



WBSS

Registered Charity Number: 1152724

**Walsall Bereavement Support Service
Trustee Annual Report & Accounts
2024 - 2025**

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

Trustee's Annual Report And Financial Statements

1st April 2024 - 31st March 2025

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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 31st March 2025.

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 among 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

2024-25 proved to be another challenging year for WBSS. One of our trustees, Sandev Panaser, left his role as Interim Service Lead and Ian Davies, Let's Talk Service Lead, took over aspects of this role. At the time of writing this report we have two people who are interested in becoming trustees; to date they have attended a couple of meeting before committing themselves fully to the role.

Referrals for support continue to be received for both our adult and child bereavement projects. During the year, WBSS has supported 859 bereaved adults, children and young people and has provided 2,908 hours of specialist bereavement support.

To ensure WBSS can best support our clients, we continue to deliver counselling sessions from a number of locations throughout the Walsall borough. Additionally, we continue to provide a blended support approach by offering clients face to face and on-line support.

In 2024/25 we continued to receive funds from The Henry Smith Charity and BBC Children in Need, both supporting The Swing as well as funding from Walsall Council which enabled us to deliver support to bereaved adults at various locations throughout the borough. We are extremely grateful to these, and other funders, for their continued support.

The main focus for the Trustees over the forthcoming year is to secure both short- and long-term funding. A funding strategy is being developed which will help the organisation focus on funding application priorities in order to maximise the number of applications for short term funding. Obviously, having to seek funds every year is not sustainable, therefore WBSS will be approaching larger grant awarding bodies, Trusts and Foundations in the hope that it can secure multi-year funding.

Whilst the future may appear a little uncertain, I continue to 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. By diversifying its income streams, 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
Chair of Trustees

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

One-to-one face to face and on-line counselling

Family and Sibling support

Out of Hours daytime service on Saturdays

Support in schools

Outreach work in the community

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 418 referrals during the year, supported a total of 641 clients and delivered 2,391 hours of support.

Profile of the adults we have supported.

- 76% of adults supported were females, 24% male.
- 79% were White British, 9% British Asian or Asian, 5% Black British, Black African or Caribbean, 1% European or Irish, 2% were mixed heritage. 4% did not give their ethnicity.
- 34% were under the age of 40, 42% aged 40–60, the remaining 24% were over the age of 60.
- 89% lived in areas falling in the top 10% most deprived areas in the UK.
- Just over a third of all adults, 35%, requested support following the death of a parent, 17% the death of a spouse or partner, 8% a sibling and 17% their own child.
- For clients who presented with one loss, the main cause of death was cancer, with 22% of adults losing a loved one to this disease; 14% of deaths were heart related; 8% lost a loved one in an extremely tragic circumstance such as murder, manslaughter, suicide or a road traffic collision. 16% were referred for several or multiple losses.
- For clients who presented with one loss 5% sought support within the first 6 months following their bereavement and 23% between 6 and 12 months of bereavement; however, we support people whenever they need our help and during this period 9% 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.
- 35% of adults supported had complex grief needs and/or had a mental health diagnosis.
- 18% of adults were recommended our service by their GP or another member of staff at their practice; 23% by NHS Talking Therapies, 10% by a Social Prescriber; 18% by a psychiatrist, secure mental health unit, community psychiatric nurse or mental health worker and 13% by another counselling service.

Outcomes reported following support.

- 56% of adults reported that their emotional difficulties such as anger, guilt, anxiety etc had improved or were no longer a problem.
- 66% reported that their physical difficulties such as relying on prescribe medication, smoking or drinking more, being unable to sleep and feeling unwell had improved or were no longer a problem.
- 75% 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.
- 66% said that their support and social network had improved and felt less lonely, more supported and able to socialise more.

Written feedback received from some adults we supported

What Helped the most....

- Learning to think differently, to love myself and that it's OK to let go of some of my pain.
- Processing of emotions and being able to understand why I felt the way I did without judgement has been huge!
- Thank you for all the understanding and being there when I was at my lowest.
- Having a supportive, helpful listener that enabled me to talk through my feelings without judgement.
- This was my first therapy and the fact that it helped me in a matter of 6 weeks shows that is doing the right thing.
- Thank you for all your help/guidance to make me feel I can tackle life going forward.
- Having someone to talk to about what has been going on in my life and hearing it from a different perspective.
- Support was very individualised and meet my needs every week.
- My counsellor was excellent; she made me look at things from my past that I had not thought of as grief. I'm looking at things head on now rather than putting things off. Every time we talked she came forward with exactly how I was feeling.
- Talk to non-family without judgement.
- Being able to understand emotions and think in a different way.
- Thank you for listening to my troubles and helping me to look at them in a different way, I've enjoyed coming to speak with you each week

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

- Sleeping better, meeting people again. Being able to talk about how my grief has felt.
- Not as angry or hurt, not crying all the time, don't feel alone.
- I can see things differently; I can look at my feelings.
- I feel a bit more content with talking to other people who have been through the same as me.
- Very influential, made me think about who I want to be. Best decision I ever made.
- I have felt a lot better since having support.

- I've been helped to understand my thoughts and feelings which has helped me to feel more positive
- I have been able to talk through all of the bereavements I have had which have profoundly affected me and my mental health but especially relating to my husband
- Thank you so much for helping me to improve the quality of my life and the lives of my children, it's been invaluable and essential! Life-changing, life affirmation, transformational support. Much needed and appreciated.
- Just a massive thank you for the continued support during the sessions and for gently encouraging me to change my perspective on small things that have made a world of difference. I've taken a lot from the sessions that I will continue to use in my daily ways now. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

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 178 referrals, supported a total of 218 clients and offered 517 hours of support.

Profile of the children and young people we have supported.

- 54% of children and young people supported were female and 46% male.
- 79% were White British, 7% British Asian or Asian, 3% Black British, Black African or Caribbean 2% European and the remaining 9% were mixed heritage.
- 26% were under the age of 10, 66% aged 10-15, the remaining 8% were 16-18.
- 73% had experienced a significant family death such as a parent/carers, sibling, or grandparent. 18% had experienced multiple bereavements.
- 84% lived in areas falling in the top 10% most deprived areas in the UK.
- 14% were defined as having additional support needs such as health issues, speech, cognitive, learning or physical disabilities and 3% required Specific Educational Needs.
- 8% were diagnosed with ADHD, Autism, Dyslexia, Dyscalculia or other medical conditions, whilst 1% were awaiting the outcome of a possible diagnosis.
- 20% were referred through Social Services with many having an allocated Social Worker.

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 with 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.

- Physical Difficulties – clients reported that the following had improved or were no longer a problem for them; eating 44%, sleeping 29%, aches and pains 35%, doing more 38%
- Emotional Difficulties – clients reported that the following: felt happy 44%, felt less sad 26% less angry 25%, more in control 50%, less confused 47%.
- Education and school attendance – 38% liked school again, 29% were getting into trouble less, 24% could focus more in class, break times was better for 40%.
- Friends and social life – 40% could relax more, 31% were less bored, 75% went outside more, 63% played with friends more, 53% were happy to mix with others again.
- Family life - 44% felt happier at home, 44% felt safe at home, 23% got less angry at home.

Outcomes reported following support, the parents' perspective.

- 53% reported an improvement in their child's physical wellbeing.
- 74% reported an improvement in their child's emotional wellbeing.
- 49% reported an improvement in their child's education.
- 74% felt that their child socialised with friends more.
- 90% felt that family relationships had improved.

Written feedback received from some children we supported

What Helped the most....

- Just ranting and getting things out of my system.
- Talking about my thoughts and doing things I enjoy a lot.
- Having someone external to talk to, I felt like my feelings weren't burdening anyone.
- Speaking about my grandad and speaking about anything and everything.
- Helped me with self-harm.
- Calming mechanisms, breathing practice, in general talking.
- Talking about good stuff helps get worries off my mind.
- Having somewhere to talk about how I feel and about dad helps.

Written Feedback Received from some of the Parents/Carers

- The overall experience for L has helped her realise there are many ways to experience and express her emotions.
- She is more able to express her feelings and has not lashed out anywhere near as much. She is better at recognising when she is feeling sad about grandad and telling me.
- Less outbursts at home. Able to talk about feelings.
- She's opened up more about how she feels
- Counselling highlighted things we can do/talk about at home. How it can impact all aspects - interest in things, sleep, routine.

Challenges

During 2024/25 WBSS experienced several fundamental changes in structure and personnel, from ongoing changes to Service Lead position and reduction in employed counsellors, to changes in process for provision of support and funding for the support WBSS provides. Each has presented challenges. However, due to the resilience and determination of staff, volunteers, and trustees, WBSS has continued to provide best quality support to the bereaved of Walsall and to the counsellors providing this support.

We are currently facing challenges of funding, due to bid writers leaving. We are now recruiting for a new bid writer to enable us to secure longer term funding grants to reestablish a secure financial base for our service to enable us to move forward with plans to develop the support we offer.

The ability of WBSS to continue as a charity is due in part to the dedication of our volunteers, whose commitment to WBSS is very much appreciated. Also, again after a year of change, WBSS Trustee Board has worked diligently to support volunteers, staff, and the incoming Service Lead, to enable a clearer vision of our future to be gained.

The future for WBSS holds ongoing changes to meet the challenges of a changing funding landscape, and to futureproof the support we provide as far as we are able. A part of this change has been to focus on bringing volunteers onto The Swing project to provide support for children and young people, which will allow us once more to provide in school support as well as support at our Centre in Walsall.

WBSS has also developed its training base and now offers training to support professionals as well as non-support based professionals, such as retail and corporate professionals. We have also continued to develop our network and collaborative practices. This has resulted in WBSS working more closely with service users in community settings.

Therefore, despite several significant challenges WBSS continues to work toward a future where we can continue to be a positive force in enabling residents of Walsall to achieve better quality lives.

Our Projects – Community Project

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 2024/25, they provided 1,198 hours of support. Since WBSS started to provide placement opportunities, it has trained in excess of 200 counsellors to help provide bereavement counselling.

WBSS continues to provide placements for counsellors in training and in February 2024 6 new volunteers successfully completed their initial training to become counsellors. Following this, in November 2024 8 more new volunteers successfully completing their initial training.

However, due to cost-of-living difficulties, WBSS no longer has a base of volunteers achieving more than two years of working with our service. Therefore, this presents ongoing recruiting needs for WBSS, as currently we have a reduced body of 16 volunteers providing support for adults, and 3 volunteers providing support for children and young people.

Our Notable Achievements during 2024 - 25

- Developed an in-house training package for safeguarding
- Recruited 14 new volunteers, each received 12 hours of bereavement training.
- Assisted Walsall Rotary Club with their Santa Sleigh collection.
- 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, in school, at numerous network events, and to university cohorts
- Achieved approved placement provider status with Warwick, Keele, and Birmingham City Universities
- 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.
- Provided 5 hours of bereavement awareness training in collaboration with NHS Recovery College and Mindkind Projects.
- Complete redesign of www.wbss.org to include interactive support information, links to WBSS PayPal and Just Giving Accounts, and direct contact links for WBSS and other services
- Began offering training and supervisory support to community groups, further extending WBSS's impact within the local area.
- Established a coproduction community fundraising team.

Our networking and partnership working....

- Continued to strengthen connections with key local organisations such as the NHS, One Walsall, and religious organisations, re-establishing partnerships and collaboration.
- Attended 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

2024-25 proved to be another busy year supporting individuals in whichever way best suited them. Whilst this continues to be our main focus, during 2025-26 we also plan to achieve the following;

- Secure funding to provide financial stability
- Focused recruitment of volunteers for our children and young people service
- Development of wellbeing support and creation of Wellbeing Support Worker roles
- Provision of administrative and IT work experience for 6th form, college, and university students
- Development of a strategic plan to increase WBSS fundraising capability
- Increase the delivery of our bereavement support training programme for school staff
- Explore the possibility of organising memorial services at local places of worship.
- Increase the profile of WBSS across Walsall borough and the Black Country to enable ongoing support for the bereaved
- Continue to network with key local groups and partnerships to seek opportunities for working together and improving support for the bereaved.

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.

Income received during this year increased slightly to £106,131 (£100,429 2023/24). Expenditure also decreased to £155,269 (£177,398 2023/24) mainly due to a reduction in counselling staff.

The main source of restricted income for The Swing is through 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. 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 2025/26 to be about £140,000. To meet this demand, we will continue with our grant application programme.

In January 2025 the Trustees produced a three-year Business Plan which identified various income streams for the charity to pursue over the coming 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. This has recently been reviewed in 2026 and an intense period of fundraising activity is planned to ensure the viability of the charity into 2027. New Trustees and volunteers are in place and bids are in progress to raise funds beyond that currently secured to meet the long terms needs of the charity. Progress will be continually monitored during the coming months and if necessary, action taken to reduce the cost base if sufficient funds are not forthcoming. However, Trustees are confident that sufficient funds can be raised to secure the viability of the Charity over the next 12 months.

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 nine 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 2025, the total of the charity's reserves stood at £78,183 of which £19,971 was restricted funds.

The financial strategy of WBSS continues to be that of building unrestricted free reserves to meet our nine-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 4th 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 the time of signing off this report, there were 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 income and expenditure 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 19th January 2026

By **Jim Green Chair of Trustees**

Acknowledgements

Walsall Bereavement Support Service would like to publicly acknowledge and thank the following Charitable Trusts and organisation for their financial support during 2024 / 2025.

- Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council
- The Henry Smith Charity Covid-19 Long-Term Support Grant
- BBC Children in Need
- The Albert Hunt Charity
- William Cadbury Trust
- Baron Davenport Charity
- CB & HH Taylor 1984 Charity
- The Eveson Trust
- Harry Payne Heart of England Trust
- The Grimmitt Trust
- The Barbara Ward Children's Foundation
- W.E.D
- The Owen Family Trust
- St Pauls' Church at The Crossing, Walsall
- St Lawrence's Church, Darlaston
- St Matthew's Church, Walsall
- Walsall Rotary Club

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

Trustees:

Chair: James Green

Treasurer: Alyson Green

Trustees: Alexandra Smith

Akinola Meheux (stepped down 15th May 2025)

Sandev Panaser (stepped down 23rd Jun 2025)

Zargul Adil (stepped down 5th Sept 2025)

Linda Dines (appointed 17th Sept 2025)

Frances Brant (appointed 15th Dec 2025)

Joanne Barlow (appointed 15th Dec 2025)

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 2025 which are set out on pages 17 to 26.

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
19th January 2026

Statement of Financial Activities

		Un-restricted funds 2025	Restricted funds 2025	Total funds 2025	Total funds 2024
	Note	£	£	£	£
Income from:					
Donations & legacies	1	16,749	17,950	34,699	25,256
Charitable activities	2	34,190	34,199	68,389	70,299
Trading activities	3	422	-	422	1,321
Investments – bank interest		2,521	-	2,521	3,553
Other		100	-	100	-
Total income		53,982	52,149	106,131	100,429
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		108	458	566	3,788
Charitable activities		87,282	67,421	154,703	173,610
		87,390	67,879	155,269	177,398
Net expenditure and net movement in funds for year		(33,408)	(15,730)	(49,138)	(76,969)
Reconciliation of funds:					
Total funds brought forward		91,620	35,701	127,321	204,290
Total funds carried forward		58,212	19,971	78,183	127,321

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	2025 £	2024 £
FIXED ASSETS			
Tangible assets	7	104	483
CURRENT ASSETS			
Debtors	8	2,250	9,719
Cash at Bank		92,594	136,154
		94,844	145,873
CREDITORS			
Amounts falling due within one year	9	(16,765)	(19,035)
NET CURRENT ASSETS		78,079	126,838
NET ASSETS		78,183	127,321
FUNDS	11		
Restricted Funds		19,971	35,701
Unrestricted Funds			
- General		58,212	91,620
TOTAL FUNDS		78,183	127,321

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

Jim Green, Chair of Trustees

Date: 19th January 2026

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 current business plan alongside its fundraising strategy indicates 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 employees' individual personal pension plans. The employer's contributions to the scheme in 2025 were £2,057 (2024 £2,529) 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

	2025 £	2024 £
Un-restricted:		
Donations	3,122	5,206
Grants	13,627	-
	<u>16,749</u>	<u>5,206</u>
Restricted:		
Donations	-	-
Grants		
The Henry Smith Charity (The Swing)	-	17,500
Other Charitable Trusts (The Swing)	17,950	2,550
	<u>17,950</u>	<u>20,050</u>
Total	<u>34,699</u>	<u>25,256</u>

2. Income from Charitable Activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Un-restricted:		
Training & Support	4,340	3,360
Walsall Council	29,850	26,888
Black Country Healthcare Foundation Trust	-	-
North Smethwick Development Trust	-	1,495
	<u>34,190</u>	<u>31,743</u>
Restricted:		
Children in Need (Emotional Wellbeing Program)	2,766	7,756
The Henry Smith Charity grant 2	31,433	30,800
	<u>34,199</u>	<u>38,556</u>
Total	<u>68,389</u>	<u>70,299</u>

3. Trading activities

	2025 £	2024 £
Un-restricted:		
Fundraising events	366	676
Fundraising platforms	56	250
	<u>422</u>	<u>926</u>
Fundraising (The Swing)	-	395
	<u>-</u>	<u>395</u>
Total	<u>422</u>	<u>1,321</u>

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

5. Analysis of Expenditure

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2025	2024
	£	£	£	£
Staff Costs	54,754	46,160	100,914	121,197
Payroll Costs	238	238	476	418
Fundraising Costs	108	458	566	1,609
Centre Costs	7,954	7,317	15,271	13,542
Unit 3/Office Suite 1 Rent	2,750	500	3,250	3,000
Unit 3 Office Suite 1 Utilities	3,046	292	3,338	1,838
Room Hire	3,404	-	3,404	5,917
IT	1,205	1,205	2,410	2,137
Telephone	766	707	1,473	1,739
Stationery	46	54	100	28
Postage	135	150	285	190
Printing	556	590	1,146	1,006
Office Equipment	152	151	303	302
Materials	-	-	-	1,463
Travel / Parking	-	-	-	723
Training	260	207	467	1,656
Supervision	3,267	960	4,227	5,218
Volunteer Expenses	15	0	15	15
Publicity	71	71	142	-
Insurance	1,662	1,661	3,323	3,213
DBS Checks	321	-	321	1,029
Professional Fees	6,589	6,700	13,289	9,316
Bank Charges	70	70	140	140
Cleaning & H&S Equipment	21	9	30	162
Sundries	-	-	-	-
Depreciation	-	379	379	1,540
	87,390	67,879	155,269	177,398

Expenditure

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2025	2024
	£	£	£	£
Fundraising Costs	108	458	566	3,788
Direct Costs	45,256	41,421	86,677	106,469
Support Costs	37,826	21,800	59,626	60,603
Governance	4,200	4,200	8,400	6,538
	87,390	67,879	155,269	177,398

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

6. Net expenditure/income for year

Net income is stated after charging:	2025	2024
	£	£
Independent Examiners fee	1,050	1,050
Depreciation	379	1,540
	1,429	2,590

Staff costs, trustee remuneration and expenses

	2025	2024
	£	£
Salaries	95,967	114,196
National Insurance	2,722	4,472
Pensions	2,057	2,529
Total	100,746	121,197

No employee has employee benefits in excess of £60,000 (2024: nil).

The equivalent of 3.65 full-time members of staff were employed during the year (2024: 4)

Key management personnel comprise the Interim Service Lead whose benefits total £9,600 (2023 £21,386).

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

In the year ended 31 March 2025 £9,600 (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 2025. No trustee expenses were reimbursed in the year (2024: None).

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

7. Tangible fixed assets

	Computer Equipment £	Fixtures & Fittings £	Total £
Cost			
At beginning of year	19,924	2,182	22,106
Additions	-	-	-
At end of year	19,924	2,182	22,106
Depreciation			
At beginning of year	19,441	2,182	21,623
Charge for the year	379	-	379
At end of year	19,820	2,182	22,002
Net Book Value			
At 31 March 2024	483	-	483
At 31 March 2025	104	-	104

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

8. Debtors

	2025	2024
	£	£
Prepayments	1,750	1,757
Accrued Income	-	7,462
Rental Deposit	500	500
	2,250	9,719

9. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Accruals	6,232	6,003
Deferred Income	10,533	13,032
	16,765	19,035

Movements in deferred income are as follows:

At beginning of year	13,032
Released to income in the year	(13,032)
Deferred in year	10,533
At end of Year	10,533

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

10. Analysis of net assets between funds

Fund balances at 31 March 2025 are represented by:

	Un-restricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£
Fixed Assets	-	104	104
Current assets	62,423	32,421	94,844
Current Liabilities	(4,211)	(12,554)	(16,765)
Total	58,212	19,971	78,183

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)
Total	91,620	35,701	127,321

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 £
Restricted funds					
The Swing	10,110	15,950	20,545	-	5,515
The Henry Smith Charity	18,580	31,433	37,235	-	12,778
BBC Children in Need Wellbeing Programme	5,458	2,766	8,224	-	-
Heart of England	-	2,000	1,875	-	125
HOPE Group	1,553	-	-	-	1,553
	<u>35,701</u>	<u>52,149</u>	<u>67,879</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>19,971</u>
Un-restricted funds					
General Fund	91,620	53,982	87,390	-	58,212
Total funds	127,321	106,131	155,269	-	78,183

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

The Henry Smith Charity grant is year 3 of a three-year grant towards the costs of a counsellor with The Swing and other project costs as agreed with The Henry Smith Charity.

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

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.

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.

12. Controlling Interest

The Charity is controlled by the Trustees.

Notes to the financial statements (continued)

13. Comparative Statement of Financial Activities

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