

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

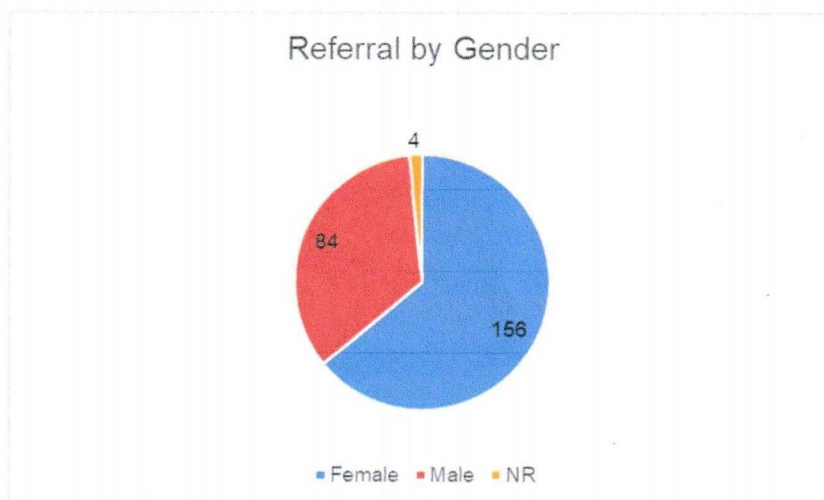
Age Profile 2022

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



Gender 2022

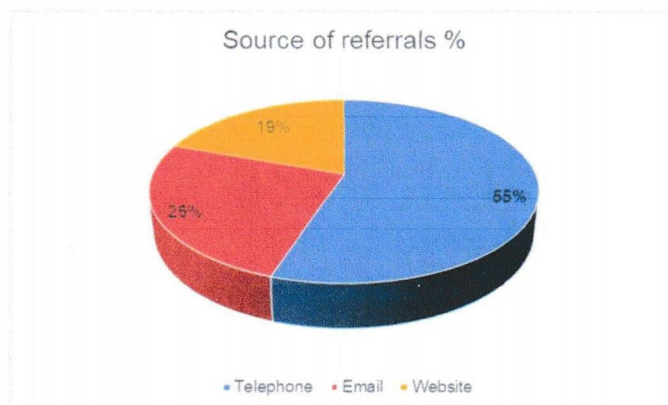
This ratio is slightly changed from last year: the ratio of men being counselled has risen from a quarter to a third.



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

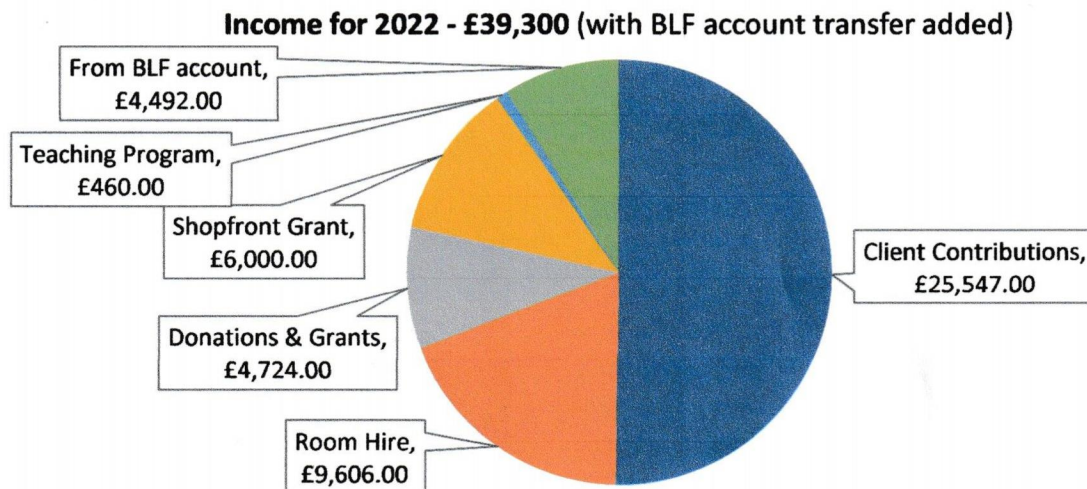
Income for the year 1st January to 31st December 2022 was £39,300 and expenditure was £44,051. The expenditure included a refund of unused funds of £7,765 to the National Lottery after the PND project ended in the spring. Excluding this refund the service made an operating surplus of £3,014.

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

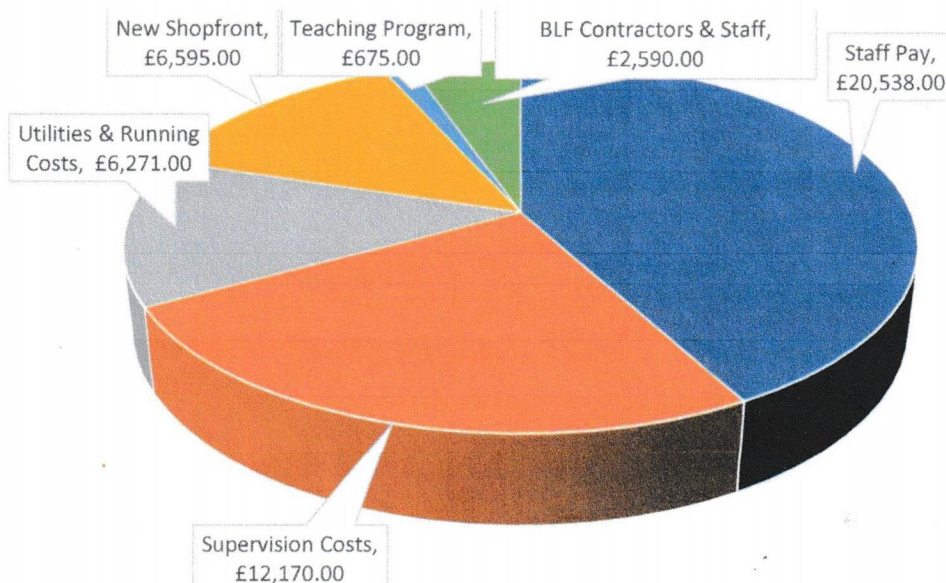
	1st January 2022	31 st December 2022
ACS Current Account	£3,278	£5,969
ACS Reserve Account	£4,970	£4,972
Big Lottery Fund Account	£12,757	closed

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.



.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

- Reduce the waiting time for clients by developing services and skillsets; address any funding implications of this target.
- Streamline administrative processes.
- Strengthen counsellor retention through e.g. improved communication, greater involvement in cross-service activities, more team-building, improved attendance at CPD events, more incentives.
- 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		
Full Name/s	HUGH QUINTIN COOPER	ANTHONY JOHN RAMPTON
Position	CHAIR	TRUSTEE AND TREASURER
Date	23 rd May 2023	23 rd 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:

Date:

27/2/2023

Name:

Valerie Moon

Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body

ACCA

(if any):

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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

<u>Income</u>	<u>2022</u> £	<u>2021</u> £
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
<u>LESS: Expenditure</u>		
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	<u>(4,751.01)</u>	<u>(7,418.87)</u>

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

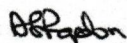
We have no concerns and have come across no matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to better understand the report.

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					
			<u>94,234.28</u>		<u>98,985.29</u>
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					
			<u>94,234.28</u>		<u>98,985.29</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 - Treasurer & Trustee
Approved by the board on