



# WBSS

Registered Charity Number: 1152724

**Walsall Bereavement Support Service  
Trustee Annual Report & Accounts  
2023 - 2024**

**Supporting adults, children, and young people of  
Walsall in their times of need.**

# Trustee's Annual Report And Financial Statements

1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 - 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024

## Contents

Report of the Trustees	Pages 2 - 14
Acknowledgments	Page 15
Reference and Administrative Information	Page 16
Report of the Independent Examiner	Page 17
Statement of Financial Activities	Page 18
Balance Sheet	Page 19
Principle Accounting Policies	Pages 20 - 21
Notes to the Financial Statements	Pages 22 - 27

## Report of the Trustees

**The Trustees of Walsall Bereavement Support Service (WBSS) have pleasure in presenting their annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024.**

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act, the Charity's Constitution 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 (FRS102) (updated 1 January 2019).

## Our Charitable Objectives



provide caring and sensitive support that is free, confidential, and open to all residents of Walsall, irrespective of their relationship to the deceased, the cause of death, or the time that has elapsed since the death.



reduce the potential negative long-term impact that bereavement can have on a person's physical/mental wellbeing, education or employment, by providing appropriate support to enable each person to cope with their loss and begin to rebuild their lives.



prevent the effects of bereavement from damaging family cohesion through developing understanding and improving communication within the family unit.

## Our Strategic Aims



To establish WBSS as the local provider in the field of emotional bereavement support



To raise awareness about the impact that bereavement has on a person's emotional and physical health and where and when to seek support and advice



To provide and promote high quality support services to the bereaved in the borough of Walsall



To raise awareness amongst the general public about 'Dying Matters' to help reduce the negative stigma that is attached to death and dying

## Public Benefit

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in Chapter 1 Section 4 of the Charities Act 2011 to have regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit 'Charities and Public Benefit'. In the opinion of the trustees, the objectives of the charity as detailed on the previous page are for the public benefit.

The support offered by Walsall Bereavement Support Service is currently available free of charge to bereaved children, young people, and their families who live within the Walsall borough or those registered at a Walsall GP surgery or educated within a Walsall school. Support is offered irrespective of the relationship to the deceased, the cause of death, or the length of time that has elapsed since the death.

## Chair's Report

2023-24 proved to be a year of change for WBSS. Our Head of Service left in July 2023 after almost 18 years working for the charity in various roles. We are really pleased that she has been able to continue to support the charity as freelance bookkeeper and financial advisor. Due to his prior experience in leadership, our trustee Sandev Panaser was appointed the role of part time Interim Service Lead.

Three long standing trustees retired from the board and they were replaced by four younger trustees, one of whom is a previous service user. Being from varying backgrounds and experience, they all bring a range of new aspects and fresh views to the board.

The total number of individuals referred for support was similar to the previous year, with 851 referred this year compared to 855 last year. Referral numbers would have been higher had it not been necessary to suspend referrals to The Swing for several months. This said, the total number of individuals supported during the year had increased from 1,083 to 1,167.

To ensure that the service we provide is as inclusive as possible WBSS delivers counselling sessions from a number of locations throughout the Walsall borough. Additionally, to meet the needs of everyone requesting support, we continue to provide a blended support approach by offering clients face to face, telephone or on-line support.

Although the overall cost to run the organisation decreased, some costs such as utility and insurance costs increased considerably due to the national cost of living crisis. Our grant income programme sadly did not raise as much as we had hoped. This is possibly due to a number of reasons such as time constraints, demand for funds from an increased number of organisations and an apparent shift in the criteria for funding from some organisation whose focus was more on grassroot projects. We continue to receive funds from The Henry Smith Charity and BBC Children in Need, both supporting The Swing. We also continue to receive funding from Walsall Council which enables us to deliver support to bereaved adults at various locations throughout the borough.

As the trustees look ahead to the forthcoming year, our main focus is to increase income. To assist us in this quest, a Business Plan has been developed to identify potential fundraising sources and opportunities. A review of expenditure has highlighted areas where current expenditure commitments can be reduced.

Whilst the future may appear a little uncertain at this time, I take positives from the fact that over the years we have had much success through our grant funding programme and have built up many positive relationships with our funders. WBSS are diversifying their income streams, and I feel confident that we can be successful in achieving our goals to ensure that the charity will continue to grow and prosper over the coming years thus ensuring that it can continue to deliver support to every Walsall resident who requires it.

**Jim Green**

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## Our Service

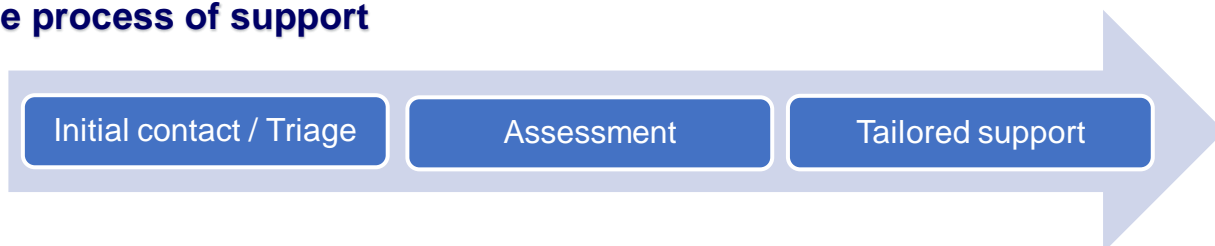
During the year, WBSS have supported 1,167 bereaved adults, children and young people. This is an increase from the previous years' total of 1,083.

In total, 3,334 hours of support was provided to the bereaved during this year. This is a decrease on the previous year of 3,690 hours mainly due to a reduction in the counselling capacity of the charity resulting from staff departures.

The support we provide is tailored to the specific needs of our service users and includes:

- One-to-one face to face, telephone and on-line counselling
- Group Support
- Family and Sibling support
- Out of Hours service week-day evenings and Saturday mornings
- Special Support in schools
- Outreach work in the community
- Community workshops and activities for children and young people

### The process of support



### Our support is provided through 3 projects:

**‘Let’s Talk’** - Bereavement support for adults

**The Swing** - Bereavement support for children, young people, and families

**Community Project** - Community support and engagement

### Our Services are available to everyone

WBSS wants its projects and services to be open to as wide a range of people as possible and as such, we do not discriminate clients by age, race, gender, sexual orientation, relationship to the bereaved person, the time elapsed since the death, or cause of death.



We utilise the skills of staff and volunteer counsellors from different backgrounds and ethnicities, to ensure that we can provide the most appropriate support to each individual client.

We work with schools across the borough, many of whom have high levels of students who have additional support needs such as ADHD, Autism, Asperger’s Syndrome etc. To help support these potentially challenging students, counsellors have all undergone specific training relating to supporting this client group.

## Our Projects - 'Let's Talk'

The people who turn to WBSS for support are unable to cope with the overwhelming feelings of grief that they are experiencing and the impact on their mental, physical, and emotional health.

Many of our clients have anxiety, depression, and more complex issues that have developed as a result of how they feel. For adults this can include dependency upon substances such as alcohol, prescription drugs, or cigarettes. Some are unable to work, have withdrawn from family and social life, and are less able to take care of themselves.

**Over the past 12 months 'Let's Talk' received 641 referrals during the year, supported a total of 860 clients and delivered 2,499 hours of support.**

### Profile of the adults we have supported.

- 72% of adults supported were females, 28% male.
- 81% were White British, 7% British Asian or Asian, 5% Black British, Black African or Caribbean.
- 31% were under the age of 40, 44% aged 40–60, the remaining 25% were over the age of 60.
- Where client postal addresses were given, 82% lived in areas falling in the top 10% most deprived areas in the UK. A further 9% lived in areas in the top 25% most deprived areas.
- Just over a third of all adults, 39%, requested support following the death of a parent, 20% the death of a spouse or partner, 8% a sibling and 8% their own child.
- For clients who presented with one loss, the main cause of death was cancer, with 18% of adults losing a loved one to this disease; 12% of deaths were heart related; 10% lost a loved one in an extremely tragic circumstance such as murder, manslaughter, suicide or a road traffic collision. 14% were referred for several of multiple losses.
- 36% sought support within the first 6 months following their bereavement and 14% between 6 and 12 months of bereavement; however, we support people whenever they need our help and during this period 15% of service users sought our help 5 years or more after their bereavement.
- 6% of adults required urgent support as they felt suicidal at the point of referral.
- 25% of adults supported had complex grief needs and/or had a mental health diagnosis.
- 15% of adults were recommended our service by their GP or another member of staff at their practice; 8% by a Social Prescriber; 7% by a psychiatrist, secure mental health unit, community psychiatric nurse or mental health worker and 7% by other counselling providers such as Talking Therapies.

### Outcomes reported following support.

- 74% of adults reported that their emotional difficulties such as anger, guilt, anxiety etc had improved or were no longer a problem.
- 56% reported that their physical difficulties such as relying on prescribe medication, smoking or drinking more, unable to sleep and feeling unwell had improved or were no longer a problem.
- 56% felt more able to cope with day-to-day tasks such as attending work, college or volunteering and daily tasks such as cooking cleaning washing etc.
- 58% said that their support and social network had improved and felt less lonely, more supported and felt able to socialise more.

## Written Feedback Received from some Adults We Supported

### ***What Helped the most....***

- Being able to talk open and freely without being judged. Being understood and having someone who cared, listened and supported me with great advice and techniques on coping.
- Declutter of my brain, it had so much going on and it was difficult to know what I was feeling. There's a lot of trauma which came back.
- My counsellor listened to me, understood me and supported me. Made me realise how I am feeling is normal and all part of the process.
- Having someone to talk to about anything that was on my mind, took the weight off.
- Talking to someone disconnected to the problem, outside of the family who can just see outside of the box when you cannot.
- I feel counselling has helped to give some meaning back into life. Just being able to talk has helped my diet and sleep improve.
- Being able to talk to someone about things I feel I can't talk about at home.
- Talking about my feelings and all the situations around the bereavement, not just the bereavement itself.
- Trying to separate what I'm going through into sections and take it step by step.
- My understanding of my grief, that it's okay to feel what I'm feeling - worksheet of process of grief helped.
- An objective listener, a different perspective.

### ***How do you feel the support you received has made a difference to how you feel now....***

- When I came, I feel really low and in a dark place but with the support from my counsellor I feel like the light at the end of the tunnel.
- Prior to counselling I didn't feel like I even cared to be alive. With some time and counselling I no longer feel that way.
- It has given me the chance to talk and be listened to, being made to feel comfortable in the process - has helped in my healing process and reflect more positive.
- After each appointment I left thinking about how I could make changes and help myself. This is the most beneficial outcome I needed as it gave me back some control over the events that had affected me and continued to affect me.
- Planning for the future, feeling happier, able to face day to day issues, controlling emotions, understanding myself.
- I am now able to go out, make plans, enjoy the garden and even think about going to the caravan. I couldn't do any of this before.
- I'm not feeling guilty or angry anymore.
- I was given the opportunity to discuss my mental health surrounding the bereavements I experienced.
- Being able to talk got a lot of stress/grief/anger out of my head. I've been able to process a lot better and understand my feeling. Also, ways to manage my anxiety.

***100% of adults who shared their views said they would recommend WBSS to others.***



## Our Projects – The Swing

Children/young people referred to our service are struggling to understand or manage their reactions to grief, which can lead to psychological/physiological difficulties.

Without appropriate support, these issues can spiral out of control and in the worst cases, we see service users excluded from school for behavioural issues and family breakdown due to misunderstood grief/poor communication.



**Over the past 12 months The Swing received 210 referrals during the year, supported a total of 307 clients and delivered 835 hours of support.**

### Profile of the children and young people we have supported.

- 50% of children and young people supported were female and 50% male.
- 79% were White British, 4% British Asian or Asian, 2% Black British, Black African or Caribbean.
- 35% were under the age of 10, 62% aged 10-15, the remaining 3% were 16-18.
- 77% had experienced a significant family death such as a parent/carer, sibling, or grandparent.
- 12% had experienced multiple bereavements.
- 80% lived in areas falling in the top 10% most deprived areas in the UK. A further 10% lived in areas in the top 25% most deprived areas.
- 8% were defined as having a specific learning need or were waiting the outcome of a possible diagnosis. 3% were confirmed as having a diagnosis of either ADHD, Autism or dyslexia.

### The impact of our work

We understand the importance of monitoring and evaluation because it enables us to hear and respond to the views and experiences of our beneficiaries. The learning that we gain from evaluating our work informs the development of any of our new work streams.

We measure success by evaluating improvements made by each client against the issues affecting them due to their bereavement. At the onset of support, we undertake an assessment and record the issues facing each person via a questionnaire. We then monitor change under four main categories: emotional, behaviour, physical, and social/educational. These are broken down further into specific issues that include anxiety, depression, self-harming, substance/alcohol misuse, mental/physical health, etc. In doing this, we are able to gain an overall picture of the difficulties each person is experiencing and create a support plan tailored to their specific needs.

We monitor the progress of clients throughout their support and adjust their support plan if necessary. Finally, we ask all clients to complete an end of support questionnaire to compare where they were at the start of their support to the end. This determines our outcomes. For children/young people we also ask parents to complete a similar questionnaire, enabling us to compare the child's view of their progress against their parents. This helps us to measure outcomes more accurately.

Our monitoring system is designed using guidance from the National Child Bereavement Network. This enables us to analyse information and provide statistical evidence about the impact of our work.



## **Outcomes reported following support, the clients' perspective.**

- 63% of children and young people reported that their emotional difficulties such as crying, feeling sad, anger, anxiety being withdrawn, feeling suicidal had improved or were no longer a problem.
- 64% reported that their physical difficulties such as eating, sleeping, nightmares, bed wetting, poor concentration had improved or were no longer a problem.
- 79% felt their behaviour such as bullying, arguments, fighting, self-harm etc had improved or was no longer a problem.
- 70% reported an improvement in their education and school attendance.
- 59% felt that their social life and mixing with friends had improved.
- 54% said their relationship with their parents and siblings had improved or was no longer a problem.

## **Outcomes reported following support, the parents' perspective.**

- 80% reported an improvement in their child's emotional wellbeing.
- 86% reported an improvement in their child's physical wellbeing.
- 64% reported an improvement in their child's behaviour.
- 67% reported an improvement in their child's education.
- 100% felt that their child socialised with friends more.
- 93% felt that family relationships had improved.

## **Written Feedback Received from some Children We Supported**

### ***What Helped the most....***

- Being able to talk and let my emotions out on a bad day.
- Having the ability to talk openly in a private and safe place.
- Being able to talk to someone who I won't see outside of the sessions, so it won't be awkward
- Understanding what I feel and how to control them.
- Talking and breathing techniques.
- What helped me the most was making me feel more confident and having someone listen to me and make each week easier.
- Probably the reflections and looking at the past.
- I am more aware about the things and people around me.
- The thing that helped me to most is probably how fun it was or the stages of grief.
- Talking and not being judged.

## **Emotional Wellbeing Programme**

Our *Emotional Wellbeing Programme* consists of three two-hour sessions. Different emotions are discussed each session; worksheets enabled the student to explore how that specific emotion affects them and helps them to learn new ways of coping thus enabling them to support themselves to resolve difficulties they may be experiencing.

## Challenges

At the end of 2023, both Swing counsellors left the charity to take up roles as counsellors within local schools. We would like to thank both staff members for all their hard work and commitment they have shown the charity both as volunteers initially and then as paid staff.

These changes resulted in a need for The Swing to suspend referral for a period of 4 months in order for the charity to recruit and induct the new counsellors. Following the change in staff, non-counselling elements of support such as our Emotional Wellbeing Programme, planned child group support/drop-in sessions and recruitment of Swing volunteer counsellors were also all suspended. Relevant funders have been notified of these changes and are happy for funds to be used to support counselling and other core costs of The Swing.

## Our Projects – Community Project

**GROUP SUPPORT** – We recognise that many people benefit from being with others who have lived experience of what they are experiencing and can offer some hope, comfort and hope to them when they are at their lowest. Group support can provide this, and when possible WBSS has facilitated support groups, due to its current situation these groups are currently on hold but the hope is that they can be reinstated as some point.

**SUPPORT IN THE COMMUNITY**– We understand that some people may be unwilling or unable to travel into Walsall to attend counselling sessions. We therefore hire rooms at a number of locations throughout the borough thus making it easier for people to attend.

**COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT** – Although being in Walsall for over 25 years, we recognise that many people may be unaware of our support or are unable to access support for various reasons such as illness, disability, cultural difficulties etc. Where appropriate, we engage with local organisations to provide bereavement awareness support with the community.

## Our Volunteers

Our volunteers are our most important asset. During 2023/24, they provided 1,220 hours of counselling support to the bereaved. This is an incredible amount given that this was 874 hours last year. Since WBSS started to provide placement opportunities, it has now trained 200 counsellors to help provide bereavement counselling.

Whenever possible, WBSS operates a rolling recruitment programme to attract volunteer counsellors to ensure that we have the staffing resources to provide a high skills base for us to draw from to support our clients. Over the years, we have developed a reputation for providing very good placements for those training to become counsellors and our volunteer mentoring is recognised as being excellent. This is evidenced in our retention rate of volunteers; we currently have one qualified counsellor who has been providing their services on a voluntary basis for over 15 years and another who has provided support for 20 years.

WBSS volunteers, providing support to adults, are all either qualified to at least Diploma Level 4 in Counselling or are on placement whilst training towards this qualification. Prior to being able to provide support, all volunteers, regardless of qualification and/or experience, must complete our in-house 'Bereavement and Loss' 10-hour training programme. Volunteers supporting children and young people must have delivered at least 75 hours counselling support and also complete our 'Supporting Children and Young People' 12-hour training programme. All volunteers must complete annual on-line safeguarding training.

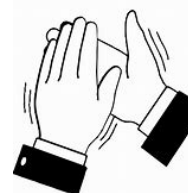
We recognise the importance of continually refreshing and expanding volunteer knowledge and experience and aim to offer additional training whenever opportunities arise.

## Our Notable Achievements during 2023 - 24

Our proudest achievement was being invited to be a guest speaker at The Henry Smith Charity Volunteer Conference held in Birmingham in April 2023. We are immensely proud of this and feel honoured to have been asked. Two staff delivered a short presentation about the work of The Swing including some case studies of children supported. Afterwards, the audience of The Henry Smith Charity Trustees, staff and volunteer assessors were invited to ask questions.

### Support we provided....

- Received 917 referrals requesting support.
- Supported 1,167 individuals.
- Delivered 2,704 hours of counselling support.
- Delivered 630 additional hours support.



### In addition, we have also....

- Completed 36 hours of on-line safeguarding training.
- Recruited 20 new volunteers, each received 12 hours of bereavement training.
- Assisted Walsall Rotary Club with their Santa Sleigh collection.
- Attended a bereavement support awareness coffee morning held at Dean Harper Funeral Directors in Walsall.
- Delivered an introductory support session at three separate residential care homes run by Walsall Housing Group.
- Introduced a refreshed logo to modernise WBSS's image and increase visibility
- Undergone a comprehensive restructuring to create a more relevant and appealing proposition for funders while increasing organisational capacity. This included internal changes to improve cost efficiency and enhance support for staff, volunteers, and trustees.
- Strengthened the focus on community support by operating in six locations: Willenhall, Darlaston, Pleck, Brownhills, Pelsall, and two sites in Bloxwich, ensuring services are more accessible to diverse local populations.
- Delivered a presentation on Walsall Bereavement Support Service to colleagues across charities and statutory services at the Black Country Healthcare Stakeholder Meeting.
- Redeveloped access criteria for young people and adults to improve clarity and ease of access for service users.
- Worked in collaboration with Walsall Council to establish bereavement peer support services for older adults.
- Launched a consultation service to support schools by providing assistance to both staff and pupils as well as a consultancy services to support children and parents, enhancing mental health awareness within the school community.
- Began offering training and supervisory support to community groups, further extending WBSS's impact within the local area.

## Our networking and partnership working....

- Continue to strengthen connections with key local organisations such as the NHS, One Walsall, and religious organisations, re-establishing partnerships and collaboration.
- Attend the Black County Healthcare Co-Production Network and Black County Evidence Repository.
- Developed partnerships with organisations such as Mandem Meetup, MindKind, Aldridge Bereavement Café, St Giles Bereavement Support, and Rethink Supporting Mental Health, significantly broadening WBSS's organisational and community network.
- Worked closely with the NHS involvement specialist in Walsall to share feedback and insights on local needs, ensuring alignment with community-specific challenges and priorities.
- Continue to participate in several Walsall Multi-agency network meetings, including a Suicide Prevention Steering Group, Walsall Multi-agency Mental Wellbeing Stakeholder Partnership. and Walsall Men's Wellbeing Strategic Development Group

## Our Plans and Goals Moving Forward

**2023-24 proved to be another busy year supporting individuals in whichever way best suited them. Whilst this continues to be our main focus, during 2024-25 we also plan to achieve the following;**

- Secure funding to provide financial stability and enable us to recruit additional staff to help meet increased demand on our service.
- Recruit additional volunteers, specifically ones who can provide support to children and young people.
- Update the five-year Business Plan and fundraising strategy.
- Increase the delivery of our bereavement support training programme for school staff.
- Set up drop-in support sessions for adults, particularly targeting hard to reach groups.
- Increase the group support provided within the community.
- Explore the possibility of organising memorial services at local places of worship.
- Increase the profile of WBSS across the borough to ensure that the bereaved know where and how to contact us, should they need our support.
- Continue to network with key local groups and partnerships to seek opportunities for working together and improving support for the bereaved.
- Undertake four free hours of consultancy support from One Walsall to enhance and strengthen the service's evaluation programme.

## Financial Review

We do not charge our clients for our services; however, we do encourage donations if clients feel they are able to support our charity. Grants from our service users, the general public and Charitable Trusts and Foundations are vital in helping us to provide our support.

Due to reduced fundraising capacity, income received during this year decreased to £100,429 (£179,624 2022/23). Expenditure also decreased to £177,398 (£225,653 (2022/23) mainly due to a change in the managerial structure of the charity resulting in fewer staff.

The main source of restricted income for The Swing is grants and donations from charitable giving organisations with The Henry Smith Charity being our largest donor. We are extremely grateful to them for their continued support. Other funding includes BBC Children in Need, Baron Davenport Charity and The Turner Trust. Unrestricted funds received include donations, training, support and a variety of online fundraising streams. Funding from Walsall Council continued to fund costs associated with providing support to adults at community outreach locations.

We expect expenditure during 2024/25 will be about £180,000. To meet this demand, we continued with our grant application programme, which generated almost £30,000 income to date during the year.

In January 2025 the Trustees produced a three-year Business Plan which has identified various income streams that the charity will pursue over the forthcoming years. Key strategies include increasing its grant application programme further by incorporating a wider range of grant making bodies as well as seeking multi-year grants. It will also seek to secure funding from corporate organisations and local businesses.

To increase the amount of funds raised internally, a training package has been developed which will deliver bereavement training to school staff and other organisations. The charity will increase its fundraising efforts and continue to seek the generosity of the clients it supports by asking for voluntary donations where possible.

As a small charity, without a dedicated fundraiser, raising funds remain a challenge, however, we will continue to consider all fundraising options available to us as well as continually review its expenditure and take cost cutting measures if required.

## **Reserves Policy**

The Trustees continue to review the charity's requirements for reserves considering the main risk to the organisation, that funding to run the organisation is not secure. The trustees have established a policy whereby the reserves in total that are not invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity, should be up to the equivalent of 9 months of the total anticipated expenditure of the charity.

This level of these reserves has been determined by the need to meet the working capital requirements of the charity. In addition, due to a massive increase in demand for our service over the past year, this period represents the necessary amount of time required to deliver counselling sessions to all the clients who are on our waiting list for support and for the charity to carry out all its legal obligations.

At the end of March 2024, the total of the charity's reserves stood at £127,321 of which £91,620 was general unrestricted funds and £35,701 restricted. Expenditure during the year was £177,398,

The financial strategy of WBSS continues to be that of building unrestricted free reserves to meet our 9-month target, through planned cost-effective operational procedures and further fundraising. The Trustees will continue to take all necessary actions regarding the prevailing economic climate. Where surplus funds are available, a percentage will be transferred to the designated fund which will help fund the purchase of premises for the charity.

## **Risk Assessment**

The Trustees are very aware of the need to assess and minimise risks to the operation of the charity. As such, a comprehensive set of policies and procedures are maintained, reviewed, and where necessary, updated to comply with changes in legislation and the requirements of funding bodies. Following the guidance of these policies covers the main risks to the operation of the charity.

The risk of being unable to adequately fund projects is our main concern. In order to minimise this risk, the trustees continually look at ways in which the charity can diversify income streams. Expenditure is constantly reviewed in order to ensure that funds continue to be used effectively.

The risk of not supporting clients and volunteers professionally is managed by having a supervision programme in place in line with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) procedures. It is WBSS's policy that every new volunteer is supported by way of an obligatory training course followed by induction, prior to client contact time. All staff and counsellors must complete on-line safeguarding training annually.

Disclosure and Barring checks are made every three years for all members of staff and volunteer counsellors. General Data Protection Regulation is adhered to as well as policies regarding Safeguarding Adults and Children. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with Health and Safety of all staff, volunteers, clients, and visitors to the centre. These ensure a consistent quality of delivery for all operational aspects of the charity. In addition, the regular meetings of the Trustees at the charity's premises facilitate the constant review of the environment in which the charity exists.

## Structure, Governance and Management

### Governing Document

**Walsall Bereavement Support Service is a registered charity that aims to meet some of the needs of bereaved people within the Walsall Borough. The charity, originally formed as an unincorporated charity in 1998, became a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) on 4<sup>th</sup> July 2013 and is governed by a constitution approved by the Charity Commission of England and Wales.**

### Appointment of Trustees, Induction, and Training

The focus of the charity is that of supporting bereaved adults, young people and children. The Board of Trustees seeks to ensure that the needs of these groups are appropriately reflected through the diversity of the trustee body. To enhance the potential pool of trustees the charity has sought to identify members of the community who are willing to use their own experiences to assist the organisation.

The Trustee Board is well represented by a wide range of individuals from various aspects of the community. Trustees have the power to appoint additional trustees to act jointly with them for all purposes. A trustee whose term of office has expired can be appointed for a further term of office.

Whilst there is no formal induction process in place, all new trustees are invited and encouraged to visit the offices of WBSS in order to familiarise themselves with the organisation and the context within which it operates. The Chair of Trustees will then discuss the following aspects of the organisation with the new trustee and answer any questions arising.

- The obligations of the Board of Trustees members.
- The main documents which set out the operational framework for the charity.
- The current financial position as set out in the latest published accounts.
- Future and objectives of the organisation.

In addition, new trustees are given a copy of the latest Annual Report along with a trustee role description, a copy of the constitution, the Charity Commission's Trustee Handbook, the organisation's main policy documents and the latest financial statements.



## Organisational Structure

WBSS has a Board of Trustees of at least four members who meet at least quarterly and are responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. At present there are six trustees from a variety of professional backgrounds relevant to the work of the charity.

The Trustees are responsible for overseeing and maintaining the operational management of the organisation in line with the constitution and quality procedures.

## Responsibilities of the Trustees

The Trustees are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice). The law applicable to charities in England and Wales requires the Trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the incoming resources and application of resources of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements the Trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charity's SORP;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charity (Accounts Reports) Regulations 2008. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Trustees and signed on its behalf on 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025

By **Jim Green (Chair)**



## Acknowledgements

Walsall Bereavement Support Service would like to publicly acknowledge and thank the following Charitable Trusts and organisation for their financial support during 2023 / 2024.

- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
- North Smethwick Development Trust
- The Henry Smith Charity
- The Henry Smith Charity Covid-19 Long-Term Support Grant
- BBC Children in Need
- Baron Davenport Charity
- The Turner Trust
- Walsall Rotary Club
- Alumwell Primary School, Walsall
- St Pauls' Church at The Crossing, Walsall
- St Lawrence Church, Darlaston

**And finally, many thanks go to all of the volunteers for the skills, commitment, and time they contribute throughout the year.**

**Without their support we simply would not be able to provide this valuable service.**

## Reference and Administrative Information

**Charity Name:** Walsall Bereavement Support Service

**Charity Status:** Charitable Incorporated Organisation

**Charity Number:** 1152724

**Registered Office:** Office Suite 2  
The Crossing at St Paul's  
Darwall Street  
Walsall  
West Midlands  
WS1 1DA

**Telephone:** 01922 724841 / 01922 645035

**Website:** [www.wbss.org.uk](http://www.wbss.org.uk)

### Trustees:

Chair: James Green

Treasurer: Neil Simpson (stepped down Dec 2023)

Alyson Green

Trustees: Dr Robert Crundwell (stepped down Dec 2023)

Bev Simpson Stepped down Dec 2023)

Verity Baker (stepped down Aug 2023)

Sandev Panaser (appointed Oct 2023)

Akinola Meheux (appointed Dec 2023)

Alexandra Smith (appointed Feb 2024)

Zargul Adil (appointed Feb 2024)

### Independent Examiner:

Karen Hanlan Independent Examiner Limited, 1 Saracen Close, Ettington.CV37 7SZ

### Banks:

Barclays Bank: 1 Churchill Place, London, E14 5HP

Nationwide: Nationwide House, Pipers Way, Swindon, SN38 1NW

## **Independent Examiner's Report to the trustees of Walsall Bereavement Support Service**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Walsall Bereavement Support Service ('the Charity') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which are set out on pages 18 to 27.

### **Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the charity trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

### **Independent examiner's statement**

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

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

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

Karen Hanlan, Institute of Chartered Accountants, England & Wales  
Karen Hanlan, Independent Examiner Limited  
1 Saracen Close, Ettington, CV37 7SZ

Date  
12<sup>th</sup> February 2025

## Statement of Financial Activities

		Un-restricted funds 2024	Restricted funds 2024	Total funds 2024	Total funds 2023
	Note	£	£	£	£
<b>Income from:</b>					
Donations & legacies	1	5,206	20,050	25,256	65,760
Charitable activities	2	31,743	38,556	70,299	111,820
Trading activities	3	926	395	1,321	526
Investments – bank interest		3,553	-	3,553	1,518
<b>Total income</b>		<b>41,428</b>	<b>59,001</b>	<b>100,429</b>	<b>179,624</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Raising funds		2,287	1,501	3,788	9,830
Charitable activities		104,121	69,489	173,610	215,823
		<b>106,408</b>	<b>70,990</b>	<b>177,398</b>	<b>225,653</b>
<b>Net (expenditure)/income and net movement in funds for year</b>		<b>(64,980)</b>	<b>(11,989)</b>	<b>(76,969)</b>	<b>(46,029)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>					
Total funds brought forward		156,600	47,690	204,290	250,319
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>		<b>91,620</b>	<b>35,701</b>	<b>127,321</b>	<b>204,290</b>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

## Balance Sheet

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>			
Tangible assets	7	483	2,023
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>			
Debtors	8	9,719	7,657
Cash at Bank		136,154	232,668
		<b>145,873</b>	<b>240,325</b>
<b>CREDITORS</b>			
Amounts falling due within one year	9	(19,035)	(38,058)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>126,838</b>	<b>202,267</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		<b>127,321</b>	<b>204,290</b>
<b>FUNDS</b>	11		
Restricted Funds		35,701	47,690
Unrestricted Funds			
- General		91,620	81,600
- Designated		-	75,000
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>		<b>127,321</b>	<b>204,290</b>

The accompanying accounting policies and notes form part of these financial statements.  
Approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Mr J Green, Chair of Trustees

Date: 12<sup>th</sup> February 2025

## Principal accounting policies

### Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (updated 1 January 2019) – (Charities SORP (FRS102)) and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102).

Walsall Bereavement Support Service meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note.

### Going Concern statement

The financial statements have been prepared on a going concern basis which assumes that the Charity will continue to operate. The validity of this assumption is dependent upon the continuance of support from the Charity's key funders and stakeholders and in response to the progress made by the Charity in pursuing a viable budget including the obtaining of further grants and donations.

The Charity's business plan shows that the Charity will be able to operate in the foreseeable future. Based on this understanding the Trustees believe that it remains appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis. The financial statements do not include any adjustments, which would result from the basis of preparation being inappropriate.

### Funds

General accumulated funds are unrestricted funds available for general purposes and include funds designated for a particular purpose; the use of such funds remains at the discretion of the Trustees.

Restricted funds are funds subject to conditions imposed by the donor or by specific terms of the appeal under which the funds are raised. The restrictive conditions are binding upon the Charity.

### Income

All income is recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the Charity is legally entitled, ultimate receipt is probable and the amount can be quantified with reasonable accuracy.

Income relating to future periods, as a result of donor imposed conditions specifying the time period, has been treated as deferred income.

Income dependent on certain conditions, amounting to more than mere administrative requirements, is recognised when the conditions have been fulfilled.

### Expenditure

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the Charity to the expenditure. All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. Expenditure is classified under the following activity headings:

Costs of raising funds comprises the costs of fundraising activity and includes an allocation of staff costs relating to time spent on fundraising activity.

Expenditure on charitable expenditure includes the costs of project delivery to further the purposes of the Charity and their associated support and governance costs.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged as a cost against the activity for which the expenditure was incurred.

## **Principal accounting policies (continued)**

### **Interest receivable**

Bank interest is shown on the basis of amounts received in the year

### **Tangible fixed assets**

Depreciation is provided at a rate calculated to write off the cost on a straight line basis over a period of less than the estimated useful life of the assets, which is estimated at 4 years.

Fixed assets are capitalised when their value exceeds £500.

### **Cash and cash equivalents**

Cash and cash equivalents include cash at bank and in hand and short term deposits repayable on or within a three month notice period.

### **Debtors**

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

### **Creditors**

Creditors are recognised where the Charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably.

### **Pensions**

The Charity contributes to employee's individual personal pension plans. The employer contributions to the scheme in 2024 were £2,529 (2023 £4,056) and are charged to the statement of financial activities as incurred.

### **Taxation**

As a registered Charity no provision is considered necessary for taxation.



## Notes to the financial statements

### 1. Donations & Legacies

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Un-restricted:</b>		
Donations	5,206	6,242
Grants	-	-
	<u>5,206</u>	<u>6,242</u>
<b>Restricted:</b>		
Donations	-	218
Grants		
The Henry Smith Charity (The Swing)	17,500	30,000
Other Charitable Trusts (The Swing)	2,550	29,300
	<u>20,050</u>	<u>59,518</u>
	<u><u>25,256</u></u>	<u><u>65,760</u></u>
<b>Total</b>		

### 2. Income from Charitable Activities

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Un-restricted:</b>		
Training & Support	3,360	2,405
Walsall Council	26,888	44,250
Black Country Healthcare Foundation Trust	-	37,500
North Smethwick Development Trust	1,495	1,375
	<u>31,743</u>	<u>85,530</u>
<b>Restricted:</b>		
Children in Need (Emotional Wellbeing Program)	7,756	5,757
The Henry Smith Charity grant 2	30,800	20,533
	<u>38,556</u>	<u>26,290</u>
	<u><u>70,299</u></u>	<u><u>111,820</u></u>
<b>Total</b>		

### 3. Trading activities

	2024 £	2023 £
<b>Un-restricted:</b>		
Fundraising events	676	275
Online fundraising	250	251
	<u>926</u>	<u>526</u>
 Fundraising (The Swing)	 395	 -
	<u>395</u>	<u>-</u>
<b>Total</b>	<u><u>1,321</u></u>	<u><u>526</u></u>

## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

### 5. Analysis of Expenditure

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
Staff Costs	71,513	49,684	121,197	181,882
Payroll Costs	209	209	418	458
Fundraising Costs	108	1,501	1,609	951
Centre Costs	6,771	6,771	13,542	11,160
Unit 3 Rent	2,250	750	3,000	3,000
Unit 3 Utilities	981	857	1,838	173
Room Hire	5,824	93	5,917	1,900
IT	1,240	897	2,137	1,918
Telephone	984	755	1,739	1,768
Stationery	28	-	28	300
Postage	127	63	190	11
Printing	503	503	1,006	1,256
Office Equipment	163	139	302	760
Refreshments	-	-	-	12
Materials	-	1,463	1,463	2,194
Resources	-	-	-	267
Travel / Parking	84	639	723	1,164
Training	1,464	192	1,656	1,531
Supervision	4,423	795	5,218	6,078
Volunteer Expenses	15	-	15	512
Publicity	-	-	-	626
Insurance	2,006	1,207	3,213	2,516
DBS Checks	1,029	-	1,029	1,014
Professional Fees	5,640	3,676	9,316	1,633
Bank Charges	70	70	140	128
Cleaning & H&S Equipment	114	48	162	103
Sundries	-	-	-	653
Depreciation	862	678	1,540	1,685
	<b>106,408</b>	<b>70,990</b>	<b>177,398</b>	<b>225,653</b>

### Expenditure

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2024	2023
	£	£	£	£
Fundraising Costs	2,287	1,501	<b>3,788</b>	<b>9,830</b>
Direct Costs	61,767	44,702	<b>106,469</b>	<b>159,834</b>
Support Costs	37,014	23,589	<b>60,603</b>	<b>27,735</b>
Governance	5,340	1,198	<b>6,538</b>	<b>28,254</b>
	<b>106,408</b>	<b>70,990</b>	<b>177,398</b>	<b>225,653</b>

## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

### 6. Net expenditure/income for year

Net income is stated after charging:	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Independent Examiners fee	1,050	990
Depreciation	1,540	1,685
	<b>2,590</b>	<b>2,675</b>

### Staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses

	<b>2024</b>	<b>2023</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Salaries	114,196	149,821
National Insurance	4,472	8,005
Pensions	2,529	4,056
Staff Settlement Figure	-	20,000
Total	<b>121,197</b>	<b>181,882</b>

No employee has employee benefits in excess of £60,000 (2023: nil).

The equivalent of 4 full-time members of staff were employed during the year (2023: 5)

Key management personnel comprise the Head of Service and the Interim Service Lead whose employee benefits total £21,386 (2023 £41,266).

The charity does not operate its own pension scheme but contributes towards NEST Pension scheme for all employees.

In the year ended 31 March 2024 £3,600 was paid to Mr Sandev Panaser, a Trustee, for providing the services of Interim Service Lead to the Charity. Remuneration was approved by all other Trustees in his absence and was paid at the going rate for such services in the marketplace. There were no further trustees' remuneration or other benefits in the year ended 31 March 2023. No trustee expenses were reimbursed in the year (2023: None).

There are no further related party transactions that require disclosure in the accounts.

### 7. Tangible fixed assets

	<b>Computer Equipment £</b>	<b>Fixtures &amp; Fittings £</b>	<b>Total £</b>
<b>Cost</b>			
At beginning of year	19,924	2,182	22,106
Additions	-	-	-
At end of year	<b>19,924</b>	<b>2,182</b>	<b>22,106</b>
<b>Depreciation</b>			
At beginning of year	17,901	2,182	20,083
Charge for the year	1,540	-	1,540
At end of year	<b>19,441</b>	<b>2,182</b>	<b>21,623</b>
<b>Net Book Value</b>			
At 31 March 2023	2,023	-	2,023
<b>At 31 March 2024</b>	<b>483</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>483</b>

## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

### 8. Debtors

	2024	2023
	£	£
Prepayments	1,757	2,082
Accrued Income	7,462	5,075
Rental Deposit	500	500
	<u>9,719</u>	<u>7,657</u>

### 9. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024	2023
	£	£
Accruals	6,003	1,408
Deferred Income	13,032	16,650
Staff Settlement Figure	0	20000
	<u>19,035</u>	<u>38,058</u>

Movements in deferred income are as follows:

At beginning of year	16,650
Released to income in the year	(16,650)
Deferred in year	13,032
At end of Year	<u>13,032</u>

Deferred income relates to funding received in advance of project activity.

### 10. Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 March 2024 are represented by:

	Un-restricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	274	209	483
Current assets	94,786	51,087	145,873
Current Liabilities	(3,440)	(15,595)	(19,035)
<b>Total</b>	<b>91,620</b>	<b>35,701</b>	<b>127,321</b>

Fund balances at 31 March 2023 are represented by:

	Un-restricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	-	2,023	2,023
Current assets	177,436	62,889	240,325
Current Liabilities	(20,836)	(17,222)	(38,058)
<b>Total</b>	<b>156,600</b>	<b>47,690</b>	<b>204,290</b>

## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

### 11. Movement in funds

	Balance at beginning of year £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers between funds £	Balance at end of year £
<b>Restricted funds</b>					
The Swing	36,391	2,945	(29,226)	-	<b>10,110</b>
The Henry Smith Charity	-	17,500	(17,500)	-	-
The Henry Smith Charity BBC Children in Need	6,535	30,800	(18,755)		<b>18,580</b>
Wellbeing Program	1,123	7,756	(3,421)	-	<b>5,458</b>
Tesco Community Grant	210	-	(210)	-	-
HOPE Group	1,826	-	(273)	-	<b>1,553</b>
Skipton Building Society	1,605	-	(1,605)	-	-
	<b>47,690</b>	<b>59,001</b>	<b>(70,990)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>35,701</b>
<b>Un-restricted funds</b>					
General fund	81,600	41,428	(106,408)	75,000	<b>91,620</b>
Designated building fund	75,000	-	-	(75,000)	-
	<b>156,600</b>	<b>41,428</b>	<b>(106,408)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>91,620</b>
<b>Total funds</b>	<b>204,290</b>	<b>100,429</b>	<b>(177,398)</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>127,321</b>

The Swing provides counselling support to children, young people and families. Funding is provided by various charitable giving organisations and grant providers.

The first Henry Smith Charity grant is year 3 of a three-year grant towards The Swing project costs. The second is year 2 of a three-year grant for the costs of a counsellor with The Swing.

A three-year grant from BBC Children In Need has enabled us to pilot an Emotional Wellbeing programme to deliver to groups children at their school.

Tesco Community Grant supported the pilot Emotional Wellbeing programme.

HOPE Group (formally the Bereaved by Suicide Support Group) provides monthly support to the families who have lost loved ones as a result of suicide.

Skipton Building Society funds the costs of materials and resources to help support children and young people.

General funds consist of unrestricted reserves brought forward, general donations and fundraising; they may be used for any charitable purpose as deemed by the trustees.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds that have been ringfenced towards the cost of purchasing premises from which the charity can operate and provide support.

## Notes to the financial statements (continued)

### 12. Controlling Interest

The Charity is controlled by the Trustees.

### 13. Comparative Statement of Financial Activities

	Un-restricted funds 2023	Restricted funds 2023	Total funds 2023
	£	£	£
<b>Income from:</b>			
Donations & legacies	6,242	59,518	<b>65,760</b>
Charitable activities	85,530	26,290	<b>111,820</b>
Trading activities	526	-	<b>526</b>
Investments – bank interest	1,518	-	<b>1,518</b>
<b>Total income</b>	<b>93,816</b>	<b>85,808</b>	<b>179,624</b>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>			
Raising funds	4,918	4,912	<b>9,830</b>
Charitable activities	122,677	93,146	<b>215,823</b>
	<b>127,595</b>	<b>98,058</b>	<b>225,653</b>
<b>Net expenditure and net movement in funds for year</b>	<b>(33,779)</b>	<b>(12,250)</b>	<b>(46,029)</b>
<b>Reconciliation of funds:</b>			
Total funds brought forward	190,379	59,940	<b>250,319</b>
<b>Total funds carried forward</b>	<b>156,600</b>	<b>47,690</b>	<b>204,290</b>