



**Arise Counselling Service,
Training and Related Services**

Charity No: 1183335

Trustees' Report

End of Year Financial Statement

Year Ending 31 December 2023

Arise Counselling Service – Chair’s Summary

Throughout 2023, Arise Counselling Service (ACS) has continued to see our vision of providing affordable counselling to adults, couples, and adolescents in our local town of East Grinstead and the surrounding area. We provide a safe, warm, and nurturing environment, often supporting clients through the most difficult times.

We are the only charitable, local service to provide low-cost counselling which enables clients who, due to financial reasons, may not be able to access the support they need. We offer a variety of different counselling approaches and can provide up to 24 months of counselling for complex cases. We assess and provide support on an individual basis, as we understand that circumstances and needs are different, and a ‘one size fits all’ approach does not bring about the best outcomes.

This makes us stand out from the only other affordable (free) counselling service provided by the NHS, where waiting lists are long, the therapeutic approach is restricted, and the number of sessions is limited.

As Chair of Arise I am proud of our achievements throughout this challenging year. The team has seen some significant changes in 2023, with a new Counselling Service Manager and a new Chair of Trustees. Through the whole team’s hard work and flexibility, we have been able to see 53 new clients, provide around 33 sessions a week and reduce our waiting list times from 7 months to just 3 weeks.

This anonymous feedback from one client in 2023 sums up the vision and values of ACS:

My sessions with [my counsellor] have been so incredibly valuable in helping me to understand the reasons behind my feelings and behaviours, in enabling me to validate my feelings and move through them, and in equipping me to manage difficult situations and relationships. [My counsellor] was always kind and compassionate and I felt safe and heard in all our sessions. She has also supported me through a very challenging situation that arose when our sessions were already underway. Without her support I do not think I would have coped in the way I have done, and I am very grateful to have been able to work with her. I am also thankful to Arise for reducing my fee when my financial situation changed part way through the duration of my sessions which enabled me to continue with my sessions when I would otherwise have had to stopped.

Alison Morpew
Chair of Trustees

CHARITY INFORMATION

Arise Counselling Service was set up as an unregistered organisation in November 2018, becoming a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation on the 9 May 2019.

The following were Trustees of Arise Counselling Service for the financial year January 2023 – December 2023:

Alison Morpew (Chair)
John Blechynden
Dave Pennington
Mary Nicholls
Heather Kauffman (from January 2023)
Carol Evans (resigned April 2023)

Registered Address

Arise Counselling Service
Jubilee Community Centre,
Charlwoods Road,
East Grinstead,
RH19 2HL
<https://arisecounsellingservice.com/>

Charity Number:

1183335

Bank:

Lloyds Bank
1/3 London Road,
East Grinstead
RH19 1AH

Independent Examiner

David Robert Ralph FCIE
50 Southwood Road
Rusthall
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN4 8SP

TRUSTEES' REPORT

For the year ended 31st December 2023

Structure, governance and management

Arise Counselling Service (ACS) gained charity status on 9th of May 2019 as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO). The Trustees are appointed by the Board of Trustees.

In January 2023 ACS appointed a new trustee for a three-year term, meeting the objective of having between 3 and 12 trustees at any one time. One trustee stepped down during 2023. ACS is actively seeking new trustees through internal and external advertisements.

ACS is an Affiliate of the Association of Christian Counsellors (ACC) which provides support on any ethical issue that may arise in client work or governance of the counselling service.

Thirtyone:eight is our safeguarding umbrella organisation, providing safeguarding training for trustees and counsellors, as well as a similar supportive role to ACC in advising on specific safeguarding issues that might arise. Each freelance counsellor also has access to an independent qualified supervisor and their chosen national counselling governing organisation to consult on any safeguarding issue that may arise in the course of their work.

ACS is managed on a day-to-day basis by a Counselling Manager, holding a self-employed role within the organisation. The Counselling Manager meets regularly with the counselling team to provide support and help with any issues arising. The Counselling Manager attends quarterly, and any extraordinary, Board meetings by invitation of the Trustees, to update and advise on current and future matters. In April 2023 we appointed a new Counselling Manager following the resignation of the previous Manager.

The Charity is insured by Howden; counselling sessions, ancillary activities and trustees are all covered.

Objectives and activities

The objective of the charity is to aid in the preservation and protection of the physical and mental health of the community of East Grinstead and the surrounding area, by offering excellent and affordable counselling to adolescents, adults and couples according to the qualifications of the counselling team.

ACS works with qualified freelance counsellors with a Christian faith and is committed to working with trainee counsellors, who have a Christian faith, as a placement organisation. ACS respects each client's right to make their own decisions in all aspects of life, including faith, and the service is offered to all irrespective of religious background or commitment. It is not the ethos of ACS to teach or advance the Christian faith.

The Trustees are aware of the Charity Commission guidance on Public Benefit and see that the services provided fully meet the requirements of the advancement of health or the saving of lives.

To ensure that counselling sessions are affordable ACS continues to charge clients at a sliding scale between £15 - £60 depending on each person's household income. For those on a very limited income, particularly when this is verified through a third-party referral, the cost is reduced to an amount that is affordable for that person. During 2023, 57 clients benefitted from a reduced rate of £15 or under per session, which is an increase from 2022. In April 2023 it was agreed to limit the number of clients who pay a reduced rate at any one time, to limit any strain on our finances.

Achievements and Performance

Team Changes

During 2023, ACS experienced some significant changes, including the departure of the Counselling Service Manager, Assistant Manager/Finance Assistant and a couple of our counselling team. These changes had an impact on our capacity to provide as much counselling in 2023, which is reflected in the summary of our achievements and performance throughout the year listed below.

One of our qualified counsellors took up the role of Counselling Service Manager, and one of our student counsellors took on the role of Finance Assistant. The Assistant Manager role is yet to be filled and the need/requirement for this role is currently being reviewed.

Between January and December 2023, we took on three new student counsellors and one qualified counsellor. One of our existing students also graduated and has continued to provide sessions for ACS throughout 2023.

ACS also appointed a Fundraising Consultant to support the Counselling Manager in applying for grants which are crucial to enable the service to keep running. We also appointed a volunteer to help record and review our statistics which provides valuable data for us to complete funding applications and help us review and ensure ACS is running as it should.

Achievements

One of our biggest achievements in 2023 was the management of our waiting list. At the end of 2022 we had 104 clients on our waiting list. With an increase in enquiries, and a decrease in our capacity, we made the difficult decision to close our waiting list in July 2023. This decision was made in both ACS and our clients' best interests, as we were seeing a huge increase in our wait times, and often finding that clients had since received support elsewhere by the time they had reached the top of our waiting list.

The waiting list remained closed until the end of the year, and this allowed time to review and contact the clients already on the list, check if they still required our services, and if so allocate them as and when a space was available. Reducing our catchment area and limiting our contracts to 6 months, also helped in the management of this, which meant by the end of 2023 we were down to just 17 clients on our waiting list. At the beginning of 2023, clients were waiting 7.5 months before being allocated with a counsellor, which reduced to just 24 days later in the year. Though there have been significant changes in 2023, these changes have enabled us to work more efficiently and allocate clients in a timely manner.

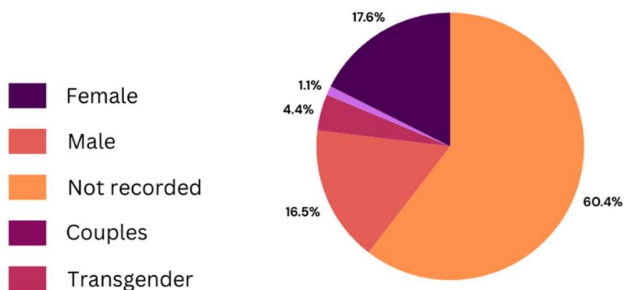
ACS continue to provide counselling for all target groups: adults, adolescents, and couples. During Jan to Dec 2023, 91 new people contacted ACS. Many of the initial contacts do not end in counselling for a variety of reasons. Of these 91 people, just 15 were successfully placed. Others changed their mind about pursuing counselling, were out of area, sought counselling sooner elsewhere, were inappropriate referrals etc. The remaining clients are still awaiting an appropriate space with a counsellor to become available.

Of the 91 new enquiries in 2023, where the referral avenue was known, 14.9% were sourced through Church, 13.19% through the GP, Time to talk and other Mental Health services, 6.59% by word of mouth and 2.2% via online searches.

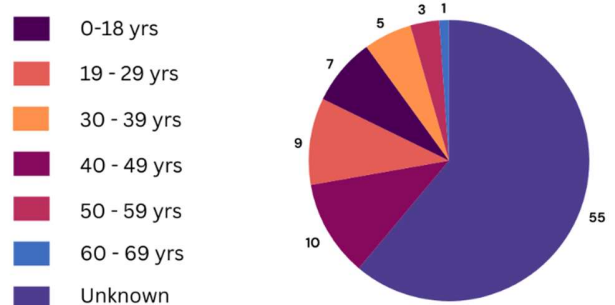
In addition to the 15 new enquiries placed in 2023, we also placed an additional 38 clients who had originally enquired in 2022. This means we were able to successfully see 53 new clients throughout 2023, in addition to existing clients that were carried through from the previous year.

Below is further information regarding the new clients placed in 2023:

2023 ENQUIRIES - GENDER STATISTICS



2023 ENQUIRIES - AGE STATISTICS



During 2023 we carried out an average of 33 sessions per week, totaling 1718 throughout the whole year. This is a slight decrease from 2022, where we completed 2328 sessions across the year.

Where the location of the enquiry was known and recorded, 25% came from people residing in East Grinstead, 14% from the surrounding villages, and 28% from further afield and therefore outside our catchment area.

Reasons for initiating counselling varied, with the most common causes or combination of causes stated as:

- General Mental Health (such as depression, anxiety, or stress) – 20%
- Relationship Difficulties (marital difficulties and/or relationships within the family) – 13%
- Self-abuse – 12%
- Life Events (including bereavement, redundancy etc) – 10%

In 2023, we continued to see an increasing demand for face-to-face sessions – 56% of our sessions took place in person and 44% took place online/over the phone. ACS continues to offer a hybrid service of online (video), telephone and in-person sessions to accommodate counsellor and client preferences. We have also managed to secure both a student and qualified counsellor to work one evening a week at Jubilee Community Centre, which enables us to provide counselling to those that are not able to make it during the day due to work/childcare commitments, but still want to receive in-person counselling.

Evaluation and Feedback

During 2023, 10 clients completed an evaluation of their counselling experience following their final session. All feedback is reviewed by the Counselling Manager who will contact the client about their responses if they have indicated they would like this. Feedback is only shared with their counsellor or used in reports and publicity if the client has given their permission. ACS continues to look at ways to encourage more clients to provide feedback to inform the continued improvement of the service offered.

The majority of the feedback received remains extremely positive. For example, 9 out of 10 respondents said they were very likely to access counselling again if needed, and all the 10 respondents were very likely to recommend ACS to a friend or colleague if they needed counselling.

We are always grateful to those clients who give us feedback and agree for us to share it. Here are a few examples from 2023:

My counsellor gave me a completely safe space to talk about all manner of things. She challenged me and helped me think of ways I could grow in confidence.

My counsellor was fantastic. So kind and caring. We tried different ways of looking at things and I never felt pressured or silly.

Receiving Christian counselling from Arise helped me to look at life from a completely different perspective. I learnt how to take responsibility for my own actions rather than others and to put healthy boundaries in place!

Looking Forward

ACS are heading into 2024 in a strong position and have already recently welcomed back the previous Counselling Manager to the Counselling team, alongside a student Art Therapist and another qualified counsellor. However, further changes are on the horizon as we see the temporary departure of our Finance Administrator in the summer and continue to review how an administrative role could help support the Counselling Manager and ACS as a whole.

We have successfully moved most of our work to a new software system, to support the increasing demand of the service. This is an ongoing process and will continue to be worked on throughout 2024.

The Trustees would like to thank all our counsellors (qualified and students) for their continued commitment to ACS, along with all our administrative team and volunteers. A special mention must go to our new Counselling Service Manager, Becky Mumford, who has excelled in her new role, in what has been a busy and challenging year.

Financial Review

The attached financial report shows ACS's receipts and payments for the year ending 31 December 2023. ACS had a deficit of £5,483 in 2023, resulting in total funds carried forward of £13,916. (Unrestricted £9,345, Restricted £2,950 and Designated £1,621.)

The Restricted Fund represents monies given by the Albert Hunt Trust in December 2021, for the sole purpose of covering the costs of counselling sessions for clients referred by a local charity, Turning Tides, focused on ending homelessness. During 2023, work with Turning Tides was restricted, but we are hoping for a renewed relationship in 2024.

The Designated Fund represents monies given by Le Cornu Trust, the Sussex Community Foundation and the SMB Charitable Trust towards the shortfall between low-paying clients and the average cost of a counselling session to ACS.

ACS's main source of income is client fees, and during 2023 the average payment per client rose a little from £19 per session to £20.50 per session. This was mainly due to measures introduced in 2023 to enable ACS to continue meeting the increasing demand for low-cost sessions:

- Increase client fees - From January 2023 all client fees were reviewed and increased where necessary. Clients were given three months' notice of this change, so we did not see an actual rise until April 2023.
- New clients - All new clients were asked to pay a minimum of £15 per session. Only in very exceptional cases are clients able to pay less, and if this is the case, their sessions are limited to six months only. Our top rate rose to £60 per session.
- Fund-raising and grant applications – In April 2023, ACS appointed a Fundraising Consultant, and through their work we were awarded a total of £10,000 in 2023.

ACS's main expenditure includes counsellor fees, rent of counselling rooms and a Counselling Manager.

- Counsellor fees - As in previous years, freelance counsellors on appointment are initially remunerated with a nominal sum of £15 per counselling session, including late cancellations and DNAs. In 2021, the Trustees agreed to raise the session fee to £16/session once qualified counsellors had been with ACS for 2 years. This decision will be reviewed annually with the intention of raising the fee by £1/session in subsequent years.
- Rent – ACS has an on-going agreement with the Jubilee Community Centre & Church in East Grinstead to provide 2 counselling rooms at a reduced rate. On rare occasions other venues are used.
- Counselling Manager – This role had been previously fulfilled by Lizzie Venter who, as the founder of ACS, had given her time at a nominal rate of remuneration since ACS began. As Lizzie Venter stepped down from the role in April 2023, the Trustees have remunerated the new Counselling Manager at a more competitive rate.

The challenge for the Trustees going forward into 2024 will be to secure funding associated with the increasing costs of administration and management of the service, along with the costs associated with the supervision and placement of student counsellors.

No Trustees received payment in 2023 for their service as a Trustee. Since his appointment as a Trustee in April 2021, John Blechynden has only been reimbursed expenses for his services as a Counsellor, rather than receiving the standard rate per session. However, when such matters are discussed, he declares an interest and takes no part in setting the revised fee. No Trustees claimed expenses in 2023.

The CIO aims to keep in reserve three months of operating expenses to protect the charity against drops in income or allow it to take advantage of new opportunities. This can also be used for the costs of dissolution should the charity be unable to continue.

This report was approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Alison Morpew

Alison Morpew
Chair of Trustees

Date: 20/05/2024

David Pennington

David Pennington
Trustee

Date: 20/05/2024

Receipts and Payments Account - Arise Counselling Service, Training & Related Services 01 Jan 2023 to 31 Dec 2023

| | Unrestricted Funds | Restricted Funds | Designated Funds | Total Funds | Prior Year Funds 2022 |
|---|--------------------|------------------|------------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| | £ | £ | £ | £ | £ |
| Receipts | | | | | |
| Client Income | 31821 | - | - | 31821 | 42535 |
| Grant | 8500 | - | 1500 | 10000 | 7000 |
| Fundraising | 118 | - | - | 118 | 0 |
| Training/Workshop Income | - | - | - | 0 | 0 |
| Voluntary Donations | 867 | - | - | 867 | 1127 |
| Total receipts | 41305 | 0 | 1500 | 42805 | 50661 |
| Payments | | | | | |
| Counsellor payments | 22,498 | - | - | 22,498 | 25847 |
| Rent | 7,484 | - | - | 7,484 | 8271 |
| Supervision & Training Costs | 2,300 | - | - | 2,300 | 2545 |
| Subsidised Sessions | - | 325 | 1500 | 1,825 | 6104 |
| Administrator Fees | 3,330 | - | - | 3,330 | 2932 |
| Advertising & Website | 733 | - | - | 733 | 817 |
| Charitable Donations to Others | - | - | - | - | 2350 |
| Counselling Manager Fees | 7,267 | - | - | 7,267 | 6055 |
| DBS Checks | 308 | - | - | 308 | 195 |
| Equipment | 53 | - | - | 53 | 325 |
| Insurance | 247 | - | - | 247 | 415 |
| IT Software & Consumables | 312 | - | - | 312 | |
| Membership Fees | 187 | - | - | 187 | 180 |
| Postage | 15 | - | - | 15 | 1 |
| Printing and Stationery | 32 | - | - | 32 | 36 |
| Professional/Governance Fees | 327 | - | - | 327 | 151 |
| Telephone & Internet | 154 | - | - | 154 | 276 |
| fundraising Consultant | 1,218 | - | - | 1,218 | |
| Trustee Expenses | - | - | - | - | 0 |
| Total Payments | 46464 | 325 | 1500 | 48289 | 56498 |
| Net receipts/payments | -5158 | -325 | 0 | -5483 | -5837 |
| Cash Funds Last Year End | 14503 | 3275 | 1621 | 19399 | 25236 |
| Cash Funds This Year End | 9345 | 2950 | 1621 | 13916 | 19399 |
| Statement of Assets & Liabilities - Arise Counselling Service, Training & Related Services | | | | | |
| Year Ending Dec 2023 | | | | | |
| | £ | | | | |
| Cash assets as at 31 Dec 2023 | | | | | |
| <i>Current Bank Account</i> | 13916 | | | | |
| Total cash assets | 13916 | | | | |
| Represented by Funds | | | | | |
| <i>Unrestricted Funds</i> | 9345 | | | | |
| <i>Restricted Funds</i> | 2950 | | | | |
| <i>Designated Funds</i> | 1621 | | | | |
| | 13916 | | | | |

This financial report was approved by the Trustees and signed on their behalf by:

Alison Morphey

Alison Morphey
Chair of Trustees

Date: 20/05/2024

David Pennington

David Pennington
Trustee

Date: 20/05/2024

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Arise Counselling Service, Training & Related Services.

This report on the financial statements of the Charity for the year ended 31st December 2023 which are set out on pages 1 to 9, is in respect of an examination carried out under s145 of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

Respective responsibilities of trustees and independent 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. Where the charity's gross income exceeded £250,000, I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified Fellow of the Association of Charity Independent Examiners.

It is my responsibility to:

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

Basis of independent examiner's report

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 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 connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

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

D R Ralph

David R Ralph IEng JP FCIPD MIET FCIE
HMCE MLR No. 12338775
50 Southwood Road
Rusthall
Tunbridge Wells
Kent. TN4 8SP

29th May 2024