

AGM Chairmans Report 23/24

This year has seen a significant degree of consolidation as we continue to put LCC on a more sustainable footing in the post covid era. This will also be my first AGM as Chairman and I would like to thank the work and effort Philip Meakins has put in over the years to getting the organization to where it is now!

During the last 12 months we have been effectively been providing three services, our core service, supported by our team of 24 volunteer counsellors, the grant funded paid counsellor project (PCP), employing 8 counsellors that have qualified and migrated from the core service, and lastly, the ESP Network project, that uses a number of experienced paid counsellors, majority of which have worked with LCC for some time.

In the period November 23 to October 24 we have provided 2393 counselling sessions, 88% of which have been face to face, and as such, a tribute to the hard work of our volunteers, and particularly the commitment of Liz Rose, our head coordinator and her deputy coordinator, Amy Thomas.

The ESP Network project has meant that we have also seen a significant number of clients through this service as referred by the GP local practices.

Throughout the last year we have worked very hard to keep the waiting list at historically low levels. Consequently, our wait times have generally been significantly less than our target of 6 weeks - a huge achievement compared with waiting times of a year or more in the NHS.

This is a terrific achievement for an organization like ours, led by a team of volunteer trustees and a small, dedicated staff. Hopefully there is more to come!

Sadly, the ESP Network project, came to an end in October as the funding stream is no longer available. This is particularly disappointing, particularly given the brilliant work undertaken by Imelda Byrne and Steven Maidment in getting this service up and running and the hugely positive endorsement of the service by the ESP Network GP's. The small surplus made on this contract has however helped to subsidise, to some extent, the losses made in the core service. We are, with the help of Imelda and Steve looking at developing other opportunities of a similar nature for the future.

In August we completed the second year of our paid counsellor project (PCP), it now employs 8 counsellors and now delivers around 70 sessions per month. A total of 18 counsellors have worked on this project since it started many of whom have moved on to further paid work on the ESP project. This project is more or less breaking even financially and the challenge is to turn it into a self-financing part of our organisation by the time the grant ceases in August 2025, as was our intention. HiWCT have been very supportive of this project, and have they responded very positively to our report, we have therefore decided to approach them to see if there is any opportunity to extend this grant. Many thanks to Liz Rose who, with myself, is driving this project.

This project, with the ESP Network project, has allowed us to continue to provide opportunities to our counsellors to have some paid work when they complete their training, it also, as a consequence, increases the amount of experience and expertise available in our counselling service and therefore our clients.

On the IT front, Steve Maidment, working initially within the ESP Network project, has used this experience to streamline our Core service IT and databases and this is not only giving us a better handle on data - but this data is available with a fraction of the management work to obtain it. Well done Steve!

Over the last year we have held 3 recruitment events, and we have another in the near future, we seem to have no shortage of applications and Anne Hall has been very helpful in identifying potential candidates with Liz Rose and Amy Thomas.

Central to our ethos is our determination that our Core service must stand on its own two feet so that we can survive even if our more ambitious projects should fail to get funding. Therefore, we reran our business model and as consequence, we realized that we needed to have an average level of fee per client at £25/session to cover our running costs. To put this into context however, NHS organization's providing the same service do so at a cost of over £100!

Looking to the future the Board of Trustees we believe that in order to continue to provide a sustainable organisation with a lowest possible fee level we need to focus on some aspects of operations. We have agreed the following operational priorities in the short to medium term:-

- Improving the utilisation of the services; reducing no shows; ensuring donations are made by clients, as agreed; better utilising of our consulting rooms at Winchester House; and, ensuring that counsellors have 3 or more clients that they are seeing regularly.
- Applying for new grants to support and subsidise clients that are short of funds and can't afford to meet our donation criteria. We also want to apply for grants to extend our paid counsellor projects.
- Seek out and develop new opportunities for providing counselling services to organisations, utilising our trained and experienced counsellors.
- We are also tweaking our payment model to make sure that client's that we have screened and allocated to counsellors, pay for their counselling sessions up-front, and attend.

Weekly meetings, with the coordinator team, are now well established, to monitor the parameters above. This team reviews aspects such as counsellor utilisation, grant spent, our new spreadsheet development, recruitment, CORE 10 outturns and grant applications.

We have also developed new Contracts for both Counsellors and Clients, with the help of Ben Rose so that all parties are clearer and more aware of expectations.

You may also be aware that we have opened an additional counselling room at Winchester House, utilizing space already available. This should allow us more flexibility for counsellor sessions matching them closer to times when clients prefer to have sessions.

Whilst we remain in a tight financial position it is stable and we hope that through the improvements above, and new grant funding we can compensate for the loss of the ESP network contract which has been so useful in bolstering our financial position post COVID.

One particular success for this year was the award of a new lottery grant in May'24, for two years, that will allow us to continue to extend our services to those who could not afford even our low fees, well done Philip Meakins!

On the Trustee front sadly both Melani Morgan and Ed Kennedy who have been with us for some time have left, and we thank them for all the work that they have done for us. We have recently been courting a number of potential new Trustees and I'm pleased to say that Professor Karen Temple has joined our team after recently retiring as a doctor from UHS. Karen is already working with us to progress new grant applications.

Many thanks to all within the organisation for their hard work to achieve what we have last year. Meanwhile the Trustees confirm that they have followed the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit and that they have conducted the affairs of Life Changes in accordance with its aim to benefit the public.

Registered Number 05750613

LIFE CHANGES COUNSELLING

Micro-entity Accounts

31 March 2024

Micro-entity Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

	<i>Notes</i>	<i>2024</i>	<i>2023</i>
		£	£
Fixed Assets		-	-
Current Assets		25,051	23,622
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year		0	-
Net current assets (liabilities)		<u>25,051</u>	<u>23,622</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		<u>25,051</u>	<u>23,622</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year		0	-
Accruals and deferred income		(4,600)	(8,040)
Total net assets (liabilities)		<u>20,451</u>	<u>15,582</u>
Reserves		<u>20,451</u>	<u>15,582</u>

- For the year ending 31 March 2024 the company was entitled to exemption 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 responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.
- The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the micro-entity provisions and delivered in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime.

Approved by the Board on 15 August 2024

And signed on their behalf by:

C Jones, Director

Notes to the Micro-entity Accounts for the period ended 31 March 2024**1 Employees**

	<i>2024</i>	<i>2023</i>
Average number of employees during the period	0	0

This document was delivered using electronic communications and authenticated in accordance with the registrar's rules relating to electronic form, authentication and manner of delivery under section 1072 of the Companies Act 2006.

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