ASHFORD COUNSELLING SERVICE (CIO)

England & Wales · Charity number 1169322

Details

Other names	ASHFORD COUNSELLING SERVICE, ASHFORD COUNSELLING SERVICE LIMITED
Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2016-09-22
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	The Paul Bower Centre 123 Church Road Willesborough Ashford TN24 0JQ
Phone	01233610083
Email	info@ashfordcounselling.org.uk
Website	www.ashfordcounselling.org.uk

Activities

Objects: (1) TO ASSIST PERSONS SUFFERING FROM MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL DIFFICULTIES. (2) TO CONDUCT STUDY AND RESEARCH INTO METHODS OF HELPING SUCH PERSONS AND TO PUBLISH THE USEFUL RESULTS OF SUCH STUDY AND RESEARCH. (3) TO PROVIDE CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT TRAINING TO COUNSELLORS AND OTHERS.

Activities: 1. TO RELIEVE PERSONS SUFFERING FROM MENTAL AND/OR EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS (IN SUCH WAYS AS THE AGENCY PERSONNEL THINK FIT).2. TO CONDUCT STUDY AND RESEARCH INTO METHODS OF TREATMENT OF SUCH PERSONS.3. TO EDUCATE AND TRAIN PERSONS IN COUNSELLING SO THAT THEY MAY ASSIST IN THE TREATMENT OF PERSONS SUFFERING FROM MENTAL OR EMOTIONAL DISORDERS OR PROBLEMS.

Downloaded from opencharities.uk/ew/1169322

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** Education/training, Disability
- **Who:** The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Throughout England

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2024-12-31	£61,016	£63,257	-	-
2023-12-31	£61,272	£43,799	-	-
2022-12-31	£39,300	£44,051	-	-
2021-12-31	£31,370	£38,789	-	-
2020-12-31	£32,773	£38,207	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Susan Smith	Chair	2016-06-14
Christopher James Stanley		2025-11-10
Darren John Sharpe		2022-04-25
Dr Anthony John Rampton		2013-05-01
Michelle Hamer Dr		2024-03-04
Neil Richard Bedwell		2025-11-10

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ASHFORD COUNSELLING SERVICE (CIO)

England & Wales - Charity number 1169322

Accounts

ASHFORD COUNSELLING SERVICE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR FROM 01/01/24 TO 31/12/2024

INTRODUCTION

In review, 2024 has been a year of exparsion & investment for ACS. The continual increase in demand for In-person counselling has ensured a busy centre, with referrals yet again increasing on the previous year. We have increased the number of counsellors & expanded the supervision groups. In person supervision has recommenced at the Paul Bower centre, although on-line supervision remains the most favoured format. The clinical team has expanded to four supervisors who provide strong & supportive leadership to our counsellors.

We have made substantial investment to the fabric of the centre this year. A disabled toilet has been installed. In addition, the old metal barred windows have been replaced with UPVC double glazed units and a secure UPVC rear door installed. This has made a marked impact on both the accessibility and ascetics of the centre and additionally reduced heat loss. The heating controllers in each room have been replaced and a regular maintenance contract agreed. We will continue to make improvements to the centre, as funds allow.

SECTION A - REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION DETAILS

Charity registration number: 1169322

Company number:10231859

Registered charity: Ashford Counselling Service (CIO)

Principal Address: The Paul Bower Centre, 123 Church Road, Ashford TN24 0JQ

TRUSTEES WHO MANAGE THE CHARITY (Executive Committee)

Hugh Cooper	Joint Chair resigned Dec 2024	Elected at AGM 2021
John Rampton	Hon. Treasurer	Elected at AGM 2021
Susan Smith	Joint Chair to Dec 2024 /Chair Jan 24 to present	Elected at AGM 2021
Darren Sharpe		Elected at AGM 2022
Michelle Hamer		Elected at AGM 2023

ADVISERS AND AGENTS

Sealey & Johnson Ltd	Accountant and Independent Examiner
Lloyds Bank, Ashford	Bankers

SENIOR STAFF During this period

Femmie Bonsier January 23 to present	Manager
Brigitte McAndrew	Clinical Lead
Michelle Cage to July 24/ Heather Dehara Aug 24 to present.	Administrator

SECTION B - STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The organisation was established in 1987 and is governed by its constitution. Since July 2021 the service is a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) managed by its Trustee Body. The Trustee Body consists of volunteers selected for the skills they can bring to the organisation as well as their interest and commitment to our work. They meet at least quarterly (January, April, July and October); in 2024 they met formally eight times.

Trustees are voted in each year at the Annual General Meeting by members of Ashford Counselling Service plus attendees from local organisations who have an interest in our work.

The Trustee Body delegates responsibility for the day to day running of the organisation to the Manager who is supported by a Clinical Lead and an Administrator; all staff are employed part-time.

ADDITIONAL GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Ashford Counselling Service is an organisational member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy. It adheres to its ethical framework.

The agency has a comprehensive Handbook of policies and procedures which is under rolling review. The Handbook includes all aspects of Health & Safety, Risk Assessment, Troubleshooting and problem resolution. An appendix includes the new constitution.

The organisation does not receive any year-on-year grant from statutory funders and as a result we have to elicit contributions from our clients. We also attempt to obtain grant-funding from appropriate bodies by submitting bids. This enables us to provide the clinical support and to continue to provide a high standard of service to our clients.

SECTION C - OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The objectives as set out in the current constitution are as follows:

The objects of the CIO are:

(1) To provide high quality, low-cost counselling to persons in Ashford and the surrounding area suffering from mental or emotional difficulties.

(2) To provide continuous professional development to counsellors, counsellors-in-training and others.

CONTRIBUTION MADE BY VOLUNTEERS

It cannot be over-emphasised that the contribution made by our counsellors is the bedrock of the service and they are the means by which we deliver Objective 1 above. They deploy their skills and experience without remuneration beyond minimal expenses, and many of them waive even that. This is what enables ACS to offer a genuinely affordable service to our clients, many of whom may be considered to be 'less well-off'. There is no compromising of standards: volunteer counsellors have an intensive interview to ensure that they meet the criteria which the organisation sets, are DBS checked and are expected to give three counselling sessions per week. All counsellors have group supervision every two weeks with an experienced supervisor.

During 2024 we have had the support of four clinical supervisors, Brigitte McAndrew, Barbara Akers, Natalie Elliott and Sharon Mason who, in addition to their support for counsellors, have continued to be pivotal in the development of the service. Their remuneration is significantly below the market rate, and they are crucial to the delivery of Objective 2 above. In 2024 Supervision groups were increased to nine and in 2025 we are looking to expand on this further, as we increase the number of counsellors at ACS. We have re-established one in-person supervision group back in the centre & hope to establish a second during 2025. Thus, ensuring a hybrid system that gives counsellors the choice. During the year there were 27 counsellors.

Brigitte McAndrew is our Clinical Lead and continues to ensure the quality and safety of counsellors and the clinical work in conjunction with Barbara, Natalie and Sharon. They have developed a strong and supportive team who in conjunction with the Administrator and Manager provide comprehensive support to the counsellors.

There is a well-regarded programme of Continuous Professional Development to ensure that our volunteers continue to develop their skills. As well as trained counsellors we recruit and develop trainee counsellors who are undertaking their Diploma in Counselling at local colleges, training establishments and universities.

We continue to review our administrative systems and implement changes that support best practise. There has been some turnover of volunteers throughout the year, and we continue to look at increasing retention of volunteer counsellors, including trials to afford them some renumeration. It is our intention to continue exploring ways that we might be able to do this, while ensuring the viability and survival of the service. We continue to welcome new volunteer counsellors from a diverse range of backgrounds, and we hope their time here will be rewarding.

All members of the Trustee Body are also volunteer's and put in many hours of work to ensure the smooth-running of the service; their role is not only strategic: each trustee makes a real 'hands-on' contribution to the organisation as well.

SECTION D - ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

1. HOPES AS EXPRESSED IN PREVIOUS TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

a. Re-establish a centre-based team, which creates a well-used Hub

The Paul Bower centre is now a very well utilised centre. The Manager or Administrator are in attendance daily during core hours and provide comprehensive support for the counsellors and their clients. Heather Dehara joined us as Administrator in August 2024. Her excellent administrative skills & supportive input have made a very noticeable impact on our procedures and systems. Heather has created and implemented a number of changes such as the introduction of templates and updating of counsellor forms that have made a tangible difference to the administrative support that our counsellors receive. The Administrator hours were increased to facilitate the continuing increase in workload.

A co-operative and collaborative relationship has been established between the Clinical & Business team with regular quarterly meetings and the introduction of Supervision of Supervision meetings.

b. Develop services and attract funding, in order to reduce waiting times for clients.

The NHS have rented a room on three days a week between 8.30 to 16.30. Unfortunately, following a consultation and restructuring of their services, they have terminated this arrangement. This will have a major impact on our financial situation for 2025, resulting in a loss to our income of approx. £12,000 per annum. It is also a loss to us of colleagues that had become part of the ACS extended team. We will be advertising our rooms more widely to increase revenue.
We have increased our volunteer counsellor numbers to assist us in reducing the waiting list. Our Increased counsellor sessions have resulted in much higher client contributions again in 2024 but sourcing extra funding will now need to be more of a priority to offset the loss of rental income. We have been lucky to have been successful in a couple of small bids for refurbishment, but larger funding bids must now be targeted.
It costs the service approximately £35 to run a counselling session and ACS relies on client contributions to enable it to function.

c. Free/heavily subsidised CPD provision

Much of the CPD provision for this year has been heavily subsidised & a reasonable attendance achieved for some events. For example, 'Counselling and the Law' However, it has proved generally difficult to encourage counsellors back to in person training. On occasion, targeted training has been offered and subsidised to individuals rather than offering full courses. We continue to try & improve our CPD offering and hope to become a service where all counsellors are 'Trauma informed'

Counsellors connect which is a networking event run by Darren Sharpe has proved to be of great value. This event runs quarterly and is open to both ACS and external counsellors and has provided a number of valuable training topics for counsellors to attend in a relaxed and sociable environment.

d. Strengthen counsellor retention through e.g. improved communication, greater involvement in cross-service activities, more team-building, improved attendance at CPD events.

Qualified counsellor retention has continued to be a priority, and we ran a pilot scheme to offer payment of £20 for 4th & 5th clients. Unfortunately, there was limited uptake & we only had a couple of counsellors who participated in the scheme. It is still our intention to continue to investigate affording some remuneration to our qualified counsellors and other pilot schemes will be considered throughout 2025.

Communication and support provided to counsellors and clients alike is much improved, with the office being manned Mon-Fri during core daytime hours between the Manager and Administrator. Inductions are run for all new counsellors in training where they receive a comprehensive overview of all systems and documentation.

e. Enhance the premises.

The Centre has had major investment during 2024 with the installation of a disabled toilet & the replacement of windows & a rear door in the office. The refurbishment will continue, as funding allows & we have recently received an allocation of funds to provide the counselling rooms with new chairs.

f. Increase the size of the trustee body.

Michelle Hamer has been a very welcome & proactive addition to the Trustee body and has offered to complete some of our funding applications.
After many years of unstinting service and support, Hugh Cooper stood down as Chair of ACS. We thank him for his years of service and hope that he will remain connected to the service.
We hope to recruit Additional Trustees with specific skills (IT, Media, Fundraising) are still very much needed. Despite some local advertising this continues to be an issue.

2. DETAILS OF COUNSELLING WORK UNDERTAKEN IN 2024

Numbers of clients
This year has seen a further increase in enquiries and referrals into the service. ACS has continued to offer counselling that met client need for short, medium and long-term work.

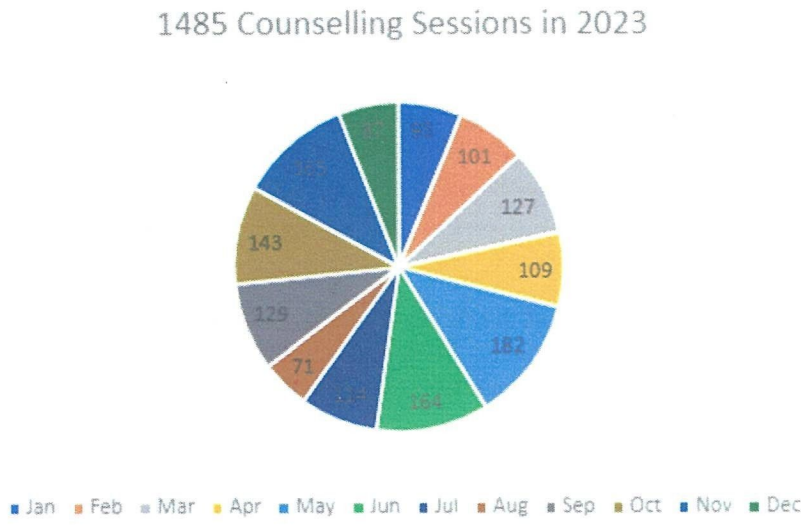
Client profiles
We experienced a large increase this year in the number of enquiries for the service, 321 people contacted us during 2024 up from 298 in 2023 an increase of 8%.

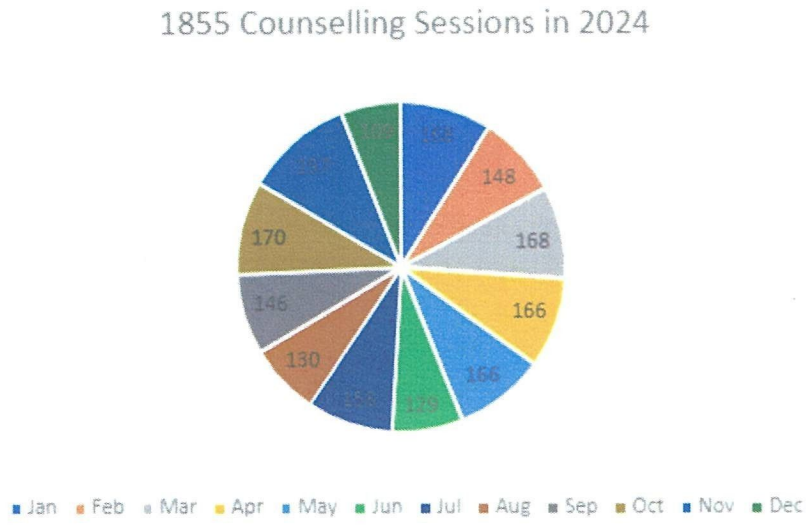
Client Referrals 2024 (up to 29/12/2024)

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
104	115	104	189	244	298	321

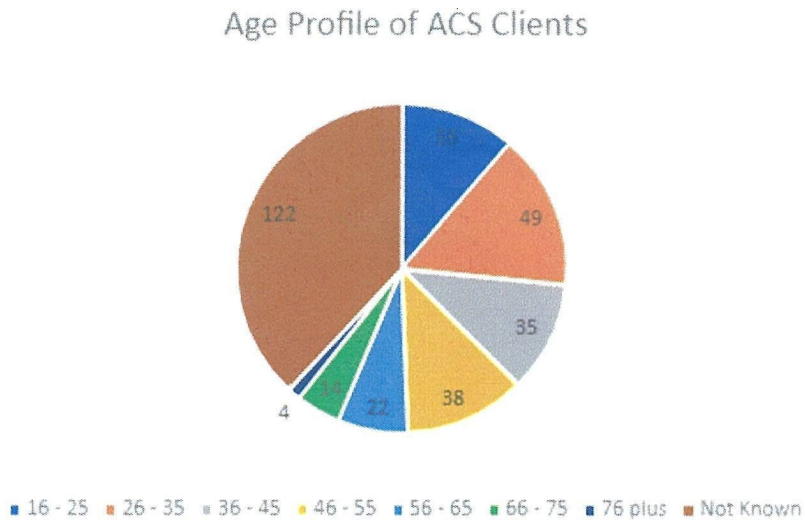
Counselling Hours 2021 - 2024

2021	2022	2023	2024
COVID / no record	1102	1485	1855

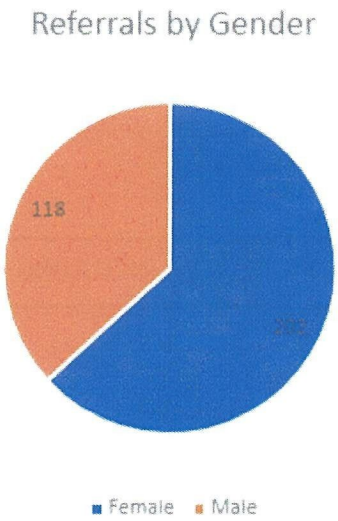




Age Profile 2024
Age of clients is not always recorded, but the majority fall into the 19-39 age bracket.



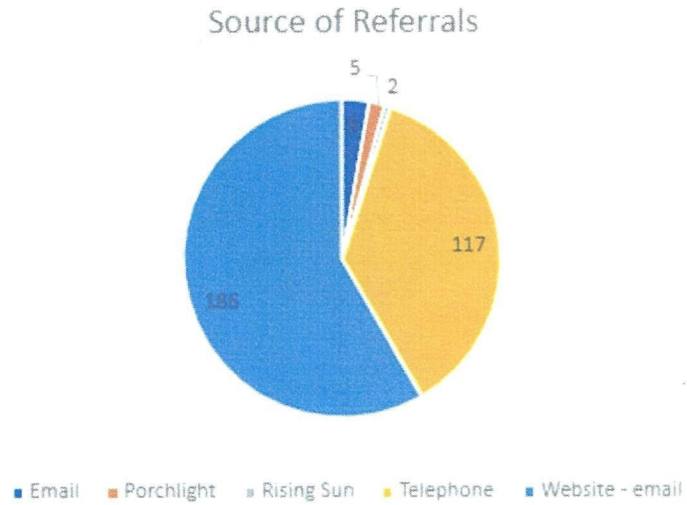
Gender 2024
Historically about 75% of our clients have been female. However more recently the split has moved to 63% female & 37% male.



Source of Referrals 2024

All our clients are treated as self-referrals; none were funded by outside agencies. The majority come after a recommendation from their GP or are returning, but we also see a significant number who have been signposted by other Mental Health services.

Clients access us by telephone or by electronic contact, there has been a noticeable increase in electronic contact.



Presenting Issues 2024

Stress, anxiety, depression, trauma and bereavement were issues for 50% of our clients. These were often presenting along with other difficulties and/or diagnoses. The increase in complexity of issues presented to us and the loss of some of our more experienced counsellors meant that often people had a longer wait for allocation to an appropriate counsellor.

We have continued to work with clients suffering from financial hardship this year and have been able to offer 'affordable counselling' to those who need it.

SECTION E - FINANCIAL REVIEW, INCLUDING POLICY ON RESERVES

Income for the year 1st January to 31st December 2024 was £60,956 and expenditure was £61,935. Thus the service made an operating deficit of £979. Our bank accounts remained in a very positive situation at the end of the year.

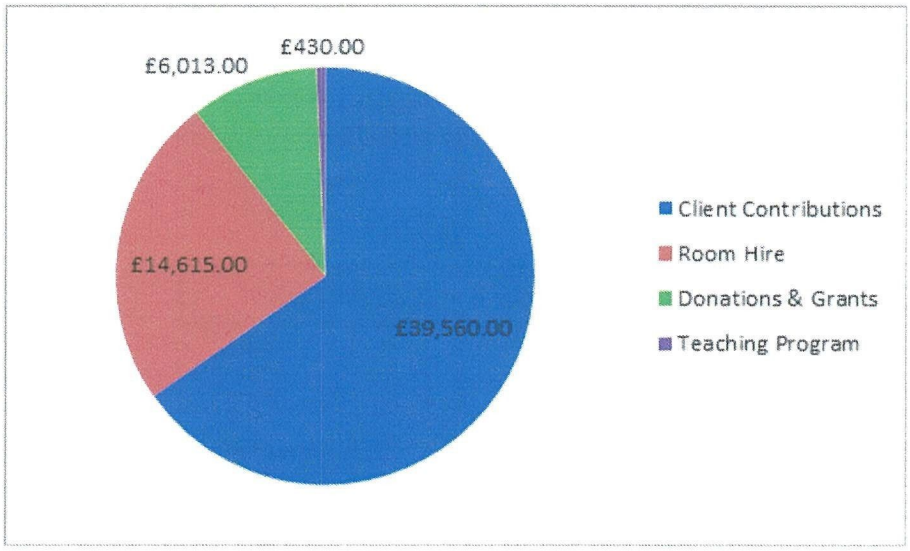
Fixed assets (the property, furniture, fittings) were valued at £80,290. Full details are in the pages following Section G (Declaration).

	1st January 2024	31st December 2024
ACS Current Account & Petty Cash	£23,572	£22,502
ACS Reserve Account	£5,016	£5,076

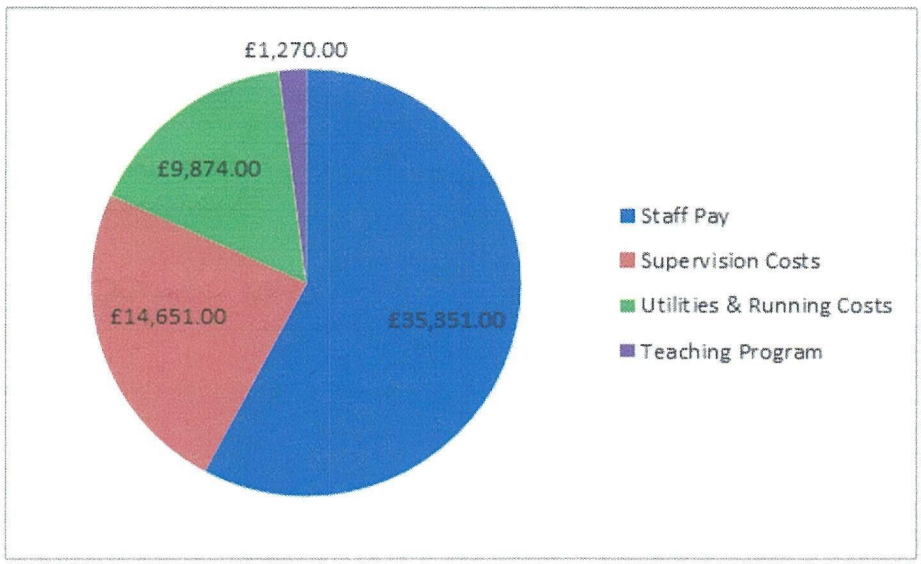
Income. Our income for the last two years has been significantly higher than in past years, again due to three factors: a high level of client contributions, high income from room hire (primarily by the Kent Community Trust), and the second of three yearly £5,000 grants from the Colyer-Fergusson Trust. We also received small grants from local councillors.

Expenditure. During the year we again increased the rates of pay for our staff, increased the hours of the administrator, and continued pay ng overtime. Utility costs also increased. Due to the continuing income from room hire we were able to refurbish the toilet and pay the deposit for replacement of the rear windows and door.

Inccme for 2024 - £61,000



Expenditure for 2024 - £62,000



POLICY ON RESERVES

The trustees have decided that the Reserve Account (currently just over £5,000) is for emergency, unpredicted expenditure.

SECTION F - OTHER OPTIONAL INFORMATION

HOPES FOR 2025

a. Develop services and attract funding, to reduce waiting times for clients.
b. BACP accreditation of ACS
c. Strengthen counsellor retention through e.g. improved communication, greater involvement in cross-service activities, more team-building, improved attendance at CPD events, more incentives.
d. Increase the size of the trustee body.

SECTION G - DECLARATION

The trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees Annual Report (TAR) above.

Signed on behalf of the trustees:

Signature/s	S. Smith	D Rampton
Full Name/s	SUSAN MARIE LOUISE SMITH	ANTHONY JOHN RAMPTON
Position	Chair of Trustees	Trustee and Treasurer
Date	5-06-2025	5th June 2025

Company Registered number
10231859

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Report and accounts

31 December 2024

Registered Charity No
1169322

Ashford Counselling Service Limited
Report and accounts
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Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Registered Charity No 1169322 Companies House No 10231859

Income and Expenditure Accounts for the Year ending 31st December 2024

	2024	2023
Income	£	£
Client Contributions	39,559.50	36,874.40
Room Hire	14,615.00	17,550.00
Fund Raising	339.30	397.14
Donations	6,012.69	5,804.52
Teaching Program Income/Study Days	430.00	350.00
Miscellaneous:		
Gift Aid	-	296.88
Refund National lottery		
Bank Account Interest	59.74	43.76
TOTAL	61,016.23	61,316.70
LESS: Expenditure		
Staff & Counsellor Pay & Expenses	50,790.47	36,334.23
Utilities & Running Costs	9,873.69	7,428.20
Teaching Program Costs	1,270.00	37.50
BLF Contractors & Staff	-	-
Depreciation	1,322.41	2,066.26
Accrued Expenses	-	(755.30)
TOTAL	63,256.57	45,110.89
Excess (Expenditure)/Surplus over Income	**(2,240.34)**	**16,205.81**

The Trustees have prepared, the above statement of Income and expenditure from their records which have been examined by Sealy & Johnson Accountants Ltd.

We have no concerns and have come across no matters in connection with the examinatin to which attention should be drawn in order to better understand the report.

The report is made solely to the Trustees. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustees, those matters we are required to state to them in an Independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and its Trustees as a body, for our work on this report.

.....

Sharon Edwards
Accountant
Sealy & Johnson Accountants Ltd
22 Evegate Business Park
Smeeth
Ashford
Kent TN25 6SX

02/04/2025

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Registered Charity No 1169322 Companies House No 10231859

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2024

	Notes	2024 £	£	2023 £	£
Fixed Assets					
Property at 123, Church Road		75,000.00		75,000.00	
Furniture, fixtures, fittings		5,289.63		6,612.03	
			80,289.63		81,612.03
Current Assets					
Bank Accounts:					
petty cash		10.58		-	
6862		22,491.46		24,469.63	
5163		5,075.80		5,016.06	
		27,577.84		29,485.69	
Current Liabilities					
Unpaid Expenses - Accruals		(332.28)		657.63	
Net Current Assets			27,910.12		28,828.06
Net Assets			**108,199.75**		**110,440.09**
Capital Account					
Balance at start of period		74,550.09			58,344.28
Revaluation Surplus		35,890.00			35,890.00
Surplus/(Deficit)		(2,240.34)			16,205.81
Charity funds			**108,199.75**		**110,440.09**

For the financial year in question the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.
No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.
The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

JRampton

John Rampton
Director - Treasurer & Trustee
Approved by the board on

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Ashford Counselling Service		
On accounts for the year ended	31 December 2024	**Charity no (if any)**	1169322
Set out on pages	(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2024

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust'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 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination ~~(other than that disclosed below *)~~ which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:		**Date:**	02/04/2025
Name:	Valerie Moon		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	ACCA		
Address:	Sealy & Johnson Accountants Ltd		

22 The Barn, Evegate Business Park
Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SX

Section B	Disclosure
	Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	I have satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited for this year under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination. In 2018 the property at 123 Church Road was revalued to £75,000 which created a revaluation surplus of £35,890. The property has not been depreciated.

Company Registered number
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Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Report and accounts

31 December 2024

Registered Charity No
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02/04/2025

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Registered Charity No 1169322 Companies House No 10231859

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No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.
The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

JRampton

John Rampton
Director - Treasurer & Trustee
Approved by the board on

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Ashford Counselling Service		
On accounts for the year ended	31 December 2024	**Charity no (if any)**	1169322
Set out on pages	(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2024

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust'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 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination ~~(other than that disclosed below *)~~ which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:		**Date:**	02/04/2025
Name:	Valerie Moon		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	ACCA		
Address:	Sealy & Johnson Accountants Ltd		

22 The Barn, Evegate Business Park
Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SX

Section B	Disclosure
	Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	I have satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited for this year under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination. In 2018 the property at 123 Church Road was revalued to £75,000 which created a revaluation surplus of £35,890. The property has not been depreciated.

ASHFORD COUNSELLING SERVICE (CIO)

England & Wales - Charity number 1169322

Accounts

ASHFORD COUNSELLING SERVICE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR FROM 01/01/23 TO 31/12/2023

INTRODUCTION

With the Covid pandemic very much in our rear-view mirror, 2023 has been a year of rebuilding and drawing back together a Centre based team. In-person counselling has ensured a busy centre, which has returned to a well-used hub. We have developed a more hybrid way of working, incorporating the benefits of online work but with the emphasis on in-person contact.

The longer-term effects of Covid are likely to remain with us for many more years to come. There is a noticeable increase in the complexity of client cases and we have found that we are receiving client referrals from clients signposted to us from other oversubscribed mental health organisations and charities. Our referrals continue to increase year on year.

SECTION A - REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Charity registration number: 1169322

Registered charity: Ashford Counselling Service (CIO)

Principal Address: The Paul Bower Centre, 123 Church Road, Ashford TN24 0JQ

TRUSTEES WHO MANAGE THE CHARITY (Executive Committee)

Hugh Cooper	Chair	Elected at AGM 2022
John Rampton	Hon. Treasurer	Elected at AGM 2022
Susan Smith		Elected at AGM 2022
Darren Sharpe		Elected at AGM 2022

ADVISERS AND AGENTS

Edwards Williams Ltd	Accountant and Independent Examiner
vacant	Independent Consultant and Tax Adviser
Lloyds Bank, Ashford	Bankers

SENIOR STAFF During this period

Femmie Bonsier January 2023 to present	Manager
Brigitte McAndrew	Clinical Lead
Michelle Cage	Administrator

SECTION B - STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The organisation was established in 1987 and is governed by its constitution. Since July 2021 the service is a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) managed by its Trustee Body. The Trustee Body consists of volunteers selected for the skills they can bring to the organisation as well as their interest and commitment to our work. They meet at least quarterly (January, April, July and October); in 2022 they met formally eight times.

Trustees are voted in each year at the Annual General Meeting by members of Ashford Counselling Service plus attendees from local organisations who have an interest in our work. Following last year's AGM trustees appointed Hugh Cooper and Susan Smith as Co-Chairs.

The Trustee Body delegates responsibility for the day to day running of the organisation to the Manager who is supported by a Clinical Lead and an Administrator; all staff are employed part-time.

ADDITIONAL GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Ashford Counselling Service is an organisational member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy. It adheres to its ethical framework.

The agency has a comprehensive Handbook of policies and procedures which is under rolling review. The Handbook includes all aspects of Health and Safety, Risk Assessment, Troubleshooting and problem resolution. An appendix includes the new constitution.

The organisation does not receive any year-on-year grant from statutory funders and as a result we have to elicit contributions from our clients. We also attempt to obtain grant-funding from appropriate bodies by submitting bids. This enables us to provide the clinical support and to continue to provide a high standard of service to our clients.

SECTION C - OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The objectives as set out in the current constitution are as follows:

The objects of the CIO are:

(1) To provide high quality, low-cost counselling to persons in Ashford and the surrounding area suffering from mental or emotional difficulties.

(2) To provide continuous professional development to counsellors, counsellors-in-training and others.

CONTRIBUTION MADE BY VOLUNTEERS

It cannot be over-emphasised that the contribution made by our counsellors is the bedrock of the service and they are the means by which we deliver Objective 1 above. They deploy their skills and experience without remuneration beyond minimal expenses, and many of them waive even that. This is what enables ACS to offer a genuinely affordable service to our clients, many of whom may be considered to be 'less well-off'. And there is no compromising of standards: volunteer counsellors have an intensive interview to ensure that they meet the criteria which the organisation sets, are DBS

checked and are expected to give three counselling sessions per week. All counsellors have group supervision every two weeks with an experienced supervisor.
During 2023 we have had the support of three clinical supervisors, Brigitte McAndrew, Barbara Akers and Heather Lewis who, in addition to their support for counsellors, have continued to be pivotal in the development of the service. Their remuneration is significantly below the market rate and they are crucial to the delivery of Objective 2 above. We currently offer eight supervision groups and in 2024 we are looking to expand on this, as we will have additional Supervision capacity. We have made provision for one in-person supervision group back in the centre and hope to establish a second during 2024. Thus, ensuring a hybrid system that gives counsellors the choice. During the year there were on average 22 counsellors.
Brigitte McAndrew is also our Clinical Lead and continued during 2023 to ensure the quality and safety of counsellors and the clinical work in conjunction with Barbara and Heather. Sadly, Heather Lewis resigned in December 2023. We are extremely grateful for her support of ACS, particularly during the difficult Pandemic years. Recruitment of an additional Supervisor and a Supervisor-in-Training has taken place.
There is a well-regarded programme of Continuous Professional Development to ensure that our volunteers continue to develop their skills. As well as trained counsellors we recruit and develop trainee counsellors who are undertaking their Diploma in Counselling at local colleges, training establishments and universities.
Our supervisors and volunteers have worked very hard throughout 2023 and shown much perseverance in adapting to new systems, that have helped streamline and improve operational procedures. There continued to be some natural turnover of volunteers during the year: however, this slowed during 2023. We continue to welcome new volunteer counsellors from a diverse range of backgrounds, and we hope your time here will be rewarding.

All members of the Trustee Body are themselves volunteers and put in many hours of work to ensure the smooth-running of the service; their role is not only strategic: each trustee makes a real 'hands-on' contribution to the organisation as well. John Rampton, our Treasurer has spent many hours on maintenance to the fabric of the building and continues to follow up on the refurbishment of the toilet. Susan has liaised with the administrator, so that Newsletters are out on time and Darren has facilitated excellent EDI training for our counsellors.

SECTION D - ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

1. HOPES AS EXPRESSED IN PREVIOUS TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

a. Re-establish a centre-based team, which creates a well-used Hub

A centre-based team has been re-established with either the Manager or Administrator working from the office each day. This has resulted in a more engaging environment within the centre. Improved communication at all levels and a tangible sense of teamwork. Following the establishment of the shared drive the previous year, Michelle Cage our administrator and Femmie Bonsier our Manager have introduced some different procedures and documentation to streamline and improve operations.
Like all procedural change, this has not been without teething problems.
The most prominent changes have been to the screening procedure, where an appointment system and new documentation have been introduced.

Thanks must be given to the supervision team for their co-operation and perseverance during these changes. This system is in its infancy but looks to be moving forward in the right direction and with amendments along the way, should prove worth the hard work.

b. Develop services and attract funding, in order to reduce waiting times for clients.

The NHS have rented a room on four days a week and this is hoped to continue but each financial year they are dependent on their allocated budget. We continue to monitor this closely, to see if there is any competing demand for counselling rooms from counsellors but have not found this to be an issue. This continues to help greatly with our finances. The NHS counsellors have become a welcome extension to the ACS team and have on occasion attended ACS CPD events. Their presence in the building has also assisted by reducing the frequency of chaperone requests. We have limited room hire to outside agencies to one room at a time, to enable our counsellors to book rooms.
Effective targeting of recruitment to match room availability has also helped ensure optimum room usage.
The excellent administration skills of Michelle Cage, who has kept a very tight control on session dates and payments have ensured that very few payment anomalies or arrears occurred.
Increased counsellor sessions have resulted in much higher client contributions in 2023 but the Manager's time has not allowed for extra funding bids to be submitted. Extra funding for specific needs, would be useful. For example, update of Centre facilities and CPD provision.
It costs the service approximately £35 to run a counselling session and ACS relies on client contributions to enable it to function.

c. Free/heavily subsidised CPD provision

Much of the CPD provision for this year has been heavily subsidised and high attendance achieved for some events, for instance, Hybrid and remote working, EDI (Equality and Diversity Inclusion) and Sand Tray therapy. However, it has proved generally difficult to encourage counsellors back to in-person training. This may be due to the high amount of CPD now offered on-line post pandemic and also the number of demands that many of the counsellors have, where they are balancing work/parental responsibilities/their course training and practice hours. We continue to try and improve our CPD offering. In particular we would like to offer EUPD (Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder) training to our qualified counsellors. This would assist us in reducing some of our more complex clients that remain longer on the waiting list, until a more experienced counsellor becomes available.

d. Strengthen counsellor retention through e.g. improved communication, greater involvement in cross-service activities, more team-building, improved attendance at CPD events.

During 2023 there has been a period of stability with improved counsellor retention. The feedback from Counsellors has been that the Centre has become a positive and engaging environment. Improvements have been made to the layout and tidiness of the office. The Manager and Administrator have worked hard to build and develop a team spirit. Inductions of counsellors are arranged, so that both the Manager and Administrator are present at the office and this establishes a clear line of contact from the start, with counsellors encouraged to ask for any support they might need.
As previously mentioned, uptake of CPD needs further encouragement. Frequent and ongoing discussions continue to take place regarding the payment of qualified counsellors to aid retention. The issue of retention of counsellors, particularly after qualifying, continues to be a focus for the whole executive team.

e. Enhance the premises.

The Centre has undergone somewhat of a facelift during 2023, to make it a more user-friendly environment: disposal of the sofa from the office, allowing greater room; addition of storage for counsellor bags/belongings; additional storage cupboards; a microwave and coffee machine; a replacement shredder and vacuum-cleaner; plants to improve the air quality and ambience. The Centre is cleaned fortnightly. Counsellors continue to leave the rooms as they find them, and the Administrator and Manager undertake the removal of waste and the laundering of towels and tea towels.

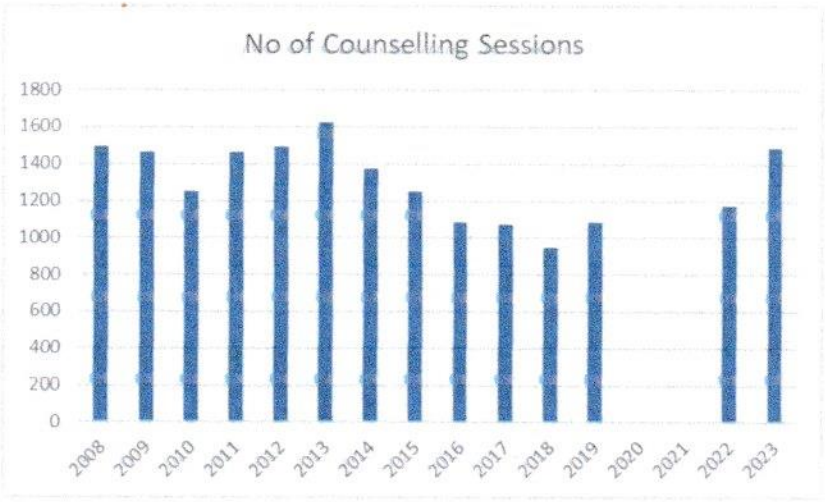
Quotes have been requested to cost the replacement of the toilet to ensure disabled compliancy and replacement of the old metal windows and door at the rear of the building with UPVC ones.

f. Increase the size of the trustee body.

Darren Sharpe has been a very welcome and proactive addition to the Trustee body. He has facilitated CPD sessions and has succeeded in setting up a regular counsellor networking event.
At the beginning of 2024, we have been pleased to welcome Michelle Hamer as an additional trustee. Additional Trustees with specific skills (IT, Media, Fundraising) are still very much needed. Despite some local advertising this continues to be an issue.

2. DETAILS OF COUNSELLING WORK UNDERTAKEN IN 2023

Numbers of clients
This year has seen a further increase in enquiries and referrals into the service. ACS continued to offer counselling that met client need for short, medium and long-term work.



Client profiles
We experienced a large increase this year in the number of enquiries for the service, 298 people contacted us during 2023 up from 244 in 2022, an increase of 22%.
Counselling hours in 2023 increased by 35% on the previous year.

Client Referrals 2023 (up to 31/12/23)

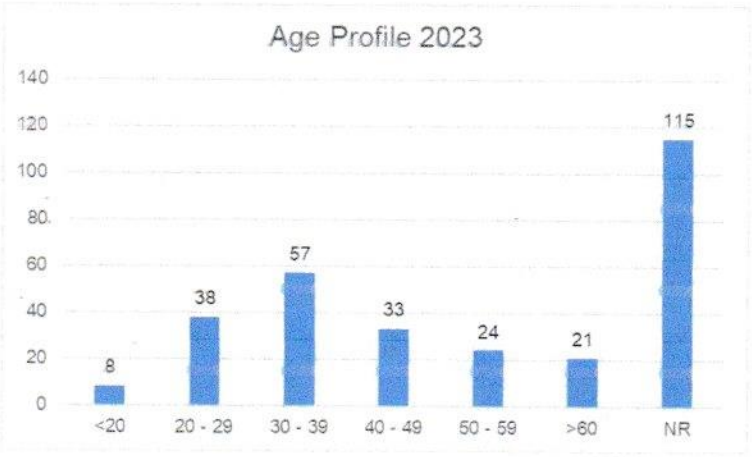
2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
104	115	104	189	244	298

Counselling Hours 2023 (up to 31/12/23)

2021	2022	2023	2024 – End of May	2024 – Total Estimate
NA/Covid	1102	1485	816	1600

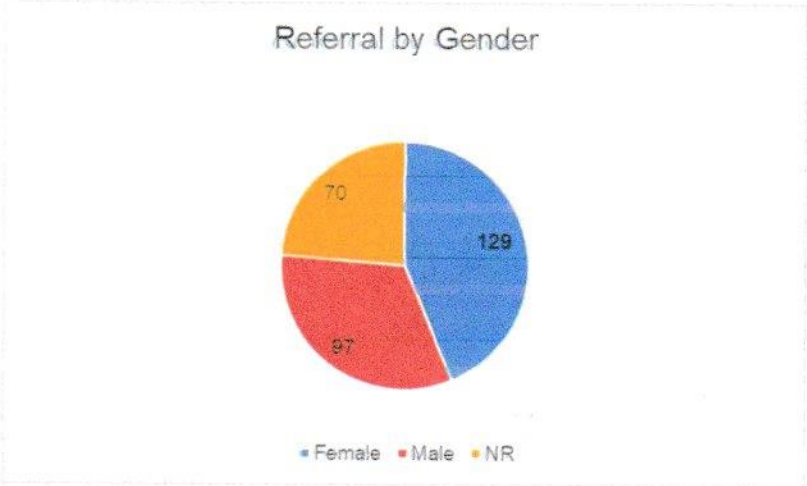
Age Profile 2023

Age of clients is not always recorded, but the majority fall into the 19-39 age bracket.



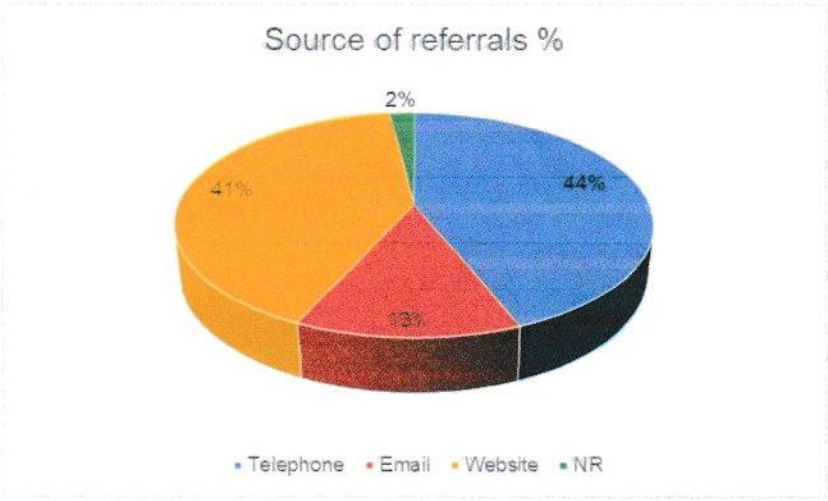
Gender 2023

Rather predictably, about 75% of clients are female.



Source of Referrals 2023

All of our clients are treated as self-referrals; none were funded by outside agencies. The majority come after a recommendation from their GP, a previous client or are returning, but we also see a significant number who have been signposted by other Mental Health services.



Clients access us by telephone or by electronic contact, in roughly equal proportions.

Recommended by:	Actual
GP	7
Dads Unlimited	1
Invicta Health	7
Friend/Family	5
Previous Client	4
Live it Well	1
Forward Trust	3
We are with You	1
Mental Health Service	4
IAPT	4
TOTAL	37

Presenting Issues 2023

Stress, anxiety, depression, trauma and bereavement were issues for 50% of our clients. These were often presenting along with other difficulties and/or diagnoses. The increase in complexity of issues presented to us and the loss of some of our more experienced counsellors meant that often people had a longer wait for allocation to an appropriate counsellor.

We have continued to work with clients suffering from financial hardship this year and have been able to offer 'affordable counselling' to those who need it.

SECTION E - FINANCIAL REVIEW, INCLUDING POLICY ON RESERVES

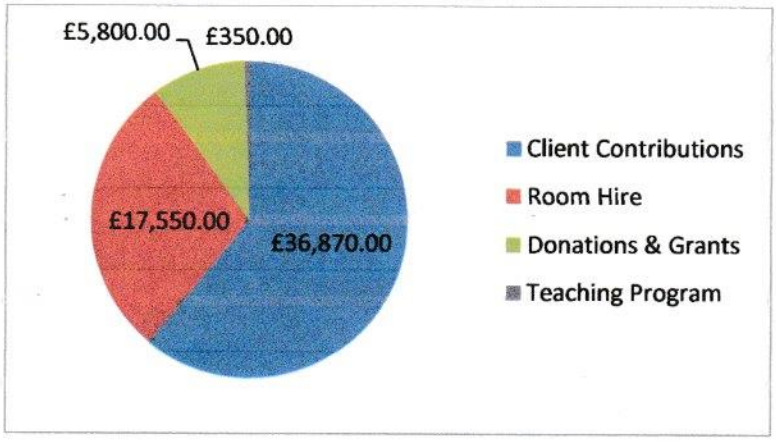
Income for the year 1st January to 31st December 2023 was £61,300 and expenditure was £43,800. Thus the service made an operating surplus of £17,470 and consequently our bank accounts were in a very positive situation at the end of the year. Fixed assets (the property, furniture, fittings) were valued at £81,600. Full details are in the pages following Section G (Declaration).

Income. Our income was a significant increase in comparison to previous years, due to three factors: a high level of client contributions, high income form room hire (primarily by the Kent Community Trust), and the first of three yearly £5,000 grants from the Colyer-Fergusson Trust.

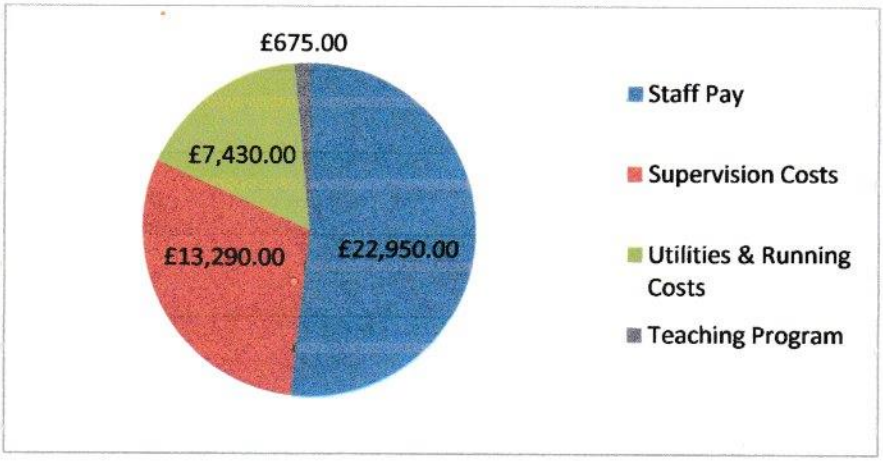
Expenditure. *During the year we increased the rates of pay for our staff, and due to workload overtime* pay was required late in the year. We also increased the rate of pay for the supervisors. Utility costs also increased.

	1st January 2023	31st December 2023
ACS Current Accounts	£5,997	£23,469
ACS Reserve Account	£4,972	£5,016

Income for 2023 - £61,300



Expenditure for 2023 - £43,800



POLICY ON RESERVES

The trustees have decided that the Reserve Account (£5000 approximately) is for emergency, unpredicted expenditure. The norm is for it to be a contingency fund to be drawn upon only to support clients who are unable to contribute more than a token amount per session.

SECTION F - OTHER OPTIONAL INFORMATION

HOPES FOR 2024

a. Reduce waiting times for clients.
b. Reduce the administrative burden of the Manager.
c. Strengthen counsellor retention.
d. Increase the size of the trustee body.

SECTION G - DECLARATION

The trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees Annual Report (TAR) above.

Signed on behalf of the trustees:

Signature/s	Hugh & Cooper	Susan Smith.
Full Name/s	HUGH QUINTIN COOPER	SUSAN MARIE LOUISE SMITH
Position	CO-CHAIR OF TRUSTEES	Co-Chair of Trustees
Date	9th July 2024	9th July 2024

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Report and accounts

31 December 2023

Registered Charity No 1169322

Ashford Counselling Service Limited
Report and accounts
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Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Registered Charity No 1169322

Income and Expenditure Accounts for the Year ending 31st December 2023

	2023	2022
Income	£	£
Client Contributions	36,874.40	25,547.50
Room Hire	17,550.00	9,606.00
Fund Raising	397.14	287.78
Donations	5,804.52	10,724.00
Teaching Program Income/Study Days	350.00	460.00
Miscellaneous:		
Coronavirus Support Grants	-	-
Gift Aid	296.88	436.16
Refund National lottery		(7,765.00)
Bank Account Interest	43.76	3.32
TOTAL	61,316.70	39,299.76
LESS: Expenditure		
Staff & Counsellor Pay & Expenses	36,334.23	33,202.59
Utilities & Running Costs	7,428.20	6,271.67
Teaching Program Costs	37.50	675.00
BLF Contractors & Staff	-	2,590.55
Depreciation	2,066.26	2,066.26
Accrued Expenses	(755.30)	(755.30)
TOTAL	45,110.89	44,050.77
Excess (Expenditure)/Surplus over Income	**16,205.81**	**(4,751.01)**

The Trustees have prepared, the above statement of Income and expenditure from their records which have been examined by Sealy & Johnson Accountants Ltd.

We have no concerns and have come across no matters in connection with the examinatin to which attention should be drawn in order to better understand the report.

The report is made solely to the Trustees. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustees, those matters we are required to state to them in an Independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and its Trustees as a body, for our work on this report.

.....

Sharon Edwards
Accountant
Sealy & Johnson Accountants Ltd
22 Evegate Business Park
Smeeth
Ashford
Kent TN25 6SX

07/06/2024

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Registered Charity No 1169322

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2023

	Notes	2023 £	£	2022 £	£
Fixed Assets					
Property at 123, Church Road		75,000.00		75,000.00	
Furniture, fixtures, fittings		6,612.03		8,265.04	
			81,612.03		83,265.04
Current Assets					
Bank Accounts:					
8068		-		753.56	
3360		-		-	
4368		-		-	
6862		24,469.63		5,243.06	
5163		5,016.06		4,972.62	
		29,485.69		10,969.24	
Current Liabilities					
Unpaid Expenses - Accruals		657.63			
Net Current Assets			28,828.06		10,969.24
Net Assets			**110,440.09**		**94,234.28**
Capital Account					
Balance at start of period		58,344.28			63,095.29
Revaluation Surplus		35,890.00			35,890.00
Surplus/(Deficit)		16,205.81			(4,751.01)
Charity funds			**110,440.09**		**94,234.28**

0.00

For the financial year in question the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.
No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.
The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

D S Rampton

John Rampton
Director - Treasurer & Trustee
Approved by the board on 9th July 2024

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Ashford Counselling Service		
On accounts for the year ended	31 December 2023	**Charity no (if any)**	1169322
Set out on pages			

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2023

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I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
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** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:		**Date:**	07/06/2024
Name:	Sharon Edwards		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	ACCA		
Address:	Sealy & Johnson Accountants Ltd		

22 The Barn, Evegate Business Park
Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SX

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Give **here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.**	I have satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited for this year under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination. In 2018 the property at 123 Church Road was revalued to £75,000 which created a revaluation surplus of £35,890. The property has not been depreciated.

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Report and accounts

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Registered Charity No 1169322

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Sharon Edwards
Accountant
Sealy & Johnson Accountants Ltd
22 Evegate Business Park
Smeeth
Ashford
Kent TN25 6SX

07/06/2024

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Registered Charity No 1169322

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Current Liabilities					
Unpaid Expenses - Accruals		657.63			
Net Current Assets			28,828.06		10,969.24
Net Assets			**110,440.09**		**94,234.28**
Capital Account					
Balance at start of period		58,344.28			63,095.29
Revaluation Surplus		35,890.00			35,890.00
Surplus/(Deficit)		16,205.81			(4,751.01)
Charity funds			**110,440.09**		**94,234.28**

0.00

For the financial year in question the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.
No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.
The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

JRampton

John Rampton
Director - Treasurer & Trustee
Approved by the board on 9th July 2024

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Ashford Counselling Service		
On accounts for the year ended	31 December 2023	**Charity no (if any)**	1169322
Set out on pages			

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2023

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust'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 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:		**Date:**	07/06/2024
Name:	Sharon Edwards		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	ACCA		
Address:	Sealy & Johnson Accountants Ltd		

22 The Barn, Evegate Business Park
Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SX

Section B	Disclosure
	Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	I have satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited for this year under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination. In 2018 the property at 123 Church Road was revalued to £75,000 which created a revaluation surplus of £35,890. The property has not been depreciated.

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Report and accounts

31 December 2023

Registered Charity No 1169322

Ashford Counselling Service Limited
Report and accounts
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Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts	3-4

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Registered Charity No 1169322

Income and Expenditure Accounts for the Year ending 31st December 2023

	2023	2022
Income	£	£
Client Contributions	36,874.40	25,547.50
Room Hire	17,550.00	9,606.00
Fund Raising	397.14	287.78
Donations	5,804.52	10,724.00
Teaching Program Income/Study Days	350.00	460.00
Miscellaneous:		
Coronavirus Support Grants	-	-
Gift Aid	296.88	436.16
Refund National lottery		(7,765.00)
Bank Account Interest	43.76	3.32
TOTAL	61,316.70	39,299.76
LESS: Expenditure		
Staff & Counsellor Pay & Expenses	36,334.23	33,202.59
Utilities & Running Costs	7,428.20	6,271.67
Teaching Program Costs	37.50	675.00
BLF Contractors & Staff	-	2,590.55
Depreciation	2,066.26	2,066.26
Accrued Expenses	(755.30)	(755.30)
TOTAL	45,110.89	44,050.77
Excess (Expenditure)/Surplus over Income	**16,205.81**	**(4,751.01)**

The Trustees have prepared, the above statement of Income and expenditure from their records which have been examined by Sealy & Johnson Accountants Ltd.

We have no concerns and have come across no matters in connection with the examinatin to which attention should be drawn in order to better understand the report.

The report is made solely to the Trustees. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustees, those matters we are required to state to them in an Independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and its Trustees as a body, for our work on this report.

.....

Sharon Edwards
Accountant
Sealy & Johnson Accountants Ltd
22 Evegate Business Park
Smeeth
Ashford
Kent TN25 6SX

07/06/2024

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Registered Charity No 1169322

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2023

	Notes	2023 £	£	2022 £	£
Fixed Assets					
Property at 123, Church Road		75,000.00		75,000.00	
Furniture, fixtures, fittings		6,612.03		8,265.04	
			81,612.03		83,265.04
Current Assets					
Bank Accounts:					
8068		-		753.56	
3360		-		-	
4368		-		-	
6862		24,469.63		5,243.06	
5163		5,016.06		4,972.62	
		29,485.69		10,969.24	
Current Liabilities					
Unpaid Expenses - Accruals		657.63			
Net Current Assets			28,828.06		10,969.24
Net Assets			**110,440.09**		**94,234.28**
Capital Account					
Balance at start of period		58,344.28			63,095.29
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Surplus/(Deficit)		16,205.81			(4,751.01)
Charity funds			**110,440.09**		**94,234.28**

0.00

For the financial year in question the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.
No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.
The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

JRampton

John Rampton
Director - Treasurer & Trustee
Approved by the board on 9th July 2024

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Ashford Counselling Service		
On accounts for the year ended	31 December 2023	**Charity no (if any)**	1169322
Set out on pages			

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2023

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust'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 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:		**Date:**	07/06/2024
Name:	Sharon Edwards		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	ACCA		
Address:	Sealy & Johnson Accountants Ltd		

22 The Barn, Evegate Business Park
Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SX

Section B	Disclosure
	Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	I have satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited for this year under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination. In 2018 the property at 123 Church Road was revalued to £75,000 which created a revaluation surplus of £35,890. The property has not been depreciated.

ASHFORD COUNSELLING SERVICE (CIO)

England & Wales - Charity number 1169322

Accounts

ASHFORD COUNSELLING SERVICE

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR FROM 01/01/22 TO 31/12/2022

INTRODUCTION

The Covid pandemic continued to affect our work in 2022. This had a major impact on the way we delivered our services and we start by thanking all those at all levels of the service who made superhuman efforts to mitigate all the problems we encountered and to praise the way that all members of the service worked together to adapt to new ways of working amidst increasingly challenging circumstances.

SECTION A - REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Charity registration number: 1169322

Registered charity: Ashford Counselling Service (CIO)

Principal Address: The Paul Bower Centre, 123 Church Road, Ashford TN24 0JQ

TRUSTEES WHO MANAGE THE CHARITY (Executive Committee)

Hugh Cooper	Chair	Elected at AGM 2021
John Rampton	Hon. Treasurer	Elected at AGM 2021
Susan Smith		Elected at AGM 2021
Daniel Frings		Elected at AGM 30/06/2021 to 29/09/2022
Darren Sharpe		Nominated

ADVISERS AND AGENTS

Edwards Williams Ltd	Accountant and Independent Examiner
Lloyds Bank, Ashford	Bankers

SENIOR STAFF During this period

Jane Nice	Manager
Brigitte McAndrew	Clinical Lead
Karen Wrack (Dec 2021 to September 2022)	Administrators
Michelle Cage September 2022 to present	

SECTION B - STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The organisation was established in 1987 and is governed by its constitution. Since July 2021 the service is a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) managed by its Trustee Body. The Trustee Body consists of volunteers selected for the skills they can bring to the organisation as well as their interest and commitment to our work. They meet at least bi-monthly; in 2022 they met formally eight times.

Trustees are voted in each year at the Annual General Meeting by members of Ashford Counselling Service plus attendees from local organisations who have an interest in our work.

The Trustee Body delegates responsibility for the day to day running of the organisation to the Manager who is supported by a Clinical Lead and an Administrator; all staff are employed part-time.

ADDITIONAL GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Ashford Counselling Service is an organisational member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy. It adheres to its ethical framework.

The agency has a comprehensive Handbook of policies and procedures which is under rolling review. The Handbook includes all aspects of Health & Safety, Risk Assessment, Trouble-shooting and problem resolution. An appendix includes the new constitution.

The organisation does not receive any year-on-year grant from statutory funders and as a result we have to elicit contributions from our clients. We also attempt to obtain grant-funding from appropriate bodies by submitting bids. This enables us to provide the clinical support and to continue to provide a high standard of service to our clients.

SECTION C - OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The objectives as set out in the current constitution are as follows:

The objects of the CIO are:

(1) To provide high quality, low-cost counselling to persons in Ashford and the surrounding area suffering from mental or emotional difficulties.

(2) To provide continuous professional development to counsellors, counsellors-in-training and others.

CONTRIBUTION MADE BY VOLUNTEERS

It cannot be over-emphasised that the contribution made by our counsellors is the bedrock of the service and they are the means by which we deliver Objective 1 above. They deploy their skills and experience without remuneration beyond minimal expenses, and many of them waive even that. This is what enables ACS to offer a genuinely affordable service to our clients, many of whom may be considered to be 'less well-off'. And there is no compromising of standards: volunteer counsellors have an intensive interview to ensure that they meet the criteria which the organisation sets, are DBS checked and are expected to give three counselling sessions per week. All counsellors have group supervision every two weeks with an experienced supervisor.
There are three clinical supervisors, Brigitte McAndrew, Barbara Akers and Heather Lewis who, in addition to their support for counsellors, play an important part in the development of the service. Their remuneration is significantly below the market rate and they are crucial to the delivery of

Objective 2 above. We currently offer seven supervision groups and in 2023 we are ready to expand to eight. During the year there were 27 counsellors.
Brigitte McAndrew is also our Clinical Lead and continues to ensure the quality and safety of counsellors and the clinical work in conjunction with Barbara and Heather.
There is a well-regarded programme of Continuous Professional Development to ensure that our volunteers continue to develop their skills. As well as trained counsellors we recruit and develop trainee counsellors who are undertaking their Diploma in Counselling at local colleges, training establishments and universities.
We have been extremely grateful this year for the support of many of our volunteers who have continued to adapt to new methods of administrative and 'housekeeping' duties which enabled our organisation to function.
There continued to be a turnover of volunteers during the year: some volunteer counsellors left ACS in 2022 to either further their careers or take some time for themselves. Included among this number are John King, Sarah Hanshaw and Jackie West who have provided excellent work on behalf of ACS over several years. We wish them all well with their future plans and extend our sincere thanks for their time and expertise whilst at ACS. Many of them remain as friends of ACS. We were pleased to welcome new volunteer counsellors; we hope your time here will be rewarding.

All members of the Trustee Body are also volunteers and put in many hours of work to ensure the smooth-running of the service. Their role is not only strategic: each trustee makes a real 'hands-on' contribution to the organisation as well. John, as well as being our Treasurer, spent many hours organising the installation of the new shopfront and undertook repairs to the fabric of the building following the installation, ensuring that the building was up and running as quickly as possible. Susan wears many hats within the organisation and spends many hours both on and off the premises ensuring the effectiveness of the service. The commitment to the service over more than two decades by Hugh, our wordsmith, is truly admirable. Darren is an exemplary bridge between the sharp end of counselling and the strategic direction of the service. Dan was a huge source of ideas and helped with funding bids; unfortunately, due to his many other commitments he had to step down from the Board in September. He remains with us as a volunteer qualified counsellor.

SECTION D - ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

1. HOPES AS EXPRESSED IN PREVIOUS TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

a. Stabilise the service as the pandemic alters the working situation; establish a vigorous 'new normal'.

There has gradually been a return to face-to-face work with this generally becoming our preferred way of working. We continue to offer remote counselling when needed.
At the beginning of 2022 we established the use of online spreadsheets for recording client enquiries, sessions, contributions and statistics. We also instituted a double contribution by clients before or at the first session. This has greatly improved our ability to monitor and address issues with clients' screening, allocation, attendance and progression. Counsellors can also access their documents and book counselling rooms online. Access to documents is limited to a need-to-know basis to maintain confidentiality. Thanks are given to our Administrators for setting up, maintaining and improving this facility.

b. Develop services and attract funding, in order to reduce waiting times for clients.

The NHS have increased their room hire from two to three days a week, 8.30 to 16.30, and this is hoped to continue to grow to up to five days. Currently we have been able to meet competing demand

for counselling rooms from counsellors, many of whom book evening sessions. This has helped greatly with our finances. We have limited room hire to outside agencies to one room at a time to enable our counsellors to book rooms.
John Rampton (Treasurer) has made a successful bid for funding towards staff costs which should come to fruition early 2023.
The Community Funded post-natal depression project continued into its sixth and final year in 2021/22, ending in the Spring of 2022. Unfortunately, there has been little time to explore opportunities for taking this into the future during the remainder of 2022. Exploration of such possibilities need to be undertaken with Health and the Children's Centres as does possible funding streams in 2023.
It costs the service approximately £30 to run a counselling session and ACS relies on client contributions to enable it to function.
The online spreadsheets enable counsellors to input session dates and assessment scores as they happen and these are now checked almost daily to allow difficulties to be addressed as they occur.

c. Ensure that supervision time per counsellor/counsellor-in-training matches the number of clients being seen.

This has fluctuated with counsellors' personal circumstances but this has generally been achieved.

d. Strengthen counsellor retention through e.g. improved communication, greater involvement in cross-service activities, more team-building, improved attendance at CPD events.

All new counsellors have had face to face office inductions at the Centre with the Manager, but in 2022 there was a higher-than-expected turnover of counsellors; the issue of retention of counsellors, particularly after qualifying, continues to be a focus for the whole executive team.

e. Enhance the premises.

Funding was obtained from The Brook Trust administered by Kent Community Foundation to replace the Shopfront. This has enabled light into the building, improved energy efficiency and provided improved soundproofing and wheelchair access.

Ventilation has been installed in the toilet.

The Centre is cleaned fortnightly. Counsellors continue to leave the rooms as they find them and generally remove rubbish and food waste along with staff. The Administrator is generally in the Centre three days a week and has undertaken office tidying and improvements.

f. Increase the size of the trustee body.

Darren Sharpe has been participating in Trustee Meetings to be proposed for election to the Board in May 2023. Despite some local advertising the small size of the trustee body remains a problem.

2. DETAILS OF COUNSELLING WORK UNDERTAKEN IN 2022

Numbers of clients
This year has seen a further and significant increase in enquiries and referrals into the service. ACS continued to offer counselling that met client need for short, medium and long-term work.

Client profiles

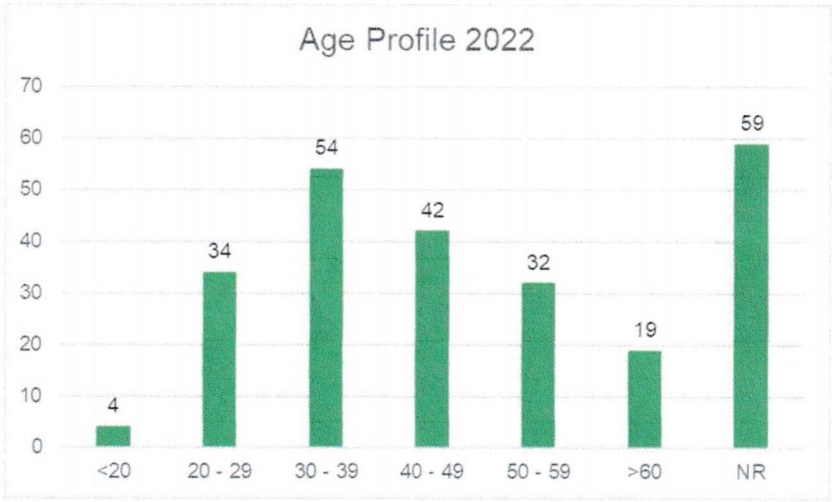
We experienced a large increase this year in the number of enquiries for the service, 244 people contacted us during 2022 up from 189 in 2021.

Client Referrals 2022 (up to 29/12/2022)

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
104	115	104	189	244

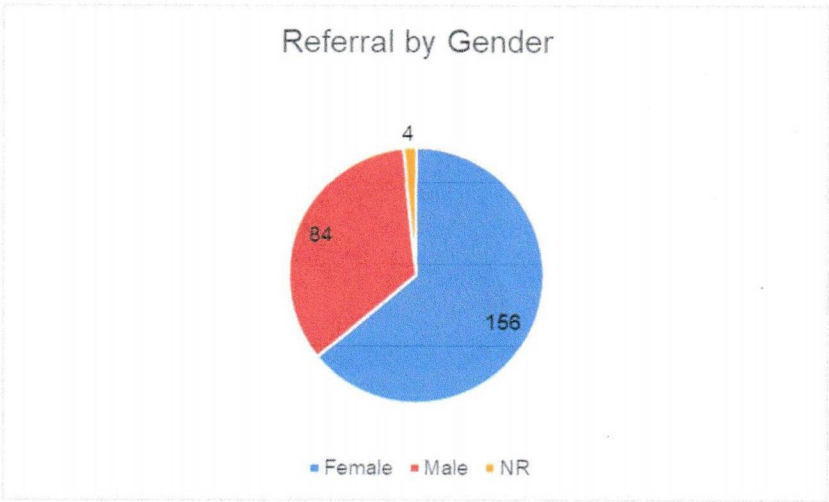
Age Profile 2022

Age of clients is not always recorded, but the majority fall into the 30-49 age bracket.



Gender 2022

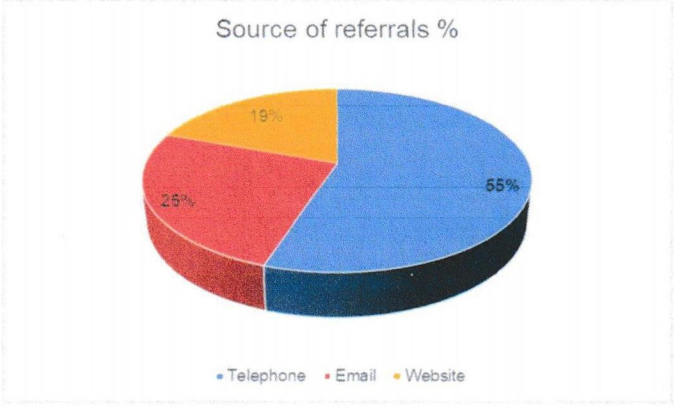
This ratio is slightly changed from last year: the ratio of men being counselled has risen from a quarter to a third.



Source of Referrals 2022

All of our clients are treated as self-referrals; none were funded by outside agencies. The majority come after a recommendation from their GP or are returning, but we also see a significant number who have been signposted by other Mental Health services.

Clients access us by telephone or by electronic contact, in roughly equal proportions.



Recommended by:	Actual
GP	13
Domestic Abuse Service	1
Invicta Health	8
Friend/Family	3
Previous Client	3
Ashford Mediation	1
Live it Well	1
Forward Trust	1
We are with You	4
Mental Health Service	4
IAPT	2
TOTAL	**41**

Presenting Issues 2022

Stress, anxiety, depression, trauma and bereavement were issues for 50% of our clients. These were often presenting along with other difficulties and/or diagnoses. The increase in complexity of issues presented to us and the loss of some of our more experienced counsellors meant that often people had a longer wait for allocation to an appropriate counsellor.

We have continued to work with clients suffering from financial hardship this year and have been able to offer 'affordable counselling' to those who need it.

SECTION E - FINANCIAL REVIEW, INCLUDING POLICY ON RESERVES

Income for the year 1st January to 31st December 2022 was £39,300 and expenditure was £44,051. The expenditure included a refund of unused funds of £7,765 to the National Lottery after the PND project ended in the spring. Excluding this refund the service made an operating surplus of £3,014.

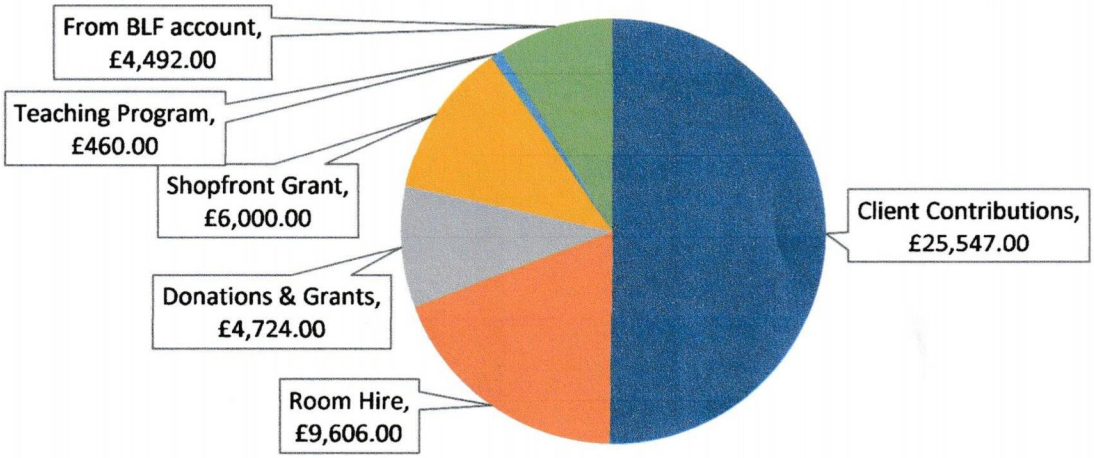
Fixed assets (property, furniture, fittings) were valued at £82,265. Full details are in the pages following Section G (Declaration).

	1st January 2022	31st December 2022
ACS Current Account	£3,278	£5,969
ACS Reserve Account	£4,970	£4,972
Big Lottery Fund Account	£12,757	closed

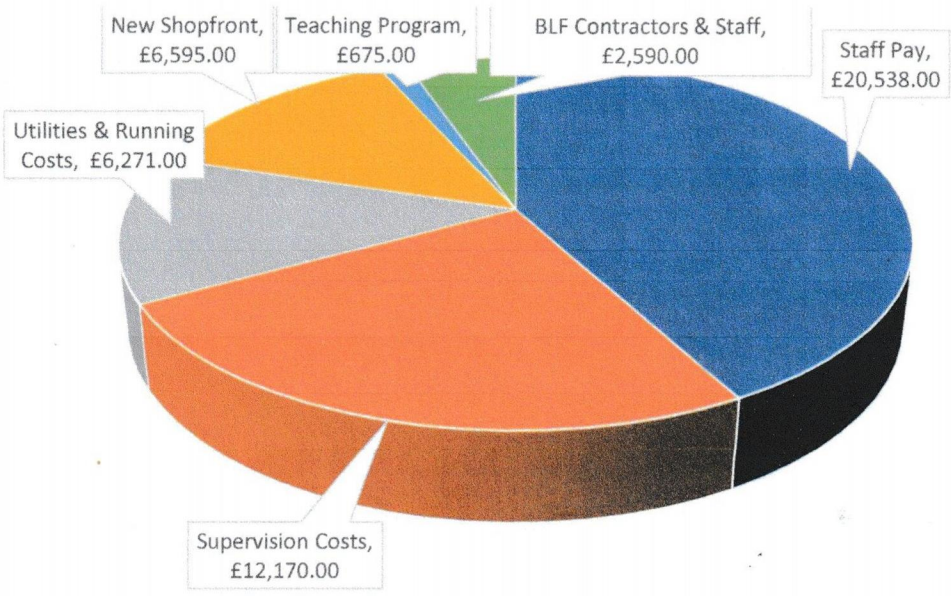
Income. Our main source of income remains client contributions and this remained stable. We were grateful to receive a grant of £6,000 from the Brook Trust, via the Kent Community Foundation, for replacing the shopfront. We also received a grant of £2,624 from KCC for the ventilation (installed in 2021). Room hire income increased significantly, the majority from regular bookings by the Kent Community Health Foundation Trust.

Expenditure. Costs increased for staff pay and supervisor payments, and included costs for the new shopfront.

Income for 2022 - £39,300 (with BLF account transfer added)



.Expenditure for 2022 - £36,280 (excluding National Lottery refund)



POLICY ON RESERVES

The trustees have decided that the Reserve Account (currently less than £5000) is to be drawn upon to support clients who are unable to contribute more than a token amount per session. However, there may on occasion be the need to use it for emergency, unpredicted expenditure.

SECTION F - OTHER OPTIONAL INFORMATION

HOPES FOR 2023

a. Reduce the waiting time for clients by developing services and skillsets; address any funding implications of this target.
b. Streamline administrative processes.
c. Strengthen counsellor retention through e.g. improved communication, greater involvement in cross-service activities, more team-building, improved attendance at CPD events, more incentives.
d. Increase the size of the trustee body.

SECTION G - DECLARATION

The trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees Annual Report (TAR) above.

Signed on behalf of the trustees:

Signature/s	Hugh Q Cooper	D&Rampton
Full Name/s	HUGH QUINTIN COOPER	ANTHONY JOHN RAMPTON
Position	CHAIR	TRUSTEE AND TREASURER
Date	23rd May 2023	23rd May 2023

CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Ashford Counselling Service		
On accounts for the year ended	31 December 2022	**Charity no (if any)**	1169322
Set out on pages	1 - 2 (remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)		

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2022

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust'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 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

~~[The charity's gross income exceeded £250,000 and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of [insert name of applicable listed body]]. *Delete [ ] if not applicable.*~~

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination (other than that disclosed below *) which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:	[signature]	**Date:**	27/2/2023
Name:	Valerie Moon		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body	ACCA		

(if any):	
Address:	Edwards Williams Ltd
	22 Evegate Business Park
	Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SX

Section B Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

I have satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited for this year under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination.

In 2018 the property at 123 Church Road was revalued to £75,000 which created a revaluation surplus of £35,890. The property has not been depreciated.

Company Registered number
10231859

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Report and accounts

31 December 2022

Registered Charity No
1169322

Ashford Counselling Service Limited
Report and accounts
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Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Registered Charity No 1169322 Companies House No 10231859

Income and Expenditure Accounts for the Year ending 31st December 2022

	2022	2021
Income	£	£
Client Contributions	25,547.50	26,261.50
Room Hire	9,606.00	428.00
Fund Raising	287.78	72.22
Donations	10,724.00	1,638.00
Teaching Program Income/Study Days	460.00	1,960.00
Miscellaneous:		
Coronavirus Support Grants	-	1,008.73
Gift Aid	436.16	-
Refund National lottery	(7,765.00)	-
Bank Account Interest	3.32	2.10
TOTAL	39,299.76	31,370.55
LESS: Expenditure		
Staff & Counsellor Pay & Expenses	33,202.59	28,296.48
Utilities & Running Costs	6,271.67	4,419.55
Teaching Program Costs	675.00	1,559.95
BLF Contractors & Staff	2,590.55	2,824.18
Depreciation	2,066.26	933.96
Accrued Expenses	(755.30)	755.30
TOTAL	44,050.77	38,789.42
Excess (Expenditure)/Surplus over Income	**(4,751.01)**	**(7,418.87)**

The Trustees have prepared, the above statement of Income and expenditure from their records which have been examined by Edwards Williams Ltd.

We have no concerns and have come across no matters in connection with the examinatin to which attention should be drawn in order to better understand the report.

The report is made solely to the Trustees. Our work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charity's Trustees, those matters we are required to state to them in an Independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and its Trustees as a body, for our work on this report.

Valerie Moon
Accountant
Edwards Williams Ltd
22 Evegate Business Park
Smeeth
Ashford
Kent TN25 6SX

27/02/2023

ANTHONY JOHN RAMPTON

Trustee and Treasurer
Ashford Counselling Service CIO

1st March 2023

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Registered Charity No 1169322 Companies House No 10231859

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2022

	Notes	2022 £	£	2021 £	£
Fixed Assets					
Property at 123, Church Road		75,000.00		75,000.00	
Furniture, fixtures, fittings		8,265.04		3,735.84	
			83,265.04		78,735.84
Current Assets					
Bank Accounts:					
8068		753.56		3,277.69	
3360		-		4,969.94	
4368		-		12,757.12	
6862		5,243.06			
5163		4,972.62		-	
		10,969.24		21,004.75	
Current Liabilities					
Unpaid Expenses - Accruals		-		755.30	
Net Current Assets			10,969.24		20,249.45
Net Assets			**94,234.28**		**98,985.29**
Capital Account					
Balance at start of period		63,095.29			70,514.16
Revaluation Surplus		*35,890.00*			35,890.00
Surplus/(Deficit)		(4,751.01)			(7,418.87)
Charity funds			**94,234.28**		**98,985.29**

For the financial year in question the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.
No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.
The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

John Rampton
Director - Treasurer & Trustee
Approved by the board on

ASHFORD COUNSELLING SERVICE (CIO)

England & Wales - Charity number 1169322

Accounts

ASHFORD COUNSELLING SERVICE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR FROM 01/01/21 TO 31/12/2021

INTRODUCTION

The Covid pandemic continued to be a major source of disruption to our work in 2021. This had a major impact on the way we delivered our services and we start by thanking all those at all levels of the service who made superhuman efforts to mitigate all the problems we encountered and to praise the way that all members of the service worked together to adapt to new ways of working amidst increasingly challenging circumstances.

SECTION A - REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Charity registration number: 1169322

Company number:10231859

Registered charity: Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Principal Address: The Paul Bower Centre, 123 Church Road, Ashford TN24 0JQ

TRUSTEES WHO MANAGE THE CHARITY (Executive Committee)

Hugh Cooper	Chair	Elected at AGM 2021
John Rampton	Hon. Treasurer	Elected at AGM 2021
Susan Smith		Elected at AGM 2021
Daniel Frings		Elected at AGM 30/06/2021

ADVISERS AND AGENTS

Edwards Williams Ltd	Accountant and Independent Examiner
vacant	Independent Consultant and Tax Adviser
Lloyds Bank, Ashford	Bankers

SENIOR STAFF During this period

Jane Nice	Manager
Brigitte McAndrew	Clinical Lead
Jane Nice (Jan 2021 – May 2021)	Administrator
Fran Anderson (May 2021 – October2021)	
Karen Wrack (Dec 2021 - present	

SECTION B - STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The organisation was established in 1987 and is governed by its constitution. Since July 2021 the service is a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) managed by its Trustee Body. The Trustee Body consists of volunteers selected for the skills they can bring to the organisation as well as their interest and commitment to our work. They meet at least quarterly (January, April, July and October); in 2021 they met formally eight times.

Trustees are voted in each year at the Annual General Meeting by members of Ashford Counselling Service plus attendees from local organisations who have an interest in our work.

The Trustee Body delegates responsibility for the day to day running of the organisation to the Manager who is supported by a Clinical Lead and an Administrator; all staff are employed part-time.

ADDITIONAL GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Ashford Counselling Service is an organisational member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy. It adheres to its ethical framework.

The agency has a comprehensive Handbook of policies and procedures which is under rolling review. The Handbook includes all aspects of Health & Safety, Risk Assessment, Trouble-shooting and problem resolution. An appendix includes the new constitution.

The organisation does not receive any year-on-year grant from statutory funders and as a result we have to elicit contributions from our clients. Each year there is a further target to be raised by a small fund-raising sub-group to enable us to provide the clinical support and to continue to provide a high standard of service to our clients.

SECTION C - OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The objectives as set out in the current constitution are as follows:

The objects of the CIO are:

(1) To provide high quality, low-cost counselling to persons in Ashford and the surrounding area suffering from mental or emotional difficulties.

(2) To provide continuous professional development to counsellors, counsellors-in-training and others.

CONTRIBUTION MADE BY VOLUNTEERS

It cannot be over-emphasised that the contribution made by our counsellors is the bedrock of the service: they deploy their skills and experience without remuneration beyond minimal expenses, and many of them waive even that. This is what enables ACS to offer a genuinely affordable service to our clients, many of whom may be considered to be 'less well-off'. And there is no compromising of standards: volunteer counsellors have an intensive interview to ensure that they meet the criteria which the organisation sets, are DBS checked and are expected to give three counselling sessions per week. All counsellors have supervision every two weeks with an experienced supervisor.

There are three clinical supervisors who, in addition to their support for counsellors, play an important part in the development of the service; their remuneration is significantly below the market rate.
There is a well-regarded programme of Continuous Professional Development to ensure that our volunteers continue to develop their skills. As well as trained counsellors we recruit and develop trainee counsellors who are undertaking their Diploma in Counselling at local colleges.
We have been extremely grateful this year for the support of many of our volunteers who have continued to adapt to new methods of administrative and 'housekeeping' duties which enabled our organisation to function.
This year we have said farewell to Diane Rampton, as a long-term supervisor and counsellor with ACS; her departure has been felt by all. Elena Ward, supervisor in training, also left after completing her qualification. Happily, we have recruited Heather Lewis as a supervisor and along with Brigitte McAndrew and Barbara Akers they comprise our current team of supervisors and we currently offer 7 supervision groups. During the year there were 27 counsellors. There was a larger turnover of volunteers than usual during the year: some volunteer counsellors left ACS in 2021 to either further their careers or take some time for themselves. We wish them all well with their future plans and extend our sincere thanks for their time and expertise whilst at ACS. Many of them remain as friends of ACS. We were pleased to welcome new volunteer counsellors; we hope your time here will be rewarding.

All members of the Trustee Body are also volunteers and put in many hours of work to ensure the smooth-running of the service; their role is not only strategic: each trustee makes a real 'hands-on' contribution to the organisation as well.

SECTION D - ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

1. HOPES AS EXPRESSED IN PREVIOUS TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

a. Stabilise the service once restrictions are lifted and establish a vigorous 'new normal'.

Covid-19 continued to blight all efforts to establish a 'new normal' and at the time of writing infection rates remain alarmingly high. Again, many hours of work have been spent developing protocols, and updating them as the situation and government decisions changed.

b. Continue to provide PND services, seeking alternative funding if necessary.

The Community Funded post-natal depression project continued into its sixth and final year in 2021/22. Following meetings with the Children's Centre staff, Health Visitors, Ashford Children's Partnership and with the agreement of the Community Fund we were able to return to in person groups for four women at the Bluebells Children's Centre in the Autumn. We enlisted creche workers from Canterbury Early years Project for the first cohort and hoped to provide 24 sessions over the Autumn and Spring of 2022. Referrals were slow to arrive as Health Visitors continued to be needed with the NHS for Covid-19; they also had changes in Lead and staff so new referrals were sparse. Further problems arose with personnel shortages and changes with the Children's Centre workers and other professionals; add to this the Children's Centre's revised Risk Assessment and lack of creche workers and it is no surprise that the start was delayed. In total 17 sessions took place over 2021-22. Attendance varied from one to three women a week. Women were contacted weekly. Although the number attending was small the group offered much needed support often to new mothers who had little family or other regular support.

The Community Fund project has now ended and we are busy reporting back. We are determined to maintain as far as possible the links we have made during the course of the project. Our overall judgement is that the project was of huge and significant assistance to the various mothers and their families, and that there remains a huge unmet need out there.

c. Develop services and attract funding, including from room hire.

The continuance of the pandemic affected ourselves and the general population adversely. Much time was necessarily spent on recruitment of staff and volunteers to maintain the service we offer. A grant was obtained from KCC for ventilation into the building and we were able to re-open the counselling rooms at the end of October. The NHS began hiring a room for a day a week and this increased to two days a week at the end of 2021; in this way, along with a counsellor hiring the room for private sessions, we began to see a return of this income.

d. Fund-raise to sustain the general services to clients.

ASC relies on client contributions to enable it to function. Counsellors played a vital role in recording client sessions, which enabled Administrators to track client contributions. However, the system of monthly returns provided information which was out of date when it arrived and allowed non-payments to accrue. A new system of alerting Administrator and Manager of new allocations and online recording has been developed and set up by Karen Wrack allowing counsellors to input session dates and assessment scores as they happen and these are now checked almost daily to allow difficulties to be addressed as they occur.
Our usual fund-raising events ground to a halt given the lockdowns and uncertainties. Many thanks, though, to local Councillor Liz Wright for contributing £528 towards the cost of sessions for those struggling financially. Nicole Osbourne's employers also donated £530 for the time she volunteered with us as a counsellor during the year. KCC provided a grant for the installation of ventilation allowing us to reopen the counselling rooms in late October and begin to attract room hire from outside agencies and private counsellors.
During 2021 we offered our programme of workshops for our volunteers and external counsellors aimed at enhancing their continued professional development (CPD). In March Brigitte provided a Zoom workshop on Oedipus. In October we were able to provide Endings training at The Singleton Centre facilitated by Lindsay Schofield. In November Zoom training on Personality Disorders was provided by Martin Smith. These generally broke even or provided a small return. Commitment by counsellors to attending these events is vital in ensuring they continue.
Unfortunately, no other fundraising events took place in 2021.

e. Enhance the premises.

As mentioned previously funding was applied for and ventilation was installed in late October, which allowed us to reopen our counselling rooms rather than just be able to hold individual sessions in the office space.
We have applied for funding through the Kent Community Foundation to replace the shopfront and door to allow better access, more light into the premises and to improve soundproofing and heat loss; a decision is awaited.

f. Increase the size of the trustee body.

Daniel Frings, Trustee Counsellor, elected June 2021.
Darren Sharpe, ex-counsellor. Proposed for election in April 2022.

g. Establish a system of annual reviews for all branches of the service.

i. In January 2022 the Board reviewed the 77 resolutions/decisions/actions it had taken since the previous AGM. Each decision was judged to be (a) completed or no longer applicable, or (b) little or no progress, or (c) actively working towards. The scores were 50, 3 and 24 respectively.
ii. Qualified counsellors have an annual conversation with a supervisor.
iii. Counsellors -in-Training are subject to continuous monitoring and support
iv. The Manager and Administrator are subject to formal annual review with their respective line-managers

2. DETAILS OF COUNSELLING WORK UNDERTAKEN IN 2021

Due to the pandemic and remote working our statistical information remains incomplete at this time due to records being held remotely until client sessions have ended.

Numbers of clients

This year has seen an 82% increase in enquiries and referrals into the service. ACS continued to offer counselling that met client need for short, medium and long-term work. Although the number of counselling sessions and number of clients on medication has not been recorded new practices are being put in place to record statistical information to ensure records are kept more complete and up to date in 2022.

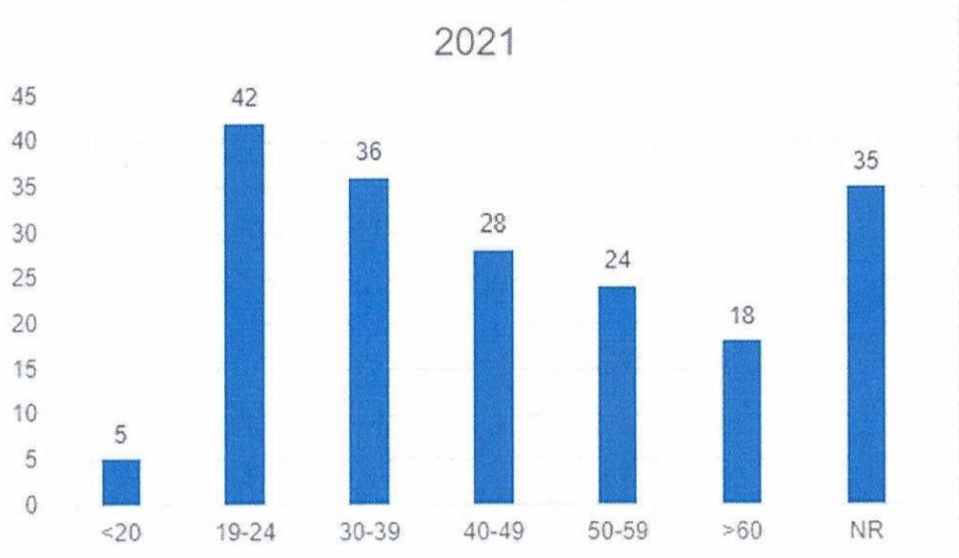
Client profiles

We experienced a large increase this year in the number of enquiries for the service, 189 people contacted us during 2021 up from 104 in 2020.

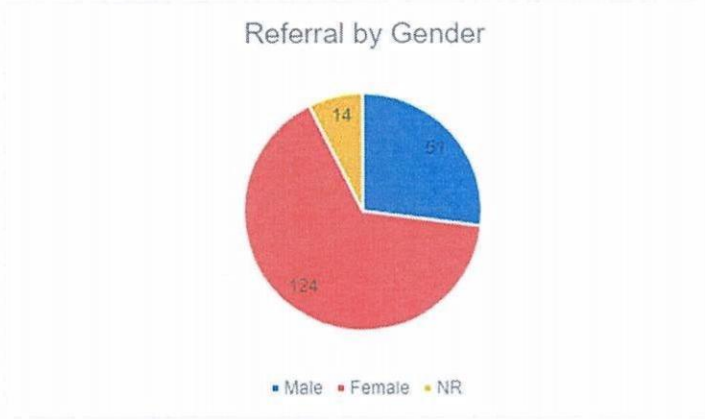
Client Referrals 2021

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
92	104	115	104	189

Age Profile 2021



Gender 2021

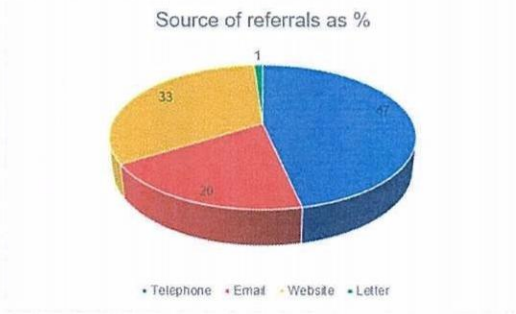


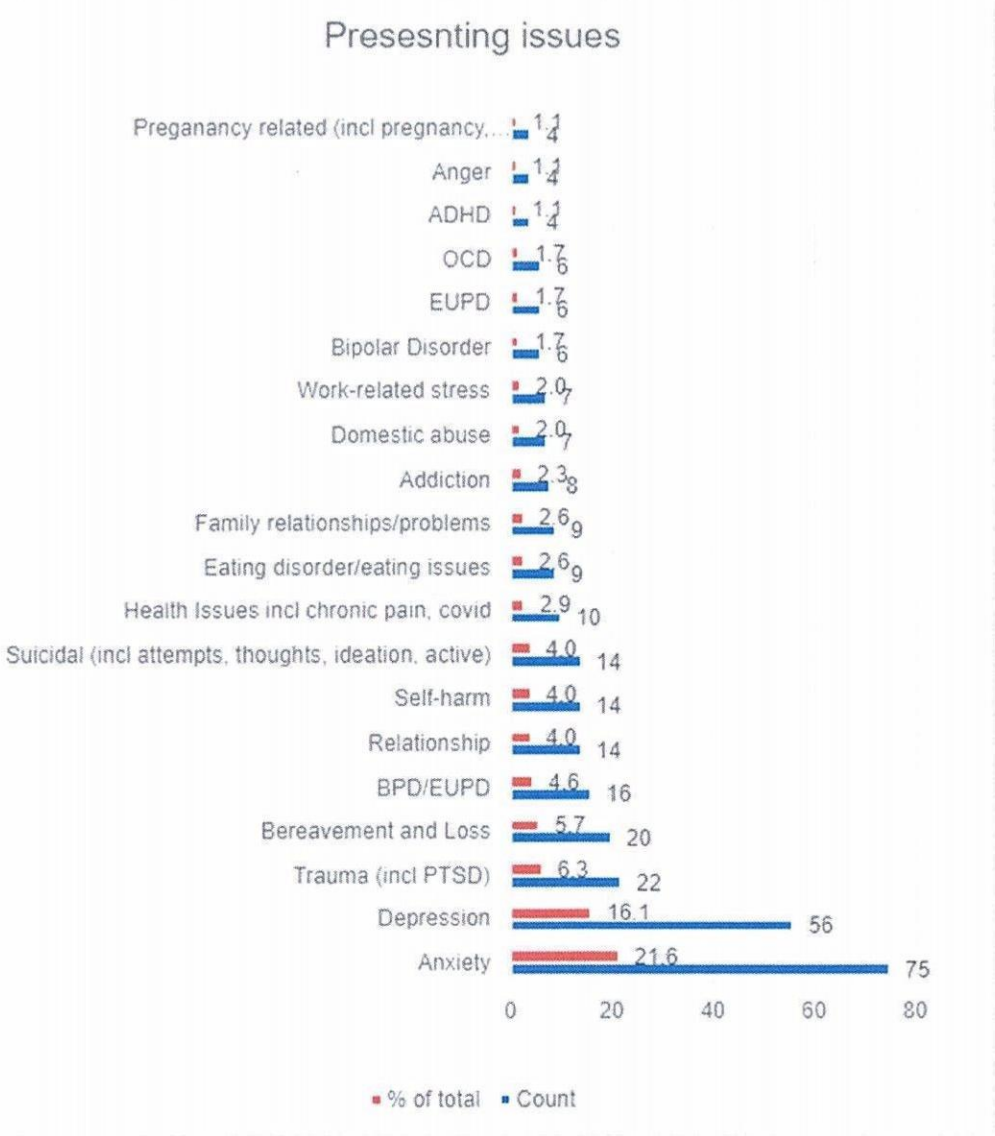
Many of our clients this year are in their middle years. This is perhaps a reflection on the turmoil that Covid-19 has caused in people's lives.
Most clients, as in previous years, identify as women.

Source of Referrals

All of our clients are treated as self-referrals, none were funded by outside agencies. This year we saw an increase of clients signposted by other Mental Health services, with 30 coming via them following their intervention or because of the need for longer term work and often with more complex issues. GP recommendations and returning clients were also a source of referrals. However, the majority of clients appear to have referred themselves independently.
People contacted us almost in equal numbers by electronic means as well as telephone.

Recommended by:	Actual
GP	18
Returning client	10
Insight	8
NHS other	5
We are with you	5
Invicta	5
Other counselling agency	3
Forward Trust	2
There for you	1
Turning Point	1
TOTAL	58





Stress, anxiety and depression were issues for many clients. These were often presenting along with other difficulties and / or diagnoses. The increase in complexity of issues presented to us and loss of more experienced counsellors meant that often people had a longer wait for allocation to an appropriate counsellor.

We have continued to work with clients suffering from financial hardship this year and have been able to offer 'affordable counselling' to those who need it. We warmly thank our local counsellor, Liz Wright, for deciding to support us financially, and we are similarly grateful to various friends, ex-clients and a counsellor's employers who donated for the time she volunteered with us during the year. This helped to compensate for the lack of income from room hire and fundraising events.

Client Contribution Table

	Actual	% of total
£1	1	1
£5	4	2
£10	24	13
£15	31	16
£20	22	12
£25	53	28
£30	8	4
£35	11	6
NR	35	19

SECTION E - FINANCIAL REVIEW, INCLUDING POLICY ON RESERVES

Income for the year 1st January to 31st December 2021 was £31,370 and expenditure was £39,649 (with £4,860 being used from the PND National Lottery project fund). Thus the service made an operating deficit of £3,418, largely due to using up more of the PND project fund. Fixed assets (property, furniture, fittings) remain valued at £77,121. Full details are in the pages following Section G (Declaration).

BANK ACCOUNT POSITION

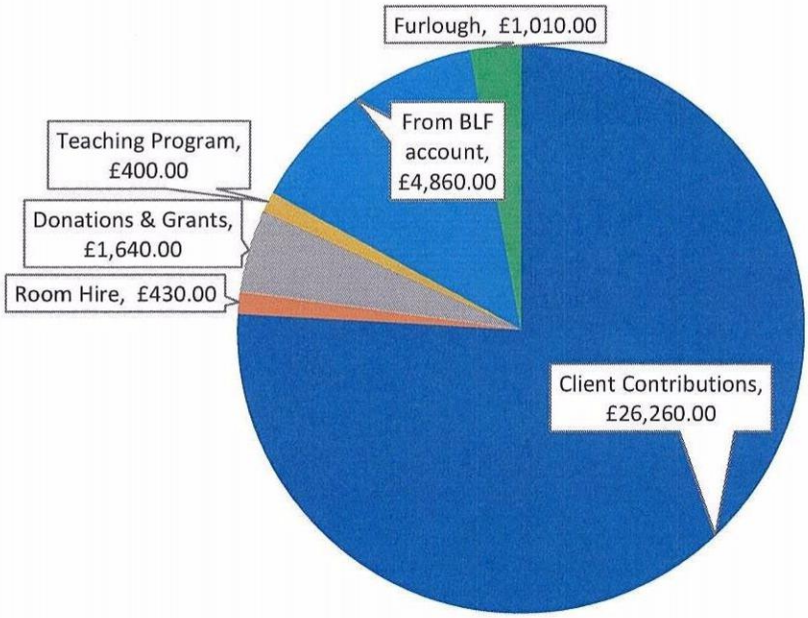
	1st January 2021	31st December 2021
ACS Current Account	£6,695	£3,277
ACS Reserve Account	£4,969	£4,970
Big Lottery Fund Account	£17,618	£12,757

The UK remained in the second lockdown for the first three months of 2021. Our premises remained largely closed until fresh air ventilation was installed during the autumn. Client referrals (our main source of income) increased significantly as the year progressed. Income from room hire (which had been high during the two previous years) was negligible. Donations and grants were minimal and no fundraising events took place.

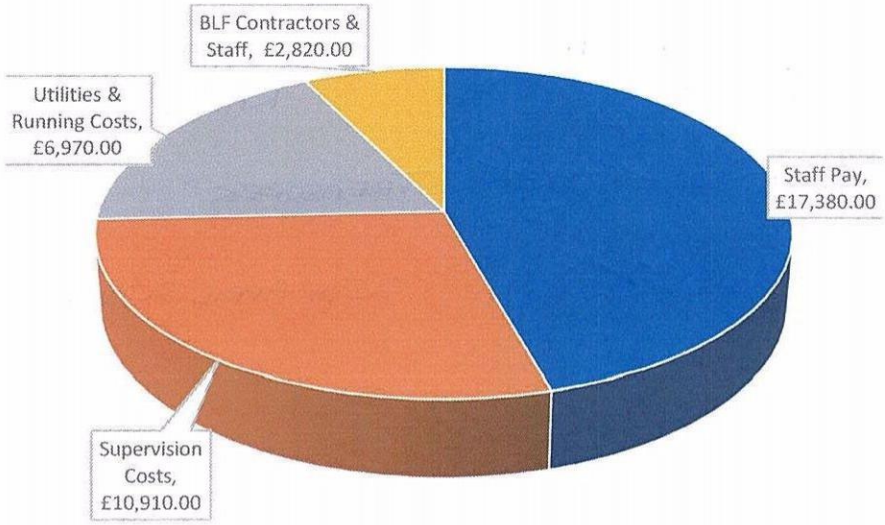
POLICY ON RESERVES

The organisation has a current account and a reserve account. This second account is a standby and may be used temporarily to resolve cashflow problems. Otherwise it is a contingency fund for sudden, unforeseen expenditure or, if appropriate at the time, for one-off projects.

Income for 2021 - £31,370 (with BLF account transfer added)



Expenditure for 2021 - £39,649



SECTION F - OTHER OPTIONAL INFORMATION

HOPES FOR 2022

Because of the pandemic our hopes for 2022 are very similar to last year's, but are based on building the positive progress made in 2021 in spite of the difficult circumstances.

a. Stabilise the service even as the pandemic alters the working situation; establish a vigorous 'new normal'.
b. Develop services and attract funding, in order to reduce waiting times for clients.
c. Ensure that supervision time per counsellor/counsellor-in-training matches the number of clients being seen.
d. Strengthen counsellor retention through e.g. improved communication, greater involvement in cross-service activities, more team-building, improved attendance at CPD events.
e. Enhance the premises.
f. Increase the size of the trustee body.

SECTION G - DECLARATION

The trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees Annual Report (TAR) above.

Signed on behalf of the trustees:

Signature/s	Hugh Q Cooper	A Rampton
Full Name/s	HUGH QUINTIN COOPER	ANTHONY JOHN RAMPTON
Position	CHAIR OF TRUSTEES	TREASURER
Date	25th April 2022	25TH APRIL 2022

Registered number
10231859

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Report and accounts

31 December 2021

Registered Charity No 1169322

Ashford Counselling Service Limited
Report and accounts
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Independent Examiner's Report on the Accounts	3-4

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Registered Charity No 1169322 Companies House No 10231859

Income and Expenditure Accounts for the Year ending 31st December 2021

	2021	2020
Income	£	£
Client Contributions	26,261.50	20,567.50
Room Hire	428.00	4,861.00
Fund Raising	72.22	481.70
Donations	1,638.00	1,670.00
Teaching Program Income/Study Days	1,960.00	310.00
Miscellaneous:		
Coronavirus Support Grants	1,008.73	4,490.65
Gift Aid	-	384.16
Lloyds compensation	-	
Bank Account Interest	2.10	8.25
TOTAL	31,370.55	32,773.26
LESS: Expenditure		
Staff & Counsellor Pay & Expenses	28,296.48	26,119.08
Utilities & Running Costs	4,419.55	5,148.99
Teaching Program Costs	1,559.95	758.05
BLF Contractors & Staff	2,824.18	6,226.37
Depreciation	933.96	-
Accrued Expenses	755.30	(45.00)
TOTAL	38,789.42	38,207.49
Excess (Expenditure)/Surplus over Income	**(7,418.87)**	**(5,434.23)**

The Trustees have prepared, the above statement of Income and expenditure from their records Which are audited by Edwards Williams.

.....

Valerie Moon
Accountant
Edwards Williams Ltd
22 Evegate Business Park
Smeeth
Ashford
Kent TN25 6SX

11/04/2022

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Registered Charity No 1169322 Companies House No 10231859

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2021

	Notes	2021 £	£	2020 £	£
Fixed Assets					
Property at 123, Church Road		75,000.00		75,000.00	
Furniture, fixtures, fittings		3,735.84		2,121.00	
			78,735.84		77,121.00
Current Assets					
Bank Accounts:					
8068		3,277.69		6,695.55	
3360		4,969.94		4,969.46	
4368		12,757.12		17,618.15	
		21,004.75		29,283.16	
Current Liabilities					
Unpaid Expenses - Accruals		755.30			
Net Current Assets			20,249.45		29,283.16
Net Assets			**98,985.29**		**106,404.16**
Capital Account					
Balance at start of period		70,514.16			75,948.39
Revaluation Surplus		35,890.00			35,890.00
Surplus/(Deficit)		(7,418.87)			(5,434.23)
Charity funds			**98,985.29**		**106,404.16**

For the financial year in question the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.
No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.
The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

JRampton

John Rampton
Director - Treasure & Trustee
Approved by the board on 25th April 2022

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

=

Charity Name: Ashford Counselling Service

On accounts for the year ended	December 2021	Charity no (if any)	1169322 CRN 10231859

Set out on pages (remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended ~~31/3/2021~~ 31/12/21

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust'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 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed: [signature] **Date:** 11/4/2022

Name: Mrs V Moon

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any): ACCA

Address: Edwards Williams Ltd
22 Evegate Business Park,

Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SX

Section B	Disclosure
	Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	I have satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited for this year under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination. The property at 123 Church Road was revalued to £75,000 which created a revaluation surplus of £35,890. The property has not been depreciated. Depreciation has been implemented for the first time and will be used in future at the rate of 20%. Please note that this charity is not eligible to prepare receipts and payments accounts but must prepare the accruals accounts by charitable activity.

Registered number
10231859

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Report and accounts

31 December 2021

Registered Charity No 1169322

Ashford Counselling Service Limited
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Surplus/(Deficit)		(7,418.87)			(5,434.23)
Charity funds			**98,985.29**		**106,404.16**

For the financial year in question the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.
No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.
The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

JRampton

John Rampton
Director - Treasure & Trustee
Approved by the board on 25th April 2022

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

=

Charity Name: Ashford Counselling Service

On accounts for the year ended	December 2021	Charity no (if any)	1169322 CRN 10231859

Set out on pages (remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended ~~31/3/2021~~ 31/12/21

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust'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 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed: [signature] **Date:** 11/4/2022

Name: Mrs V Moon

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any): ACCA

Address: Edwards Williams Ltd
22 Evegate Business Park,

Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SX

Section B	Disclosure
	Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	I have satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited for this year under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination. The property at 123 Church Road was revalued to £75,000 which created a revaluation surplus of £35,890. The property has not been depreciated. Depreciation has been implemented for the first time and will be used in future at the rate of 20%. Please note that this charity is not eligible to prepare receipts and payments accounts but must prepare the accruals accounts by charitable activity.

ASHFORD COUNSELLING SERVICE (CIO)

England & Wales - Charity number 1169322

Accounts

ASHFORD COUNSELLING SERVICE LIMITED

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR FROM 01/01/20 TO 31/12/20

INTRODUCTION

This report needs to be read in the knowledge of the Covid pandemic which was a major source of disruption to our work in the last nine months of 2020 (and, indeed the first half of 2021). This had a major impact on the way we delivered our services.

SECTION A - REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Charity registration number: 1169322

Company number:10231859

Registered charity: Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Principal Address: The Paul Bower Centre, 123 Church Road, Ashford TN24 0JQ

TRUSTEES WHO MANAGE THE CHARITY (Executive Committee)

Hugh Cooper	Chair	Elected at AGM May 2019
John Rampton	Hon. Treasurer	Elected at AGM May 2019
Diane Parr		Elected at AGM May 2019
Susan Smith		Elected at AGM May 2019
Marion O'Donnell		Elected at AGM May 2019

ADVISERS AND AGENTS

Edwards Williams Ltd	Accountant
Lloyds Bank, Ashford	Bankers

SENIOR STAFF During this period

Manager	Jane Nice	
Clinical Lead	Brigitte McAndrew	
Administrators during this year.	Lisa Payne/ Jane Nice	Lisa resigned with effect from 13/03/2020.

SECTION B - STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

The organisation was established in 1987 and is governed by its constitution. The service is a Company Limited by Guarantee managed by a Board of Directors (the 'Trustees' for Charity Commission purposes). The Board consists of 5 people selected for the skills they can bring to the organisation as well as their interest and commitment to our work. They meet at least quarterly (January, April, July and October); in 2020 they met formally eight times.

Many hours of trustee time in 2020 were spent on working towards becoming a CIO (Charitable Incorporated Organisation) and we expect this to be finalised shortly.

Trustees are voted in each year at the Annual General Meeting by members of Ashford Counselling Service plus attendees from local organisations who have an interest in our work.

The Board delegates responsibility for the day to day running of the organisation to the Manager who is supported by a Clinical Lead and an Administrator; all staff are employed part-time.

ADDITIONAL GOVERNANCE ISSUES

Ashford Counselling Service is an organisational member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy. It adheres to its ethical framework.

The agency has a comprehensive Policies & Procedures manual which is under rolling review. The manual includes all aspects of Health & Safety, Risk Assessment, Trouble-shooting and problem resolution.

The organisation does not receive any year-on-year grant from statutory funders and as a result we have to elicit contributions from our clients. Each year there is a further target to be raised by a small fund-raising sub-group to enable us to provide the clinical support and to continue to provide a high standard of service to our clients.

SECTION C - OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The objectives as set out in the current constitution are as follows:

1. To relieve persons suffering from mental and/or emotional problems (in such ways as the agency personnel think fit).
2. To conduct study and research into methods of treatment of such persons and to publish the useful results of such study and research.
3. To educate and train persons in counselling so that they may assist in the treatment of persons suffering from mental or emotional disorders or problems.

In furtherance of the above objectives the Service shall deploy the following activities for the public benefit in relation to these objectives:

a) To provide advice and counselling to persons suffering from mental and emotional problems.
b) To provide information to the public concerning the work of the Service.

c) To establish counselling centres where persons suffering from mental and emotional problems may be diagnosed, treated and advised.
d) To raise funds and to invite and receive contributions from any persons or bodies whatsoever, by way of subscription, donation and otherwise.
e) To do all such other lawful things as may be necessary for the attainment of the said objectives.

CONTRIBUTION MADE BY VOLUNTEERS

It cannot be over-emphasised that the contribution made by our counsellors is the bedrock of the service: they deploy their skills and experience without remuneration beyond minimal expenses, and many of them waive even that. This is what enables ACS to offer a genuinely affordable service to our clients, many of whom may be considered to be 'less well-off'. And there is no compromising of standards: volunteer counsellors have an intensive interview to ensure that they meet the criteria which the organisation sets, are DBS checked and are expected to give three counselling sessions per week. All counsellors have supervision every two weeks with an experienced supervisor.

There are three clinical supervisors who, in addition to their support for counsellors, play an important part in the development of the service; their remuneration is significantly below the market rate. We have also benefited this year from the services of one supervisor-in-training.

There is a well-regarded programme of Continuous Professional Development to ensure that our volunteers continue to develop their skills. As well as trained counsellors we recruit and develop trainee counsellors who are undertaking their Diploma in Counselling at local colleges.

We have been extremely grateful this year for the support of many of our volunteers who have additionally undertaken a considerable number of the administrative and 'housekeeping' duties which enabled our organisation to function.

During the year there were 27 counsellors and there is inevitably a turnover: some volunteer counsellors left ACS in 2020 to either further their careers or take some time for themselves. We wish them all well with their future plans and extend our sincere thanks for their time and expertise whilst at ACS. Many of them remain as friends of ACS. We were pleased to welcome new volunteer counsellors; we hope your time here will be rewarding.

All members of the Board are also volunteers and put in many hours of work to ensure the smooth-running of the service; their role is not only strategic: each Board member makes a real 'hands-on' contribution to the organisation as well.

SECTION D - ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

The major achievement of 2020 has been the swift, resourceful and determined response to the lockdowns created by the Covid-19 pandemic. Face-to-face counselling stopped entirely for a while, bringing problems for clients and counsellors alike. When it became legal again it was only on a very small and strictly controlled scale, and 'virtual counselling' remained the norm. Thanks to huge amounts of goodwill, hard work and training the disruption was minimised and client numbers held up well. We thank all those at all levels of the service who made superhuman efforts to mitigate all

the problems we encountered and we praise the way that all members of the service worked together to adapt to new ways of working amidst increasingly challenging circumstances.

In our Trustees Annual Report for 2019 we listed the following as our seven hopes for 2020:

1. **Continue to provide PND services, seeking alternative funding if necessary.**
The Community Funded post-natal depression project continued into its fifth year in 2020.
Ray Wilson resigned as Craft Attack counsellor and Nicole Osbourne was appointed.
Craft Attack did not complete the Autumn 2019 cohort, because of staff illness and client drop-off, the Jigsaw group is usually offered to women following attendance at Craft Attack but as there were no graduates the January 2020 Craft Attack group was facilitated by Lisa Payne and Becky Knell (Jigsaw facilitator). The initial sessions took place at Bluebells Children Centre, Hothfield. We provided 9/10 sessions of Craft Attack before it closed because of Lockdown.
We hoped to be able to run groups again in Autumn 2020.
Jackie White was appointed as our new Craft Attack facilitator and took on the administration for the group.
Unfortunately face to face groups were unable to take place and Jackie ran a virtual support group. Health Visitors were needed with the NHS Covid-19 response so new referrals were not forthcoming. Although the numbers attending were small the group offered much needed support often to new mothers who had little family or other regular contact.
Five women with PND were referred for individual counselling at the service.

2. **Develop services and attract funding, including from room hire**. During 2020 many people were affected by furlough, redundancy, and financial hardship. Therefore, we saw a decrease in the average client contribution. As face-to-face contact posed a health risk we saw the end of our room hire income from March the 23rd and all of our income from fundraising events. With continued careful resource management, an additional volunteer supervisor in training and counsellors in training we have managed to meet our financial commitments. We are grateful for a number of compensatory grants/furlough funds which have proved invaluable. During 2020 we started our programme of workshops for our volunteers aimed at enhancing their continued professional development (CPD). In February we ran our only face-to-face training of the year on Suicide, provided by Dr Terence Nice. Brigitte offered training on virtual working to our counsellors over several dates at the start of the pandemic. We also provided training on Domestic Abuse provided for free by NCDV on the 24th of June. We had planned to provide training on the theme of Endings, facilitated by Lindsay Schofield; unfortunately this had to be cancelled both in May and October.

Although primarily developed for our own counsellors, these workshops are also usually offered to external counsellors, therapists and supervisors and provide another income stream.

3. **Recruit and maintain a stable staff team.** In spite of all the difficulties confronting us there is a strong case for saying that the calibre of the important people at the top of the service is at its highest in living memory. We are grateful to all those mentioned in Section C.

4. **Update all policies and procedures.** In spite of being unable to meet in person many hours of painstaking work were done on this. A completely new Handbook was developed and ready for issue in early 2021. We continue to refine and improve various administrative and clinical procedures. Supervisors took on the role of Initial Contact and Screening and continued with allocation.

5. **Fund-raise to sustain the general services to clients.** As reported elsewhere fund-raising events ground to a halt given the lockdowns and uncertainties. However some outgoings were much reduced and some income increased by Covid-related grants, so the financial position remained satisfactory and services to clients not compromised.

6. **Enhance the premises.** In the second half of the year this became a realistic prospect, with ideas being developed on what the refurbishment would look like, who might carry it out and how it could be funded.

7. **To undertake a Board Review towards the end of 2020.** In November 2020 the Board reviewed the 102 resolutions/decisions/actions it had taken since the previous AGM; 74 were judged "completed or no longer applicable", 26 as "actively working towards" and 2 as "little or no progress".

DETAILS OF COUNSELLING WORK UNDERTAKEN IN 2020

Due to the pandemic and remote working our statistical information remains incomplete at this time due to records being held remotely until client sessions have ended.

ACS Clients	2020	2019	2018	2017	2016	2015	2014	2013
Number of clients referred	104	115	104	92	110	122	125	181
Number of counselling sessions	(NA)	1084	1755	1074	1086	1250	1376	1622
Number of clients on medication	(NA)	33	20	37	28	20	20	22

(NA) = this information not yet collated

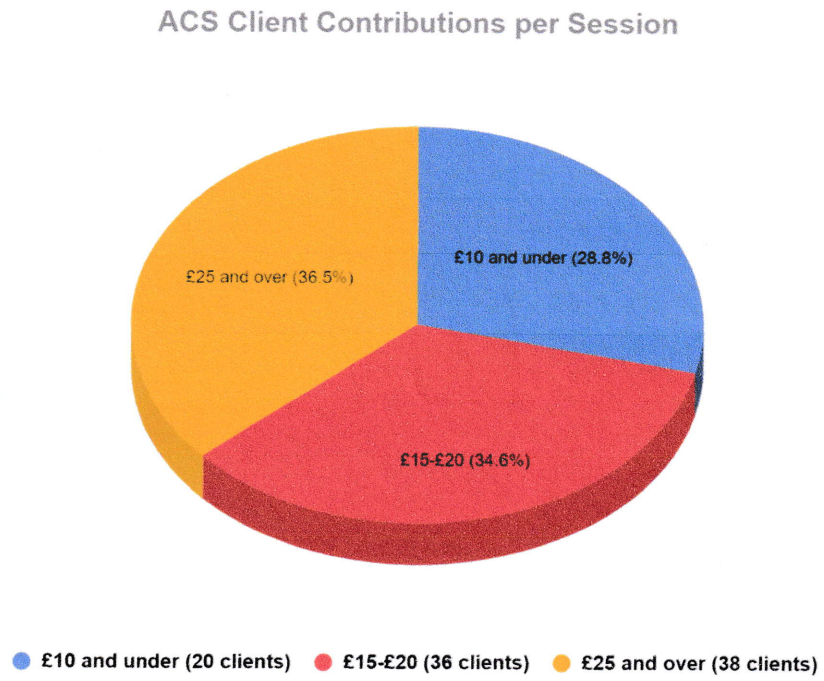
ACS continued to offer counselling after lockdown on the 23/03/2020. Despite an initial drop in referrals enquiries began to rise again over the summer. ACS continued to offer counselling that met client need for short, medium and long term work, with self-referrals coming via GP, NHS Mental Health Service, our Post Natal Depression groups and family and friend recommendations.

Although the number of counselling sessions and number of clients on medication has not been recorded on our statistics as yet for 2020, due to remote working, new practices are being put in place to record statistical information monthly to ensure records are kept up to date in 2021.

CLIENT PROFILES

We experienced a slight decrease this year in the number of clients contacting the service, 104 new clients contacted us during 2020, down from 115 in 2019.

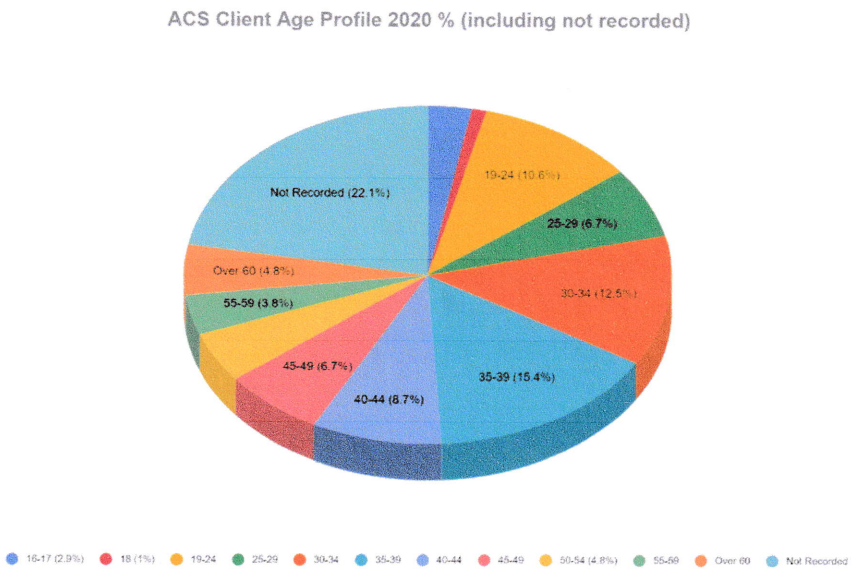
We have accommodated more clients suffering from financial hardship this year and have been able to offer 'affordable counselling' to those who need it with the help of grants of £1,000 from Ashford Borough Council and £2,000 from Kent Community Foundation Covid-19 grants. Nicole Osborne's employers also donated £1,000 for the time she volunteered with us during the year. This compensated for the lack of income from room hire and fundraising events.



As with previous years, more women than men approached us for counselling. 69 of our clients were women and 35 were men.

Most people using our service (92%) lived within the Ashford area, including postcodes from central and surrounding Ashford areas. Around 8% of clients contacted the service from mainly Canterbury postal codes, suggesting some awareness of our service outside the Ashford area.

The over 60 age group showed a large decrease this year, down from 17 clients in 2019 to 5 clients in 2020 (6% of those whose ages were recorded).



	16-17	18	19-24	25-29	30-34	35-39	40-44	45-49	50-54	55-59	Over 60	Not Recorded	TOTAL
2020	3	1	11	7	13	16	9	7	5	4	5	23	104

CLIENT PRESENTING PROBLEMS 2020 (number of clients in brackets)

Anxiety (57)

Low Mood/Depression (43)

Relationship Difficulties (16)

Bereavement and Loss (14)

Trauma (9)

Stress (7)

Addiction (6)

Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder (1)

Eating Disorder (2)

Anger (2)

Ill Health (2)

OCD (2)

Sexual Abuse (1)

SADS (1)

Borderline Personality Disorder (4)

Suicidal Ideation (3)

Finance (1)

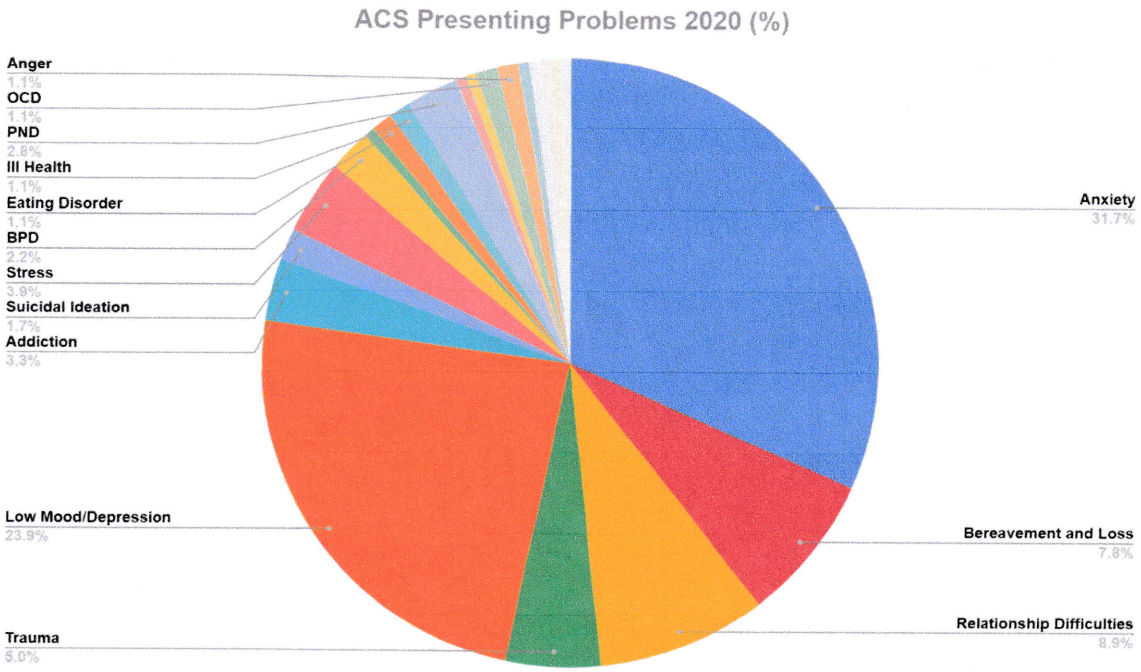
Race (1)

PND 95)

ADHD (1)

Self Harm (1)

Agrophobia (1)

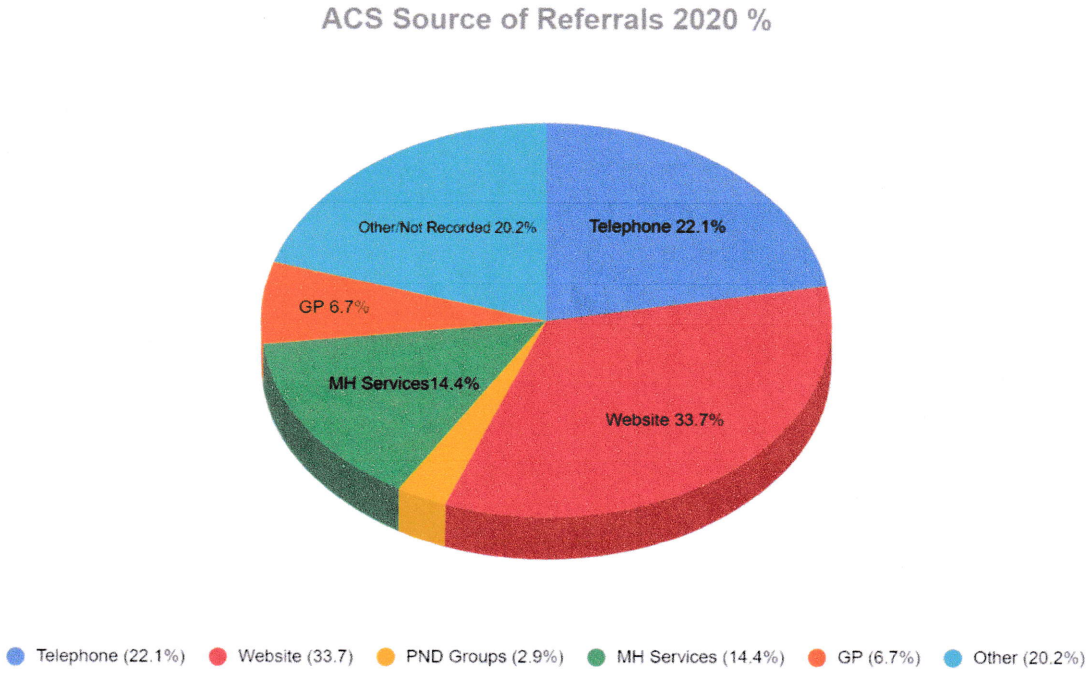


Our volunteer counsellors often find that these mask more complex underlying issues and work sensitively with their clients to help them. This work is overseen by our Clinical Director and team of committed diligent and experienced supervisors.

SOURCE OF REFERRALS

This year the greatest route of enquiries into the service has been via our website (33.7%), this increased dramatically as the lockdown continued, followed by telephone calls (22.1%).

There has been a decrease to 14% from 21% last year of referrals coming to us following contact or involvement with other mental health services such as Think Action, Insight or a Mental Health Team. Referrals via GP have decreased dramatically from 22% last year to 7% in 2020. PND groups accounted for 3% of referrals.



Telephone	Website	PND Groups	MH Services	GP	Other/Not recorded	Total
23	35	3	15	7	21	104

SECTION E - FINANCIAL REVIEW, INCLUDING POLICY ON RESERVES

Income for the year 01/01/20 to 31/12/20 was £32,775. Expenditure was £38,253 (including some £8,657 on the PND Lottery project, funding for which was received in 2018) so the service made an operating deficit of £5,434. Though the Big Lottery Fund account continued to be used up early in the year the ACS current account was in a more positive position at the end of the year. Fixed assets (property, furniture, fittings) remain valued at £77,121. Full details are in the pages following Section G (Declaration).

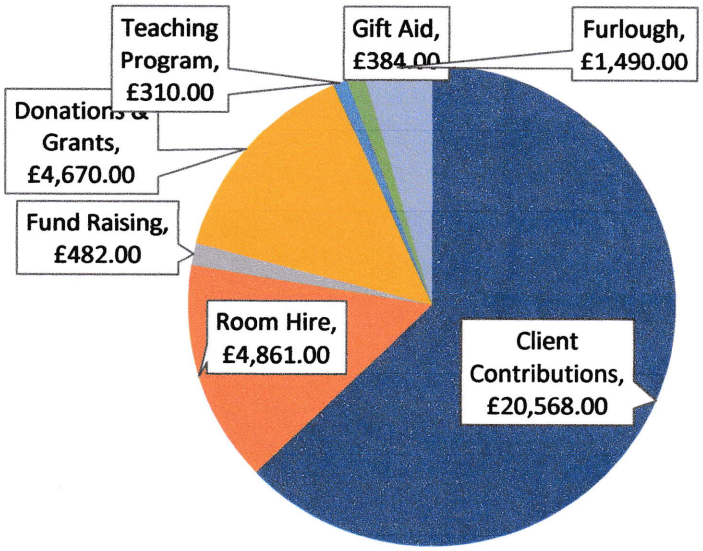
BANK ACCOUNT POSITION

	1st January 2020	31st December 2020
ACS Current Account	£3,956	£6,695
ACS Reserve Account	£4,967	£4,969
Big Lottery Fund Account	£25,838	£17,618
TOTAL	£34,761	£29,282

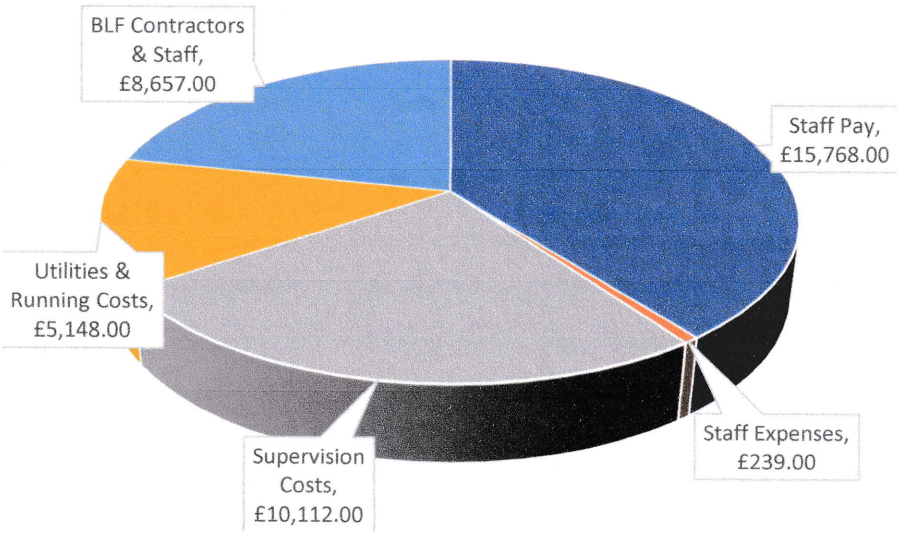
From March 2020 the pandemic brought about many changes. Client numbers and contributions dropped initially but later returned to normal numbers. The Community Fund PND project was unable to run, and no CPD or fund-raising events took place. This year our overheads were reduced by not having an Administrator for five months and reduced Administrator hours for four months. We also did not employ or need a cleaner for several months. Electricity bills were minimised along with water charges and telephone costs.

We postponed appointing a new administrator while the office remained essentially closed, with all phone messages and emails being managed remotely. We received a total of £3,000 coronavirus support grants from Kent Community Fund and Ashford Borough Council, and a £1,000 donation from Lloyds Bank. We claimed furlough payments for the part of the manager's salary that was allocated to the Big Lottery Fund project.

Income for 2020 - £32, 775



Expenditure for 2020 - £38,253



POLICY ON RESERVES

The trustees have decided that a separate Reserves Policy for our Reserve Account is inappropriate; the sums involved are not significant and the service is vulnerable to fluctuations in income.

SECTION F - OTHER OPTIONAL INFORMATION

HOPES FOR 2021

Given the strange conditions of 2020 our hopes for 2021 are unsurprisingly similar but are based on building on the positive progress made in 2020 in spite of the difficult circumstances.

1. Stabilise the service once restrictions are lifted and establish a vigorous 'new normal'.

2. Continue to provide PND services, seeking alternative funding if necessary.

3. Develop services and attract funding, including from room hire when permissible.

4. Fund-raise to sustain the service to clients, particularly those of limited disposable income.

5. Enhance the premises.

6. Increase the size of the trustee body.

7. Establish a system of annual reviews for all branches of the service.

SECTION G - DECLARATION

The trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees Annual Report (TAR) above.

Signed on behalf of the trustees:

Signature/s	Hugh Q Cooper	A J Rampton
Full Name/s	HUGH QUINTIN COOPER	ANTHONY JOHN RAMPTON
Position	CHAIR	TREASURER
Date	30th June 2021	7TH JULY 2021

Registered number
10231859

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Report and accounts

31 December 2020

Registered Charity No
1169322

Ashford Counselling Service Limited
Report and accounts
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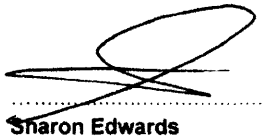
Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Registered Charity No 1169322 Companies House No 10231859

Income and Expenditure Accounts for the Year ending 31st December 2020

Income	2020 £	2019 £
Client Contributions	20,567.50	22,677.00
Room Hire	4,861.00	7,253.00
Fund Raising	481.70	1,381.89
Donations	1,670.00	892.88
Teaching Program Income/Study Days	310.00	1,315.00
Miscellaneous:		
Coronavirus Support Grants	4,490.65	-
Gift Aid	384.16	312.10
Lloyds compensation	-	172.00
Bank Account Interest	8.25	21.31
TOTAL	32,773.26	34,025.18
LESS: Expenditure		
Staff & Counsellor Pay & Expenses	26,119.08	31,498.97
Utilities & Running Costs	5,148.99	7,448.41
Teaching Program Costs	758.05	1,366.70
BLF Contractors & Staff	6,226.37	15,473.93
Miscellaneous	-	-
Accrued Expenses - paid in Jan 2019	(45.00)	(1,953.19)
TOTAL	38,207.49	53,834.82
Excess (Expenditure)/Surplus over Income	**(5,434.23)**	**(19,809.64)**
Represented By		
Bank Accounts at 31st December	29,283.16	34,762.39
Expenses paid post year end	0.00	(45.00)
	29,283.16	34,717.39
Less: Opening Balance B/Fwd	34,717.39	54,527.03
Closing Balance	**(5,434.23)**	**(19,809.64)**
	(0.00)	

The Trustees have prepared, the above statement of Income and expenditure from their records Which are audited by Edwards Williams.



.....

Sharon Edwards
Accountant
Edwards Williams Ltd
22 Evegate Business Park
Smeeth
Ashford
Kent TN25 6SX

08/03/2021

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Registered Charity No 1169322 Companies House No 10231859

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2020

	Notes	2019 £	£	2018 £	£
Fixed Assets					
Property at 123, Church Road		75,000.00		75,000.00	
Furniture, fixtures, fittings		2,121.00		2,121.00	
			77,121.00		77,121.00
Current Assets					
Bank Accounts:					
8068		6,695.55		3,956.22	
3360		4,969.46		4,967.68	
4368		17,618.15		25,838.49	
		29,283.16		34,762.39	
Current Liabilities					
Unpaid Expenses - Accruals		-		45.00	
Net Current Assets			29,283.16		34,717.39
Net Assets			**106,404.16**		**111,838.39**
Capital Account					
Balance at start of period		75,948.39			95,758.03
Revaluation Surplus		35,890.00			35,890.00
Surplus/(Deficit)		(5,434.23)			(19,809.64)
Charity funds			**106,404.16**		**111,838.39**

For the financial year in question the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.
No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.
The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

JR Rampton

John Rampton
Director - Treasure & Trustee
Approved by the board on 21st October 2020

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Ashford Counselling Service		
On accounts for the year ended	December 2020	**Charity no (if any)**	1169322 CRN 10231859
Set out on pages			

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended .

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust'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 Act.

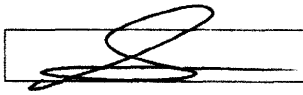
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- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:		**Date:**	8/3/2020
Name:	Mrs S J Edwards		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	AAT ACCA IPA AFA AFTA – membership no: 261899		
Address:	Edwards Williams Ltd		

22 Evegate Business Park,
Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SX

Section B	Disclosure
	Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	I have satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited for this year under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination. The property at 123 Church Road was revalued to £75,000 which created a revaluation surplus of £35,890. The property has not been depreciated. Please note that this charity is not eligible to prepare receipts and payments accounts but must prepare the accruals accounts by charitable activity.

Registered number
10231859

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Report and accounts

31 December 2020

Registered Charity No
1169322

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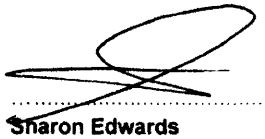
Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Registered Charity No 1169322 Companies House No 10231859

Income and Expenditure Accounts for the Year ending 31st December 2020

Income	2020 £	2019 £
Client Contributions	20,567.50	22,677.00
Room Hire	4,861.00	7,253.00
Fund Raising	481.70	1,381.89
Donations	1,670.00	892.88
Teaching Program Income/Study Days	310.00	1,315.00
Miscellaneous:		
Coronavirus Support Grants	4,490.65	-
Gift Aid	384.16	312.10
Lloyds compensation	-	172.00
Bank Account Interest	8.25	21.31
TOTAL	32,773.26	34,025.18
LESS: Expenditure		
Staff & Counsellor Pay & Expenses	26,119.08	31,498.97
Utilities & Running Costs	5,148.99	7,448.41
Teaching Program Costs	758.05	1,366.70
BLF Contractors & Staff	6,226.37	15,473.93
Miscellaneous	-	-
Accrued Expenses - paid in Jan 2019	(45.00)	(1,953.19)
TOTAL	38,207.49	53,834.82
Excess (Expenditure)/Surplus over Income	**(5,434.23)**	**(19,809.64)**
Represented By		
Bank Accounts at 31st December	29,283.16	34,762.39
Expenses paid post year end	0.00	(45.00)
	29,283.16	34,717.39
Less: Opening Balance B/Fwd	34,717.39	54,527.03
Closing Balance	**(5,434.23)**	**(19,809.64)**
	(0.00)	

The Trustees have prepared, the above statement of Income and expenditure from their records Which are audited by Edwards Williams.



.....

Sharon Edwards
Accountant
Edwards Williams Ltd
22 Evegate Business Park
Smeeth
Ashford
Kent TN25 6SX

08/03/2021

Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Registered Charity No 1169322 Companies House No 10231859

Balance Sheet at 31st December 2020

	Notes	2019 £	£	2018 £	£
Fixed Assets					
Property at 123, Church Road		75,000.00		75,000.00	
Furniture, fixtures, fittings		2,121.00		2,121.00	
			77,121.00		77,121.00
Current Assets					
Bank Accounts:					
8068		6,695.55		3,956.22	
3360		4,969.46		4,967.68	
4368		17,618.15		25,838.49	
		29,283.16		34,762.39	
Current Liabilities					
Unpaid Expenses - Accruals		-		45.00	
Net Current Assets			29,283.16		34,717.39
Net Assets			**106,404.16**		**111,838.39**
Capital Account					
Balance at start of period		75,948.39			95,758.03
Revaluation Surplus		35,890.00			35,890.00
Surplus/(Deficit)		(5,434.23)			(19,809.64)
Charity funds			**106,404.16**		**111,838.39**

For the financial year in question the company was entitled to exemption under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.
No members have required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476 of the Companies Act 2006.
The directors acknowledge their responsibility for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and for the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

JR Rampton

John Rampton
Director - Treasure & Trustee
Approved by the board on 21st October 2020

CHARITY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of	Ashford Counselling Service		
On accounts for the year ended	December 2020	**Charity no (if any)**	1169322 CRN 10231859
Set out on pages			

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended .

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust'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 Act.

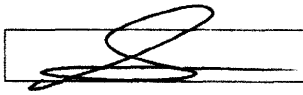
Independent examiner's statement

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

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did 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.

** Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

Signed:		**Date:**	8/3/2020
Name:	Mrs S J Edwards		
Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):	AAT ACCA IPA AFA AFTA – membership no: 261899		
Address:	Edwards Williams Ltd		

22 Evegate Business Park,
Ashford, Kent, TN25 6SX

Section B	Disclosure
	Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).
Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.	I have satisfied myself that the accounts of the company are not required to be audited for this year under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination. The property at 123 Church Road was revalued to £75,000 which created a revaluation surplus of £35,890. The property has not been depreciated. Please note that this charity is not eligible to prepare receipts and payments accounts but must prepare the accruals accounts by charitable activity.