



TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

2024-2025

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
No 1135647



TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT 6th April 2024 - 6th April 2025

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity:

Chair: Craig Wilcox
Co-Chair: Kathryn Newell
Secretary: Sarah Taylor
Treasurer: Gwen Radcliffe
Trustees: Peter Burrows
Lita Gray
Ted Sullivan
David Palmer (Joined 14th October 24)

Name of Clinical Business Manager and names of staff members:

Clinical & Business Manager: Kelly French
Professional Counsellors: Elizabeth Bond, Pauline Maxwell,
Sessional Counsellor: ☐ Catherine Baines, Natalia Mae Lavin
Finance Officer: Karina Gilder (until 28th June 24) Craig Wilcox (From 3rd February 25)

Structure, Governance and Management

Charity is constituted as:

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Summary of objects:

CHAT exists for: The preservation and protection of the emotional and mental health of young people, aged 9-25 years in Oundle, Thrapston and surrounding villages of North East of North Northamptonshire by:

1. Offering free information, counselling and mentoring services
2. Providing early support to individuals, as an alternative to or prior to NHS clinical intervention work, reducing the cases seeking access to NHS clinical services

3. Providing, maintaining and developing up-to-date quality information resources for young people
4. Working with other organisations, in order to strengthen the support available to young people.

Trustee selection methods:

The Trustees are local people with an interest and experience in counselling, youth work, local government or other relevant leadership and management experience. They are appointed at the AGM, which reviews the appointments annually.

Management:

Trustees work closely with the charity CBM to ensure the smooth running of the charity and service delivery. Together, they are responsible for strategic planning to ensure the delivery of the client services in accordance with the Charity's objectives and for supporting funding applications to ensure the financial security and future of CHAT.

They liaise with other professionals and attend meetings, lifting CHAT's profile, increasing awareness of CHAT's presence in the community, earning recognition and respect. Trustees provide support to the employed staff, for example personnel processes, financial management and health and safety advice, to ensure that CHAT is run in a professional and legal manner.

The Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit in all their decision making.

The part-time employed CBM supports Trustees in the development and implementation of the strategic development plan, undertaking the key administrative tasks and client management. They maintain a close working relationship with the staff on operational and procedural issues. The CBM represents the Charity at the Reach Collaborative meetings and other local community meetings. In addition, the CBM acts as the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), David (Trustee) acts as an additional DSL, whilst the Chair is designated Caldicott Guardian and Data Protection Officer.

Summary of Main Activities:



CHAT Youth Counselling employs two part-time counsellors. Self-employed counsellors are available to enable CHAT to respond to periods of increased client waiting lists. They work primarily through local schools or from the CHAT office in the Courthouse, Oundle.

Prince William School, an 11-18 secondary, has an annually reviewed Service Level Agreement. CHAT provides a confidential service 5 days a week in term times, in a designated protected space. In addition to Prince William, CHAT also has also started to provide counselling at Weldon Academy, which has continued to grow throughout the year. A weekly Reach driven Drop-In is also provided in the early evening at Souster Youth in Thrapston.

In addition, occasional work is undertaken at other local primary schools in the Northeast of North Northamptonshire. Most sessions are individual face-to-face with professional, online or telephone sessions available on request for those clients encountering issues with direct access.

All counsellors are professionally qualified and undergo regular clinical supervision and participate in ongoing professional development activities.

Referrals are taken through the CAMHS Referral Management Centre, directly from GPs and other medical professionals, schools, parents and the young people themselves. Following an initial assessment, professionals provide a six-session course of either counselling or therapeutic mentoring, as appropriate. At this point, there is a review resulting in one of the following outcomes: case closure, a referral to another support agency, or an extended counselling agreement, as required.

Achievements and Performance this year (in terms of Objects):

1. Offering free information, counselling and mentoring services
2. Providing early support to individuals, as an alternative to, or prior to NHS clinical intervention
3. Providing, maintaining and developing up-to-date quality information resources for young people
4. Working with other organisations in order to strengthen the support available to young people
5. Growing the service provided into Weldon and expanding as the school grows each academic year
6. Expand the reach across local primary schools with the Happy Heads program, which supports the 8 to 10 year age group



Summary of achievements and updates for the year

CHAT Youth Counselling is commissioned by the NHS (Integrated Care Board) to provide a service for 11–18-year-olds and vulnerable clients up to the age of 25-year-old.

The newly appointed Clinical & Business Manager has taken hold of the service throughout the year, providing support for the counselling staff while liaising and reporting to the board of trustees. In addition, the service has been strengthened further with the assistance through the trustees, of a new Finance & Data lead who has provided data support and managed financial aspects under the guidance of the trustee treasurer.

Between April 24 – April 25 CHAT delivered 1766 individual counselling sessions. Predominantly within the core 11 to 18 age range from Prince William school however also covered Weldon School and various primary schools within the catchment area. This was an increase of 250 more sessions than the previous year.

In addition, 77 Rapid Response sessions were delivered, which are high risk cases that must be seen within 1 week.

At Thrapston café, now renamed 'The Drop In', we delivered 52 cafes between April 24-25 to 110 individuals. Of these 33 young people made multiple visits to the cafe. The café is staffed by 2 full time counsellors and a volunteer. The YIACS service covering ages 19 to 25 was being implemented at the end of the year and will include another counsellor to provide the service.

CHAT continues to use a range of social media platforms to improve communication with potential clients. Its Instagram has grown to 297 followers and 112 followers on Facebook. The CHAT website provides links to other county-based and local websites, e.g., Northamptonshire Health Care Partnership Directory and provides many links and information regarding the service with the ability to raise referrals.



CHAT's area of operation covers a wide rural area in North Northamptonshire. This year, focus has remained on improving access for young people and their families in the Thrapston area. It has proved positive with continued clients accessing CHAT's range of services from the Thrapston area, along with continued use within Oundle and other local areas.

Counsellors report that the issues being presented by clients at initial assessment remain similar to those of previous years, with self-harm, family issues and anxiety remaining high. Bereavement/Loss and relationships continue to be present as issues. Low mood/self-esteem issues increased as CHAT widened counselling access to clients in the younger age group and with the continuing impact of the pandemic on young people. It has been noted that clients do not always define the issues clearly at the initial assessment, with underlying issues appearing during support, e.g., self-harm and suicidal ideation.

Client evaluative feedback on CHAT services still remains 100% positive, with no complaints being received. This is expected to continue due to the professional service that is provided.

CHAT staff provide various information leaflets, guides and online links to clients and families, covering a range of mental health issues. These continue to be updated and distributed as required. Staff maintain their expertise and knowledge through their membership of BACP; through subscription to emailed newsletters, e.g. NAYC, Youth Access, Barnardo's, NSPCC, ICO; and through the research and development in mental health provision published both nationally and locally.

All staff have up to date with training on the Lamplight recording system. Admin staff have had extended data training to ensure all reports and data submitted to MHSDS are accurate. Topics covered in CPD events have included autism and ADHD, and accessibility awareness for how young people access mental health services, in particular those with ASD.

These training opportunities help CHAT to continue to deliver a high-quality service to its clients. Performance reviews for all staff took place in January and were directed towards sustaining and embedding good practice. Staff suggestions for enhancing its services were sought during these meetings.

CHAT continues to work closely with the other local youth counselling charities via the Reach Collaborative. Regular meetings have taken place with the CBM and Chairs of Trustees to develop continuity and consistency of counselling coverage; to submit joint bids for funding; and to plan the delivery of shared counselling and therapeutic interventions, emotional support and other activities to young people and their families living within Northamptonshire. A shared Strategic Plan has been developed, reviewed and updated to steer the direction of the Reach Collaborative.



Resources have been co-produced and shared to the benefit of young people within the county, e.g., Self-Harm bags and Mood Boost booklets. A common Safeguarding recording and reporting system, MyConcern, has been explored by Reach.

The CHAT CBM has continued to represent the charity with local groups, GP surgeries, local government bodies, the Northamptonshire Early Help Service, CAMHS and with all local schools.

CHAT continues to be a member of the Mental Health Transformation Board, as all members of Reach have.

CHAT Youth Counselling has focused its developments on the areas identified in its Strategic Development Plan. These are reviewed periodically by Trustees with a new updated plan ready to implement in the first part of the next year.

The key priorities are to extend the access for young people to youth counselling support within our geographic area and maintain a consistent, respected and proficient service for young people that need it. CHAT staff have embedded the core services and contributed to the additional independently funded projects ready to expand the service in the near future.

Promotional reports, posters and adverts continue to be placed in the local press and printed publications, and regular presentations are made within school contexts communicating the free nature of CHAT's services. This has contributed to the increase in self and family referrals being received. It is planned to expand CHAT's social media presence over the forthcoming year which will assist in providing greater access to the service provided.

We have continued to attract funds from Thrapston Council, Waitrose, The Freemasons, and the Oundle & District Care charity to permit the support of young people aged 8-10 and 19-25-year-olds. The support from local organisations has been much appreciated.

CHAT has continued to review its policies. These have included Health & Safety/Risk Assessments, Volunteering and Client Care, Data Protection, Grievance and Problem Solving, and Whistleblowing, as well as Safeguarding & Child Protection and financial policies. These activities have resulted in the ongoing development of the charity's operating practices. There have been no serious incidents during this financial year.

Special thanks to Pauline Maxwell for her dedication in collecting monthly data prior to the role being filled in February. In addition, Pauline stepped up to act as interim CEO before the CBM was appointed. Her support was instrumental in keeping the service running during a critical time, and she deserves heartfelt thanks from us all.

Sincere thanks to our Board of Trustees, who generously volunteer their time to support the service. Their commitment is essential to CHAT's continued operation. As we look to the year ahead, the Board aims to strengthen its foundation by welcoming new trustees to help grow the service and meet our goals. With strong leadership and a clear vision, the future is looking bright for CHAT.

Financial Review

The Trustees aim to hold a reserve fund of 6 months expenditure against the time when NHS/ICB/Public Health funding is no longer available, to provide time for further funding applications, whilst withdrawing from client work in a professional manner. The current calculation is that reserves should not fall below £75k, allowing for redundancy provision.

During the financial year the reserve was reduced by £8908.55, of which £1920 were reallocations to REACH partners. The fall in reserves was lower than predicted in the budget as there was some saving on administration staff wages and a time-limited increase in Capacity & Demand funding from the NHS.

Trustees review the reserve holdings on a regular basis. As interest rates began to fall, Trustees decided to opt for shorter fixed term accounts, 3 months and 6 months, at the maturity of other fixed term deposits. held on the CAF Deposit Platform, managed by Flagstone investments. This policy provides flexibility and has taken advantage of best interest rates available on the CAF Deposit Platform, managed by Flagstone investments.

Further details can be found in the examined accounts, appended.

Declaration

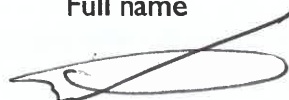
The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' Report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature

Full name

Position


 A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Craig Wilcox".

Craig Wilcox

Chair


 A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gwen Radcliffe".

Gwen Radcliffe

Treasurer

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR ENDED 5TH APR 2025

	Note	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	Total 2024/25	Total 2023/24
Incoming Resources					
NHS Contract +2.5		£86,365.89	£0.00	£86,365.89	£78,643.69
Cafe Funding	1	£21,942.11	£0.00	£21,942.11	£26,476.00
Project Funding		£500	£0.00	£500.00	£0.00
Data Flow		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£6,650.00
Donations		£0.00	£2,929.49	£2,929.49	£6,700.46
Interest & Other		£0.00	£6,476.01	£6,476.01	£4,435.37
REACH Repayments		-£1,920.00	£0.00	-£1,920.00	-£25,490.72
Total		£106,888.00	£9,405.50	£115,428.76	£97,414.80
Direct 'Charitable' Expenditure					
Salaries, Pensions & NIC	2	-£105,360.15	£0.00	-£105,360.15	-£109,568.75
Travel costs - Staff		-£875.21	£0.00	-£875.21	-£1,235.30
Travel costs - Volunteers		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
		-£106,235.36	£0.00	-£106,235.36	-£110,804.05
Support Costs					
Supervision & Training		-£2,307.85	£0.00	-£2,307.85	-£2,993.20
Communications		-£1,987.39	£0.00	-£1,987.39	-£1,772.83
Data & Safeguarding systems		-£2,871.25	£0.00	-£2,871.25	-£1,296.00
Accommodation		-£6,309.99	£0.00	-£6,309.99	-£8,229.28
Advertising/Recruitment		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	-£1,596.30
		-£13,476.48	£0.00	-£13,476.48	-£15,887.61
Management and Administration					
Governance	4	-£1,924.89	£0.00	-£1,924.89	-£1,904.69
Accounting		-£1,561.20	£0.00	-£1,561.20	-£1,260.90
IT Equipment/Depreciation	3	£0.00	-£1,353.58	-£1,353.58	-£554.25
Sundry Office Costs		£0.00	-£650.54	-£650.54	-£1,223.76
		-£3,486.09	-£2,004.12	-£5,490.21	-£4,943.60
Total Resources expended		-£123,197.93	-£2,004.12	-£125,202.05	-£131,635.26
Net incoming resources		-£16,309.93	£7,401.38	-£8,908.55	-£34,220.46
Transfer between funds		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Total funds brought forward		£41,962.00	£102,022.07	£143,984.07	£178,204.53
Total Funds carried forward		£25,652.07	£109,423.46	£135,075.52	£143,984.07

Balance Sheet at April 5th 2025

	April 5th 2025	April 5th 2024
Computer Equipment	£4,953.67	£4,953.67
Accumulated Depreciation	-£4,657.67	-£3,961.67
Net Book Value	<u>£296.00</u>	<u>£992.00</u>
Current Assets		
Debtors		£0.00
Cash at bank	£16,654.28	£59,061.52
Cash on deposit	£120,326.86	£84,451.96
Cash in Hand	£1.50	£1.50
	<u>£136,982.64</u>	<u>£143,514.98</u>
Less current liabilities		
Creditors	-£2,203.12	-£522.91
Suspense Account	£0.00	£0.00
	<u>-£2,203.12</u>	<u>-£522.91</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>£135,075.52</u>	<u>£143,984.07</u>
Represented by		
Restricted funds	£25,652.07	£41,962.00
Unrestricted funds	£109,423.46	£102,022.07
Total Assets	<u>£135,075.52</u>	<u>£143,984.07</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 5TH APR 2025

1. Project Funding

In 2024-25, in addition to core funding from NHS and the 'Tier 2.5' funding from NCCG channeled through Service 6, funding was received via REACH partners for the following projects.

	Wellbeing Cafe	YIACS	Rapid Response	Tier 2.5	CD! Plus /Happy Heads	Data Flow	Total
Fund holder	lowdown	lowdown	lowdown	Service Six	NHS	Youth Works	
Unused at 5.4.2024	£0.00		£3,625.00	£12,420.00		£194.00	£16,239.00
Received 24-25	£21,942.11	£500.00	£0	£246,590.00	£21,000	£0	
Unused at 5.4.2025	£0	£0	£565.00	£0	£15,750.00	£0	£16,315.00

Rapid Response funding is to deliver emergency counselling for young people referred by A & E departments.

Wellbeing Café. Friendly mental health professionals are on hand to listen to and help individuals in their time of need, providing advice, support or signposting / referrals to the relevant team or organisation. Parents and carers are also welcome to drop-in. The YIACS funding is to deliver the service to a wider age range.

The Happy Heads funding is for period December 2024 to December 2025. The money for implementation from April to December 2015 was paid in advance.

Restricted funds at 5.4.2025	
Current projects	£16315.00
Budget support 2025-2026	£9,337.07
Total	£25,652.07

No transfers between restricted and unrestricted funds have been made.

2. REACH reallocations

Following the end of the previous financial year it was agreed that CHAT should use £12,016 of the £12420 unused Tier 2.5 money from 23-24 and reallocate the remaining £404 to Youth Works . In June a further £1516 was called in in order that partners could provide Wellness Kits.

3. Staffing

Staff costs include salaries, employers NIC and employers pension contributions plus payments to sessional counsellors. CHAT Youth Counselling applies for, and receives, the NIC Employer's Allowance of £5000. All work was covered by Core and Project funding.

4. IT Equipment

Depreciation of computer hardware is calculated using the double depreciation method based on their residual values at the end of a 4-year period.

Tangible Fixed Assets	Purchased	Original Cost	Value April 23	Value April 24	Value April 25
Laptop Treasurer	Jan 19	£431.60	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
Laptop Manager	March 21	£1,149.97	£475.00	£250.00	£0.00
Laptop Finance Off	April 21	£648.98	£237.25	£100.00	£50.00
4 l pads *	April 20	£2289.36	£400.00	£400.00	£100.00
Laptop CEO	August 23	£434.00	.	£242.00	£146.00
		£4,953.67	£1,112.25	£992.00	£296.00

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

- ☐ Income is recognised as received or when receipt is certain.
- ☐ Direct charitable expenditure represents the salaries and expenses reimbursements for staff and volunteers.
- ☐ Support costs represent the accommodation and communication infrastructure required to support the staff and volunteers.
- ☐ Management and administration costs represent expenditure not connected with the costs of the staff and volunteers.

Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees of CHAT Youth Counselling

I report on the accounts of Oundle CHAT Youth Counselling, charity number 1179806, for the year ended 5th April 2025.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act); and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, subject to not having seen the Trustees Report, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that:
 - proper accounting records are kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act, and
 - accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: 

Dated: 17/04/2026