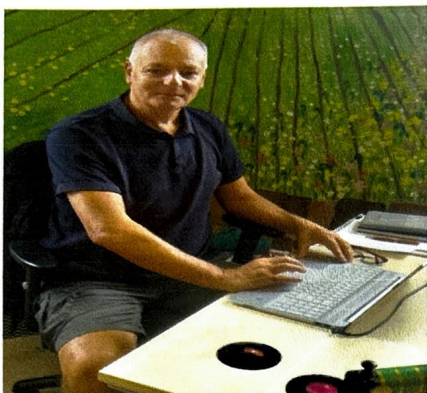




PLATFORM 1

CHANGING LIVES, SAVING LIVES

Trustees Report 2023-2024



A word from our C.E.O – Gez Walsh

Platform 1 is now six years old. It's transformation in that time has been nothing short of remarkable. What started, back in 2018, as a men's drop-in service for a cuppa and a chat, has ended up being a qualified counselling and crisis service working with the whole community.

Our ability to change to meet the needs of our community has always been our strength. We have a dedicated staff team along with a supportive board. We can meet all challenges head on and it's fair to say there have been quite a few of them. Lack of

financial support, the decimation of statutory services, and the over whelming need for mental health help are all major factors in our constant need to adapt and support.

Our service does not just deal with the symptoms of a person's problems. We deal with the whole person and their environment. For too long people have been treated in isolation, just dealing with one issue at a time. Life is never so simple as there are usually many factors in our lives that impact upon us concurrently. We now have thirty counsellors many specialising in various issues so we can offer a comprehensive service to the whole community. Our service is B.A.C.P and level 1 Quality 4 Health and Well-being accredited.

We work with families and in schools. working with the teaching staff as well as the students. We have class-based lessons which are targeted for each age group along with one-to-one counselling sessions and group support sessions. We have evidence (from the school) that the work we are doing has increased both well-being and attendance. We have also supported the teaching staff as they are often the first in line for students to approach which can be both challenging and emotional for teachers to deal with. We are now looking to expand the schools service with a qualified dedicated team, delivering a high-quality service to the whole school.

As we move forward, we are looking at ways to redevelop our old site and ways to move out into the community to become a true community service. We have already introduced a community funding team who are organising events in different areas to raise both awareness and funding. These events have been very successful, so we are looking to expand them. I'm sure that there will be many more challenges for us to face as a charity, funding being the main one, but whatever the challenge we are as always ready to assess, discuss and deal with it.

GEZ WALSH.

Objectives and Activities

Platform 1 is a 'hands on' mental health charity based in the heart of Huddersfield, offering support to the community and throughout the county. Our service is run by qualified mental health professionals and counsellors.

We work with people who have complex needs and are from all backgrounds and experiences. Our services help a variety of mental health needs from anxiety, stress and isolation to severe depression, psychosis, trauma, bereavement and long-term addictions. We specialise in working with those who may be experiencing suicidal thoughts, those who have attempted suicide and the families of those who have lost a loved one through suicide.

We also offer a crisis service where people can get support and practical help for issues which they find difficult to deal with. This is a useful means of helping people who may need further help but cannot attain any meaningful counselling involvement until their practical issues such as housing or benefits are initially solved.

We now only receive referrals from doctors. This is to reduce the strain on GP'S who are struggling to find the right help for their clients.

Our work in schools has developed to the point that we are working with all age ranges from the little ones right up to six form. This is an early intervention project which is highlighting abuse and identity issues. We use our 'Listening Dog' for the little ones to gain trust and information. We also offer counselling for older students and for teachers, dealing with student issues such as sexuality, identity and abuse.

Our ethos is to treat the person not the diagnosis, to give time and support when it is most needed and for as long as it is needed.



Bridget Fahy Head of Crisis And Counselling

Our Crisis & Counselling service has increased exponentially since our last report. As a result, we had to pause our counselling referral process in May 2023.

NEW COUNSELLING PROJECT

Due to long term difficulties obtaining funding to continue and develop our

counselling service we have decided to change how we offer our service.

After many discussions we have decided to offer a paid service alongside our GP referral service. Since we began our counselling service we have worked with, trained and supported many counsellors through their qualification. Many of these counsellors are now qualified and wish to support Platform 1 by volunteering their time and expertise. As a result, we will take self-referrals from those who can afford to pay for counselling. We will therefore have two separate waiting lists. We would expect that the paid waiting list would be much shorter and will start at 6 sessions with more offered if a client wishes to do so. Paid sessions will cost £45 per hour. This paid service will not only help people access qualified counselling quicker but will also support us to offer counselling to those whose circumstances make payment difficult.

* Please note we are still offering a free service via GP referral

Crisis Service

When someone comes to us for counselling, we began to recognise how the effects of a crisis can be a barrier to the counselling process. Sometimes the “smallest” problem can grow into an issue that can envelope a person's life leaving them unable to cope with daily living which can often lead to further difficulties therefore exacerbating their mental health difficulties. These problems are often something that others take for granted e.g. issues with bills, renewing of blue badges, anxiety surrounding phoning other professionals etc.

Where the need for crisis support is recognised one of our crisis team will work with the client to ensure that they are free to focus on their recovery through our counselling service.

Where a client appears to be in a higher level of crisis (due to their mental health difficulties) and not ready for counselling, they will work with our crisis service for 2-4 weeks until their mental health state has become more stable, and they will then be offered counselling to help them to develop confidence and coping strategies needed to navigate the ups and downs of life. The client will then be matched to a counsellor which would best suit their temperament and mental health difficulties.

Crisis Case Study -

'Sarah' was referred to us by her GP. She was referred to us with difficulties surrounding her marriage which had since broken down. Client waiting time had been up to 8 months and shortly after referral we called people to assess how they were doing whilst waiting. I called her to see how she was doing and do an initial assessment and realised that she was in significant crisis. She was invited in for a crisis appointment the next day and we gave her the opportunity to offload her worry, supported her with benefit applications, finding legal representation and contacting her GP. This was worked on with weekly appointments over 4 weeks and on completion she was feeling stronger to work on her emotional difficulties through counselling now what she no longer had to work on all the practical issues that come with a marital breakdown alone.

Counselling - is 1-1 talking therapy sessions which help with a wide range of emotional problems which are influencing a person's mental health.

When a referral is received, we assess their difficulties and needs over the phone. By doing this it can be determined whether counselling can begin or if the individual may need crisis support to ensure that they are ready to commence counselling. The individual will receive a further and more comprehensive assessment face to face with their potential counsellor to ensure that they are both happy to begin the counselling process and that an effective therapeutic relationship can be formed.

Once counselling has been offered they will receive 10 weekly counselling sessions, after which the counsellor and client will decide if they require additional sessions. If this is agreed the client can receive up to five more sessions. The counsellors do have the discretion to offer a furthermore six on a monthly basis if they feel this is needed. This provides for security and support to help the person to move on without the weekly sessions whilst offering mental health maintenance.

On completion of counselling our clients are informed that should they need counselling in the future they can possibly self-refer into our service, where, if their former counsellor is available, they can access more sessions with them. But they will have to sit an assessment to determine whether other strategies would be more appropriate to help the person.

Counselling Case Study-

'Simon' was referred to us by his GP who felt that the severity of his mental health difficulties could be alleviated through some counselling. On assessment it was apparent that he was mistrustful of services and unsure if he wanted to attend. Our counselling service was explained to him, and he was invited to an appointment for a chat to see how he felt about further appointments. We are aware that many clients struggle to engage with services so were mindful to put no pressure on him and tell him we would just take it week by week. As a result, Simon completed his initial 10 sessions and requested an additional 5 which he also completed. He found his sessions successful and reported many changes in his life as a result. He is more confident in his own ability and has been going out more seeking support groups and making more connections. He has begun to build bridges with family he has been estranged with and is in a much happier place.

Safe Site - & workshops

Unfortunately, our safe site was forced into closure in December 2022 following a flood and a break-in resulting in catastrophic damage to the site and leaving it not fit for purpose. Talks are ongoing to have the site rebuilt.

Current Support Groups Available

Women's Support Groups

The groups give women a space to offload their difficulties and support each other. The ages of women who attend range from 18-65 which allows them to understand difficulties from a wide range of perspectives and experiences. The ladies stay in touch with each other, in between appointments, via Platform 1 women's Facebook group or their WhatsApp group. Within the group, issues that arise include, mental health, parenting, family relationships, self-confidence and self-worth, financial difficulties and physical health. Our women's groups have been successful with weekly sessions. During these sessions they have completed craft projects, had cake parties and developed the ability to rationalise their own difficulties by listening to others.

Menopause Support Group

The group consists of women in various stages of menopause which encourages them to share their feelings and experiences and to develop solutions to help each other through the physical and emotional changes they are struggling to cope with. The group is peer led but with a qualified counsellor facilitating. This group has been a lifeline for our members as it helps them to understand that they are not alone in experiencing the mental, physical and emotional difficulties of going through the menopause. This alone can help their mental health as they gain a greater understanding of not only what they are going through but also the medication available to ease some of these symptoms.

Prostate Cancer Support Group

Our prostate cancer group has been a huge success with regular attendees of at least 20 men per session. This is held on the first and third Tuesday of the month and is facilitated by a qualified counsellor who also has suffered from prostate cancer and received recent treatment. This is a peer led group dealing with symptoms, diagnosis, treatment, and the effects of having prostate. The prostate cancer group has become so successful that it has developed a life of its own. The group quickly outgrew our premises and had to be moved to the Lawrence Batley theatre to accommodate the number of men who were using the service.

The fact that the group is now so big it has had to be developed as a separate entity and has its own identity but still works in association with Platform 1. The group is changing the way men view prostate cancer, they work out in the community and work tirelessly offering advice and promoting prostate testing, while being supported by the hospital staff at both Calderdale and Huddersfield hospitals.

The group now has members from all walks of life and ethnicities, they offer peer support while we work with men that are finding their diagnosis difficult to accept. This dual approach to cancer support seems to be paying huge dividends.

cancer, not only on the man but also their partners. The support the men give to each other has also continued outside of the group through the use of a WhatsApp group and firm friendships have been formed with some men meeting for a coffee in-between sessions. We organise regular sessions where professionals have attended to give talks and support on issues relevant to prostate cancer such as catheter use and management and erectile dysfunction.

Partners Of Prostate Cancer Sufferers

Through the knowledge we gained from the issues experienced by the men in our prostate group we recognised that their partners may also need support, so we have recently started a women's prostate group. In this group the partners are given the opportunity to speak about how their partner's diagnosis has also affected them and their relationship in a safe and confidential setting. From the very first session it was obvious that they felt relieved to share their fears with each other, knowing that everyone understood and had experienced something similar. The partners have expressed interest in having professionals visit to speak to them about any concerns they may have, and this is currently being organised. They keep in contact with each other via a WhatsApp group and will be attending monthly.

Future Cancer Support Groups

Under the partnership of Cancer UK, funds permitting, we are currently developing future cancer support groups, due to the number of requests, including:

- Breast and Ovarian Cancer Support Group
- Bowel Cancer Support Group

Counselling Support Groups

As a result of our counselling service, we have recognised the need for mental health maintenance for some of our clients. Where someone has experienced trauma that may be triggered following the end of our sessions we decided to run support groups relevant to the issues that were prominent through our counselling practise. By doing so we hope to maintain their mental health by supporting each other and reinforcing the coping strategies they have developed through counselling. The group sessions will also include relevant professionals who will attend to give talks on topics suggested by members. The counselling support groups include:

- **for men who have experienced domestic violence/coercive control.**
The aim of this group is to support men in a safe and confidential setting to share with each other their coping strategies, developed through counselling, and reinforce their self-confidence.

- **Support for women who have experienced domestic violence/coercive control.**
The aim of this group is to support women in a safe and confidential setting to share with each other their coping strategies, developed through counselling, and reinforce their self-confidence.
- **Support for men who have experienced sexual abuse.**
The aim of this group is to provide ongoing support for men who have experienced sexual abuse. Shame and self-blame is an ongoing topic that appears in those who have experienced this abuse and while this is worked on during counselling sessions we hope that ongoing support will reinforce the fact that any shame or blame is not theirs to carry.
- **Support for women who have experienced sexual abuse.**
The aim of this group is to provide ongoing support for women who have experienced sexual abuse. Shame and self-blame is an ongoing topic that appears in those who have experienced this abuse and while this is worked on during counselling sessions we hope that ongoing support will reinforce the fact that any shame or blame is not theirs to carry.

Our counsellors meet every 12 weeks to talk about the issues that are appearing regularly in our sessions with clients. Our hope is that as more topics are appearing we will be able to provide further support groups relevant to our client's needs as a follow on from our counselling service. This will depend on the availability of funds.

Outreach

We were working out in the community with designated premises which had been offered to us for free. This had become quite a successful format where people could access help within their own environment. This not only offered mental health support but also practical support with housing and benefits etc.

Due to the lack of funding we had to assess where our services were best placed so we have temporarily suspended the outreach for a while, but we are currently in talks with various services with a view to bring these services back.

Our outreach work is now more targeted such as people who cannot physically leave their homes and have no support from any services. We also work within schools offering support, counselling and mental health awareness classes. The school services have started to grow and are becoming an important service allowing people with disabilities access to support and also giving schools access to support for their students.

Schools Support & Intervention

What started as a request from a teacher in a school who had used our services has now changed the way we now see the work we offer.

We were originally asked to go into a local school to work with a mother and a child. The child was in danger of being removed from the custody of the mother. This work is complex and always involves lots of services and others connected with the family. We were struck by how disjointed this process was. We also had figures of our own that 75% of men aged between 45 and 65 that use our service are suffering from historical sexual abuse which has gone untreated or recognised leaving these men to live quite chaotic lives. Early intervention is always better than a cure. We have focused our attention on how we can offer help when needed to schools to create early intervention portals and offer help to the schools and students when it is most needed, not 18 months later.

We are now working in schools on a regular basis with all age ranges this is a funded service paid for by the schools, we are keen to develop this service more on the request of teachers. The issues that have already been identified and dealt with in schools by our team has shown the need for qualified staff working alongside the teaching staff.

Our crisis and counselling package include.

- 1:1 Counselling
- Family Therapy
- Class based awareness sessions
- Small group mental health support
- Staff counselling and/or crisis support
- Staff training to support students with mental health difficulties - this includes lesson plans.
- Parent workshops to support them to understand the mental health difficulties young people face.

Listening Dog - This project is aimed specifically at infant and junior school students.

We have a large former 'Snow Dog' which we bring into schools to work with the very young. The dog can be used in assemblies and in lessons to create stories and open dialogue and it can also be used when a child has been identified as, 'at risk'. The dog is a silent witness which the child can divulge any information they wish to talk about while receiving play therapy,

The steps in this project include:

- Initial assembly to introduce the "Listening Dog" and narrate the story of how he came to be in our office and the "magic" powers it has of sending people to help them with any problem they may have.
- Incorporating the dog into a lesson plan where they write to the dog to tell them about their lives so that any children "at risk" can be identified.
- Collating any difficulties recognised which can be supported through a workshop.

Depending on what has been identified within each individual school our crisis and counselling package can be modified to the age and development of the students.

Understanding our school crisis and counselling package

Whole Class Mental Health Awareness Workshop

These can be modified to all age ranges dealing with issues each age group may encounter. The classes are fun but informative, this also helps to highlight any issues students may be encountering.

This workshop hopes to break the stigma, embarrassment and ignorance around mental health difficulties and attempts to help students to understand that ignoring these difficulties will exacerbate the situation.

Helping young people to recognise mental health issues and where to go for help is of the most importance.

Small Group Mental Health Support

Following our whole class Mental Health Awareness Workshop any difficulties specific to a number of children can be further supported in separate small groups to allow more support concentrated on a specific mental health difficulty/symptom e.g. Low self-esteem, lack of confidence, negative body image.

Teacher Support

We must not forget that the teaching staff within schools are often the first people to highlight issues that young people may be experiencing. This often impacts upon the teachers themselves. With this in mind we can offer both support and counselling to the staff. In order for the staff to feel knowledgeable and prepared to identify a student who may be struggling with a mental health difficulty we also offer **Staff training** which includes a workshop for school staff along with lesson plans and ongoing guidance and support where needed via phone or email.

1:1 Counselling

This is available to both staff and any students identified as needing counselling. This will take place on school premises during school hours or if preferred at our counselling site at 7 St Georges Square, Huddersfield.

Family Therapy

This is available to anyone identified by the school who may need support to navigate the difficulties of family life. These sessions can take place at school or at Platform 1 counselling site at 7 St Georges Square, Huddersfield.

Parent Workshops

This is offered to parents according to class group to speak about any difficulties they are facing with children within the same age range.

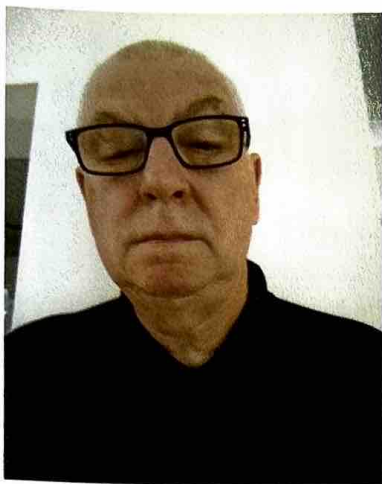
Impact

Our services were heavily referred to by the mental health services. We decided to work solely with the doctor's surgeries because people were being referred into the mental health services only to find themselves being referred on. This was causing a great deal of stress to the people involved. When people are referred to our service, we support them with every aspect of their treatment.

Feedback

100% of our clients would have counselling again if they needed it with 100% stating they would want to attend Platform 1 rather than any other service.

- "It helped me so much to come for counselling it has helped me to recognise that I am important and worthy of being happy".
- "I would recommend coming to Platform 1 to anyone it has been my lifeline and helped me to get my life in order."
- "I feel so much better than I did.....I can cope with anything and if I can't I know that I can come back and get more support"
- "I wish I had come to counselling sooner. I feel like a new person"
- "I feel like I can take on anything now"
- "The people at Platform 1 always made me feel that I was welcome"



A word from our Chair of Trustees – Philip Clark

Platform 1's ethos has always to change and develop to meet the needs of the community which it serves, and this year has been no different.

The financial situation has been quite difficult for all charities over the past few years but even with such a bad economic climate we have still managed to grow the team and develop our services. We now have 39 counsellors and 4 support staff. Our school's service has become so successful that we are now rolling it out throughout Kirklees. We are also seeing an increase of

people with complex needs so we now have counsellors who specialise in certain fields so we can offer the best support.

Because of our waiting list which has been disproportionately high due to the statutory service increasing dependency on the third sector we have looked at ways of lowering our waiting list.

People have been telling us for a long time that they would be happy to pay for our service, so we have set up a dual system to enable us to lower our waiting times. Lots of counsellors that have done their work placements with us still want to volunteer their services to us now that they are qualified. With this in mind our qualified counsellors are offering us a few hours a week to offer a paid service, 'FOR THOSE WHO CAN AFFORD' This will relieve the pressure on our team and bring in some much-needed finances. This in no way effects our free service it will enable us to cut our waiting times and increase the service.

Next year will see us develop and increase our services as usual, whatever the challenges we shall meet them head on as usual, so we can offer the people of Kirklees a mental health service that works for them.

Philip Clark

Chair of Trustees.



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Platform 1

1177710

Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period
from

01.04.2023

To

01.03.2024

Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
A1 Receipts					
CAF Donations	3,911	-	-	3,911	-
Other Donations	24,100	-	-	24,100	-
Charities Trust	1,000	-	-	1,000	-
HD5 Community Hub	5,396	-	-	5,396	-
Clarkson Jersey Trust	10,000	-	-	10,000	-
National Lottery	20,000	-	-	20,000	-
Earned income	6,082	-	-	6,082	-
Refunds	1,604	-	-	1,604	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	72,093	-	-	72,093	-
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	72,093	-	-	72,093	-
A3 Payments					
Admin & Stationery	2,643	-	-	2,643	-
Advertising & Promotion	600	-	-	600	-
Communications	2,303	-	-	2,303	-
Equipment	332	-	-	332	-
Premises	17,549	-	-	17,549	-
Project	1,166	-	-	1,166	-
Salaries	57,887	-	-	57,887	-
Subscriptions & Professional Services	3,407	-	-	3,407	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	85,888	-	-	85,888	-
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	85,888	-	-	85,888	-
Net of receipts/(payments)	- 13,795	-	-	- 13,795	-
A5 Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	-
A6 Cash funds last year end	36,465	-	-	36,465	-
Cash funds this year end	22,670	-	-	22,670	-

Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B1 Cash funds	Bank Balance	13,360	-	-
	Reserve Account	7,710	-	-
	Premises deposit	1,600	-	-
	Total cash funds	22,670	-	-
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK



	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B3 Investment assets			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
B5 Liabilities			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
	PAUL P. G. A. CLARK	16-1-2025
	DEEPAK SINGH	16-1-2025



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Charity Name
Platform 1

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31 March 2024

**Charity no
(if any)**

1177710

Set out on pages

15 - 16

(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 31/03/2024.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with 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 (other than that disclosed below *) 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 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:

N Jones

Date:

16 Jan 2025

Name:

Nicola Jones

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

Address:

14 Bream Avenue, Cleckheaton, BD19 5EN.

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

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