 383820

Email Address [counselling@lpost.org.uk](mailto:counselling@lpost.org.uk)

Website [www.listeningpost.org.uk](http://www.listeningpost.org.uk)

Facebook Listening Post Counselling

Twitter @ListeningPostco

Instagram @listeningpost\_

**Cheltenham Centre** Hesters Way Community Resource Centre  
Cassin Drive, Cheltenham, GL51 7SU

Telephone Number 01242 256060

Email Address: [counselling@lpost.org.uk](mailto:counselling@lpost.org.uk)

**Stroud Centre** Northcote House, Middle Street, Stroud, GL5 1DZ

Telephone Number 01453 750123

Email Address [counselling@lpost.org.uk](mailto:counselling@lpost.org.uk)

## Independent Examiner

Mr Julian Owens BSc FCA, GCSD Accountants Ltd

Chartered Accountants & Registered Auditors

701 Stonehouse Park, Sperry Way, Stonehouse, GL10 3UT

## Bankers

Charities Aid Foundation Bank Ltd, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ.

Redwood Bank, The Nexus Building, Broadway, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire, SG6 3TA.

## Meet Our Patrons and Trustees



### Patron

The Right Revd Rachel Treweek



### Patron

Dr David Drew



### Chair

Mrs Rosie Clifford

Appointed: 15/7/19



### Vice Chair

Mr Alastair Sammon

Appointed: 27/9/21



### Treasurer

Mr Robert Kingston

Appointed: 11/09/2023



### Trustee

Mrs Sheila Appleton

Appointed: 20/5/19



### Trustee

Mrs Pauline Bayliss Jones

Appointed: 20/03/2023



### Trustee

Ms Arlene Hanson

Resigned: 11/09/2023



### Trustee

Mr David Monument

Appointed: 15/11/21

## Foreword from the Chair:

### Rosie Clifford

Past months have not, on the whole, been filled with the best news. We have heard of the many families who are struggling to make ends meet, of failures of trusted national institutions, and on the world stage, of escalating conflicts between countries, and the looming climate emergency.

In such a challenging environment many businesses and charities are finding it hard to make ends meet, we at Listening Post included. But we remain committed to our core aim of making counselling available to all adults regardless of ability to pay. No other agency locally advertises this commitment. But will we be able to meet the ongoing demand for our service without running out of resource? Sometimes it has felt as if a strong headwind makes our steps slow and difficult.

Despite this very testing environment, we celebrated significant moves forward this last year.

With the Diocese of Gloucester planning to sell St Aldate's church we looked extensively for new Gloucester offices but could not afford commercial property rates. And then in 2022 came the offer of the use of St Mary de Lode church within Gloucester's city centre near the Cathedral.

The trustees voted for this as the ideal base for our new Gloucester office and we began discussions with the Benefice's Parochial Church Council who had been looking to partner with others in the use of their historic building. We eventually moved in over Christmas 2023 after many long months liaising with the Diocese of Gloucester and contractors over permitted alterations to a Grade 1 listed, starred building. The protracted negotiations took time, energy and persistence.

Now installed with three warm and welcoming counselling rooms, an upstairs office, and the use of a well-fitted kitchen, in the coming years we are hoping it will welcome many who will find it a place of hope and support - including those from the local community. We are most grateful to the Diocese of Gloucester, Canon Nicky Arthy, Churchwarden Richard Lane and St Mary de Lode PCC, Roberts Limbrick Architects, and Men in Sheds.

Our long-term aim of acquiring a customer relationship management (CRM) system remains extant, in order to better manage our client journey from first contact to final counselling session. Having decided to use the funds originally earmarked for a particular system towards bespokeing a different one, better suited to Listening Post needs, Daniel Whisson and Alice Wheeler are working towards a spring 2024 implementation. The system will include appointment and donation reminders, clinical notes and measures and will be semi-automated to reduce the administrative burden on Listening Post staff and counsellors. We hope this will enable us to work much more efficiently and effectively providing a more coordinated experience for our clients and counsellors.

## *Foreword from the Chair continued...*

The clinical team headed by Vicki Paterson, have been providing great support as ever to our 70 to 80 counsellors, allocating clients, inducting new counsellors and providing safeguarding advice. They have worked hard to reduce the numbers on our waiting list although it remains longer than we would like.

We did not run a Diploma course this September but will restart in 2024. The Level 2/3 course was re-sited to our Cheltenham base as we moved from St Aldate's.

Jo Patrick, a very welcome addition to our team, joined us in the summer as our part-time fundraiser, bringing significant experience to the role. Alice Wheeler has been so effective over the past couple of years in securing significant grant funding, but her time is limited with many other responsibilities.

Linda and Jo have been engaging with the NHS and with other local charities to discuss the possibility of work in partnership, supporting those living with multiple challenges. Increased partnership working is a specific focus for these next three years, agreed as part of our strategic plan in March 2023. We remain committed to be:

a professional and caring organisation, which delivers affordable, appropriate and timely counselling, trains people to be counsellors and enables the church and local community to play a part in alleviating emotional and psychological suffering.

Through our PeoplePlus contract we continued providing counselling to carers. Our work providing reflective supervision to the NHS has expanded to include Health and Wellbeing Coaches, as well as Social Prescriber Link Workers.

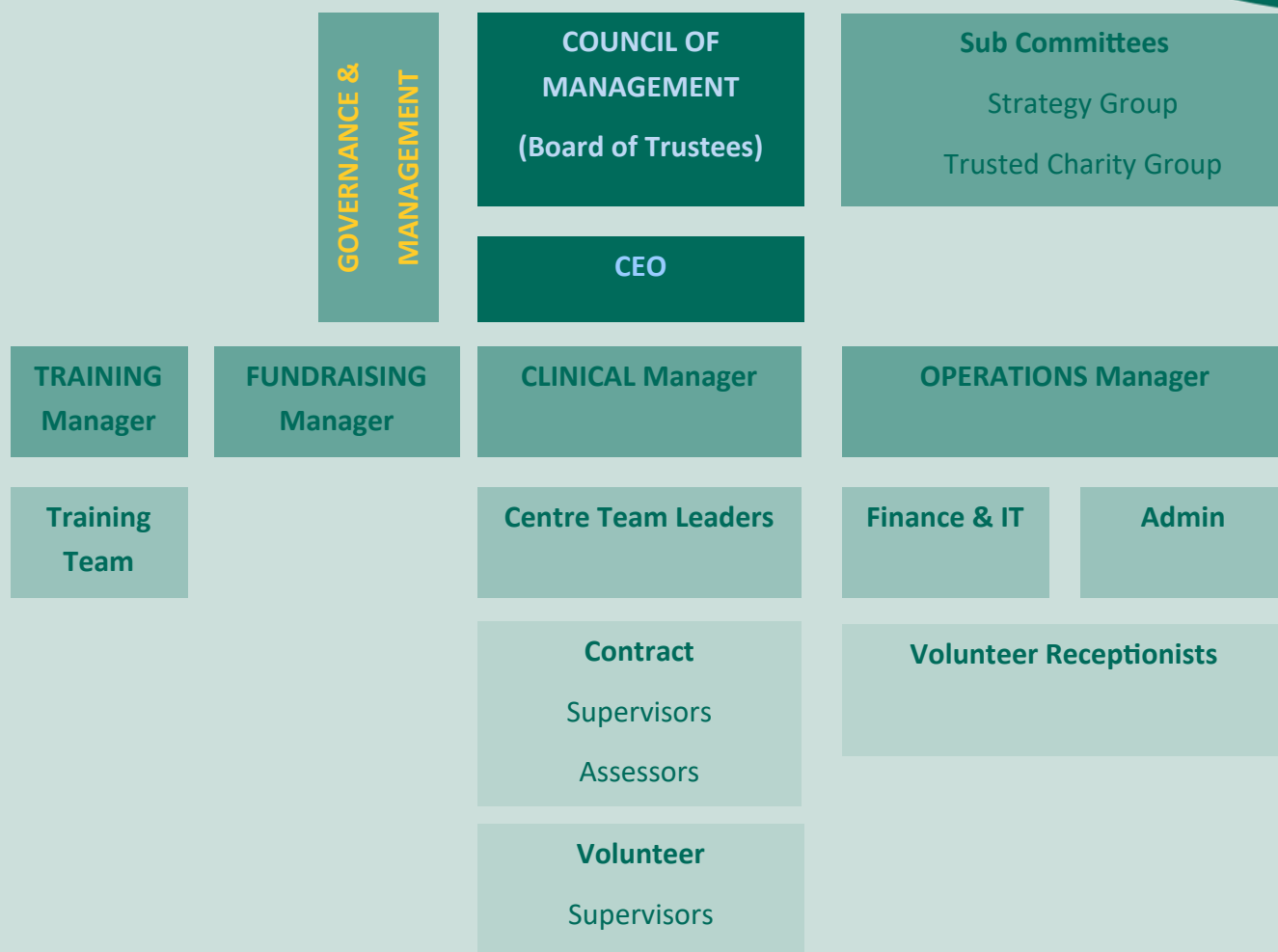
None of this would have been possible without our dedicated staff team, and all our volunteers, most of whom are counsellors. Huge thanks to them all. Many counsellors say how much they value the support of their peers in their counselling role, and the friendliness, warmth and welcome of the organisation.

I also want to thank the team of Trustees for steering the charity through these challenging times. Alastair Sammon, Vice Chair, is a man of many parts and has lent his considerable practical expertise to the Stroud and Gloucester offices, as well as giving of his astute mind to our debates. Robert Kingston, our treasurer, has an increased role as we expand our activity and see additional staff on the payroll. We bade farewell to Arlene Hanson as she stepped back from her role as Trustees to give her more time for her family. We thank her for her commitment over these past few years and her contribution.

We are very grateful to those organisations who have faithfully supported us financially over a number of years. Each contribution is greatly valued, especially in these stringent days.

For all blessings we, and those counselled have known,  
we thank God.

# Our Organisation



## Our Vision

To walk alongside the broken-hearted and restore them to fuller life

## Our Values

- Respect and nurture for all who come and all who serve at Listening Post
- Integrity and Compassion, rooted in love



## Our Strategic Plan: 2023-2026

Our three year Strategic Plan has been updated based on many months of discussions between Trustees and staff which were informed by client feedback forums. They will continue to govern our plans going forwards.

### Strategic Aim

**To deliver counselling that is accessible, affordable, appropriate and available/ timely**

1. Build on our established strengths by continuing to offer professional long-term counselling employing differing modalities, with positive client feedback.
2. Build organisation to a capacity of 100 counsellors; min of 2 sessions/ week each:
  - a. Develop support to counsellors which makes retention attractive
  - b. Provide incrementally more earning opportunities
3. Develop closer community and church integration:
  - a. Pursue opportunities for counsellors embedded in community spaces
  - b. Take a multi-disciplinary approach to counselling by providing mutual support to community organisations.
  - c. Develop closer links to churches through counselling and training opportunities
4. Robustly demonstrate the difference counselling makes to a client:
  - a. PHQ and GAD scores consistently applied and monitored.
  - b. Client qualitative feedback gathered throughout process.
5. Offer clients:
  - a. Assessment within one week of first contact
  - b. 95% of clients offered support within 4 weeks of first contact
  - c. Develop psychoeducation and personal contact to waiting list clients
6. Create a welcoming and warm environment at all centres.

**To deliver training in counselling**

1. To continue to run Listening Post training courses to high professional standards with a fully resourced training team:
  - a. Promote Listening Skills course and deliver it twice per year
  - b. Promote (Counselling and Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body (CPCAB) Level 2/3 Course and deliver it annually
  - c. Build towards running a sustainable L4 Diploma
2. Provide dedicated administrative and leadership support to training team.
3. To deliver six short courses to Churches and Businesses per year.
4. To continue a CPD programme that is well advertised and attended.

## Strategic Aim    Strategic Objectives

### **To be a professional and caring organisation**

1. Secure funding that enables the organisation to meet the current demands upon it well, to continue to develop professionally and interpersonally and to support:
  - a. Appropriate staff hours
  - b. Appropriate staff pay
  - c. Increased paid counselling roles
  - d. Subsidised Continuous Professional Development (CPD)
  - e. Volunteer mileage for qualified counsellors holding a minimum of 3 clients/ week each.
  - f. Better access to services.
2. Focus on successfully managing the move to St Mary de Lode with ambitious and modern designs.
3. Use the new space available at St Mary creatively and in a community spirit.
4. Gain level 1 accreditation with "Trusted Charity" (formerly PQASSO), a quality standards framework for the Charity sector.
5. Conduct annual staff and volunteer reviews.
6. Conduct an annual staff and volunteer survey with satisfactory indicators.
7. Have an on-going three-year strategic plan.
8. Implement the CRM with minimum friction and excellent training.
9. Redeploy admin hours freed by the CRM with a focus on clients and training.
10. Consider how best Trustees can support:
  - a. High profile members and associates to help network
  - b. Members and associates to more accurately reflect social representation of Gloucestershire
  - c. Planning and implementation of best possible methods of oversight.

### **To enable the Church community to play a part in alleviating emotional and psychological suffering**

1. To be known, acknowledged and respected professionally for counselling and training and as a Christian organisation within churches and the local community.
2. To have established partnership working:
  - a. With local churches and in the Diocese
  - b. With the NHS
  - c. With other teaching organisations
  - d. With local communities (Including Community Mental Health Transformation (CMHT) projects)
3. Equip church members to support members with mental health needs- correspondent with point 3 of 'Deliver training in Counselling'
4. Through the fundraiser and church liaison roles, to develop and nurture contact with church members and churches through prayer-letters, financial support schemes, training courses and speaking engagements.

The reports that follow are aligned with our organisational structure

- **Management - Governance**
- **Management - Clinical**
- **Management - Training**
- **Management - Operations**
- **Management - Fundraising and Finances**

## **Management - Governance**

### **Progress on our strategic plan: report from the Strategy group: February 2023– January 2024**

A newly created strategic plan for 2023 – 2026, published on pages 6-7, was developed and refined by the Strategy Group, then discussed in depth at a professionally facilitated Strategy Away Day attended by Trustees and senior staff and incorporated client feedback from client feedback forums. The plan was presented to the AGM in September 2023 and has been adopted as our vision for the next three years, informing our day to day work.

As has been referred to in detail in the Chair's opening comments, the two major practical drives in the organisation have been to move to St Mary de Lode in Gloucester as our headquarters offices and to implement a Customer Relations Management (CRM) system.

With a strong lead from Jo Patrick, fundraising strategy has featured regularly in our discussions.

The length of our waiting list is a constant concern. Guided by and inspired by Vicki Paterson and driven from the client feedback groups, the strategy group has looked at ways to reduce the waiting time for counselling. This has been challenging in a situation where we are successfully increasing the number of clients completing treatment, and at the same time attracting more clients. We have looked at ways to 'hold' our clients in a better way - to offer regular and effective 'wraparound' support for those waiting for counselling and hope to attract the funding needed to implement these plans.

**Alastair Sammon**



## Management – Governance

### Trusted Charity Report: February 2023– January 2024

In 2016 Listening Post’s Council of Management decided to work towards achieving the **Trusted Charity Standard** (at that time known as PQASSO). Built on eleven areas of quality, each aspect is broken down into two levels:

Level 1: to demonstrate organisation is operating effectively

Level 2: to demonstrate organisation is operating strategically

Organisations self-assess, with an option to go for external assessment for the award of the Trusted Charity Standard. As well as being a benchmark and a useful tool to ensure the right foundations are in place, it is a confirmation that the organisation has reached a recognised quality standard providing assurance for statutory and independent funders, users and other stakeholders. In 2021, NCVO handed over the oversight and support for the programme to the Growth Company.

We would have liked to have made further headway in these last twelve months, but we have needed to reserve our time and energies for fundraising, the relocation of our Gloucester office, and the development of our Customer Relationship Management system.

Members: Linda Bullock, Rosie Clifford (Chair), Robert Kingston, Alice Wheeler.

**Rosie Clifford**

## Risk Register and Risk Management

The Governance Review Group met four times during the year and updated the Risk Register on an ongoing basis. The updated Risk Register was presented to the Board of Trustees for approval.

**Robert Kingston**

# Management – Clinical

This year has been a year of stability and growth in the Clinical Team.

This is reflected in the 15% increase in client sessions across our centres this year.

Vicki Paterson has remained as Clinical Manager, with Alice Wheeler supporting her in a crossover role in the organisation. Vicki's ethos of the staff team looking after counsellors as well as they possibly can, so that in turn our counsellors can look after clients as well as they possibly can, is evident throughout the organisation. Feedback of counsellors as they leave is consistently that they felt well supported and cared for. Clients often report the warmth and kindness of everyone they encountered in the organisation. Retention of counsellors is better than ever and the centres are getting busy.

## Client Feedback

The highlight of the Clinical year was perhaps a series of 1:1 feedback calls with former clients followed by two client feedback forums. We learnt so much about what would be helpful and also what new initiatives were superfluous to need and were so encouraged by the depth of change clients related to us from having experienced counselling. We intend to move forward with coproduction in the future, recruiting a steering group of former clients to help monitor service and vet new initiatives. As a direct result of these conversations we plan to implement check-in calls to clients every 6 weeks whilst on the waiting list, offer holding sessions for some clients and a drop in coffee morning for prospective, current and completed clients.

## Bank counselling

Vicki suggested a 'Bank Counselling' initiative this year which has been successfully trialled and implemented, which aims to support newly qualified counsellors as they begin to find their feet in readiness for private practice. It also acts as a retention incentive and more of our counsellors feel able to continue to support us with voluntary hours as a consequence of this.

## Team Leaders

As Team Leader, Natasha Dancy has continued to hold the Cheltenham centre with great efficiency, and care. She has been a driving force for positive change in the organisation, such as initiating guidelines for counsellors. Rachel Eggleton continued Team Leading both our Stroud and Gloucester centres, her counsellors will tell you how much she goes out of her way to look after them and she has been a wise voice in our Clinical team.

## Paid counsellors

Our counsellors who see our most complex clients deserve so much thanks. Without them the waitlist for these clients would be untenably long. They work in a long-term manner with many trauma survivors and for this work, which is deeply rewarding as change happens, the counsellors also need emotional resilience and an incredible level of commitment to their caring work. Our counsellors delivering short term counselling to carers via the PeoplePlus contract are a wonderfully motivated and efficient team who have been receiving glowing feedback.

## Our Volunteer Counsellors

Our sincere thanks go to our team of counsellors for your kindness and support of each other, the staff and your incredible commitment to of all our clients.  
Here is a recent client quote:

*'Please keep this enormously important service going. It has been life-changing for me. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.'*

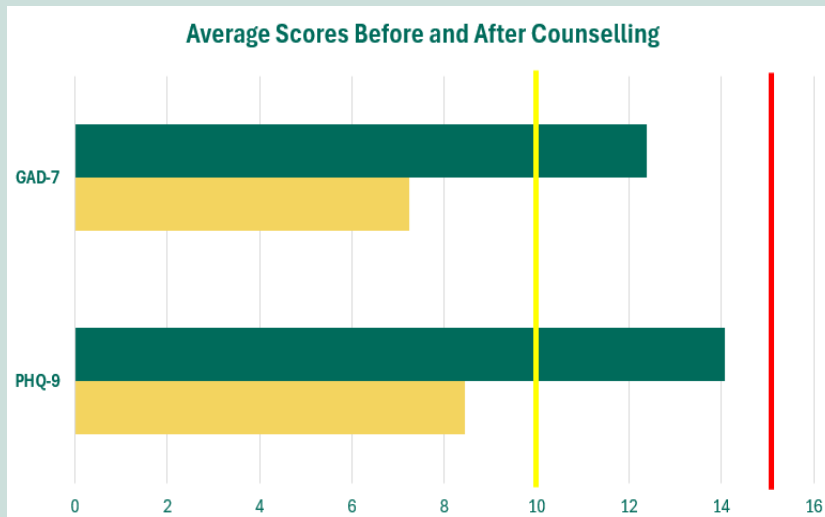
# Management – Clinical continued...

## Key Statistical Outcomes

Due to the work Jo Patrick has pioneered in Listening Post, in future years a breadth of clinical and wellbeing statistics will be available demonstrating the impact of counselling with longitudinal follow up embedded.

Currently we use the NHS outcome measures for depression and anxiety, PHQ-9 and GAD-7 and qualitative feedback.

The following data has been gathered from clients who ended in the year with at least two completed sets of data. In each case, their earliest set of data was compared with the most recent. In total, this produced 224 clients with GAD/PHQ data for the 2023-24 year.



### Notes

- Patient Health Questionnaire – 9 Question Variant (PHQ-9), scored out of 27
- Generalised Anxiety Disorder – 7 Question Variant (GAD-7), scored out of 21
- The cut off point of 10 or greater is considered a ‘yellow flag’ for both scores, whilst 15 or greater is a ‘red flag’, indicating that active treatment is warranted.



## Key Statistics:

**10,093**

People helped since 1991

**100,350**

Sessions run since 1991

**5784**

Sessions run in 2023-24

**1259**

Carers Sessions 2023-24

**22.5**

Average sessions attended

(clients with PHQ and GAD data)

**406**

New people helped in 2023-24

**£14.42**

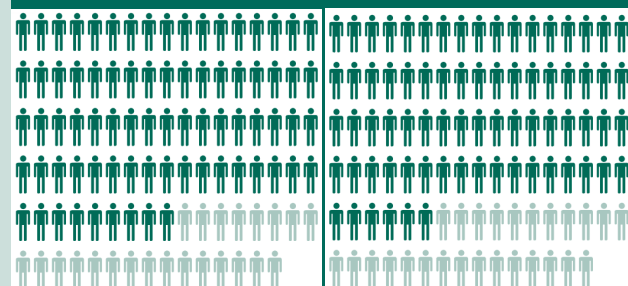
Average client donation

**£36.02**

Mean cost of a session

172 out of 224 clients  
tested showed an  
improvement in their  
GAD-7 score

166 out of 224 clients  
tested showed an  
improvement in their  
PHQ-9 score



# Management – Clinical continued...

## Key statistical outcomes:

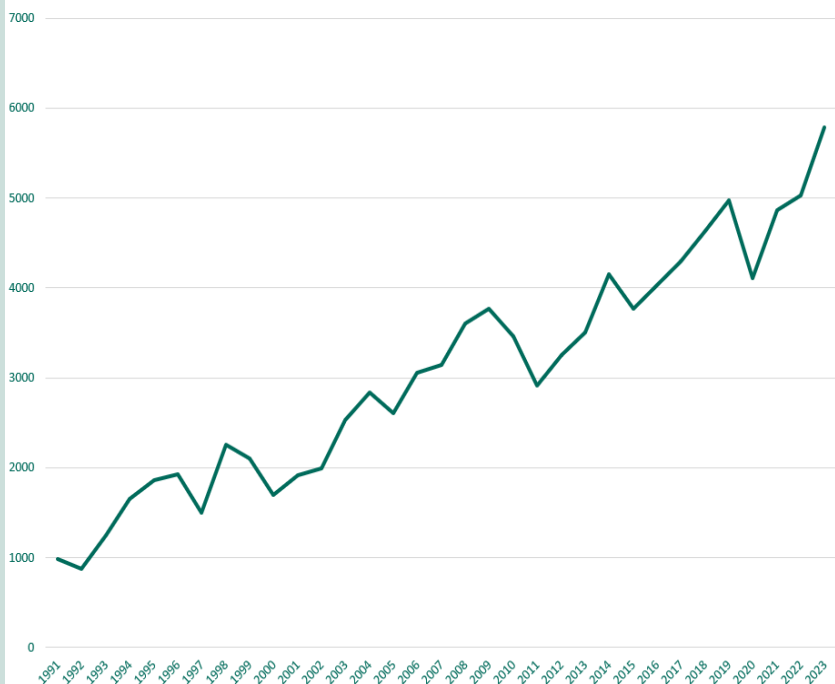


### Reason for referral



Stress, Anxiety And Related Issues (32.28%)	Depression And Related Issues (15.49%)
Other Mental Health Difficulties (1.84%)	Issues Relating To Eating And Weight (0.26%)
Issues Relating To Dependency (0.26%)	Issues Relating To Emotions And Feelings (Including Anger) (10.76%)
Life Events And Life Crisis (11.55%)	Bereavement And Loss (4.72%)
Issues Relating To Pregnancy And Fertility (1.05%)	Relationship Issues (12.6%)
Abuse (3.94%)	Issues Relating To Culture (0.79%)
Issues Relating To Finance (0.79%)	Issues Relating To Work / Redundancy (1.31%)
Spiritual Issues / Spirituality (0.26%)	Personal Growth Work (1.57%)
Other (0.52%)	

### Counselling Sessions Run per Year



## Counselling Delivery

### Key Statistics

Sessions: Face to Face /  
**Remote**

### Regular Clients:

**4222 (73%)**

Face to Face

**1273 (22%)**

Video Link

**289 (5%)**

Telephone

### Carer Clients:

**541 (43%)**

Face to Face

**240 (19%)**

Video Link

**478 (38%)**

Telephone

[www.listeningpost.org.uk](http://www.listeningpost.org.uk)

## Management – Training

**Listening Post provided the following training courses during the year:**

**Foundation Course in Counselling Skills and Studies (CPCAB L2 & L3)**

(L3 Course commenced 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023, ended 6<sup>th</sup> July 2023)

*Tutors—Jill Evans and Julie Gates*

12 students completed the combined course, gaining their L3 qualification.

**Foundation Course in Counselling Skills and Studies (CPCAB L2 & L3)**

(L2 Course commenced 17<sup>th</sup> September 2023, ended 25<sup>th</sup> January 2024)

*Tutors—Jill Evans and Julie Gates*

14 students completed and gained their L2 Qualification

**Diploma Course in Therapeutic Counselling (CPCAB L4, Year 2)**

(Ended 29<sup>th</sup> June 2023)

*Tutors—Nicky Harber & Catherine Jones*

15 students completed and gained their L4 Qualification.

**Listening Post held the following CPD during the year:**

‘Working with Trauma’ parts 1, 2 & 3 with Margaret Landale.

‘Working with Bereavement’ with Aileen McCormack

‘Working with Neurodiversity’ with Orly Koppel

‘How to Write Session Notes’ with Vicki Paterson

‘Creative Counselling’ with Vicki Paterson and guests



## Management - Operations

### PeoplePlus

In September 2019 Listening Post were sub-contracted by PeoplePlus to provide counselling services to Carers within Gloucestershire and we are delighted to report that the contract has been renewed for a further 2 years. Between 1 February 2023 and 31 January 2024, 204 carers were referred to us for counselling, a 12% increase from the previous financial year. During the period Listening Post provided 1259 sessions of counselling to these carers. Current statistics show that over 78% of the carers, who have received counselling, saw a positive improvement in both PHQ and GAD scores.

### Networking

Our CEO Linda Bullock and our fundraiser, Jo Patrick have been extremely active in networking. Jo has forged relationships with multiple other agencies and has submitted various partnership bids. Linda maintains connections with third sector organisations and Alice Wheeler has been connecting with individuals and organisations who can help Listening Post build the platform of counsellors and clients to better represent the diversity of Gloucestershire residents. Maintaining links with the Community Mental Health Transformation initiative has remained a priority and funding bids have been made to develop an initiative in the Forest of Dean.

### Organisation Systems (CRM)

In the previous reporting period, Listening Post had been successful in fundraising for a much-needed client management system. We used the funding to bespoke an off-the-shelf system which is free to charities. This considerable work of introducing integration and automation with our current processes has been steered by Alice Wheeler with her small team. Listening Post is indebted to Daniel Whisson's expert IT capacities for readying this CRM for a hoped for Spring '24 start. We will roll out a second phase of this project to enable ready data impact reporting and have sufficient funds to access two further much needed CRM components— a fundraising management platform and an HR management platform. We feel with this suite of new tech that the miracle of the fishes has been enacted in 2023 in Gloucestershire as much as in 1st century Galilee!

## Management - Operations continued...

### A Listening Post Christmas

Once again we moved our Christmas tree and a car full of decorations from centre to centre to celebrate together in our local teams. The Team Leaders did a fabulous job of the drinks and nibbles.

### Move to St Mary de Lode

The move felt like a team building exercise, with amazing volunteer help from Rachel Eggleton's husband, the Neill family, Vicki Paterson's fortifying and delicious soup, bread and cheese and some precarious lifting operations; somehow we got a series of hulking cabinets up and over the balcony.



## Management - Fundraising and finances

We recruited a committed and experienced Fundraising Manager, Jo Patrick, who helped to activate significant strategic and operational discussions around funding and finance. Predicting that core funding for our services would decrease, she began to help Listening Post explore innovative projects and partnership bids, to increase the quality of our service and develop our interconnectedness with the other statutory and non-statutory mental health service provision in the county. Since most of our service users are signposted by the NHS, Jo has been seeking ways to partner with the NHS, as a way to improve their offer and to help ensure Listening Post can continue to function as the lynchpin to accessible counselling in the county that it is. The fruit of this work may take some time to fully be realised and in the meantime, fundraising from trusts and funds has become ever more difficult since many are refining their priorities in the face of an overwhelming number of applicants; some of our regular donors have explained to us that they can no longer support Listening Post work for this reason. Jo and the Strategy group have been working hand in hand to find a viable way forward to secure sustainable funding for Listening Post.

# Management - Fundraising and Finances continued...



Our grateful thanks go to the many Charitable Trusts, individuals, friends, members, churches and organisations who have supported us so generously with their time, donations, equipment, and use of facilities during this financial year. Thank you to each and every person and group who has contributed to us to meet the incredible and increasing demand for affordable mental health services in Gloucestershire.

## Charitable Trusts &

### Organisations- £74,550

Langtree  
Spirax Sarco  
Jack Lane  
Co-op  
James Tudor  
Benefact  
Barnwood Trust  
High Sheriff  
Sylvanus Lysons  
Gloucestershire Community Foundation  
Anchor Foundation  
Poverty Hurts

### Friends and Members- £8,653

## Churches- £2,182

St Andrew's Church, Churchdown  
Cambray Baptist Church  
St Mark's Methodist, Cheltenham  
Cheltenham Quaker meeting  
Highbury Congregational Church  
Mariners' Church, Gloucester  
St Mary's Church, Tetbury

## General Donations- £8,993

Perdie Bennett (LP Christmas Card)  
Jacobs Well (Esther the Musical)  
Deer Park Archers (Community fun day)  
Nicky Harber (collection)  
Severn Sport (Football collection)

### LP quiz night:

Jim Jones (host)  
Asda (raffle prizes)  
Morrisons and Tesco's (food)

### Legacies:

Gladys Dyson and Joan Vaughan-Hayes



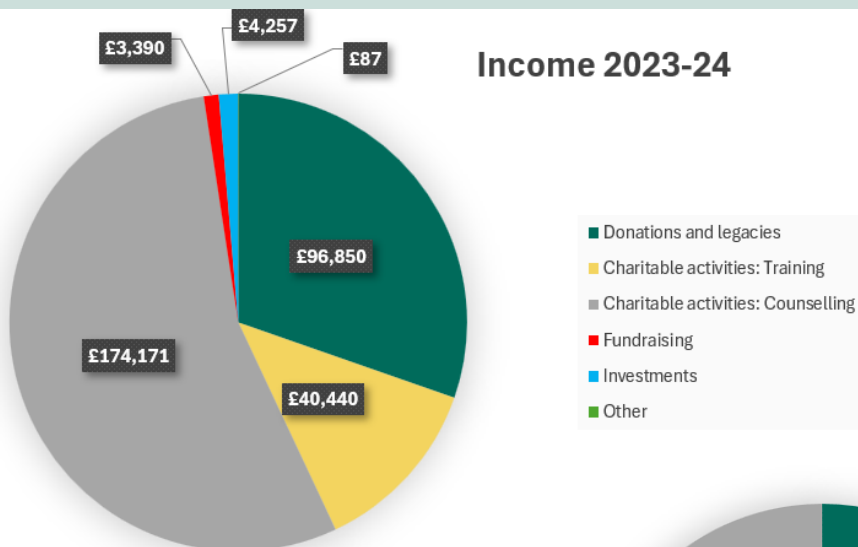
For the year ending 31 January 2024, total income rose by 3.5% increase to £319,195. Training income fell due to the absence of a diploma course, and Trusts and Foundations income fell from £95,399 last year to £74,550 this year, for reasons referred to in the fundraising report.

There was a 51.8% increase in counselling related income due to an increase in demand for our services. Most of the increase came from two new sources. Firstly, a short-term NHS contract to provide supervision to social prescribers. Secondly an initiative to increase the number of clients we can help by enabling clients who can pay a fixed price for counselling with a paid counsellor to obtain a quicker service. Expenditure rose quite significantly overall, with a 17.8% increase to £326,436, reflecting inflation, the initiatives mentioned above and the recruitment of a fundraiser.

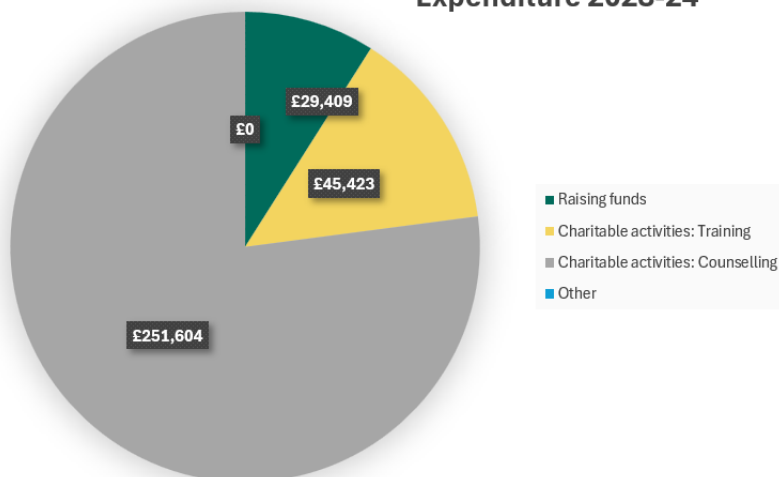
We finished the year with a deficit of £7,241, compared to last year's surplus of £31,347. However, the deficit understates the challenges we face mentioned elsewhere in this report. Accountancy rules for charities require restricted grants to be included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SOFA) when the money is received, usually some time before it is spent. The SOFA shows that the unrestricted funds deficit is much greater at £21,417.

During the year our general funds fell from £176,523 to £155,106. Following Charity Commission guidance, we have changed our reserves policy to focus on uncommitted unrestricted funds not invested in fixed assets. This figure fell from £169,893 at 01 Feb 2023 to £132,778 at 31 Jan 2024. Our reserves policy aims to retain uncommitted funds at between 4 and 6 months of planned operational expenditure. For 2024-25, budgeted operational expenditure (after deducting project expenditure covered by restricted funds) is £329,758 and thus we were holding 4.8 months of this in our uncommitted general funds.

### Income 2023-24



### Expenditure 2023-24





## A Final Word from the CEO:

### Linda Bullock

Our Charitable Trust funders tell us that we are a great organisation. Organisations that signpost clients to us say the same. Ninety-five percent of our clients rate our service at the highest level (excellent).

I concur: Listening Post both maintains its core commitment to provide affordable counselling to adults in Gloucestershire and seeks to develop into a better service. It never rests on its laurels and constantly finds ways to maximise resources, incorporate client feedback and change for the better.

Yet despite the love for Listening Post and the excellent work that we are doing, it is becoming increasingly hard to access funds to cover our core costs, as you will have read in the financial reports contained in this Annual Report. This means that we fall more behind sector wage averages and staff feel pressure to over-deliver.

We are not unique, charitable trusts are telling us that there just aren't enough resources to fund all applications, even to those who they have given to consistently in the past. Signposting organisations don't have the budgets to accompany their service user into counselling with us, meaning we carry the cost.

We hope that these financial challenges will be like the irritant in an oyster which cause a pearl to grow. We are actively pursuing new sources of funding and ways to become more self-sustaining. We owe it to the mental health of the people of Gloucestershire, and our founders to keep finding our way forward. Our clients tell us that counselling works. Our statistics show us that counselling works. Research tells us that counselling works:

*Hundreds of meta-analyses...on the efficacy of psychotherapy...[show] around 79 percent of clients who have therapy do better than the average person who has not had therapy... substantially larger than many medical or surgical procedures.'*  
Cooper, 2008:22. *Essential Research Findings in Counselling and Psychotherapy*, Sage.

Through our fantastic team of volunteers and staff we will continue to do all we can to ensure that Listening Post is able to continue to provide much-needed counselling support for many years to come and I just want to take this opportunity to say a huge thank you to all, including our friends, members and supporters for getting us this far and supporting us in our mission!

Linda Bullock

Company Number: 02619615  
Registered Charity: 1013442

**LISTENING POST COUNSELLING  
SERVICE LIMITED**  
(Limited by Guarantee)

**ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS  
31 JANUARY 2024**

**LISTENING POST COUNSELLING SERVICE LIMITED**  
**ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2024**

<b>CONTENTS</b>	<b>PAGES</b>
Company Information	3
The Report of the Council of Management	4
Statement of Financial Activities	5
Balance Sheet	6
Notes to the Unaudited Accounts	7 to 10
<i>The following report does not form part of these unaudited accounts:</i>	
Independent Examiner's Report to the Council of Management	11

**LISTENING POST COUNSELLING SERVICE LIMITED**

**ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2024**

**CHARITY AND COMPANY INFORMATION**

<b>COMPANY NUMBER</b>	02619615
<b>CHARITY NUMBER</b>	1013442
<b>PATRONS</b>	Dr D Drew The Right Reverend Rachel Treweek
<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>	Mrs L Bullock
<b>COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT</b>	Mrs S M Appleton Ms P Bayliss-Jones Mrs R Clifford (chairperson) Mr R D Kingston Mr D Monument Dr A M Sammon
<b>TREASURER</b>	Mr R D Kingston
<b>COMPANY SECRETARY</b>	Miss A E Wheeler
<b>REGISTERED OFFICE</b>	St Mary de Lode Church St Marys Square GLOUCESTER GL1 2QT
<b>INDEPENDENT EXAMINER</b>	Mr J Owens BSc FCA GCSD Accountants Limited 701 Stonehouse Park Sperry Way STONEHOUSE Gloucestershire GL10 3UT
<b>BANKERS</b>	CAF Bank Ltd 25 Kings Hill Avenue West Malling Kent ME19 4JQ

## **LISTENING POST COUNSELLING SERVICE LIMITED**

### **ANNUAL REPORT AND UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2024**

#### **THE REPORT OF THE COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT**

The Council of Management, who are the directors of the company and trustees of the charity, present their annual report with the unaudited accounts of the company for the year ended 31 January 2024. The trustees have adopted the provisions of Accounting and Reporting by Charities : Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015).

#### **CONSTITUTION AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CHARITY**

Listening Post is a company limited by guarantee and governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association and is a registered charity. The objects of the company, as stated in its Memorandum and Articles of Association (revised in 2016), is the relief of distress in Christian and non-Christian adults with emotional and psychological problems in such ways as the Council of Management may think fit and particularly by: Training and educating local Christians and non-Christians in counselling and related subject areas, providing counselling and related services within a Christian ethos and following Christian principles. This continues to be carried out within Gloucester, Cheltenham and Stroud.

#### **ORGANISATION OF THE CHARITY**

The charity is managed by the Council of Management and a Director of Service with a large team of volunteers without whom it would not be able to operate as effectively.

#### **COUNCIL OF MANAGEMENT (DIRECTORS)**

The directors who served the company during the year were as follows:

Mrs S M Appleton	Mr R D Kingston (Appointed September 2023)
Ms P Bayliss-Jones (Appointed March 2023)	Mr D Monument
Mrs R E Clifford	Dr A M Sammon
Mrs C A Dale (Resigned January 2023)	
Mrs A Hanson (Resigned September 2023)	

The directors are appointed in accordance with paragraphs 24 to 32 of the Articles of Association.

Signed on behalf of the Council of Management on...15.07.2024



**Mrs R E Clifford**  
**Chairperson**



# LISTENING POST COUNSELLING SERVICE LIMITED

## STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2024

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	<i>Prior period Total funds</i>	Further details See note:
<b>Income from:</b>					
Donations and legacies	56,350	40,500	96,850	117,231	2
Charitable activities:					
Training	40,440	-	40,440	73,504	3
Counselling	174,171	-	174,171	114,749	3
Other trading activities:					
Fundraising	3,390	-	3,390	1,818	
Investments	4,257	-	4,257	1,203	
Other	87	-	87	-	
<b>Total</b>	<u>278,695</u>	<u>40,500</u>	<u>319,195</u>	<u>308,505</u>	
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Raising funds	29,409	-	29,409	13,499	4
Charitable activities:					
Training	45,423	-	45,423	62,265	5
Counselling	225,280	26,324	251,604	201,379	5
Other			-	15	
<b>Total</b>	<u>300,112</u>	<u>26,324</u>	<u>326,436</u>	<u>277,158</u>	
<b>Net income/(expenditure)</b>	<u>(21,417)</u>	<u>14,176</u>	<u>(7,241)</u>	<u>31,347</u>	
<b>Extraordinary items</b>	-	-	-	-	
<b>Transfers between funds</b>	-	-	-	-	
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<u>(21,417)</u>	<u>14,176</u>	<u>(7,241)</u>	<u>31,347</u>	
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
Total funds brought forward	176,523	25,807	202,330	170,983	
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<u>155,106</u>	<u>39,983</u>	<u>195,089</u>	<u>202,330</u>	

The notes on pages 7 to 10 form part of these accounts

# LISTENING POST COUNSELLING SERVICE LIMITED

## BALANCE SHEET AT 31 JANUARY 2024

	Note	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
<b>Fixed Assets:</b>					
Tangible fixed assets	8	22,328	-	22,328	6,630
<b>Current Assets:</b>					
Debtors	9	16,406	-	16,406	19,612
Cash at bank and in hand		142,207	39,984	182,191	190,598
		158,613	39,984	198,597	210,210
<b>Liabilities:</b>					
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	10	25,836	-	25,836	14,510
<b>Net Current Assets</b>		<u>132,777</u>	<u>39,984</u>	<u>172,761</u>	<u>195,700</u>
<b>Total Assets Less Current Liabilities</b>		<u>155,105</u>	<u>39,984</u>	<u>195,089</u>	<u>202,330</u>
<b>Total Net Assets</b>		<u>155,105</u>	<u>39,984</u>	<u>195,089</u>	<u>202,330</u>
<b>Funds:</b>					
General Funds				155,106	176,523
Restricted income fund	11			39,983	25,807
				<u>195,089</u>	<u>202,330</u>
<b>Total charity funds</b>					

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 for the year ended 31 January 2024.

The members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 January 2024 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The trustees acknowledge their responsibility for ensuring that the company keeps proper accounting records which comply with Sections 386 and 387 of the Act, and for preparing accounts which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its surplus or deficit for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of Sections 394 and 395, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to accounts, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small charitable companies.

These accounts were approved by the Council of Management on 15.01.2024 and are signed on their behalf by:



Mrs R E Clifford  
Chairperson



Mr R D Kingston  
Treasurer

The notes on pages 7 to 10 form part of these accounts

## LISTENING POST COUNSELLING SERVICE LIMITED

### NOTES TO THE UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2024

#### 1) ACCOUNTING POLICIES

##### Basis of accounting

The financial statements of the charitable company have been prepared in accordance with the Charities SORP (FRS 102) Accounting and Reporting by Charities : Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) and Companies Act 2006. The financial statements have been prepared under historical cost convention.

##### Cash flow statement

The charity has taken advantage of the disclosure exemption, as permitted by FRS 102, the requirements of Section 7 Statement of Cash Flows.

##### Donations

Income from donations represents income receivable during the year including estimated amounts not yet received where these can be determined with reasonable accuracy.

Gifts in kind are recognised as incoming resources at a reasonable estimate of their value to the charity as required by the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting by Charities.

##### Tangible fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets are included at cost less an appropriate provision for depreciation.

##### Depreciation

Depreciation is calculated so as to write off the cost of each asset over its estimated life as follows:

Property improvements	20% straight line
Office furniture and equipment	20% straight line

##### Support costs

Support costs include central functions and have been allocated to activity costs categories on a basis consistent with the use of the resources, e.g. staff costs are allocated by time spent, property costs by floor space and other costs, such as telephone, by apportioned estimate.

2) Income From Donations, Grants and Legacies	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Donations	22,300	-	22,300	21,832
Trusts	34,050	40,500	74,550	95,399
	<u>56,350</u>	<u>40,500</u>	<u>96,850</u>	<u>117,231</u>

3) Income from Charitable Activities	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
a) Training & Seminars:				
Training Courses	39,200	-	39,200	73,504
Training Seminars	1,240	-	1,240	
	<u>40,440</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>40,440</u>	<u>73,504</u>
b) Counselling Services:				
Counselling Placement Administration Fees	1,125	-	1,125	1,196
Counselling Charged Clients	79,015	-	79,015	46,630
Counselling Client Donations	67,728	-	67,728	59,817
Counselling Client Assessment Booking Fees	7,146	-	7,146	7,106
Supervision Fees	19,157	-	19,157	-
	<u>174,171</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>174,171</u>	<u>114,749</u>

LISTENING POST COUNSELLING SERVICE LIMITED

NOTES TO THE UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2024 (continued)

4) Expenditure on Raising Funds	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Direct costs	24,425	-	24,425	10,268
Support costs (see note 6)	4,984	-	4,984	3,231
	<u>29,409</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>29,409</u>	<u>13,499</u>

5) Expenditure on Charitable Activities	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
<b>a) Training &amp; Seminars:</b>				
Direct staff costs	25,221	-	25,221	35,871
Registration fees	7,327	-	7,327	12,254
Other Direct costs	6,291	-	6,291	4,870
Support costs (see note 6)	6,584	-	6,584	9,270
	<u>45,423</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>45,423</u>	<u>62,265</u>
<b>b) Counselling Services:</b>				
Direct staff costs	130,048	8,601	138,649	109,948
Professional indemnity insurance	1,200	-	1,200	1,200
Contracted Counsellors	9,987	-	9,987	-
Contracted Supervision	11,820	-	11,820	-
Supervision	24,143	-	24,143	20,331
Other Direct costs	8,898	633	9,531	11,300
Support costs (see note 6)	39,184	17,090	56,274	58,600
	<u>225,280</u>	<u>26,324</u>	<u>251,604</u>	<u>201,379</u>

6) Analysis of Support Costs

	Raising Funds £	Training £	Counselling £	Grand Total £	Basis of Allocation
Support staff costs	452	2,277	6,438	9,167	By time
Governance	1,983	3,063	16,964	22,010	In proportion with costs
Telephone	564	188	2,634	3,386	By estimated usage
Rent & rates	1,557	519	21,279	23,355	By estimated usage
Heat & light	-	-	933	933	By estimated usage
Insurance	93	31	374	498	By estimated usage
Depreciation	-	171	6,602	6,773	Per item by use
Photocopier	335	335	1,050	1,720	By estimated usage
<b>Total Support Costs</b>	<u>4,984</u>	<u>6,584</u>	<u>56,274</u>	<u>67,842</u>	

**LISTENING POST COUNSELLING SERVICE LIMITED**

**NOTES TO THE UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2024 (continued)**

**7) Staff Costs and Employee Benefits**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	204,321	184,775
Social security costs	-	43
Employer pension scheme contributions	1,875	1,093
	<u>206,196</u>	<u>185,911</u>

No employee (2024: nil) earned £60,000 or more. No director/trustee received any remuneration or payment of expenses in the year (2024: nil)

The average number of employees during the year was:

	2024	2023
	No.	No.
Average number of part time staff:	36.1	33.08
Average number of full time equivalents:	<u>6.8</u>	<u>6.6</u>

**8) Tangible Fixed Assets**

	Property Improvements	Office Furniture & Equipment	Total
	£	£	£
<b>COST</b>			
At 1 February 2023	13,660	22,641	36,301
Additions	19,470		19,470
Disposals		6	6
at 31 January 2024	<u>33,130</u>	<u>22,635</u>	<u>55,765</u>
<b>DEPRECIATION</b>			
At 1 February 2023	10,274	19,397	29,671
Charge for year	2,498	1,268	3,766
At 31 January 2024	<u>12,772</u>	<u>20,665</u>	<u>33,437</u>
<b>NET BOOK VALUE</b>			
At 31 January 2024	<u>20,358</u>	<u>1,970</u>	<u>22,328</u>
At 31 January 2023	<u>3,386</u>	<u>3,244</u>	<u>6,630</u>

**9) Debtors: Amounts due within one year**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Other Debtors	11,150	4,200
Gift Aid Claim	1,187	1,102
Prepayments	4,069	6,689
Student Debtors	-	7,621
	<u>16,406</u>	<u>19,612</u>



**LISTENING POST COUNSELLING SERVICE LIMITED**

**NOTES TO THE UNAUDITED ACCOUNTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2024 (continued)**

**10) Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year**

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade Creditors	4,822	1,256
Advance Training Fees	1,257	-
Taxation, Pension and Social Security	1,525	1,147
NHS Creditor	16,558	11,333
Accruals	1,674	774
	<u>25,836</u>	<u>14,510</u>

**11) Restricted Funds**

	Balance at 31 January 2023	Incoming Resources	Outgoing Resources	Balance at 31 January 2024
	£	£	£	£
Stroud Refurbishment (Mrs Winkleman)	693.39	0.00	632.83	61
Stroud Centre (SLOF, Renishaw)	115.38	0.00	115.38	-
CRM System (Benefact)	25000.00	0.00	3486.01	21,514
Counselling & Admin Areas (Sylvanus Lyson)	0.00	12500.00	12500.00	-
CRM System (Barnwood Trust)	0.00	14000.00	0.00	14,000
Admin Salaries (GCF)	0.00	5000.00	5000.00	-
High Severity Clients (Anchor)	0.00	4000.00	2565.10	1,435
Clients who Pay £5 and Under (GCF)	0.00	2500.00	1470.00	1,030
Complex or Aged 18-25 Clients (High Sheriff)	0.00	2500.00	555.00	1,945
Total	<u>25,807</u>	<u>40,500</u>	<u>26,324</u>	<u>39,985</u>

**Stroud Refurbishment**

A grant was obtained towards refurbishing the Stroud Centre

**Stroud Centre**

Grants were obtained towards running costs of the Stroud Centre

**CRM System**

Two grants were obtained to pay for a new CRM System

**Grant for Creation of Counselling & Admin Areas**

A grant was obtained to pay for building work for the Gloucester office move

**Admin Salaries**

A grant was obtained to pay for admin staff salaries

**High Severity Clients**

A grant was obtained to provide counselling for high severity/complex needs clients

**Clients who Pay £5 and Under**

A grant was obtained to provide counselling for low income clients

**Complex or Aged 18-25 Clients**

A grant was obtained to provide counselling for clients aged 18-25 or with complex needs

**INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF  
LISTENING POST COUNSELLING SERVICE LIMITED  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 JANUARY 2024**

I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 January 2024, which are set out on pages 3 to 10.

This report is made solely to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with section 145 of the Charities Act 2011. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's trustees those matters I am required to state to them in this report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's trustees and a body, for my work, for this report, or the opinions I have formed.

**Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of financial statements. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for the year under Section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 ('The Charities Act') and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the financial statements under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent examiner's report**

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the financial statements, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the financial statements present a 'true and fair

(a) view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

which would give me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

- (b)
- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
  - to prepare financial statements which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act;

have not been met; or

to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the financial statements to be reached.

Mr J Owens BSc FCA  
GCSD Accountants Limited  
701 Stonehouse Park  
Sperry Way  
STONEHOUSE  
Gloucestershire  
GL10 3UT



Dated... 11<sup>th</sup> June 2024