

**REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1098571**

**THE LISTENING CENTRE  
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

Mercer Lewin Ltd  
Chartered Accountants and Registered Auditors  
6-7 Citibase, New Barclay House  
234 Botley Road  
Oxford  
OX2 0HP

## **THE LISTENING CENTRE ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

The Listening Centre is registered with the Charity Commission (No 1098571).

The charity is constituted by deed, dated 21 June 2003 and updated in 2009.

Charity  
Address: The Old Schoolhouse  
Hertford Street  
Oxford  
OX4 3AJ

## **Report of the Trustees FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

### **Chair's Statement**

This year has been one of quiet, purposeful progress for The Listening Centre externally. Internally, we have experienced a period of significant transition and change. I would like to offer my thanks and appreciation to our outgoing CEO Sian Renwick for starting this transition process. I also wish to express my deep gratitude to Claire Jacques and Marie Hooper, who helped the charity skillfully navigate the interim period after Sian left us and before we recruited our incoming Chief Executive Andrea West, who I am delighted to welcome to The Listening Centre. Andrea has brought new energy, expertise and ideas to our work, as well as consolidating and making our processes more robust behind the scenes. We have taken considered steps to strengthen our operations, governance, and financial resilience while continuing to meet the increasing demand for accessible, high-quality counselling. The Board has worked closely with the Chief Executive and clinical lead to provide strategic oversight and ensure we remain grounded in our mission.

The Listening Centre operates in an increasingly complex environment. Financial uncertainty, rising mental health needs, and pressure on public services all continue to shape the landscape in which we work. Despite these challenges, TLC remains steadfast in its commitment to providing a professional, ethical, and affordable service. We recognise that the need for safe, accessible therapeutic support is growing, and that our role as a community-based provider has never been more vital.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank all those who make our work possible: our counsellors, staff, partners, funders, and clients. Your support continues to sustain the impact and integrity of the service we provide.

**Chris Graham**  
Interim Chair of Trustees

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### Chief Executive's Report

This year has been defined by consolidation, transition, and careful planning for the future. My appointment as Chief Executive in early 2025 marked a new chapter for The Listening Centre, and I am grateful for the confidence shown in me by the Board and the wider team. It has been a privilege to join an organisation with such a clear commitment to ethical, affordable counselling and such a strong legacy of community-focused work.

My priority on joining was to assess and strengthen our core operations. Working closely with our newly appointed Clinical Lead, Beth Waters, we have taken significant steps to embed consistency across key areas of delivery, including assessment, supervision, and clinical governance. We have also introduced new processes to support volunteers and student counsellors, ensuring they are well-equipped to meet the needs of a growing and increasingly diverse client base.

The ongoing development of the TLC+ programme has been a particular area of focus. By providing a framework for paid work within our established ethical and clinical structures, this initiative allows us to retain skilled practitioners, extend our reach to clients with more complex needs, and strengthen our financial model. Importantly, it reflects our belief that affordability and quality should not be in opposition, and that practitioner development is central to the sustainability of the counselling profession.

Alongside this, we have laid the groundwork for longer-term growth. We reviewed our internal governance and data management systems, refreshed key policies, and submitted targeted funding applications to support service delivery and client bursaries. While the external environment remains challenging, particularly in relation to mental health demand and fundraising competition, we have made steady progress toward our strategic goals.

None of this would be possible without the ongoing dedication of our staff team, volunteer counsellors, supervisors, trustees, and funders. I would also like to acknowledge the clients who place their trust in us during some of the most difficult periods of their lives. Their voices continue to shape how we work and why we exist.

*TLC gave me a safe space at a time when everything felt overwhelming. The support I received has had a lasting impact on my well-being and my relationships. Client feedback*

**Andrea West**

Chief Executive Officer

### **Clinical and Operational Delivery**

Counselling has been delivered by a team of committed volunteer and paid counsellors, supported by experienced supervisors and the operations team. Placements have been offered to student counsellors from a range of training institutions, alongside opportunities for early-career and qualified practitioners to contribute to TLC's work.

Our clinical coordination function was strengthened this year with improvements to how assessments, allocations, and supervision are managed. These changes have supported a more consistent client experience and provided clearer oversight across the service. We introduced updated policies to support

the management of performance and professional concerns relating to student and volunteer counsellors, ensuring alignment with national ethical standards.

Counselling sessions were delivered across multiple sites as well as online, with flexibility built into the model to respond to client preference and counsellor availability.

### **Client Demand and Access**

Demand for the service remains high. We saw an increase in the number of enquiries, assessments, and sessions delivered, reflecting both community need and the strength of our referral networks. Clients continue to present with a wide range of concerns, including anxiety, depression, bereavement, relationship issues, and self-development. We maintained a blend of face-to-face and online provision, with both modes used consistently throughout the year.

Client contributions remain an important part of our income model. We have continued to offer bursary-supported places for individuals facing financial hardship. The average client contribution continues to fall well below the full cost of delivering a session, reflecting our commitment to affordability. This model helps to ensure that support remains accessible, even as financial pressures on individuals and the organisation continue to rise.

### **Finance and Fundraising**

Income increased during the year through a combination of client contributions, small grants, and individual donations. The TLC+ programme has begun to generate additional revenue, and we submitted several funding applications to support both bursary provision and infrastructure development.

Expenditure has remained stable, with investment in supervision, clinical oversight, and operational capacity continuing to account for the majority of costs. We continue to monitor our financial position closely and review our pricing and fundraising strategy regularly.

### Governance and Infrastructure

TLC is a charity registered on 15th July 2003. The charity was established under a constitution which established the objects and powers of the charity.

Trustees delegate the day to day management and responsibility to the Chief Executive who is supported by the Clinical lead who ensures the ongoing clinical standards of the Charity and an Operations Manager who oversees all aspects of operations/delivery

The CEO, Senior Management Team and Board of Trustees followed the procedures advised by the Charity Commission before making appointments for positions. All Trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the Charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the Charity are set out in note 8 of the financial statements.

Trustees are recruited through advertisements placed in local volunteer bureaux, social media, via the TLC website and by potential Trustees expressing their interest by making direct contact with TLC. Potential Trustees are requested to speak with the Chair and submit a written resume of their career and interests for consideration by the Board of Trustees. Following an interview by a panel of at least two Trustees and reference checking including a DBS check, suitable applicants are invited to attend one board meeting as an observer and then complete relevant paperwork and an induction. After the first meeting and if the Board is unanimous, the new trustee is elected on to the Board at the next meeting. Trustees are not appointed by anyone outside the Charity.

Trustees adhere to TLC policies and procedures for staff and volunteers.

**Induction and Training for Trustees** All Trustees receive a programme of induction, co-ordinated by the senior management team upon appointment. A Trustee Induction Pack is kept up to date and forms the basis of this induction. The induction includes a welcome and introduction to the Board and also an explanation of functions and services within TLC. New Trustees are required to read the trustee guidance on the Charity Commission website and access other digital training materials regarding the role and responsibilities of a Charity Trustee and information specifically regarding domestic abuse. Mandatory training for Trustees includes safeguarding (adult and children) and equality and diversity. Additional training is offered by Involve to the Board throughout the year.

### **Remuneration**

Currently, the key management personnel team consists of three staff including, the Chief Executive, Clinical Lead and Operations Manager. All are employed on a freelance basis. Individual remuneration is reviewed after each appraisal annually, although the Charity cannot guarantee an annual pay review and any payment increase is based on available funding, achievement of targets and operational performance.

Preparation, selection, vetting and vigilant maintenance are all central to our safer recruitment policy with all senior managers undertaking the Safer Recruitment Training. All of our staff, students and volunteers are screened before commencing employment or volunteering with us. This includes DBS checks and taking up references from former employers; proof of identity and ability to work is additionally sought from candidates prior to interview along with relevant training/ education/ qualification certificates. Our recruitment policy and volunteer policy are updated annually to ensure all recent legislation and guidance is followed. Pre-planned interview questions with an interview panel of two members of staff are used to access the knowledge, insight and suitability of a candidate.

All volunteers, students and staff have to complete an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check before they can commence their duties and they have to undertake comprehensive safeguarding training along with our introduction to domestic abuse training.

Objectives and Activities for the Public Benefit The mission, vision and objectives of the Charity are summarised in the TLC Constitution. The Trustees refer to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing the charitable aims and objectives and in planning future TLC operations and activities. In particular, the Trustees consider how planned activities and new projects will contribute to the aims and objectives that have been set.

Charitable Objects: To relieve the needs of people with mental health issues in Oxfordshire and the surrounding area by the provision of counselling and psychotherapy services.

Activities: The Listening Centre provides an affordable counselling service to individuals on limited incomes who live in and around Oxford. Counsellors & Psychotherapists in training support the service on an unpaid basis.

### **Risk Review**

TLC has a comprehensive Risk Register that is reviewed regularly at Board Meetings. The Risk Register covers governance, operations, financial aspects, people management, legal and external factors (e.g. government policy) and complements the Business Continuity Plan. Risk to clients is managed through relevant policies including Health & Safety Policy, Safeguarding (adults and children), and the TLC Code of Conduct. Risk is also managed through monthly supervision and case management. The CEO monitors financial risk by reviewing income and expenditure in the management accounts on a monthly basis as well as cash flow to ensure the Charity can meet its commitments as they fall due. Regular budget reforecasting allows tracking to ensure the Charity is looking ahead at its financial stability providing a longer term picture. The income and expenditure, funding and financial risk is explored thoroughly at Board meetings every other month allowing strategy and actions to be revised if required.

The TLC risk register identifies all key risks and how these are being managed.

### **Financial Review**

With fundraising support TLC has a robust financial plan in place to monitor progress and concerted move to access grant funding from new trusts and foundations. Different funding streams have been essential to ensure we can continue to deliver the diversity of projects we are committed to providing.

The statement of financial activities shows that the total incoming resources increased to £103,686 while total resources expended increased to £73,779.

The Trustees have determined that free reserves should be maintained at a level sufficient to cover continued service delivery for 3-6 months of half the activity of the Charity. At 31 March 2025 free reserves were £48,779. The reserves policy requires free reserves of £18,444 to £36,889.

### **Investment Policy**

The Trustees, having regard to the liquidity requirements of operating TLC, have kept available funds in interest-bearing deposit accounts.

### **Restrictions on Distribution**

The Constitution prohibits the distribution of the income and property of the charitable company to the members. Upon dissolution or winding up of the Charity, the assets shall be given or transferred to some similar institution or institutions having objects similar to the charitable company.

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

### Looking Ahead

The Listening Centre operates within a context that is both deeply challenging and urgently necessary. Mental health services across the UK continue to face unprecedented pressure, with waiting lists growing and increasing numbers of individuals unable to access the support they need through statutory provision. At the same time, the fundraising environment for small charities remains difficult. Competition for grant funding is intense, and many funders are reducing or narrowing their criteria in response to wider economic pressures.

Against this backdrop, our mission is clear. We exist to provide accessible, affordable and ethically grounded counselling to individuals who may not otherwise be able to access therapy. We believe in the value of therapeutic work that is thoughtful, well-supported, and rooted in professional standards. Our model, combining volunteer and paid counsellors, reflects both our commitment to affordability and our support for the development of practitioners at all stages of their careers.

Our values of inclusivity, safety, integrity, and responsiveness continue to guide our strategic decisions. In the coming year, we will invest further in the systems and partnerships needed to sustain and grow our work. This includes developing a longer-term fundraising strategy, strengthening our data and evaluation practices, and continuing to grow the TLC+ programme in a way that is clinically robust and financially sustainable.

We are also committed to finding a longer-term premises solution that supports both our service delivery and our operational needs, and to ensuring our governance and infrastructure can adapt to the evolving landscape in which we operate.

We are deeply grateful to all those who have supported The Listening Centre throughout the year our clients, counsellors, staff, funders, and partners. Your support makes this work possible.

The charity is administered by a committee of management comprising:

Trustees:	Christopher George Graham
	Alan Jiang
	Oliver Perera
	Niclo Holmes Brown
	Susanne Mary Connick

Christopher George Graham

... January 2026



## **INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE LISTENING CENTRE**

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I report on the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025 which are set out on the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet appended to this report.

### **Respective responsibilities of Committee of Management and Examiner**

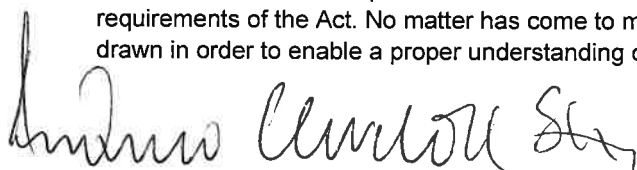
The committee of management are responsible for the preparation of the accounts; they consider that the audit requirement of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act) does not apply. It is my responsibility, without performing an audit, to carry out an examination of the accounts and to report to you.

### **Basis of Examiner's statement**

My report is in respect of an examination carried out under s145 of the Act and in accordance with directions given by the Charity Commissioners under subsection 5(b) of that section. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the committee of management and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records which is primarily limited to analytical procedures and to the making of such enquiries of the committee of management as was necessary for the purposes of this report. The procedures undertaken do not constitute an audit.

### **Examiner's statement**

Based on my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect, accounting records have not been kept in accordance with s130 of the Act, or that the accounts presented do not accord with those records or comply with the accounting requirements of the Act. No matter has come to my attention to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



A Churchill Stone FCA DChA  
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6-7 Citibase, New Barclay House  
234 Botley Road  
Oxford  
OX2 0HP  
29 January 2026

**THE LISTENING CENTRE**

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**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025**

	General funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £	Total 2024 £
<b>Income</b>				
Bank interest	492	-	492	201
Client contributions	66,839	-	66,839	49,076
Donations and other income	795	-	795	2,971
Grants	35,560	-	35,560	7,265
Workshops	-	-	-	-
	<u>103,686</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>103,686</u>	<u>59,513</u>
<b>Direct charitable expenditure</b>				
Administration expenses	11,550	-	11,550	11,711
Advertising expenses	1,100	-	1,100	922
Bank charges	60	-	60	60
Bookkeeping fees	343	-	343	315
Co-ordination fees	7,010	-	7,010	5,980
DBS checks	60	-	60	420
Donations and grants costs	1,483	-	1,483	1,446
Independent examiner's fees	330	-	330	1,158
Insurance/BACP membership	1,295	-	1,295	240
Professional fees	7,740	-	7,740	-
Room and office hire	14,397	-	14,397	14,146
Sundry expenses	152	-	152	-
Supervision, clinical and consultancy	12,732	-	12,732	10,144
Telephone	884	-	884	1,125
Assessment Fees & Expenses	3,308	-	3,308	2,700
Volunteer expenses and travel	857	-	857	1,172
Website and internet	1,371	-	1,371	144
Counsellor Payments	2,020	-	2,020	1,130
CEO Fees	7,088	-	7,088	3,585
	<u>73,780</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>73,780</u>	<u>56,397</u>
<b>Surplus/(deficit) for the year</b>	<b>29,906</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>29,906</b>	<b>3,115</b>
Balance brought forward	18,872	-	18,872	15,757
<b>Balance carried forward</b>	<b><u>£48,778</u></b>	<b><u>-</u></b>	<b><u>£48,778</u></b>	<b><u>£18,872</u></b>

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**BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2025**

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	2025 £	2024 £
Bank current account	30,831	7,512
Bank deposit account	25,814	11,360
Prepayments		
	56,646	18,872
Accounts payable	(7,868)	-
Balance of funds	<u>£48,778</u>	<u>£18,872</u>

Christopher George Graham  
.... January 2026

