

THE BRIDGE COUNSELLING SERVICE, WORCESTER

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Reference and Administrative Details

Charity Name: The Bridge Counselling Service – Worcester
Charity Number: 1079216
Address: The Angel Centre, Angel Place, Worcester, WR1 3QN

Trustees

Linda Watson (Chair)
Sarah Stansfield (Treasurer)
Stuart Currie
Neil Carey
Anthony Russell-Pattison
Rhiannon Lewis
Kirstie Valentine

Structure, Governance and Management

The Bridge is governed by a Declaration of Trust dated 1 October 1999 as amended by deed of amendment dated 20 December 1999. Under this document the Trustees have power to appoint new Trustees as required. A deed of rectification dated 24 May 2019 has corrected the original trust and deed of amendment to correct some anomalies which had been identified.

Financial Review

Total income for the year amounted to £31,482 and total expenditure was £31,990 giving rise to a small deficit of £508. There was some very generous funding from some local churches and the year was aided by receiving grants of £6,000 from Laslett's Charities towards the cost of the Clinical Lead and £5,000 from Eveson Trust towards the cost of the Administrator. The largest expenses were payments to the Clinical Lead and Administrator, which in total amounted to £15,754. The rent for the office and counselling rooms was £6,553 this year, which remains a very competitive rent for these facilities in the city centre. This is higher than previous years a full year of the extra room to provide a larger office space and a downstairs counselling room to cater for those who cannot manage the stairs or feel more comfortable in a downstairs room. Supervision costs were £2,945 of which £1,090 was refunded by trainee counsellors. It remains the trustees' view that supervision is an essential investment to enable The Bridge to provide a fully professional service and support the work of the counsellors. The income from client donations decreased by just £126 to £7,103. Other Donations were £20,942 including grants of £11,000. The Gift Aid of £1,427 was for the 12 months to 31 December 2023. A further claim to 31 December 2024 which was submitted in April 2024 is shown in debtors.

The Trustees maintained the policy of holding approximately 3 months operating costs in reserve. Based on budgeted costs for 2025 this would require a reserve of £8,800. Reserves are currently higher than this, which is helpful as a deficit is currently budgeted for 2025 which could reduce reserves significantly. However, it is hoped some successful grant applications can be made again during 2025.

Objectives and Activities

The Charitable Objects are: *a] the relief of people within the city of Worcester who are in conditions of need, hardship or distress in particular by the provision of advice and counselling, and b] the advancement of education within the said city by the provision of counselling training.*

The trustees have considered the Commission's guidance on public benefit.

During 2024 the Bridge continued to provide counselling sessions for people with a wide range of emotional, relational and personal difficulties. Following the successful introduction of telephone counselling and online counselling during the height of the pandemic, the decision was taken to move to a Blended Service for the future, offering counselling via telephone, online or in-person. To facilitate this, internet speed and connectivity were improved to allow online counselling from the counselling rooms at the Angel Centre.

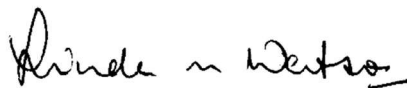
The service depends on the support of a committed team of professionally trained counsellors and student counsellors who give their time voluntarily to the Bridge and other volunteers who assist as receptionists and provide administrative support. The day-to-day running of the service is led by an Administrator, who is employed for 9 hours per week. A Clinical Lead, who is self-employed and works for up to 3 hours per week, oversees the clinical aspects of the work. All clients self-refer, usually following recommendation from a wide range of sources, including GPs, statutory and voluntary bodies in Worcestershire, and churches, but there are also many self-referrals as a result of advertising and word of mouth. The Bridge is particularly committed to making counselling available to people from lower socio-economic groups through its 'pay what you can' policy. All such payments are entirely voluntary.

Achievements and Performance

The number of counsellors working at the Bridge decreased slightly during the year as some left to set up their own business or for personal reasons, but the increased number of student counsellors in their second year of training, introduced in 2023 serves to increase our counselling capacity. During 2024, 1196 counselling sessions were attended and counselling assessments were also provided. The fact that we decided to rent a larger room for our office and convert the previous office to a downstairs counselling room gives greater capacity for counselling.

To enable counsellors and volunteers to meet up and spend time together, we funded a social event which was very much enjoyed and enabled contacts between volunteers to be strengthened.

This report was approved by the Trustees on 23/06/2025 and signed on its behalf by



LINDA WATSON Chair of Trustees

The Bridge Counselling Service - Worcester

Charity Number 1079216

Receipts and Payments Accounts For the year ending 31 December 2024

			2024	2023
<u>Income:</u>	General	Restricted	Total	
Voluntary Sources - Gifts and Donations				
Client Donations	7,103		7,103	7,229
Other Donations incl Grants	9,942	11,000	20,942	22,196
Voluntary Sources - Gift Aid Tax Refund	1,427		1,427	1,219
Fundraising	716		716	0
Other Income	1,090		1,090	5,720
Bank Interest	204		204	156
Total Income	20,482	11,000	31,482	36,520
<u>Expenditure:</u>				
Charitable Activity direct expenditure				
Clinical Lead	628	6,000	6,628	5,940
Administrator	4,126	5,000	9,126	8,555
Supervision	2,945		2,945	6,727
Training	2,090		2,090	13
Rent	6,553		6,553	5,165
Telephone, Postage, Stationery	996		996	1,022
Computer Equipment	0		0	0
Publicity	116		116	226
Electricity	1,538		1,538	750
Insurance	1,434		1,434	1,320
Books & Subscriptions	260		260	250
Legal Fees	0		0	0
Premises expenses	90		90	110
Miscellaneous	214		214	478
Total Expenditure	20,990	11,000	31,990	30,556
Net (Deficit)/Surplus for year	(508)	0	(508)	5,964
Cash Funds last year end	18,193	0	18,193	12,229
Cash Funds this year end	17,685	0	17,685	18,193

The Bridge Counselling Service - Worcester

Charity Number 1079216

Statement of Assets and Liabilities For the year ended 31 December 2024

		Unrestricted Funds	
		2024	2023
		£	£
<u>Cash funds</u>	Petty Cash	49	50
	Cash Account	9,962	10,657
	Gold Reserve Account	4,940	4,819
	Gold Account	2,734	2,667
		<u>17,685</u>	<u>18,193</u>
<u>Other monetary assets</u>	Gift Aid refund - 1 Jan 2024 to 31 Dec 2024	1,505	
	Gift Aid refund - 1 Jan 2023 to 31 Dec 2023		1,294
		<u>1,505</u>	<u>1,294</u>
<u>Assets retained for the charity's own use</u>		0	0
<u>Liabilities</u>	Creditors	0	940
	Rent for 3m as this is the notice period	1,657	1,579
		<u>1,657</u>	<u>2,519</u>

Restricted Fund

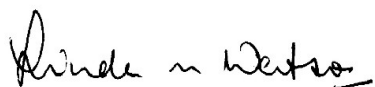
All restricted income in 2024 of £11,000 (£12,605 in 2023) was fully expended in that year

Notes

Accounting Policy. These accounts have been prepared on the receipts and payments basis and therefore the assets and liabilities above are not reflected in the accounts on page 3

Payments to Trustees. During the year Wendy Platt received Nil (2023 £4,060) for providing Supervision for Counsellors and no expenses.
No other trustee received any payments or expenses

Signed on behalf of the trustees



Date

23 June 2025

Linda Watson, Chair

Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts
to the Trustees of
The Bridge Counselling Service - Worcester
for the year ended 31 December 2024
set out on pages 1 to 4

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiners

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this 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 accounts 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 statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with 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 presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the 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 accounts present a 'true and fair' 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:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act;
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met, or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Douglas Dale

Date 24th June 2025

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