

SOUTH BUCKS COUNSELLING

Registered charity number 1095554
Registered company number 4491415

Report and financial statements. for the year ended 31 December 2024

Directors' Report for the year ended 31 December 2024

The Directors present their report together with the accounts of the Company for the year ended, 31 December 2024. The accounts comply with current statutory requirements.

Registered Charity Number 1095554

Registered Company Number 4491415

Registered Charity Address: The Cottage behind The Hub, 7 Easton Street, High Wycombe, Bucks, HP11 1NJ

Directors: **Scott Walkinshaw**
Chris Bushnell
Clare Wyatt – resigned July 2024
Penelope Holmes
Nikki Rooke
Claire Sweeney

Secretary & Treasurer **Claire Sweeney**

Bankers
Governing Document
Independent Examiner

NatWest Bank, 22 Market Square, Aylesbury, Bucks HP20 1TR
Memorandum & Articles of Association (22 July 2002)
Jeanette Yeoman

Public Benefit

Having regard to the Charity Commission's guidance, the Trustees consider that the charity provides a public benefit through the provision of a counselling service to the public by professionally trained and supervised counsellors.

Objectives

The charity's objectives are:

- (a) To provide a professional, confidential, and affordable counselling service to persons seeking help for emotional and psychological difficulties, in order to help them to cope with and work through problems and issues and to make positive changes in their life.
- (b) To offer training and development opportunities to qualified and trainee counsellors and to provide forums for those wishing to explore an interest in counselling.

Review of Activities

2024 proved to be a period of transition for South Bucks Counselling.

In July 2024, Clare Wyatt stood down as chair after many years of service with Scott Walkinshaw taking over the role. We welcomed two new trustees – Claire Sweeney and Nikki Rooke and appointed Penny Holmes as SBCs Designated Safeguarding Lead. All trustees have benefitted from training in the fundamental responsibilities of a charity trustee.

In December, Julia Appleton stood down as Clinical Director and was replaced by her deputy, Cath Muston. Amanda Cofek stepped into Cath's role as Clinical Lead, a reflection of SBC's commitment to strong succession planning.

After seeing a steady decline in enquiries since the peak during the Covid19 pandemic, this trend has now reversed, and we are now seeing similar levels of demand for our services that we were seeing before Covid19 in 2020.

We aim to respond to our clients' requests promptly, personally, and within 24 hours, and pride ourselves on not having a waiting list. Client numbers have increased steadily since August 2024 to around 150 per year by December. Adjustments to our intake processes have seen a significant improvement in conversions from 40% of initial enquirers taking up counselling to over 60%.

We continue to plan for further growth and are working to improve the awareness of our service in the local area through collaborations with local GPs and other mental health organisations. We have increased capacity at our counselling centre with both evening and weekend hours available to clients.

Alongside this, we continue to see a growth in both the volume and complexity of cases which has necessitated a renewed focus on safeguarding. This remains SBC's priority as reflected in its strategic risk register and robust risk and safeguarding policies.

The operating environment continues to be challenging. Affordable counselling is a key objective of the agency and trustees continue to balance affordability and sustainability. Increasing client numbers have resulted in a growth in client revenue to around £54,000 per year. Our standard fee for ongoing sessions remains at £45 per session with initial consultations set at £40. These published fees will

typically be discounted based on an assessment of each client's needs and financial circumstances. Our average fee paid per session has started to increase from £31 to over £34.

Donations from grants and foundations fund the difference between the fee paid by the client and the cost of providing the service. This remains a challenge with costs increasing and the availability of grant funding opportunities at a premium. We are grateful for the ongoing support of the Rothschild Foundation, Wyke Foundation and Heart of Bucks who have all provided crucial funding in 2024. We have renewed our efforts in this area and are pleased to report that Rothschild have renewed their grant of £30,000 over three years for 2025-2028.

Strengthening the trustees board and governance were both identified as strategic risks. In response, the trustee body has expanded to ensure continuity in all key areas including clinical oversight and safeguarding, finance and marketing.

A platform for developing careers

We continue to foster a supportive environment for the education and growth of our counselling team by maintaining strong connections with training organisations, which helps us meet placement training requirements and attract high-calibre trainees. Our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme for counsellors has grown, making our agency an attractive option for qualifying counsellors. We have a steady flow of trainee counsellors from well-recognised training colleges and have expanded our team to include qualified counsellors. Additionally, we have strengthened our links with more training institutions to support future recruitment and have developed a comprehensive on-boarding programme. We remain a highly sought after placement provider as evidenced by the high number of enquiries we receive from students for placements and in this area we usually hold a waiting list.

Client profile

In 2024 a total of 152 (2023: 155) clients attended counselling either at our dedicated counselling rooms in the Cottage in High Wycombe or online, depending upon individual requirements. Our client profile remains consistent, with over 50% of clients aged between 25 and 44 years, followed by 34% aged 45 to 64 years. More than 60% of our clients identify as female.

Outlook

As noted above, the Trustees are very pleased to have appointed our new Clinical Director and strengthened board of trustees. The professionalism, experience and dedication of the whole SBC team allows us to be optimistic about the service in the future.

With a near-capacity counselling team and growing capacity at our counselling centre, focus is now on maximising awareness and growing enquiries to the service. This, in turn, fuels our move towards financial self-sufficiency.

While growth is a priority, maintaining high clinical standards is central to our aims. The development of a vibrant CPD programme for counsellors will help to retain our counselling team, attract new counsellors and develop capability. In February 2024, we were able to offer mandatory safeguarding training to all our team members with our External Advisor, Andrew Broome. SBC's External Psychiatric Advisor, Dr John Baruch, now runs quarterly clinical discussion forums for counsellors to discuss complex presentations as part of our response to clients presenting with increasingly complex psychological needs.

The provision of our counselling services would not be possible without the great efforts of all our

staff, most of whom are volunteers. Although we offer training placements for students to gain their clinical experience, we have some counsellors who continue to work with us long after they have gained their professional qualifications and give their time freely. Others, such as the Trustees, all work without payment. Our intake team and supervisors play a critical role in ensuring the quality of our clinical services. We recognize that many staff work considerably more than their paid hours on a regular basis, due to their dedication to the service. We are indebted to them all for providing a first-class service to our clients. The work of the SBC Team has been critical to the ongoing growth of the agency. The increasing complexity of the cases presented to us together with the pressures to maintain funding will continue to place significant demands on our whole Team. The Trustees are grateful for their ongoing dedication and support.

Reserves Policy and Risk Management

Due to the very successful fundraising activities in 2021 and 2023 including a three-year commitment from Rothschild foundation, the agency has enjoyed strong funding in recent years. However, the Trustees have historically considered that the Agency should always carry reserves sufficient to cover operating expenses for 6 months. Our forecasts suggest that whilst we have sufficient funds and committed donations to cover activities for the whole of 2025, we do need to raise additional funds to maintain the 6-month funding requirement. To that end, fundraising remains critical to the agency, and we continue to seek support from both local and national grant and fund awarding bodies; the pressures on funding providers and the numbers seeking fundraising remains a challenge within a difficult environment.

The Trustees have renewed their strategic risk register, which is actively reviewed every quarter.

The Trustees have noted the increased complexity of client cases presented to the agency. To mitigate this risk, the agency has put in place the extended management structure and specialist Advisory panel, described in this report. The Trustees believe that this new structure allows the agency to carefully consider the levels of client risk and the appropriateness of onward referrals to other services e.g. NHS Complex Needs/Addiction services. This has resulted in an increase in costs; however, the Trustees believe the increase in costs are necessary to protect both our clients and our counsellors and supervisors.

The Trustees consider that current reserves are sufficient in the short to medium term but continue to focus on the initiatives outlined in the review of activities, which it is hoped will contribute to an increased level of reserves in future years.

Fundraising remains a key risk to the Agency and the Trustees and other senior members of the team are fully engaged in fundraising activities to actively generate funds to mitigate this risk and to ensure the Agency is adequately funded into future years.

Trustees Responsibility in Relation to the Financial Statements

The law applicable to charitable companies in England and Wales requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the Company's financial activities during the year and of its financial position at the end of the year. In preparing those financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Make judgements that are reasonable and prudent.

- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and for taking reasonable steps for the prevention of fraud and other irregularities. The report has been prepared in accordance with the special provisions of section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by Scott Walkinshaw, Chair.

Scott Walkinshaw

Date 20.10.25

Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of South Bucks Counselling

I report to the Charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out in pages 7-12.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the Charity's trustees of the Company (and also its Directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 (the '2006 Act') and the Charities Act 2011 (the '2011 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your Charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act. In carrying out my examination I have followed the directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent Examiner's report

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

1. the accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 130 of the 2011 Charities Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirement concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts & Reports) Regulations 2008, other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

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

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jeanette Yeoman', with a large, stylized loop at the end.

Jeanette Yeoman ACMA CGMA

28th October 2025

South Bucks Counselling
Statement of Financial Activities
For the year ended 31 December 2024

		Unrestricted funds 2024 £	Unrestricted funds 2023 £
	Notes		
Income and endowments from:			
Donations	3	32,153	12,071
Charitable activities			
Counselling		50,120	43,705
Assessment Fees		4,230	2,790
Conference and training courses		-	-
Total for charitable activities		54,350	46,495
Other income	4	352	430
Total income and endowments:		86,855	58,996
Expenditure on:			
Charitable activities:			
Counselling	5	94,523	74,713
Conference and training courses		845	-
Governance costs		-	350
Total expenditure on charitable activities		95,368	75,063
Net income (expenditure) for the year		(8,513)	(16,069)
Total reserves brought forward		33,938	50,007
Total reserves carried forward		25,425	33,938

South Bucks Counselling
Balance Sheet at 31 December 2024

	Notes	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed assets			
Net book value at 31 December 2024	6	-	-
Current assets			
Debtors	7	415	220
Prepayments	8	939	884
Cash at Bank and in Hand		26,628	36,248
		27,982	37,352
Current liabilities			
Creditors falling due within one year	9	2,557	3,414
Net current assets		25,425	33,938
Total net assets		25,425	33,938
Unrestricted Funds b/fwd		33,938	50,007
Surplus/(Deficit) for year		(8,513)	(16,069)
Unrestricted Funds		25,425	33,938

Audit exemptions

For the year ended 31 December 2024 the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

The members have not required the company to obtain an audit in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of the accounts.

Note on 2023 comparative figures

The 2023 comparative figures have been amended by £2 to correct a prior year reporting error in *Income in Advance*.

The Accounts were approved by the Board of Directors and signed on its behalf on the 29-10-2025

By: S Walkinshaw

C Sweeney

South Bucks Counselling
Notes to the accounts
For the year ended 31 December 2024

1 Company Status

South Bucks Counselling is a company limited by guarantee and not having a share capital. The members have each undertaken to contribute such a sum as may be required, not exceeding £1, in the event of the company being wound up. South Bucks Counselling is also a registered charity (No. 1095554) and as such is exempt from all forms of direct taxation.

2 Accounting Policies

(a) Accounting Period

The 2024 accounts cover the 12 months to 31 December 2024

(b) Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes(s) to these accounts.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102, January 2022 edition) and with the Charities Act 2011.

(c) Donations

Donations comprise grants which have been credited to income in the year in which they are received.

(d) Charitable activities

Income from charitable activities is credited in the year in which it arises.

(e) Expenditure

Expenditure is included in the Statement of Financial Activities on an accruals basis.

(f) Depreciation

Depreciation of assets which comprise office equipment was provided at 25%.

South Bucks Counselling
Notes to the accounts
For the year ended 31 December 2024

		2024	2023
		£	£
3	Donations		
	Heart of Bucks Community Foundation	17,298	-
	Rothschild Foundation	7,355	11,795
	Private individual	5,000	250
	Shanly Foundation	2,500	-
	Lotto	-	26
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		32,153	12,071
		<hr/>	<hr/>
4	Other Income		
	Bank interest	312	430
	Other revenue	40	-
		<hr/>	<hr/>
		352	430
		<hr/>	<hr/>

South Bucks Counselling
Notes to the accounts
For the year ended 31 December 2024

5 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Counselling activities 2024 £	Counselling activities 2023 £
Counsellors' costs (including travel)	3,006	2,755
Supervision and assessment Office	13,609	11,110
Management	42,275	27,800
Premises	15,442	15,463
Marketing	3,964	3,692
Insurance	947	870
Telephone	615	1,014
Professional affiliations	322	241
Bank charges	1,208	773
Accounting	2,831	2,094
IT Software & Consumables	7,002	7,125
Miscellaneous	2,722	1,776
Bad debt	580	
	94,523	74,713

South Bucks Counselling
Notes to the accounts
For the year ended 31 December 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
6 Fixed Assets		
Office Equipment at cost		
Opening balance	1,561	1,561
Additions during the year	-	-
At 31 December 2024	<u>1,561</u>	<u>1,561</u>
Depreciation		
Opening balance	1,561	1,561
Charge during the year	-	-
At 31 December 2024	<u>1,561</u>	<u>1,561</u>
Net book value at 31 December 2024	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>
7 Debtors		
Accounts receivable	550	-
Provision for doubtful debts	(135)	220
	<u>415</u>	<u>220</u>
8 Prepayments		
Insurance/BACP subs prepaid	939	884
	<u>939</u>	<u>884</u>
9 Creditors		
Income in advance (2023 figure amended by £2)	-	355
HMRC	1,000	-
Accounts payable	1,557	3,059
	<u>2,557</u>	<u>3,414</u>
10 The average number of employees during the year	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>