

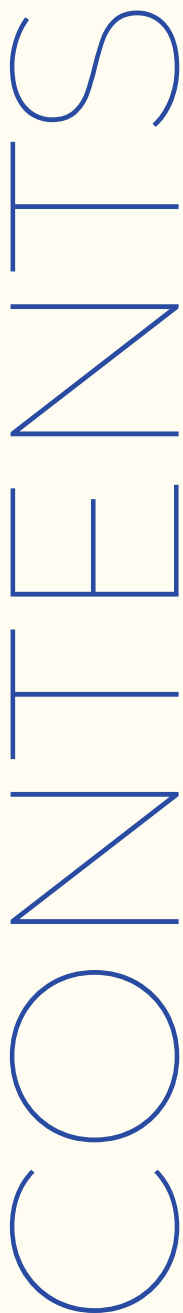


CIRCLES SOUTH EAST

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

**REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06490001
REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1123361**



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CHAIR'S FOREWARD

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2023-4 Annual Report for Circles South East. Last year I reported a more secure financial outlook, due to our success in securing Ministry of Justice contracts for delivery of circles across our core areas in London and the southeast of England. Although this proved to be more challenging than anticipated all three contracts have delivered in their first year and are looking on track for year two. I wish to acknowledge the huge efforts from staff and volunteers to make this happen and deliver this key plank of our 'no more victims' strategy.

However, these are not the only achievements from the past year, other noticeable successes are continued delivery of ReBoot circles, and the continuing growth of the Hub services.

Another key area has been Volunteer recruitment, as like many in the voluntary sector, finding volunteers of the right calibre is becoming more difficult. Volunteers are key and continue to be at the heart of everything that we do. Their enthusiasm and dedication are crucial to the success of the charity. I'm truly grateful to all our volunteers both our 'regulars' and new recruits. Looking forward to the coming year we intend to continue to build on the foundations achieved last year, take the time that this financial stability provides, strengthen the core of the charity and ensure that we have the right strategies and vision in place to continue to support all our service users well into the future.

Nora Holford
Chair

PURPOSE AND AIMS OF THE CHARITY

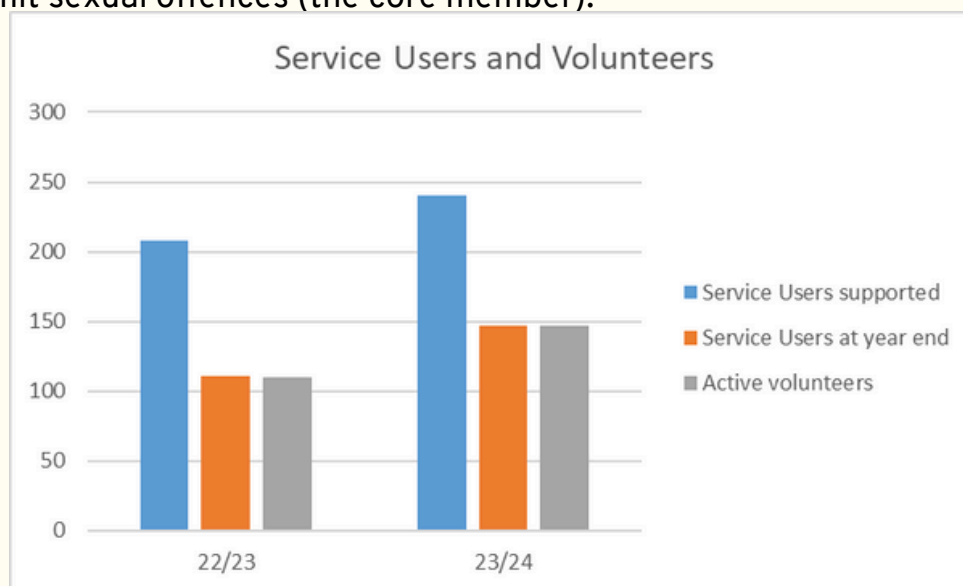
Our charity's purposes are contained in the company's memorandum of association:

To relieve the need and promote the rehabilitation, treatment, education and care of persons who have committed or are likely to commit offences, particularly sexual offences, against others and the families of such persons and others affected by such offences.

Our Aims

The Board of Trustees has determined the primary aim as the prevention of sexual abuse and therefore reduction in the number of new victims created. This is achieved through:

- A range of interventions to support both survivors and perpetrators in their recovery, rehabilitation and reintegration, recognising that each person has a unique set of personal circumstances and therefore will need a tailored response in order to progress
- Reducing stigma and isolation and increasing victims, partners and families wellbeing through helping them cope, recover and make informed life choices
- Risk management provision undertaking assessment of those who have offended and those who may have responsibility for safeguarding
- Awareness; education and an appetite and ability to talk about abuse, identifying appropriate and inappropriate behaviours, highlighting risk, treating all people with fairness and respect
- Identifying, training and supervising motivated and committed members of the public to offer support to and demand accountability from persons who have committed or who are deemed likely to commit sexual offences (the core member).



The number of Service users supported during the year has held up well, we experienced a reduction in Circles Core Members but an increase in Service Users accessing Counselling services. The reduction in Active Volunteers in the 2022/23 year reflects the reduction in Circles provision during the year as explained elsewhere, this number has recovered to previous levels in 2023/24.

— Circles of Support & Accountability —

Overview:

A Circle of Support and Accountability (or 'Circle') is a simple concept by which a group of trained and professionally supervised volunteers form a 'Circle' around an individual who has been convicted of a sexual offence (known as the Core Member) living in or due to be released into the community. A Circle provides a structured support network to the Core Member whilst holding them accountable for their behaviour. The Circle works in close partnership with the statutory agencies and is managed by a trained professional known as the Circle Coordinator. Circle support typically lasts between 12 and 18 months.



The Circle comprises volunteers from the community who are supported by professional staff

Circles of Support & Accountability

Aims:

The key aims of the Circles model are to:

- Strengthen risk management delivered by statutory partners (e.g. Police and Probation) and therefore contribute positively to the protection of the public
- Contribute to a reduction in dynamic risk¹ for Core Members engaging in a Circle
- Increase the likelihood of desistance from sexual offending for Core Members engaging in a Circle
- Reduce Core Members' experiences of social isolation and the associated risks of sexual reoffending
- Support Core Members to work towards more stable, pro-social lives through outcomes such as finding suitable volunteering or employment opportunities, building appropriate social networks and engaging in community activities
- Improve the emotional wellbeing of Core Members.

Core Members:

The Circles model is intended to support individuals (the Core Member) who have been convicted of sexual offence(s) and who have needs related to social isolation and emotional loneliness. Our current contracts allow us to work specifically with those individuals who are currently managed by statutory agencies (Probation and/or Police). These include individuals who are on licence having been recently released from custody, on community sentences or having completed their sentences being managed by Police on Sexual Harm Prevention Orders and/or the Sex Offenders Register.

As a Circle is a voluntary support service, all Core members engaging in Circles do so voluntarily and therefore they must be motivated to attend and engage with the Circle. Individual contracts have specific eligibility criteria for referral but the majority of Circles services are targeted towards those who are assessed as being high or very high Risk of Serious Harm.

Beneficiaries:

The overarching beneficiary of a Circle is the wider community – through the intended aims of the Circle, we are contributing to the ultimate goal of 'No More Victims'. By supporting individuals who have caused sexual harm to integrate safely into the community, we intend to help them achieve fulfilling lives and thereby desist from further sexual offending.

¹ Dynamic risk relates to factors that are changeable and also known to have an impact on future sexual or violent offending, such as hostile orientation or anti-social influences. For comparison, Static risk relates to prediction through historical factors known to be statistically predictive of future sexual and violent offending, such as number of previous convictions.

Circles of Support & Accountability

Beneficiaries continued:

In addition to this, the local community benefits from our service too. Through our work to raise awareness of the Circles model and sexual harm more widely, community members are given the chance to learn about this important area and provided with opportunities to get involved through volunteering. Our volunteers report a very high level of satisfaction with our training, volunteering opportunities and supervision provision and many eventually leave our service to commence employment in the statutory agencies we support, such as Police, Probation Service and Social Services.

The Circle Core Member is also a key beneficiary. Core Members engage with us voluntarily, aware that their lifestyle has led them to previously inappropriate and abusive behaviour. By engaging with our volunteers, Core Members learn to live life in a more content, purposeful and secure manner, meaning they may no longer choose to behave in an abusive way to meet their needs. Our Core Members report increased feelings of wellbeing as a result of their engagement with a Circle and typically end a Circle feeling more optimistic about the future, having made some positive steps towards achieving their goals.

“I am much happier and content (now), not as impulsive as I used to be and have learned to think things through - I am totally committed to never offending again”

CORE MEMBER

The statutory agencies we deliver Circles for (Probation and Police) also gain hugely from our service delivery. Circles are as much about monitoring and risk management as they are about support and thus they are able to contribute to the dual aims of the statutory agencies – to protect the public whilst supporting rehabilitation.

“(The service user) speaks very highly of his time with (his coordinator) and the other volunteers. There is a noticeable change in his demeanour and presentation now in comparison to when I first met him two years ago”

HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY, MAY 2023

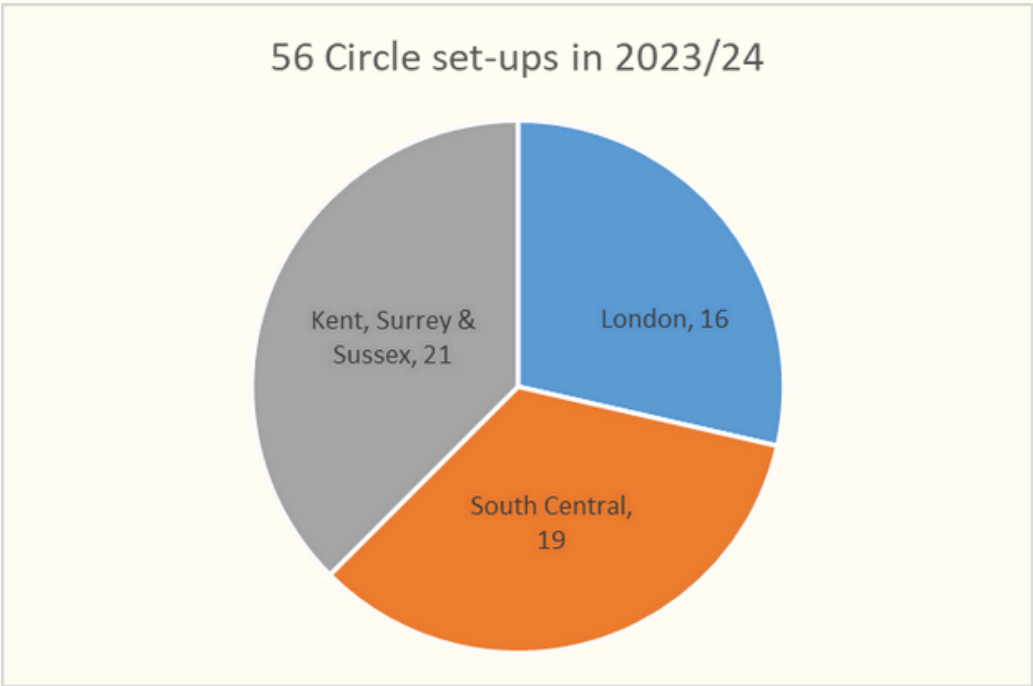
MAIN ACHIEVEMENTS OF 2023-24

Circles South East have now reached the end of its first year delivering the Ministry of Justice’s nationally commissioned 4-year contracted service to deliver Circles of Support and Accountability across the 3 geographical of.

- ·South Central (Thames Valley, Hampshire & The Isle of White)
- ·London (The Greater London area)
- ·Kent Surrey and Sussex.

Circles South East have also delivered Circles as one of the options available under current contract arrangements with Surrey Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Hampshire and Isle of Wight PCC. The Surrey PCC contract has been renewed for a further 3 years 2024 - 2027. Having achieved success in a tendering process conducted in open market competition to provide Circles in the 3 Probation regions listed above, the past year has proved difficult, with numerous challenges both prior to the start of mobilisation and in the ability to deliver the service.

These challenges have all been created externally, relating to both the Ministry of Justice’s model of delivery and payment structures, issues which have been acknowledged by the Ministry’s contract Managers. However, despite both the difficulties and challenges Circles South East has continued to show resilience and fortitude, with a determination to deliver a Service of quality.



London Circles

As was highlighted in last year's Annual Report London had to close the project completely, prior to the implementation of the new contract, the loss of volunteers and the need to create a new project infrastructure slowed the operational start significantly. Additionally we faced new referral criteria, often inappropriate referrals and slower than expected referral rates. However, the London team responded proactively to these challenges, resulting in an improvement in referral rate. Developing good working relationships with Probation, at both operational and senior level, there was also a continued steady stream of new volunteers being recruited and trained. The team have worked to establish and maintain a referral pathway and are now seeing a real growth in operational activity.

Case study 1

“This Core Member-CM (our name for the service user) didn't see himself as someone who was isolated/ lonely, despite this being flagged as a concern by his PP. However, he highlighted some key areas of need within his assessment and agreed to become involved with the project. He had an excellent first meeting with his Circle in which he was very open and honest with the volunteers about his experiences of custody and the impact on his mental health. He talked about how he is still aware he needs to manage his mental health and is keen to build relationships with the volunteers and set and work towards positive goals to help him with this”

Case study 2

“The volunteers raised a concern within the Circle minutes regarding a possible breach of licence conditions/SHPO. This was picked up immediately by a member of staff and flagged with his PP and Jigsaw Officer. This is being carefully managed by all involved to ensure ongoing engagement with the Circle is not affected. Having received this information, the Jigsaw Officer intends to take some action in line with his role to gather evidence of any breaches that may have occurred. Whilst this may not be a “good news story”, it shows the role that volunteers can play in monitoring risk and sharing essential information with professionals. Any identification of risk escalation or breaches are seen as a positive outcome for Circles as it contributes to the overall aim of protecting the public”.

South Central Circles

Unlike London, South Central was inundated with referrals before the project was able to begin establishing Circles and the establishing of the referral panel was essential in helping to allocate Circles by priority. The early establishment of Circles led to volunteer depletion and as a result we were able to recruit another 106 volunteers over the course of the year, doubling the size of the volunteer pool. Coordinators also spent many hours in the early stages of the contract visiting Probation Offices and promoting the service to Probation Practitioners who were new to the service. This also involved visiting Police offices and new MOSOVO (Management of Sex Offenders and Violent Offenders) officers, due to the contract being shared between the Probation Service and the PCC.

The Referral Panel in South Central has facilitated a flexible and proactive approach to the contract and allowed for a dynamic response to changes in risk and the need to prioritise when statutory agencies have identified an especially urgent concern. The establishment of this effective Referral Panel has formalised and reinforced the existing outstanding multi-agency working relationship we have developed over a number of years with our statutory partners in the area..

Core Member Testimony

The Core Member stated – “I am very thankful for the whole Circles experience. It has been very well structured and carried out with expertise and consideration. The facilitators are very experienced, always willing to listen and explore things that troubled me and help me reach level headed understanding of my mistakes and behaviour. I am much happier and content (now), not as impulsive as I used to be and have learned to think things through - I am totally committed to never offending again”.

Kent Surrey and Sussex Circles

Kent Surrey and Sussex benefited from the local arrangement previously held between Circles South East and the area's Probation Management who used local funding to secure continuity between the end of the old contract and the awarding of the MoJ contract.

As with the other two areas a Referral Panel was set up and has proved to be of invaluable help to the success of new set ups and the operational delivery of those new Circles. Initial difficulties experienced by the project were all positively addressed through the creation of the referral panel. Initial slow referral rates from Probation Practitioners led to implementation of measures to identify appropriate referrals that met the new MoJ criteria which ensured we were targeting those potential Core Members identified by that Probation as of concern. It is with particular thanks to the head of Probation Programmes who worked tirelessly with the KSS referral panel to ensure that all difficulties were addressed, leading to a successful fulfilling of the contract. This success is represented by an appropriate risk related waiting list, currently numbered at four.

Case Study

The Core Member had been sentenced to life and served 24 years in a variety of custodial establishments, psychiatric hospitals & latterly a medium secure unit. One of his major concerns centred around his conviction and how he would be judged by society. He stated that he always felt Circle meetings left him with a lot to reflect on and thrived on the fact he was being stimulated. The volunteers pushed him at times to try activities out of his comfort zone, however he said over time he felt confident enough to say no and they were always accepting of the decisions he made. They would have serious discussions; however, he enjoyed the fact they could laugh together, and this was ok too. Most of their weekly meetings took place in a local community café where he felt relaxed and welcomed – after being in institutions for so long his goal was to find places he could eventually go to independently and not feel anxious. The café displayed work by local artists, and he gained the confidence to bring in one of his own paintings which was eventually sold. This was such an important milestone, and he was able to share his love of art, and a highlight of the Circle was a trip they organised to the Koestler exhibition in London. He had said that he would never have had the confidence to go on his own and had not been to London for over 25 years.

After many years of psychiatric treatment, he continues to have a large team of mental health & criminal justice professionals supporting him however, he has said that it has been the Circle that has made him feel truly accepted as a valued member of the community – he believes they genuinely care & have shown him humanity which he will never forget.

MAIN AIMS FOR THE YEAR(S) AHEAD

The key aims for the next few years relate to establishing and maintaining new and effective ways of working under the new contract arrangements.

The focus will be on:

- Establishing settled and effective referral pathways
- Developing and implementing new reporting measures to comply with the MoJ contract requirements
- Increasing frequency, stability and the total number of Circle set-ups
- Increasing volunteer recruitment efforts, with targeted recruitment campaigns in key areas
- Building effective working relationships with Probation under the new arrangements associated with the MoJ contracts
- Ensuring there is consistency of practice and delivery across all of our Circles contract areas.

CIRCLES REBOOT

Overview:

Circles ReBoot incorporates the principles of traditional Circles whilst targeting a different group of service users, using a slightly adjusted delivery method. A ReBoot Circle consists of 3 or 4 trained and supervised Volunteers supported by a Coordinator and an Outer Circle of Professionals. The Circle will be shorter (12 sessions over a 6-month period) with sessions and activities focused specifically on using the Core Member's strengths and aptitudes to achieve agreed goals. A ReBoot Circle is more structured than a traditional Circle and volunteers make use of a specifically designed resource pack to support the Core Member to develop in key areas. Circles South East currently deliver a limited number of Reboot Circles across the entire South East region funded by Circles UK.

Circles South East are also able to deliver Circles ReBoot with Surrey PCC and Thames Valley Police.

Target Service Users:

The Circles ReBoot model is intended to support individuals who have been convicted of accessing Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM, or sometimes referred to as 'indecent images of children'). Circles ReBoot is designed specifically to meet the needs of individuals who meet a lower risk threshold, but where it is likely risk will escalate without intervention.

Beneficiaries:

As with traditional Circles, the main beneficiaries of Circles ReBoot delivery are the wider public, local communities, our volunteers, Core Members and our statutory partners. The added benefit for statutory partners is that quite often, those individuals who have been assessed as posing a lower risk are not able to access support services or rehabilitation programmes. Often services are targeted at individuals within the higher-risk profile, leaving statutory partners unable to make onward referrals for lower-risk individuals. Circles ReBoot provides an avenue for additional non-statutory support which therefore appears to be lacking in some areas for this service user profile.

CIRCLES REBOOT CONTINUED...

Aims:

The key aims of the Circles ReBoot model are to:

- Strengthen risk management delivered by statutory partners (e.g. Police and Probation) and therefore contribute positively to the protection of the public
- Contribute to a reduction in dynamic risk for Core Members engaging in a ReBoot Circle
- Increase the likelihood of desistance from accessing Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM) for Core Members engaging in a ReBoot Circle
- Reduce Core Members' experiences of social isolation and the associated risks of sexual reoffending
- Support Core Members to work towards more stable, pro-social lives through outcomes such as finding suitable volunteering or employment opportunities, building appropriate social networks and engaging in community activities
- Improve the emotional wellbeing of Core Members.

Main Achievements of 2023-24:

After a successful Pilot project where some changes were made to the model, we were able to move to full delivery ReBoot Circles. We successfully delivered 7 Reboot Circles, of which;

- 2 were for the Metropolitan Police in London
- 3 were for Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police
- 1 was for Sussex Probation
- 1 was for Thames Valley Police

Main Aims for the year(s) ahead:

We have just secured some continuation funding from Circles UK for the Circles ReBoot project across the South East region, therefore the focus for the year ahead will be to successfully deliver a limited number of ReBoot Circles. We intend to seek additional funding to expand project delivery and support further individuals who have accessed CSEM.

- REBOOT COORDINATOR -

“The real benefit for the CM appeared to be the positivity of the volunteers which he said rubbed off onto him, saying he felt more positive and wanted to be more pro-active. He said he also enjoyed the general conversations with the volunteers which reaffirmed to him that he was still able to hold a meaningful conversation with others and appreciating that he was not judged by the volunteers. He was able to see himself as more of a ‘whole person’ and not just someone who was defined by his convictions.”

ENSO MENTORING

The Enso Model:

The Enso Mentoring model is based on the essence of Circles' work. Those persons (the Service User) who have multiple complex needs, been convicted, and imprisoned for committing offence(s) of sexual violence or violence, can access the Enso mentoring service. This can be done while still serving their sentence or once they have been released, and the support they are offered will be tailored to their individual needs. Support whilst in Custody, will take the form of prison visits and letter writing. This Correspondence Mentoring will be used to start building relationships with their volunteers and give hope for their future lives in the community.

Once in the community, access to paired or group mentoring support is available. The focus of this mentoring support is to build trusting relationships and to provide Service Users with a network of people they can engage with in safe social activities.

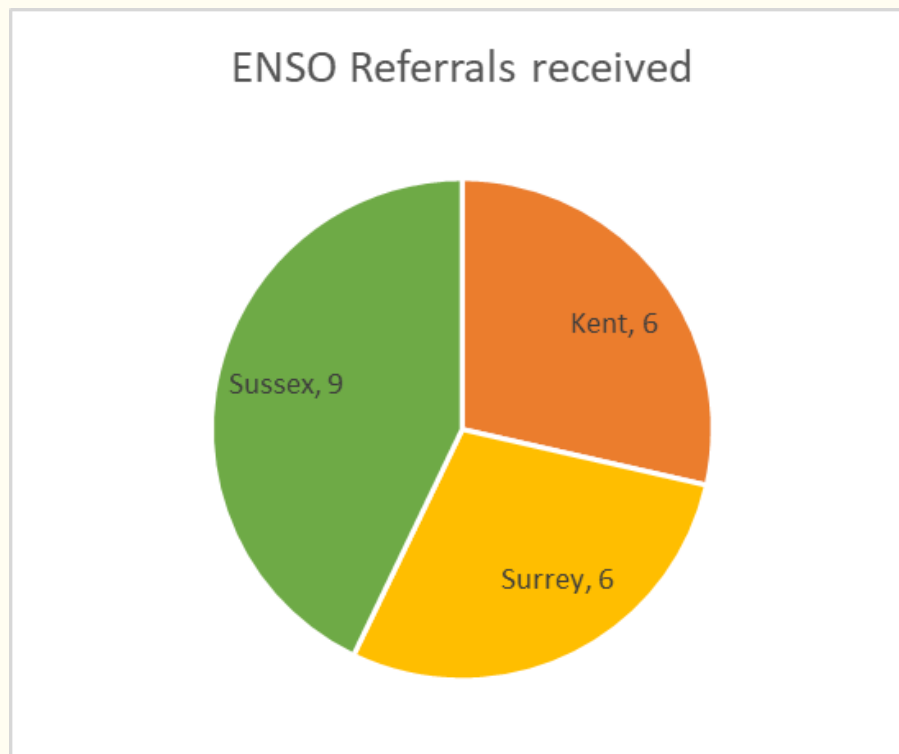
Volunteers and Training:

Volunteers who deliver the Enso mentoring model are experienced Circle volunteers who have been specifically trained. Over the past year there have been a total of 6 events in which specific Enso training was delivered, resulting in a total of 37 experienced Circle volunteers trained to deliver Enso mentoring. There are also 13 volunteers who have expressed interest and are currently awaiting training.

Operational Overview:

All operational outcomes are measured against a set of Key Performance Indicators specifically designed for the Kent, Surrey, and Sussex Enso Mentoring Project.

ENSO MENTORING CONTINUED...



Main Aims for the year(s) ahead:

We were informed that post September 2024, Kent, Surrey & Sussex Probation would engage in a process of competitive tendering for this service. Unfortunately this has been delayed and the project entered an exit strategy and terminated at the end of September 2024.

MR – Kent Chiron case –

in custody for many years following a sexual offence. The mentee is blind and therefore unable to easily converse in writing. For support to be offered to the mentee in a way that enabled him to engage, the coordinator was very creative and researched a 'spoken letter'. This was established through opening a prisoner voicemail account whereby the selected volunteer writes a letter and shares it securely with the coordinator. The coordinator then reads/records the letter for the mentee to dial up and listen to. A reply is then recorded, and an alert sent to the coordinator. The coordinator transcribes the response and shares with the volunteer. This has proved very successful in establishing and maintaining a supportive relationship and we are awaiting an oral hearing and subsequent release, whereby the volunteer and mentee can be introduced to continue support within the community.

POLICE PARTNERSHIPS PREVENTION AND DIVERSION PROJECTS (PROJECT VIGILANT, OPERATION SHIELD)

Thames Valley Police (TVP) began Project Vigilant in November 2021 in response to a large number of reported sexual crimes within the Oxford nighttime economy (NTE). A Project Vigilant deployment consists of uniformed and non-uniformed officers who go out into the NTE, the non-uniformed officers identify individuals whose behaviour is of concern, who they believe may be looking for an opportunity to offend sexually and give this information to uniformed patrols who then apprehend the individual and take appropriate action to explore the reasons for their behaviour. TVP were aware that whilst Project Vigilant deployments prevent an offence from happening on that occasion, the problematic behaviour does not stop there. They needed an intervention for these individuals to enable them to explore the underlying thoughts, feelings and motivations and undertake work to prevent further offences from taking place. This is where the partnership with Circles South East was created. This year other forces have shown an interest in similar partnership working arrangements and we are now working with Surrey Police in a similar way on their Operation Shield project.

The 2 objectives of the partnership are:

1. Working with potential perpetrators
2. Training and information sharing
 - To TVP staff about the partnership and how that works in practice for them
 - Community groups to raise awareness of Violence against women and girls (VAWG), concerning behaviours and what action to take
 - To educate and empower women and girls to stand against VAWG in all of its forms.

In April 2022, Circles South East was written into the Thames Valley Police strategic plan and funding was agreed upon for a further 3 years. This demonstrates TVP's commitment to VAWG and the strength of our partnership. To date, we have had contact with 5 individuals at risk of sexually harmful behaviour and delivered training/information-sharing sessions to over 200 individuals. We have continued the day-to-day Project Vigilant work of information sharing, training, identifying, assessing and working with individuals at risk of sexually harmful behaviour.

Main Aims for the year(s) ahead:

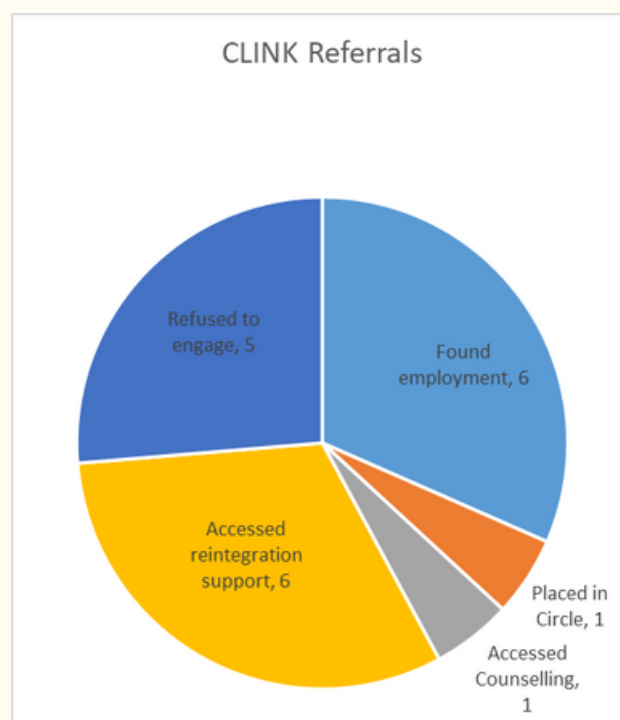
Our plan is to continue to build on the progress that we have made: to continue to work constructively and robustly with individuals at risk of causing sexual harm to divert them away from sexually harmful behaviour and prevent sexual offending; and to prepare community groups and young people to recognise and challenge VAWG in all of the micro communities that they are part of.

CLINK PARTNERSHIP

The Clink Kitchen Charity is a national charity working within the walls of 32 prisons providing professional training and qualifications to prisoners, in hospitality, food preparation, cookery and front of house roles. The charity has several restaurants in prisons that are open to the public and have a high-quality reputation.

Historically the Clink Charity had excluded prisoners convicted of sexual offences and Clink approached Circles South East to use our expertise in the field of Sexual Violence and help facilitate their work with such prisoners at HMP Brixton. Within the context of development and practice this has been a very successful pilot project. Initially envisaged and funded by the Clink to run for one year, we have sustained the pilot period for a two-year period and the closure of the project at the end of April 2024 is due to a lack of finance rather than any other reason.

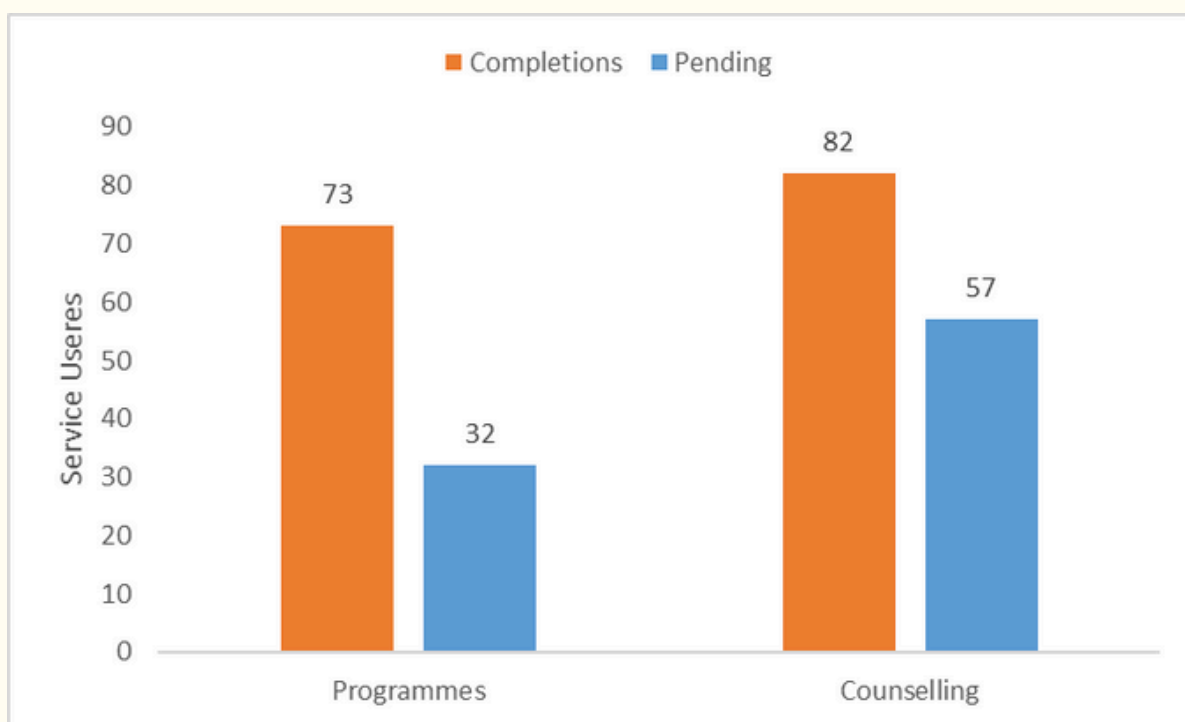
In the two years to March 2024, 19 referrals have been assessed for the Passport to Employment;



During this time we have developed an employment mentoring programme 'Passport to Employment' and a volunteer training programme focused upon how to deliver the programme. It is Circles South East's intention to continue to use the programme to deliver job opportunities for those service users regarded as the most difficult to employ, thereby enhancing their future safe reintegration into their wider community.

REDUCING SEXUAL HARM - SUPPORT HUB

We were awarded three years funding in order to develop and deliver services for those impacted by sexual harm. This year represented the last of Lottery funding. While we were able to meet (and surpass) increased year on year service user targets set by the Lottery the challenge was to maintain the momentum of staff and programme development in order to continue with the aim of financial self-sustainability by the end of the year.



Waiting lists for Breaking the Cycle in particular necessitated closing the list for Lottery-funded places in November as we already anticipated reaching our target of 48 by then. The number of referrals therefore reduced though a number of commissioned places were still sought. However we saw an increase in requests for formal (and paid for) assessments and interventions during the period November 2023 to March 2024.

The Hub

The Hub staff team have grown in expertise, technical ability and confidence over the period. We have augmented this by investing in training and development. The new Counselling Lead was able to undergo a supervisor's qualification while other staff undertook courses qualifying them to deliver SAPROF and RSVP risk assessments together with AIM3 assessments measuring the risk of adolescent sexually harmful behaviour. We have enjoyed awaydays facilitated by a consultant (provided by Lloyds Trust) and have brought in training and consultancy relating to Restorative Processes, a key piece of developmental work for us. Staff have also received training to deliver current assessment and supervisory tools. Programmes have been delivered by all staff with the exception of the Counselling Lead.

REDUCING SEXUAL HARM - SUPPORT HUB CONTINUED...

This has led to the cross-fertilisation of ideas and practice expertise. We have consolidated this with regular case discussion meetings where we have been able to share best practice, learn from mistakes to sharpen skills. The Team have also contributed to the Charity's external training programme which again has allowed for dissemination of skills and ideas.

We now sit regularly on professional forums and strategic groups where our expertise is recognised and our input valued. We also learn from these and take advantage of the networking opportunities presented. In short we have used the period to become a centre of excellence for the type of work we do. This latter point is evidenced by the fact that most of our referrals and enquiries for training etc come from word of mouth, professionals attesting to the quality of our work.

During the year we also re-structured and simplified of price tariff and have notified referrers of this change. We maintain that the Charity offers value for money in comparison with competitors while also offering a consistent and robust service.

Breaking the Cycle

The most established of our programmes, Breaking the Cycle achieved the lion's share of programme completions during the final years funding. As mentioned professional feedback is good and evidenced by repeat referrals.

During the period we were able to complete the updating of the programme with a view to accommodate changing offending profiles and relevance to a wider family network of carers. Having run this version many times now we are satisfied with the improvements.

Finally Breaking the Cycle, along with Circles work available elsewhere within the Charity, was the mainstay for students supervised by Hub staff on 2nd and 3rd year placements for their Social Work degrees.

REDUCING SEXUAL HARM - SUPPORT HUB CONTINUED...

Restoring the Balance (Forging the Links) Family Programme

Possibly the most challenging aspect of Hub work due to the complex nature of family intervention work, Forging the Links operated effectively for 2 of the 3 years funding. It operated on two levels. Primarily it was run as a responsive psychotherapeutic programme aiming to resolve trauma and resulting dysfunction within family dynamics following incidences of sexually harmful behaviour. Cases have indeed proved complex requiring multiple staff with differing expertise to be involved with certain families. This open-ended responsive approach received positive feedback from families, many of whom self-referred though equally we received referrals from Local Authorities.

Secondly our Programme Coordinator used the experience of running Forging the Links to inform the development of our formal linear sister programme Restoring the Balance. While Forging the Links was a popular resource amongst referrers and participants it is not practical in terms of commercial viability. As such restoring the Balance set out to include as many positive aspects of its sister programme as possible, while at the same time aligning with potential statutory interventions priorities. As such we offer multiple pathways through the programme relating to Parole, Child Protection and Care Proceedings scenarios and have included sibling-based sexually harmful behaviour to reflect the growing awareness of this particular issue. The new Programme has been sent for a final consultant's edit prior to roll out.

While we hope to be able to continue to offer Forging the Links as a free to access service, this will need to be funded by the payments received for delivery of Restoring the Balance.

Counselling Service

We have seen significant rises in referrals for this service, leading to a number of instances where we have considered closing our waiting lists at the six-month waiting stage. Many other service providers have been obliged to do so as waiting lists nationally have risen exponentially. The introduction of the students' placement unit helped to stave this off particularly where we were able to offer in house supervision for those on placement. We have also continued to induct and train cohorts of qualified Counsellors into our service adding a total of 12 new counsellors during the final period. We noted an increase in ethnic diversity among students and it was also gratifying to note that our NHS outreach work resulted in significant increase in diversity among referrals. In general we have seen an increase in referrals regarding ethnic minorities throughout the Hub and a concomitant increase in our work with interpreters.

REDUCING SEXUAL HARM - SUPPORT HUB CONTINUED...

Our Counselling Service Lead has developed and delivered training programmes concerning Pre-Trial Counselling, the Impact on Sexuality of Sexual Assault, and is in the process of developing a Programme of Self-help for those on waiting lists. Income derived from the delivery of these courses will help to fund this vital free – to – access service.

Evaluation

We have not yet received the final evaluation reports relating to the Programmes. In the event the initial numbers of participants interviewed was too low interviewed for any meaningful findings other than general satisfaction with the services. In conjunction with Roehampton University we agreed to extend the period of information gathering, added to the list of interviewees and await the results. There are two studies in progress.

Main Aims for the year ahead

The 3 years funding awarded by the Community Fund has allowed Circles South East to develop and deliver a range of services, to invest in the staff involved in delivery and to establish robust administrative processes to implement the programme. Ultimately services such as ours should be judged by their quality and availability. We have provided free to access support and intervention to 134 service users during the period with a further 21 being invoiced. Our task now is to continue to consolidate our programme, to become financially self-sustaining as a unit and grow in excellence, while maintaining our commitment to integrity as an organisation.

SUPPORT HUB CASE STUDY

D is a woman in her forties with two children, a girl and a boy aged 15 and 11 respectively. The girl, P, has autism, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), an eating disorder connected to the autism and also self-harms. The boy has ADHD but his symptoms are not as severe as his sister's.

D met the children's father online but he was violent and the relationship ended acrimoniously some years ago. There is no contact between the children and their father. D met her current partner V, again online some 5 years ago. She describes him as a "soul mate".

SUPPORT HUB CASE STUDY (CONTINUED)

During lockdown P disclosed to her Child and Mental Health Mental Services (CAMHS) worker that V had been “cuddling” her in a way she did not like, and that he had “touched her bottom” while she was going upstairs. The CAMHS worker contacted Social Services who in turn referred her to Breaking the Cycle. V was required to live elsewhere while assessments were made by Social Services, aspects of which were provided by Breaking the Cycle staff.

It was clear from the outset that D’s confidence had been dented by her previous relationship and by the current disclosures. She was also under pressure caused by an increase in P’s self-harming behaviour which had escalated considerably during the course of the programme, leading to emergency hospital appointments and 24 hour care of P.

This in turn led to D missing a number of group sessions. However, she always attended individual catch up sessions and contributed fully when she attended either group or individual sessions.

Our concern was that D represented the small proportion of participants we work with whose vulnerability leads to a desperate need to be in a relationship at almost any cost.

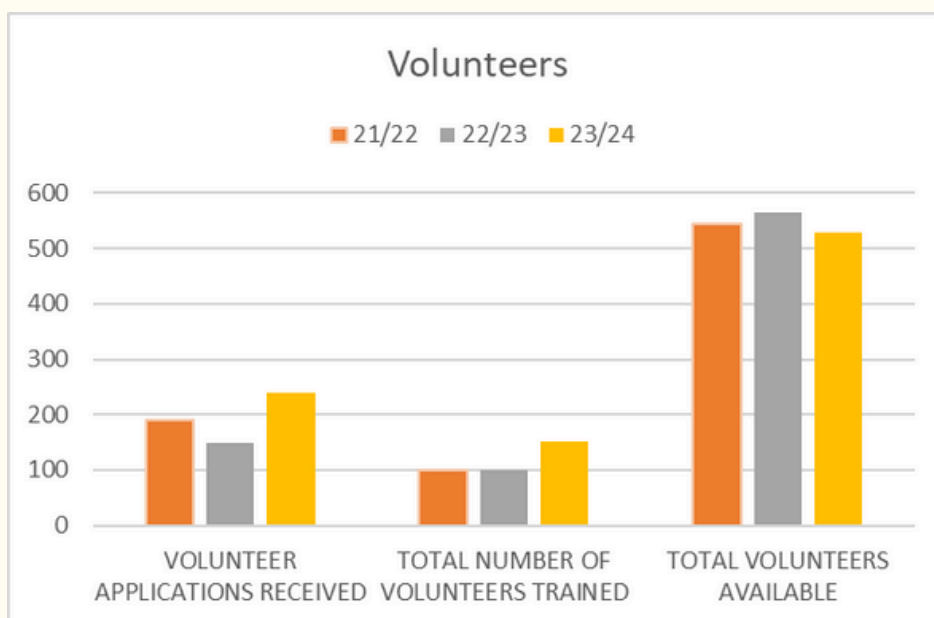
In such cases we regretfully have to conclude that any children involved cannot be deemed safe as protection from sexual harm is not necessarily the priority of the participant.

We were therefore pleased to note as the course progressed that D began to be able to recognise certain behaviours in V that could be described as “grooming”. Specifically the role of horseplay in normalising physical contact, and the way a potential perpetrator can make themselves indispensable in family life to mask abusive intent, among other learning points.

What was particularly gratifying was the strength and confidence D derived from sharing her experience with others in the group. This has long been seen by staff as an important by-product of the programme so that we encourage service users to remain in contact. We assessed that this confidence, together with insights gained from the course allowed us to construct a robust child safety plan with D so that we could assess her as capable of protecting her children from sexual harm. Although there were additional complexities to this case it represents the majority of outcomes for both service users and referrers in our work.

VOLUNTEERS

Many organisations in the voluntary sector are reporting a national decline in volunteer recruitment. We therefore had to undertake a full review of our recruitment strategy, promotion and marketing of opportunities and implement a new active campaign across our regions. We continue to actively recruit across voluntary and community groups, universities, and professional networks and we have seen a healthy increase in the number of volunteer applications over previous years, ensuring we maintain a healthy number of available volunteers.



Aims:

Circles South East aims to recruit, train and maintain a highly skilled workforce of volunteers across London and the South East who are prepared and confident to support individuals convicted of sexual harm.

Volunteers are over 18 and may be professionals, retired, students, lay-persons or individuals with lived experience of the criminal justice system, from any walk of life, provided they are vetted by us, and trained to our high standards. The only exception to this is those who volunteer for Counselling services which require the volunteer to meet counselling-specific qualifications and criteria.

We look for volunteers who are accountable, reliable and empathic.

VOLUNTEERS CONTINUED...

Target Volunteers:

As mentioned above our volunteers are diverse and will ideally represent the community within which they volunteer. For this reason, volunteers have been recruited from national and local volunteer hubs and organisations and our equal opportunities Volunteer Recruitment Policy ensures our recruitment promotes diversity and inclusion.

How public/community benefits (directly or indirectly):

The public benefits greatly from the recruitment of our volunteers. Their training and supervision means throughout communities across the South East and London there are individuals who are insightful and prepared to tackle the problems sexual harm generates and the toxic environments within which sexual harm germinates.

Our volunteers receive training that provides strengths not specific only to sexual harm but allows them to manage a range of sensitive topics with care and insight, using a range of skills and techniques to ensure these are managed more effectively.

Volunteers operate in their own communities, meaning the community directly benefits from the support that volunteers provide the service users.

Statutory agencies, and therefore the public, greatly benefit from the training, supervision and support that we provide our volunteers, as so many of our volunteers progress from volunteering to working in the criminal justice system for Police, HMPPS or Social Services, often citing the Circles experience provided them with the necessary insight and experience to secure this employ.

Main Achievement in 2023-2024:

This year we have embedded our new Volunteer Database DoVE within our team and begun using this as our primary volunteer tracking process. This has enabled the charity to track more closely the recruitment trends and volunteers that are coming into the service and ensure that our staff members are able to get the most out of every volunteer and ensure none are overlooked.

By giving Coordinators a means of searching for volunteers by proximity to any given location it has ensured that volunteers do not miss out on opportunities and we are able to offer the most complete service possible to our service users and our funders.

VOLUNTEERS CONTINUED...

Volunteers on training:

Volunteers have expressed satisfaction with the training, highlighting aspects such as enjoyable delivery, and increased preparedness to support core members. Such feedback is indicative of a successful and well-received training program, suggesting that the content is engaging, well-structured, and beneficial. Overall, these comments are a testament to the effectiveness of the training and the positive impact it had on the individuals involved. Our training has made changes over the last year to include more of the voice of the service user, the feedback from this has been excellent and we are further considering how to develop this further.

“Everyone especially everyone who ran the events made me feel so comfortable”

“I gained far more of an insight into offending behaviour and how the objectives of a Circle can be achieved than I expected.”

“I felt it was interesting and helped me understand my role in a circle better, that it is not just to improve my CV but I could actually have a real impact on something.”

VOLUNTEERS, 2023-2024

Volunteer Recruitment:

There have been obstacles over the previous year to volunteer recruitment, which have been intertwined with the national reduction in volunteering, as we have seen significant demand in certain areas combined with time pressures on certain contracts to establish Circles. We have tackled this by improving our connectivity with online and community-based volunteering hubs. In doing so this placed additional pressures upon staff members, so in turn we recruited an Intern to support the charity with the volunteer recruitment, enabling Coordinators to focus on the delivery of services.

TRAINING

Aim:

Circles South East aims to train professionals working in humanitarian fields to be skilled, prepared and confident in supporting those who have sexually harmed, with the goal of assisting the rehabilitation of such individuals more effectively and ultimately preventing further victimisation.

By delivering this training Circles South East aims not only to serve the non-profit, charitable and statutory agencies with the criminal justice system but to serve the public and communities as a whole with more direct and open challenging of sexually harmful behaviour and supporting those at risk of causing sexual harm to make changes to their lives in order to remain offence free.

Circles South East also aims to use delivery of training to external agencies to assist the organisation in remaining financially stable and to enable Circles South East to develop innovations, services and supports that serve our long-term goal of No More Victims.

Our training also has an element of educating and equipping communities and community to recognise and challenge Violence Against Women and Girls in all of its forms and to impact the cultures they are part of in a positive way.

Audience:

Our training audience has been primarily statutory agencies and the charities, non-profits and business that deliver these services, most pertinently within Probation. Circles South East has also delivered training to Mental Health, Housing and Employment and Sexual Health focused agencies.

Circles South East also delivered training to a large number of further education establishments across the south east. This training is delivered gratis, as it forms a part of our recruitment goals. We also delivered Active Bystander training and our VAWG workshop to community groups, sixth form and university students.

How public/community benefits (directly or indirectly):

The training of professionals across the country means the messages of successful reintegration and rehabilitation are promoted and increases the number of individuals who are insightful and prepared to tackle the problems sexual harm generates and the toxic environments within which sexual harm germinates, within their professional roles but also as members of the public.

TRAINING CONTINUED...

The enhanced confidence and skills of practitioners supervising those who have sexually harmed means that these individuals are more effectively managed in the community, and our focus on identifying risk means when risks do occur these can be identified quickly and managed before a service user relapses into causing harm.

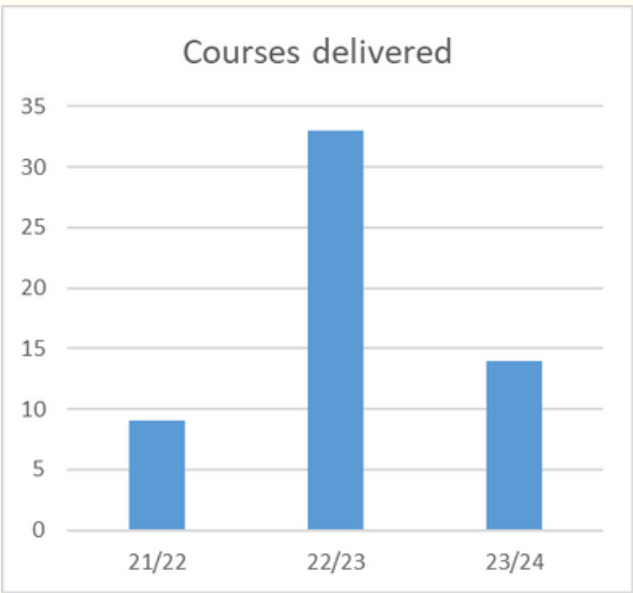
Individuals leave our workshops feeling equipped and empowered to recognise harmful beliefs, attitudes and behaviour and step in to help, whether that is to challenge those attitudes, beliefs or behaviours appropriately or report concerns to relevant agencies. They develop an understanding of how culture is created and the positive impact that they can have on that culture starting from where they are.

Main Achievements:

In 2023-2024 we delivered training to the following organisations:
Catch 22, St Giles, Turning Point/Sash, Restore and Maximus.

The St Giles and Catch 22 training contracts have formed part of wider training and staff development spanning several years and delivering several different training sessions, including reflective practice groups, workshops and consultancy.

Circles South East has also delivered training opportunities to its partners such as Thames Valley Police. Furthermore by trading training with other organisations Circles South East has also been able to offer all staff members the opportunity to be trained in Mental Health First Aid, which has been essential to the successful operation of the Circles South East Out Of Hours support line.



Training delivery reduced compared to previous other years as one of our most significant ongoing contracts entered a period of consultancy and review. This consisted of a staff skill, knowledge and confidence audit in order to target professional development in the areas that were needed most, following which we underwent a period of training development in order to specifically challenge the areas of need identified.

STAFF WELLBEING & DEVELOPMENT

At Circles we are committed to ensuring that our staff are equipped and empowered to carry out their roles with confidence and knowing that they have the up to date knowledge, skills and support of their colleagues and managers. To contribute to this aim we hold monthly whole team meetings and each quarter we run a whole team day which is face to face. These whole team days have 3 aims:

- To build on relationships and morale
- To contribute to staff CPD
- An opportunity for whole team organisational learning

Over this year we have held sessions on Safeguarding, GDPR and on reviewing and improving our processes throughout the team amongst others. Due to our team working remotely across London and the South East, meeting in person is important to allow opportunity for more relaxed informal conversation that builds relationships, trust and rapport and contributes to more cohesive working. We have held 2 team social events this year in addition to team training days, one of these was a summer 'bring and share' social lunch and one was a Christmas team day. Feedback from all of the team days has been very positive.

We have other support available for staff in the form of a counselling service available should individuals wish to access it and we have been considering an employee assistance programme which we will continue to explore. We have also provided some coaching for one of the senior management team with a view to assessing the impact of that on line management and staff wellbeing and perhaps rolling it out further should the funding be available.

The service user engagement group has gone from strength to strength, we have been able to move back to face to face meeting following the move to meeting online during the COVID pandemic. The service users continue to grow in confidence and have their voices heard, the value of the group is such that the model is now being rolled out across all circles providers. The group have been interviewed by a PhD student for her thesis, an advisory group has been set up to oversee the Service User Engagement Group and a Service User also attends the advisory group meeting. Services users will be taking on more roles and responsibilities including contributing to the volunteer training which is a very positive step in empowering them and highlighting their worth in the work that we do.

WHAT'S NEXT – CHIEF EXECUTIVE OVERVIEW

Overview

Our primary purpose as a charity is to provide a comprehensive package of support to all whose lives have been impacted by sexual harm and sexual violence. We support people affected by sexual abuse in their recovery and work to reduce instances of sexual abuse. The last 12 months have continued to be challenging for the charity, however, the year has brought with it a continued development of services and we are pleased with the progress we have made.

We currently have over 500 community volunteers providing support across the South East and London region. Volunteers continue to be at the heart of everything we do and their enthusiasm and dedication are crucial to the success of the charity. Over the last 12 months we recruited and trained 151 volunteers and had 32 volunteers awaiting training post March 24.

This year 240 service users have been able to access one of our many support services. Out of this figure 155 received specialist support and intervention from the Community Hub receiving counselling and participating in our Protective Adult groupwork programmes. 65% of referrals were allocated appropriate support.

Circles UK Membership Compliance Audit

In December 2023 we commenced the biannual Membership Compliance audit process conducted by our validating body Circles UK. The process was completed in February 2024 with site visits by the assessors. We met a total of 42.5 out of 44 requirements and scored **96.5%** compliance. The following was noted by the assessors as areas of good practice:

- Framework, systems and investment in safeguarding systems.
- Knowledge and processes including the sharing of learning from safeguarding reviews.
- The Service User Engagement group, underpinned by a broader Service User Involvement strategy, remains an extremely positive workstream with providing a voice, skills, confidence, and other opportunities to Core Members.
- Coordinators interviewed were professional and passionate about the work of Circles South East and showed a diverse range of skills and experience. Coordinators were extremely well regarded by Volunteers, Core Members, and professionals from other agencies.
- The commitment and resources that Circles South East put in place around staff wellbeing and support.
- Coordinators' commitment to Volunteers' wellbeing alongside the charity's ongoing commitment to Volunteer development and training.
- Circles South East commitment and ability to maintain highly effective relationships with outer Circle members and external partners demonstrated by the esteem they are held in.

WHAT'S NEXT – CE OVERVIEW CONTINUED

- Diligence and systems that support and enable Circles South East's approach to Referral Panels. Innovation around the Circles minutes submission process and the use of sessional workers to streamline provision to meet changing needs.

What's next

We are continuing to work on the development of our infrastructure and are accessing further specialist support through the Lloyds Enhanced Support Programme. We are working across several key areas as a priority attached to the implementation of our new 3-year strategy which will launch in October 2024. Our current priorities are:

- Implementation of a new staff structure focused on the senior management team and administration process. This is following a detailed review of our systems and structure and consultation with the whole staff team.
- Implementation of a new 3-year Fundraising Strategy. We have created a new fundraising team who will implement the strategy focused on widening our donor base and developing individual and corporate giving.
- Implementation of a new Communication and Engagement strategy working with a new partner DYNAMIQ. They are helping us implement a marketing strategy and will be commencing work with trustees on our future branding in the next year.

We have been delivering the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) contracts for 10 months across 3 Probation areas, Kent, Surrey, and Sussex, London and South Central. Since delivery commenced, we have moved 56 Circles into set up and at the end of March we had 35 Circles operational. We anticipate delivery post March 24 reaching 57 operational Circles when contracts will reach close to their capacity.

We continue to work closely with Circles UK to deliver Circles ReBoot and a new pilot project to deliver and evaluate the Faith Circle model. Our partnership continues to strengthen with the Police in Hampshire, Surrey and Thames Valley, with our work supported by the Police and Crime Commissioners. We hope to continue to have the opportunity to expand our delivery of services further over the next 12 months.

The Reducing Sexual Harm Hub staff team have grown in expertise, technical ability, and confidence over the last 12 months. Staff have also received training to deliver current assessment and supervisory tools. Programmes have been delivered by all staff apart from the Counselling Lead. This has led to the cross-fertilisation of ideas and practice expertise. We now sit regularly on professional forums and strategic groups where our expertise is recognised, and our input valued. We also learn from these and take advantage of the networking opportunities presented. We are continuing to focus on securing funding to support the service and increase available resources through ongoing recruitment of Volunteer Counsellors.

WHAT'S NEXT – CE OVERVIEW CONTINUED

We have a number of key objectives that we want to achieve over the next 12 months across both governance and operations:

- Increasing the external profile of the charity and ensuring we secure our position as a centre of excellence for specialist intervention and support services. Investment in staff training and development is essential to this success.
- Development of a Service User Engagement Group for the Reducing Sexual Harm Support Services.
- Continued development of our innovation work under the VAWG strategy and successful expansion of our Prevention and Diversionary model across the region.
- Secure the sustainability of the Reducing Sexual Harm Hub support services.
- Secure the extension of the MoJ Contracts and continue to navigate the challenges of delivering MoJ contracts.

We therefore have a year ahead filled with both opportunities and challenges for the team. Staff continue to work exceptionally hard with our service users and volunteers within our local communities. Our volunteers continue to give their time each week and work closely with the team to ensure effective delivery of support for all our service users. I would like to thank our volunteers, staff team, funders, partners and service user engagement group for ensuring our work continues to make a difference to people's lives.

Rebekah Saunders
Chief Executive

***“As volunteers, we are not paid
and are not involved because we
have to be, but because we choose
to be”***

TRUSTEES REPORT

The trustees, who are also directors of the charity for the purposes of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in Note 1 to the financial statements and comply with the Charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)".

Reference and Administrative Details

Company number	06490001
Charity number	1123361
Registered office	129 Broadway Didcot Oxfordshire OX11 8XD
Trustees	Nora Holford (Chair) Elizabeth Jones Lydia Fransham Mark Goldup Rebecca Seaborne
Secretary	Timothy Trimble
Key Management Personnel	Rebekah Saunders (Chief Executive) Alex Downer (Senior Manager, South Central) Ashleigh Palombo (Senior Manager, London) Christopher Wilson (Senior Manager, Kent Surrey & Sussex) Dominic Williams (Senior Manager, Victim Support) Sarah West (Senior Manager, Vigilant) Timothy Trimble (Finance and Administrative Manager)

Bankers

CAF Bank Ltd
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4JQ

Independent examiner

Azets Audit Services
Suites B&D
Burnham Yard
Beaconsfield
Buckinghamshire
HP9 2JH

Structure, Governance and Management

Constitution

Circles South East is a charitable company limited by guarantee with company number 06490001 and incorporated on the 31st January 2008. Circles South East was registered with the Charity Commission, registration number 1123361 on 28th March 2008. Prior to this, Circles South East was a project of the Religious Society of Friends known as HTV Circles. On 1st April 2008, the ownership and operation of HTV Circles was transferred to the charity.

The company was established under a Memorandum of Articles which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association.

Board of Trustees

The directors of the company are also charity trustees and for the purpose of charity law and under the company's articles are known as members of the Management Committee.

The Board of Trustees advertises vacancies as they arise although it is always seeking to attract new skills and strengths to assist the governance of the Charity. A selection sub-group will process applications and present potential candidates to the Board for consideration and nomination for election. The Board seeks to ensure that the needs of the Charity are appropriately reflected in the diversity and experience of the Trustees.

Trustees are elected to the Board for a period of 2 years and may be recommended for re-election. One-third of the Trustees are obliged to retire by rotation at each annual general meeting and may offer themselves for re-election. The Trustees to retire by rotation shall be those who have been longest in office since their last appointment.

Induction and Training

All newly appointed Trustees receive a detailed induction and information pack to familiarise themselves with the charity and their role as a Trustee. The Board has regular Away Days to discuss future plans and objectives and discuss their role as a Trustee. Trustees are able to visit the team and liaise with the Chief Executive of the Charity to assist in their role. Training is arranged as the Board identifies specific requirements. Trustees must adhere to the Code of Conduct and be eligible for appointment as specified in the Articles of Association.

Risk Management

A Risk Register on the governance and operational activity of the charity is reviewed quarterly by the board. This ensures that the Charity has taken all reasonable precautions to reduce risk with systems in place to minimise risk and manage issues appropriately. Risk assessments are undertaken appropriately by staff on all aspects of operational activity.

Organisational Structure

Circles South East has a Management Committee of up to 15 trustees/directors who meet quarterly and are responsible for the governance and the strategic direction of the charity. The trustees are drawn from a variety of professional backgrounds relevant to the work of the charity.

There are 6 subgroups underpinning the work of the charity:

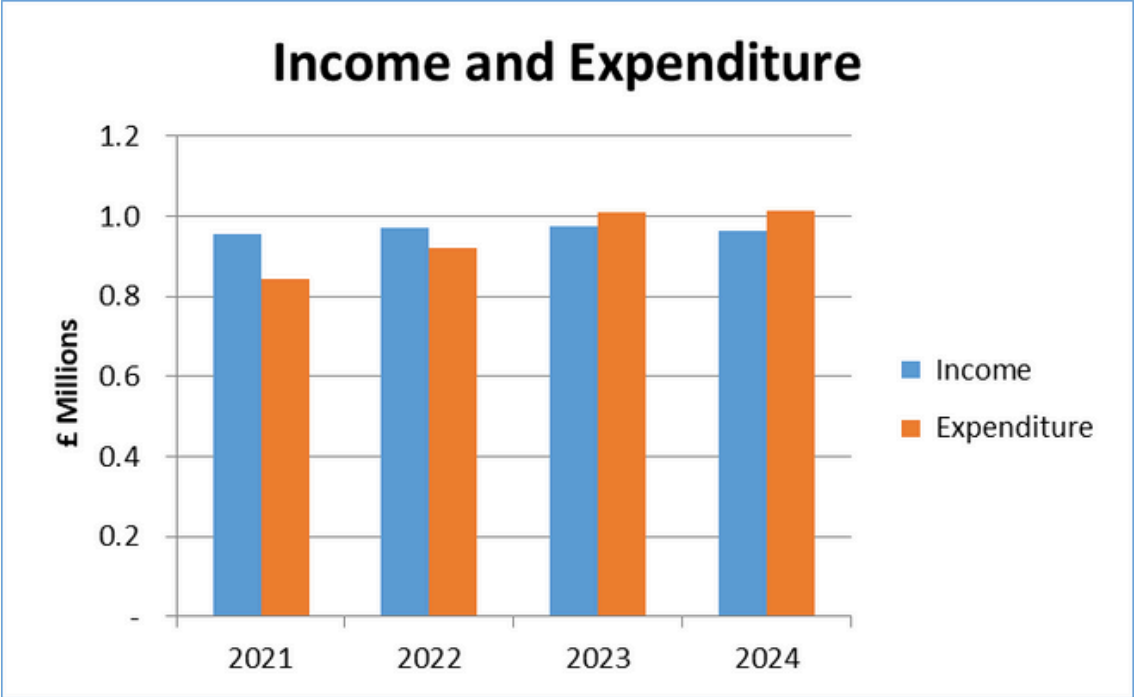
- Finance & General Purpose (including a Fundraising subsection)
- Communications
- Policies, Procedures and Human Resources
- Equality, Diversity & Inclusion
- Innovation & Development
- Volunteer and Staff Development & Wellbeing

A scheme of delegation is in place and day-to-day responsibility for the management of services, strategic development and income generation is with the Chief Executive supported by the Senior Management Team which includes a Finance & Administration Manager.

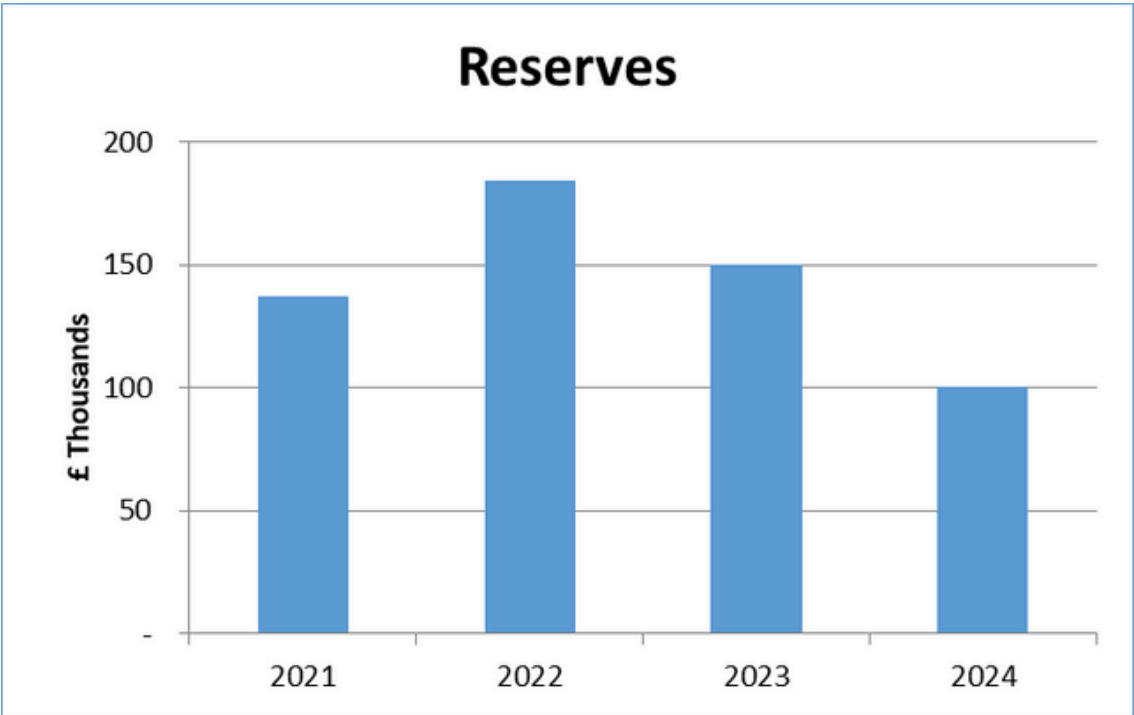
Financial Review

Financial Performance during the year

Income received during the year of £962,463 (2023: £975,763) was slightly lower than the previous year. Spending at £1,011,897 (2023: £1,010,146) showed a small increase over the previous year. This resulted in a deficit for the year of £49,434 compared to a surplus in the previous year of £34,383.



Reserves Policy



Circles South East needs to have reserves because of the complex and short-term nature of its funding arrangements. The charity is largely dependent on institutional funders and public sector commissioners to provide the services to its beneficiaries. This funding is therefore subject to shifting policy considerations, political decision-making, and the risk inherent in constant public sector re-organisation. Each of the funding streams that the Charity relies upon may not be renewed due to these factors or may need to be renegotiated. Historically this funding has been very short-term, with guarantees provided for 12 or 24 months, and the Charity has experienced several changes in the principal commissioning arrangements for its services. In particular, the new governance and funding arrangements introduced in relation to the delivery of probation services have yet to settle down, and this creates particular financial risks for the charity. The reserves are therefore required in order to allow time for a renegotiation of the contracts to ensure the stability of service provision or to allow for the services to be run down to an appropriate level requisite with the funding available in an ordered way.

For the purposes of calculating the target level of reserves, we assume funding of around half of our projects is suddenly withdrawn. In this situation we will require sufficient reserves in place to fund an orderly closure of the affected projects and to maintain core support services at existing levels during this period and for some reasonable time afterwards. Holding reserves also ensures we maintain working capital that can fund our day-to-day operations for example when grants are received in arrears.

Based on the budget agreed for the following year we estimate the reserves requirement on this basis to be approximately £219,000. Actual unrestricted reserves stood at £95,789 at the end of March 2024. This represents a shortfall to the reserves requirement of £123,558 (2022-23 £70,611). Reserves can be generated from the contract income and from fees levied for the provision of services. In order to build reserves up to the required level the Charity will transfer any surplus funds to reserves that it is free to do so, and not draw upon these during the financial year until the target level is reached unless a convincing business case can be constructed which illustrates that current investment of these funds will in the medium-term generate more funds in return and thereby improve the overall reserves position within a reasonable timeframe. Once the Reserves Requirement is reached the Charity will monitor on a quarterly basis the revised reserves target and this will be part of the quarterly report produced for the Board. The basis for setting the reserves target will be reviewed annually.

The Trustees are aware the reserves level at 31 March 2024 remains below target level have ensured the 2024-25 budget process produced a realistic budget that will result in a surplus for the charity in 2024-25 so that our reserves could be built back up again.

Approved by order of the board of trustees and signed on its behalf by:



N Holford Chair of Trustees

Date: 24 January 2025

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Circles South East

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Circles South East (the Company) for the year ended 31 March 2024 which are set out on pages 37 to 51.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity 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').

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 carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('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 statement

Since the company's gross income exceeded £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales (ICAEW), which is one of the listed bodies.

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:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act 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; or
4. the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

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.

Signed: *Christopher Nisbet*.....

Date: ...28/01/2025.....

Mr C J Nisbet FCA
Azets Audit Services
Suites B&D
Burnham Yard
Beaconsfield
Buckinghamshire. HP9 2JH

CIRCLES SOUTH EAST
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
(INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT)
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

		2024			2023		
		Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds
	Notes						
INCOME							
Donations and Legacies		54,915	-	54,915	81	-	81
Charitable Activities							
Statutory agencies		183,793	208,820	392,613	331,058	114,365	445,423
Charities		4,100	226,573	230,673	13,629	130,300	143,929
Trusts and foundations		195,000	-	195,000	230,621	38,629	269,250
Partner support and intervention		51,410	-	51,410	84,250	-	84,250
Other		37,203	-	37,203	32,500	-	32,500
Investment Income		649	-	649	330	-	330
Total		527,070	435,393	962,463	692,469	283,294	975,763
EXPENDITURE							
Charitable Activities							
Circles		315,886	401,907	717,793	604,433	152,994	757,427
Counselling		43,996	153,133	197,129	44,931	130,300	175,231
Partner support and intervention		89,046	-	89,046	68,198	-	68,198
Youth		7,929	-	7,929	9,290	-	9,290
Total	3	456,857	555,040	1,011,897	726,852	283,294	1,010,146
Net Income/(Expenditure)		70,213	(119,647)	(49,434)	(34,383)	-	(34,383)
Transfers between Funds		(124,525)	124,525	-	-	-	-
Net Movement in Funds	4	(54,312)	4,878	(49,434)	(34,383)	-	(34,383)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS							
Total funds brought forward		150,101	-	150,101	184,484	-	184,484
Total funds carried forward		95,789	4,878	100,667	150,101	-	150,101

All recognised gains and losses are included in the statement of financial activities.
The results for the year all relate to continuing activities.
The notes form part of these financial statements.

**CIRCLES SOUTH EAST
BALANCE SHEET
AT 31 MARCH 2024**

		2024	2023
		Total funds	Total funds
		£	£
	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	7	4,937	-
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	8	139,855	572
Cash at bank and in hand		-	4,306
		139,855	4,878
CURRENT LIABILITIES			
Creditors amounts falling due within one year	9	49,003	-
NET CURRENT ASSETS		90,852	4,878
TOTAL ASSETS LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		95,789	4,878
TOTAL NET ASSETS		95,789	4,878
THE FUNDS OF THE CHARITY	11		
Unrestricted funds		95,789	150,101
Restricted funds		4,878	-
TOTAL		100,667	150,101

The charitable company is entitled to exemption from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

- The members have not required the charitable company to obtain an audit of its financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023 in accordance with Section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.
- The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Companies Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small companies to the small companies regime of the Companies Act 2006 and with the Financial Reporting Standard 102 SORP.

The financial statements were approved by the Board of Trustees and were signed on its behalf by:


 N Holford Chair of Trustees

Date: 24 January 2025

**CIRCLES SOUTH EAST
STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

		2024	2023
	Notes	£	£
Cash flows from operating activities			
Cash generated from/ (absorbed by) operations	13	(87,074)	(68,781)
Cash Flows from Investing Activities			
(Purchase) of tangible fixed assets		-	(1,520)
Net Cash provided by (used in) Operating Activities		-	(1,520)
Increase (Decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		(87,074)	(70,301)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		91,380	161,681
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		4,306	91,380

**CIRCLES SOUTH EAST
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024**

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006 and “Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019)”. The charitable company is a Public Benefit Entity as defined by FRS 102.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling, which is the functional currency of the charitable company. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £. The financial statements have been prepared under the historical cost convention. The principal accounting policies adopted are set out below;

a) Charity information

Circles South East is a private company limited by guarantee incorporated in England and Wales. The registered office is Baptist House, 129 Broadway, Didcot, Oxfordshire. OX11 8XD

b) Incoming resources

All income is included on the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

c) Resources expended

Expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis and has been classified under headings that aggregate all cost related to the category. Support costs are allocated to activities on the basis of time spent. Governance costs include the costs of Trustees meetings, accountancy fees and professional fees.

CIRCLES SOUTH EAST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT- CONTINUED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

d) Tangible fixed assets

Depreciation is provided at the following annual rates in order to write off each asset over its estimated useful life.

Fixtures and fittings	- 15% on reducing balance
Computer equipment	- 25% on reducing balance

The gain or loss arising on the disposal of an asset is determined as the difference between the sale proceeds and the carrying value of the asset and is credited or charged to profit or loss.

e) Taxation

The charity is exempt from corporation tax on its charitable activities.

f) Financial instruments

The charitable company has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 'Basic Financial Instruments' and Section 12 'Other Financial Instruments Issues' of FRS 102 to all of its financial instruments.

Financial instruments are recognised in the charitable company's balance sheet when the charitable company becomes party to the contractual provisions of the instrument.

Financial assets and liabilities are offset, with the net amounts presented in the financial statements, when there is a legally enforceable right to set off the recognised amounts and there is an intention to settle on a net basis or to realise the asset and settle the liability simultaneously.

Basic financial assets

Basic financial assets, which include debtors and cash and bank balances, are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost using the effective interest method unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the transaction is measured at the present value of the future receipts discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial assets classified as receivable within one year are not amortised.

Basic financial liabilities

Basic financial liabilities, including creditors and bank loans are initially recognised at transaction price unless the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, where the debt instrument is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest. Financial liabilities classified as payable within one year are not amortised.

Debt instruments are subsequently carried at amortised cost, using the effective interest rate method.

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods or services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of operations from suppliers. Amounts payable are classified as current liabilities if payment is due within one year or less. If not, they are presented as non-current liabilities. Trade creditors are recognised initially at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

CIRCLES SOUTH EAST

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT- CONTINUED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

g) Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds can be used in accordance with the charitable objectives at the discretion of the trustees.

Restricted funds can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes. Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the financial statements.

h) Pension costs and other post-retirement benefits

The charitable company operates a defined contribution pension scheme. Contributions payable to the charitable company's pension scheme are charged to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period to which they relate.

i) Going concern

At the time of approving the financial statements, the trustees have a reasonable expectation that the charity has adequate resources to continue in operational existence for the foreseeable future. Thus the trustees continue to adopt the going concern basis of accounting in preparing the financial statements.

j) Government grants

Government grants are recognised at the fair value of the asset received or receivable when there is reasonable assurance that the grant conditions will be met and the grants will be received.

A grant that specifies performance conditions is recognised in income when the performance conditions are met. Where a grant does not specify performance conditions it is recognised in income when the proceeds are received or receivable. A grant received before the recognition criteria are satisfied is recognised as a liability.

CIRCLES SOUTH EAST
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT- CONTINUED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

2. ANALYSIS OF INCOME

			Total	Total
	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
Statutory Agencies				
Clinks Partnership	-	6,000	6,000	7,000
Hampshire PCC	-	9,844	9,844	52,500
Hampshire Police	-	-	-	17,500
NPS Circles Kent Surrey Sussex	58,986	-	58,986	105,642
NPS Circles London Region	48,694	-	48,694	59,611
NPS Circles South Central	76,113	-	76,113	33,426
NPS ENSO KSS	-	37,464	37,464	84,879
Surrey PCC	-	50,541	50,541	30,000
Thames Valley Police	-	104,923	104,971	61,865
	183,793	208,820	392,613	452,423
Charities				
Circles UK	4,100	34,650	38,750	6,629
The National Lottery Community Fund	-	141,923	141,923	130,300
	4,100	176,573	180,673	136,929
Trusts and Foundations				
AB Charitable Trust	30,000	-	30,000	20,000
AS Charitable Trust	25,000	-	25,000	25,000
City Bridge Trust	-	50,000	50,000	25,000
Esmee Fairbairn	-	-	-	55,000
Garfield Weston	25,000	-	25,000	-
Henry Smith	60,000	-	60,000	60,000
Lloyds Bank Foundation	25,000	-	25,000	27,250
Rayne Foundation	-	-	-	25,000
Tudor Trust	30,000	-	30,000	32,000
	195,000	50,000	245,000	269,250
Donations and Gifts				
Legacies	54,554	-	54,554	-
Donations	361	-	361	80
	54,915	-	54,915	81

CIRCLES SOUTH EAST
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT- CONTINUED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

2. ANALYSIS OF INCOME (continued)

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Charitable Activities				
PartnerSupport and Intervention	51,410	-	51,410	84,250
Other				
Training Courses	25,526	-	25,526	23,200
Spots and Other	11,677	-	11,677	9,300
	37,203	-	37,203	32,500
Bank Interest	649	-	649	331
Total Income	527,070	435,393	962,463	975,763

3. ANALYSIS OF EXPENDITURE

Charitable Activities	Staff costs £	Other direct costs £	Support costs £	2024 Total £	2023 Total £
Circles	583,647	80,601	53,545	717,793	757,427
Counselling	169,076	20,021	8,032	197,129	175,231
Partner support and intervention	82,548	1,813	4,685	89,046	68,198
Youth	6,537	723	669	7,929	9,290
	841,808	103,158	66,931	1,011,897	1,010,146

Analysis of Support Costs

	Circles £	Counselling £	Partner support and intervention £	Youth £	2024 Total £
Office Costs	46,154	6,924	4,038	577	57,693
Insurance	236	35	21	3	295
Communication and IT	5,147	772	450	64	6,433
Governance	2,008	301	176	25	2,510
	53,545	8,032	4,685	669	66,931

CIRCLES SOUTH EAST
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT- CONTINUED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

4. NET MOVEMENT OF FUNDS IS AFTER CHARGING

	2024	2023
	£	£
Independent Examiner's Fees	2,510	2,438
Depreciation	2,352	3,488

5. TRUSTEES' REMUNERATION AND BENEFITS

There were no trustees' remuneration or other benefits for the year ended 31 March 2024 (2023: £Nil)

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trustees' expenses reimbursed to 1 trustee (2023: 1) for travel expenses	68	63

CIRCLES SOUTH EAST
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT- CONTINUED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

6. STAFF COSTS

	2024	2023
	£	£
Wages and salaries	731,738	710,491
Social security costs	65,890	66,809
Contributions to a defined contribution pension scheme	44,180	43,640
	841,808	820,940

No employee received employment benefits (excluding pension costs) in excess of £60,000.

The key management personnel of Circles South East comprise the Trustees and the Chief Executive. The total employee benefits of the key management personnel (including pension costs) were £68,606 (2023 £66,608).

The average number of staff employed during the year was as follows:

Number of Co-ordinators	18	18
Number of Administration Staff	4	4
Number of Management Staff	1	1
	23	23

The average number of full-time equivalent staff employed during the year was as follows:

Number of Co-ordinators	15	15
Number of Administration Staff	3	3
Number of Management Staff	1	1
	19	19

CIRCLES SOUTH EAST
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT- CONTINUED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

7. TANGIBLE FIXED ASSETS

	Fixtures and fittings	Computer equipment	Total
COST	£	£	£
At 1 April 2023	4,277	19,309	23,586
Additions	-	-	-
Disposals	(2,432)	(6,634)	(9,066)
At 31 March 2024	1,845	12,675	14,520

DEPRECIATION

At 1 April 2023	3,726	12,570	16,296
Charge for year	51	1,550	1,601
Disposals	(2,222)	(6,092)	(8,314)
At 31 March 2024	1,555	8,028	9,583

NET BOOK VALUE

At 31 March 2024	290	4,647	4,937
At 31 March 2023	551	6,739	7,290

8. DEBTORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Grants due	123,412	91,148
Other debtors	4,515	3,546
	127,927	94,694

CIRCLES SOUTH EAST
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT- CONTINUED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

9. CREDITORS: AMOUNTS FALLING DUE WITHIN ONE YEAR

	2024	2023
	£	£
Trade creditors	24,764	20,749
Taxation and social security	18,906	17,298
Other creditors	5,333	5,216
	49,003	43,263

10. OPERATING LEASE COMMITMENTS

The following operating lease payments are committed:

	Equipment	Property	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
Payable within one year	1,711	7,206	8,917	17,263
Payable one year to five years	5,561	16,256	21,817	23,238

11. MOVEMENT IN FUNDS

Unrestricted Funds	At 1.4.23	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Closing Balances
	£	£	£	£	£
General Fund	150,101	527,070	456,857	(124,525)	95,789

CIRCLES SOUTH EAST
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT- CONTINUED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

Restricted Funds	At 1.4.23	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Closing Balances
	£	£	£	£	£
Circles UK - Faith Circles	-	13,018	8,140	-	4,878
Circles UK - ReBoot Circles	-	21,632	24,070	2,438	-
City Bridge Trust	-	50,000	78,059	28,059	-
Clinks Partnership	-	6,000	9,757	3,757	-
Hampshire PCC	-	9,844	14,352	4,508	-
NPS ENSO KSS	-	37,464	84,437	46,973	-
Surrey PCC - Circles	-	30,000	39,276	9,276	-
Surrey PCC - Operation Shield	-	20,541	20,719	178	-
Thames Valley Police - Safer Streets	-	28,000	29,639	1,639	-
Thames Valley Police - Vigilant	-	46,971	49,720	2,749	-
Thames Valley Police - Circles	-	30,000	43,738	13,738	-
The National Lottery Community Fund	-	141,923	153,133	11,210	-
Total Restricted	-	435,393	555,040	124,525	4,878
TOTAL FUNDS	150,101	962,463	1,011,897	-	100,667

Movements in funds

Unrestricted Funds

General Funds are provided for Management salaries and Support Services.
Other Undesignated Funds further the work of providing Circles and other related services such as Counselling, Assessment, Training and Partner Support.

Restricted Funds

Circles UK - Faith Circles

A grant to provide faith Circles in the South East.

Circles UK - ReBoot Circles

A grant to provide reboot Circles in the South East.

CIRCLES SOUTH EAST
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT- CONTINUED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

City Bridge Trust

A grant to provide Circles activities in the London area, supported by City Bridge Trust, the funding arm of The City of London Corporation's charity, Bridge House Estates (1035628).

Clinks Partnership

A grant to provide support to Clinks work at HMP Brixton.

Hampshire PCC

A grant to provide Circles activities in Hampshire.

NPS ENSO Kent, Surrey & Sussex

A grant to provide ENSO services.

Surrey PCC

A grant to provide Circles activities in Surrey and work on Violence against Women and Girls agenda.

Thames Valley Police

- Safer Streets a grant to provide Bystander training and Offender work
- Vigilant - a grant to support the Police Vigilant project in the Thames Valley area
- Circles- a grant to provide Circles activities

The National Lottery Community Fund

A grant for the work of Reducing Sexual Harm Community Hub.

12. RELATED PARTY DISCLOSURES

There were no related party transactions during the year. In the previous year £4,064 was paid during the year to Rebecca Seaborne (a Trustee) for consultancy services relating to operational activities. This payment was permitted by sub-clause (5) of the Memorandum of Association and the trustees have followed the procedure and observed the conditions set out in sub-clause (6) of this clause.

CIRCLES SOUTH EAST
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT- CONTINUED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

13. CASH GENERATED FROM OPERATIONS	2024	2023
	£	£
Surplus/ (Deficit) for the year	(61,934)	(34,383)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciation and impairment of tangible fixed assets	2,352	3,488
Movements in working capital:		
(Increase)/Decrease in debtors	(33,232)	(22,700)
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors	5,740	(15,186)
Cash generated from/ (absorbed by) operations	(87,074)	(68,781)

14. ANALYSIS OF CHANGES IN NET FUNDS

The charity had no debt during the year.



REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06490001

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1123361