

WOODSIDE BEREAVEMENT SERVICE – THE LISTENING EAR

TRUSTEES' REPORT 2023

Aims and purposes

Woodside Bereavement Service (WBS) is established to relieve persons resident in the London Borough of Croydon experiencing severe or prolonged shock or depression, arising from bereavement and loss.

Objectives and Activities

WBS is committed to providing free support by trained volunteers to bereaved people through one-to-one counselling with selected and trained Christian counsellors. It assists them through their period of mourning and encourages acceptance of loss and re-adjustment. It also aims to educate and increase awareness of the nature of grief and bereavement. The Service is available to all those residing in the Borough of Croydon, regardless of race, colour, nationality, belief, age, gender, sexual orientation or physical disability.

In planning the activities, the Trustees have applied the guidance on public benefit issued by the Charity Commission.

Achievements and Performance

Counselling is provided both on a 1-1 basis and group sessions in 2 locations in Croydon. During 2023 the adult service received 103 referrals, similar to the previous year. These came from clients visiting their GP, Croydon's Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) Service or Social Services. Meeting the demand for WBS in Croydon has been a challenge during the year, with a reduction in active counsellors from 19 to 12. Therefore, in order to manage the waiting list with fewer active counsellors it was decided to close the waiting list for 1 - 1 sessions in November 2023, with clients given the option of attending a group bereavement session. Following the Initial Assessment stage, 90 clients were placed on the waiting list. The ages of clients seen ranged from 18 years to over 70 years, the latter being seen thorough the GERAS arm of the Service which focuses on the over-70s. The Children and Young People Team received 58 referrals including first-time referrals from 4 Schools.

The Team liaises closely with parents, guardians, school staff and any other organisations that may be involved to agree a cohesive and co-ordinated service that delivers the optimum support for the young person through 1-1 counselling as well as responding to schools requests for support for both pupils and staff. An assessment appointment was offered to each CYP referred. Following the initial assessment, 17 referrals did not progress to 1 - 1 bereavement support sessions for various reasons including: Referrals to other agencies, Living out of borough and Non attendance with family to the assessment session. There are 3 counsellors in the Team, supported by other volunteers where required for family or group sessions.

The annual training commenced in January, with volunteers from local Churches in Croydon, but also individuals who were under-taking professional counselling training.

The trainers are members of the Service and started the course with a group of seven, one man and six women. Two of the women were undertaking counselling training, using WBS clients to gain clinical experience to meet their course requirement. In October we had the opportunity to join an online training course with the National Autistic Society. The course was well attended by the volunteers, it was interactive and informative, and we still have access to some great resources.

Financial Review

The grant we received in 2022 from the National Lottery Community Fund for 3 years to March 2025 has been unusual in our history as we enjoyed the ability to develop our service. In 2023, we received a total of £30,840 in grant funding of which salaries, rentals of office and counselling hire rooms and other running costs accounted for £26,449. We have been advised that we will be able to carry over the underspend into 2024 which will allow us to maintain the level of our service. We remain grateful to the Fund for this opportunity to continue our delivery to the vulnerable persons asking for our services with a degree of certainty at a very uncertain time for all organisations.

We remain grateful to our supporters in the local community for their continued support and our thanks go to Woodside Baptist Church, Selsdon Baptist Church, Addiscombe Catholic Church as well as churches in the local area. Thanks to them and those individuals who have been our stalwart supporters for many years, we were able to transfer £9,000 to our reserves for future years.

During 2023, the impact of the financial crisis both nationally and locally led to cost uncertainty, especially in relation to potential changes to core costs of premises rentals, insurances, office costs and staffing. We were relieved to be informed by our landlord, Croydon Voluntary Action, that our rentals would not be increased during 2023. They have maintained this until September 2024, but the future will depend on the decision by Croydon Council who are the owners of the Lakeside building that we use. We were therefore able to finish the year with an increase in our general reserves which stood at £37,700 at the end of 2023.

The trustees have determined that the charity should aim to hold unrestricted cash of no less than £7,200 which equates to about 3 months of unrestricted expenditure so that the charity could continue to operate should income and expenditure vary adversely. The general fund holding of £37,700 at the end of the year is complying with its reserve policy.

In the uncertain financial state of the country, the current level of the Service's financial reserves will at least allow us to have some security that our clients may be able to access our services for the near future. We are thankful for this and the support we receive to continue with our service to the community of Croydon.

Volunteers

The Service would not be able to operate its current model without the time and input given freely by the volunteers both as counsellors and in the administration and management functions. Heartfelt thanks go to all the volunteers and friends in the community who help the Service to deliver its aims and objectives. Altogether around 500 volunteer hours were delivered across the service.

The Safeguarding policy included in the Service's Policies and Procedures ensures that all counsellors are required to have a DBS certificate of the relevant level before engaging with clients. The achievement of this has been supported by Croydon Council who undertook to process the acquisition of all certificates. All policies are reviewed regularly, and this was completed in January 2023.

Structure, governance and management

The service is constituted in accordance with its Constitution which is agreed in consultation with Trustees, Management Team and members.

The Service is overseen by the Trustees, who receive reports from the Management Team and consider any issues raised at their quarterly meetings.

Trustees are nominated and selected by vote at the annual general meeting. Where there is a need to recruit new trustees following resignations, advertisements are placed in the service Newsletter and local churches to attract and retain suitable candidates committed to our values.

The day-to day management of the Service is carried out by the Management Team comprising representatives of the main operating areas. Their role consists of assessment of service performance, issues affecting delivery, following up fundraising possibilities and taking decisions on service amendments where necessary.

Administrative information

During 2023, the Service operated from a counselling room and a shared office in the Croydon Voluntary Action premises at 26 Waterside , South Norwood. Some Group Sessions were provided at Selsdon Baptist Church in South Croydon.

The correspondence address is Waterside Centre, 26 Avenue Road, London SE25 4DX.

Trustees/ Officers who are serving at the time this report was approved are as follows:

1. **Linda Nicholas - Chair**
2. **Charles Thomas King - Vice Chair**
3. **Vincent Kpodo Atigla - Secretary (appointed 22/6/2023)**
4. **Anne Barcellos - outgoing Treasurer**
5. **Christine Carter - Co-opted Volunteer Representative (appointed 05/09/2023)**

Approval

This report was approved by the trustees and signed on their behalf by:

L. Nicholas
[L. Nicholas \(Oct 21, 2024 12:53 GMT+1\)](#)

Linda Nicholas – Chair, Board of Trustees

Date: Oct 21, 2024



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

WOODSIDE BEREAVEMENT SERVICE

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Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	01/01/2023	To	31/12/2023
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Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
NATIONAL LOTTERY GRANT	-	30,840	-	30,840	24,600
DONATIONS	5,052	-	-	5,052	12,914
GIFT AID RECOVERED	1,522	-	-	1,522	-
TRAINING INCOME	2,235	-	-	2,235	1,770
INTEREST ON BALANCES	400	-	-	400	28
MEMBERSHIPS	60	-	-	60	65
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	9,269	30,840	-	40,109	39,377
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	9,269	30,840	-	40,109	39,377
A3 Payments					
EMPLOYEES	-	11,532	-	11,532	8,485
TRAVEL COSTS	-	257	-	257	179
INSURANCE POLICY	-	578	-	578	881
OFFICE COSTS	-	1,478	-	1,478	1,218
OFFICE RENTAL	45	8,805	-	8,850	8,175
EQUIPMENT & RESOURCES	95	265	-	360	663
PROFESSIONAL SERVICE FEES	-	1,523	-	1,523	745
TRAINING	-	1,690	-	1,690	1,323
MARKETING	-	322	-	322	-
Sub total	140	26,450	-	26,590	21,669
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	140	26,450	-	26,590	21,669
Net of receipts/(payments)	9,129	4,390	-	13,519	17,708
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	28,608	7,806	-	36,414	18,706
Cash funds this year end	37,737	12,196	-	49,933	36,414



Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	BANK ACCOUNT BALANCES	37,725	12,196	-
	PETTY CASH	12	-	-
		-	-	-
	Total cash funds	37,737	12,196	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK

	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	GIFT AID CLAIM OUTSTANDING	481	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities	INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION FEES	700	-	
	DECEMBER PAYROLL	1040	-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature

L. Nicholas
L. Nicholas (Oct 21, 2024 12:53 GMT+1)

Print Name

Linda Nicholas

Date of approval

Oct 21, 2024

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT
TO THE TRUSTEES OF
WOODSIDE BEREAVEMENT SERVICE

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Woodside Bereavement Service ('the charity') for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with the accounting records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

J. Young
J. Young (Oct 21, 2024 13:04 GMT+1)

Jaimée Young

Stewardship
1 Lamb's Passage
LONDON
EC1Y 8AB

Date: Oct 21, 2024