

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.

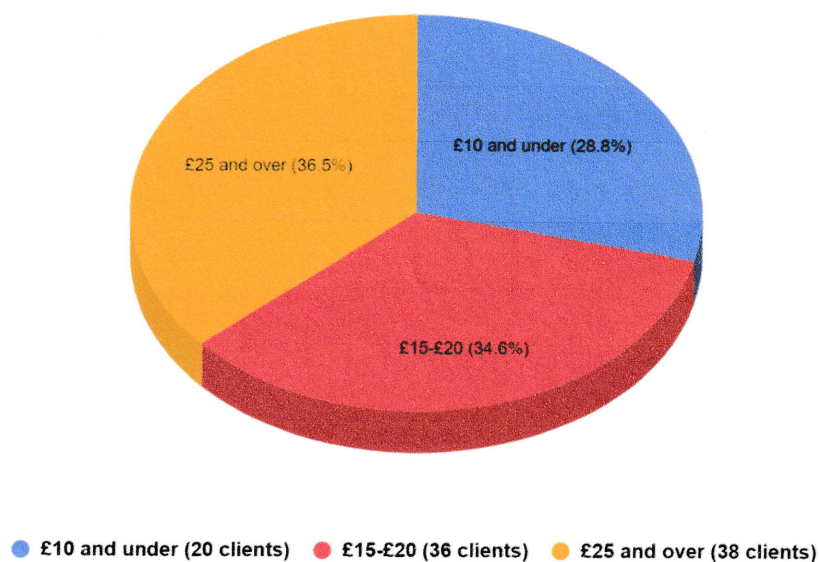
Although the number of counselling sessions and number of clients on medication has not been recorded on our statistics as yet for 2020, due to remote working, new practices are being put in place to record statistical information monthly to ensure records are kept up to date in 2021.

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.

ACS Client Contributions per Session

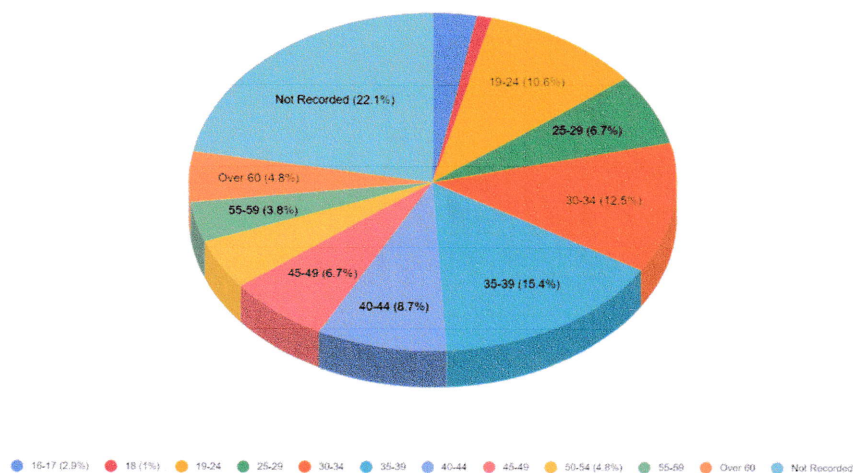


As with previous years, more women than men approached us for counselling. 69 of our clients were women and 35 were men.

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).

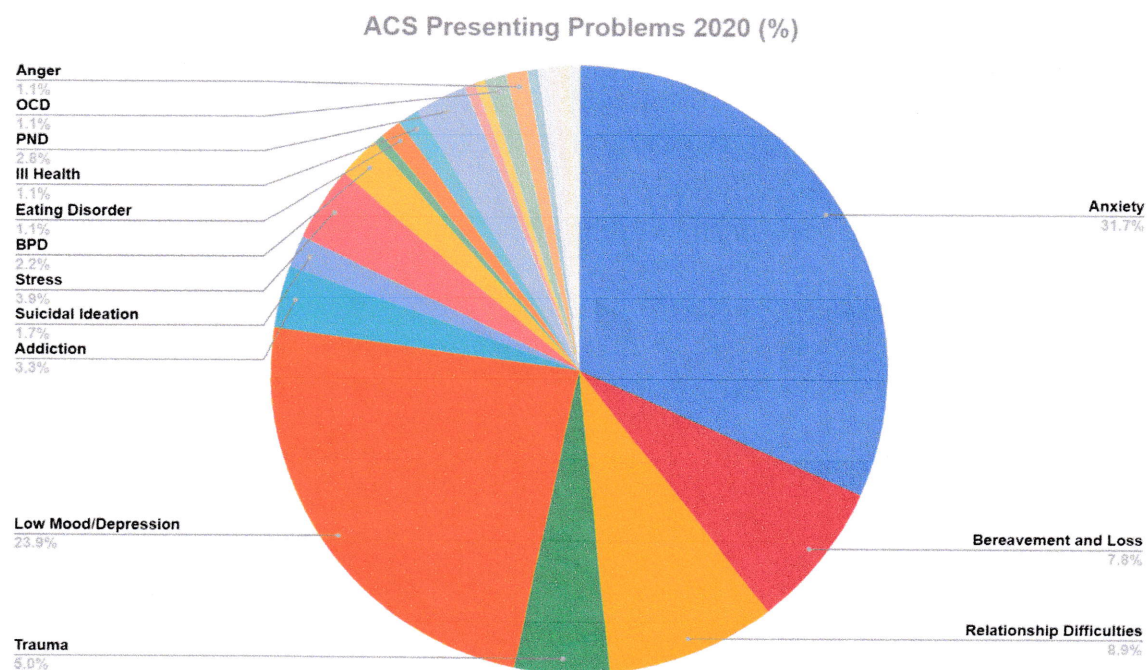
ACS Client Age Profile 2020 % (including not recorded)



	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)	Eating Disorder (2)	Finance (1)
Low Mood/Depression (43)	Anger (2)	Race (1)
Relationship Difficulties (16)	Ill Health (2)	PND (95)
Bereavement and Loss (14)	OCD (2)	ADHD (1)
Trauma (9)	Sexual Abuse (1)	Self Harm (1)
Stress (7)	SADS (1)	Agrophobia (1)
Addiction (6)	Borderline Personality Disorder (4)	
Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder (1)	Suicidal Ideation (3)	



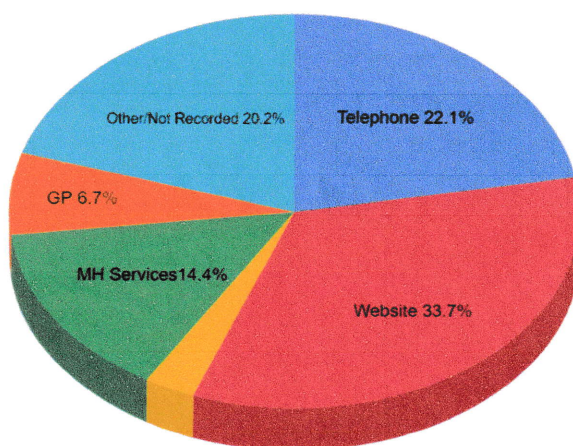
Our volunteer counsellors often find that these mask more complex underlying issues and work sensitively with their clients to help them. This work is overseen by our Clinical Director and team of committed diligent and experienced supervisors.

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.

ACS Source of Referrals 2020 %



● Telephone (22.1%) ● Website (33.7%) ● PND Groups (2.9%) ● MH Services (14.4%) ● GP (6.7%) ● Other (20.2%)

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).

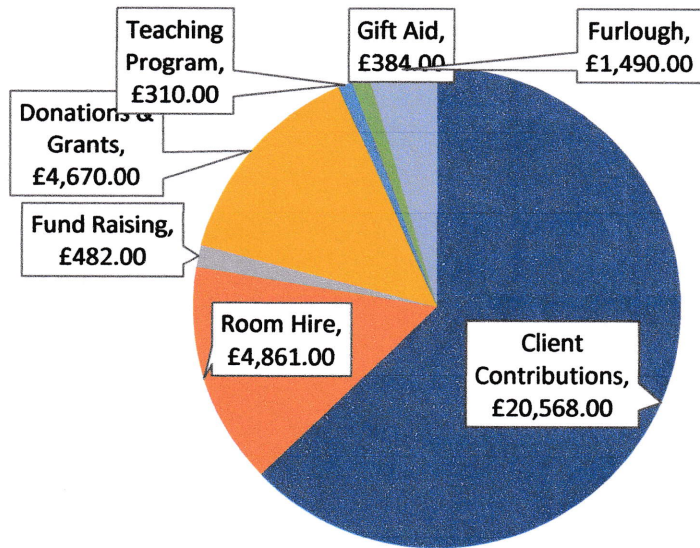
BANK ACCOUNT POSITION

	1st January 2020	31 st 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

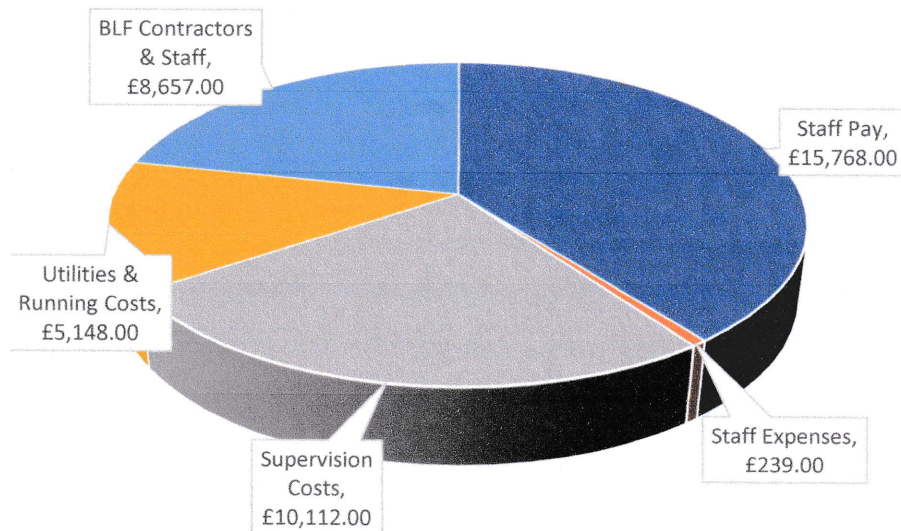
From March 2020 the pandemic brought about many changes. Client numbers and contributions dropped initially but later returned to normal numbers. The Community Fund PND project was unable to run, and no CPD or fund-raising events took place. This year our overheads were reduced by not having an Administrator 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

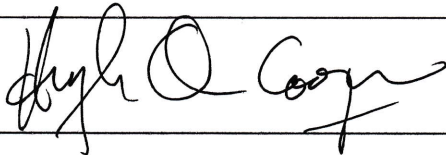

Given the strange conditions of 2020 our hopes for 2021 are unsurprisingly similar but are based on building on the positive progress made in 2020 in spite of the difficult circumstances.

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		
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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Balance sheet	2
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 2020

<u>Income</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2019</u>
	£	£
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

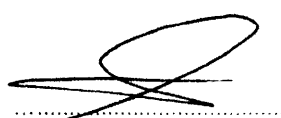
Staff & Counsellor Pay & Expenses	26,119.08	31,498.97
Utilities & Running Costs	5,148.99	7,448.41
Teaching Program Costs	758.05	1,366.70
BLF Contractors & Staff	6,226.37	15,473.93
Miscellaneous	-	-
Accrued Expenses - paid in Jan 2019	(45.00)	(1,953.19)
TOTAL	38,207.49	53,834.82

Excess (Expenditure)/Surplus over Income	(5,434.23)	(19,809.64)
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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			<u>106,404.16</u>		<u>111,838.39</u>
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			<u>106,404.16</u>		<u>111,838.39</u>

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 - Treasure & Trustee

Approved by the board on

21st October 2020



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.

Registered number
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Ashford Counselling Service Limited

Report and accounts

31 December 2020

Registered Charity No
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Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

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ended

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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.