



Southampton Mental Health Network

Registered Charity No: 1200515

Registered Office: Voluntary Action Centre, Kingsland Square, Southampton, SO14 1NW

Report of the Trustees

October 2023 – September 2024



The Trustees have pleasure in presenting their report and the financial statements of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation for the period October 2023 to September 2024.

Purposes and Aims

The objects of the Southampton Mental Health Network are set out in the Constitution and are as follows:

- (1) To make Southampton a mental health friendly city
- (2) This will be achieved through:
 - 2.1 Collaborating with relevant stakeholders (medical professionals, those affected by poor mental health in the past and/or currently), those with an interest in improved mental health
 - 2.2 By carrying out research and surveys to identify areas of need and best-fit solutions for those affected by poor mental health in the city of Southampton
 - 2.3 Facilitating appropriate events designed to engage with all relevant parties as a result of the research/survey results.
 - 2.4 The advancement of knowledge and education about mental health and resources to effectively support, maintain or improve mental health
 - 2.5 Raising awareness of resources available and good practice in supporting those affected by poor mental health
- (2) These outcomes will benefit all members of the community
- (3) The benefits of this Southampton Mental Health Network extend to the residents of the city of Southampton, and other areas as the trustees of the Southampton Mental Health Network may so decide

The Trustees have:

- Paid due regard to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit in establishing the new charity and reviewing the work undertaken in the last 12 months.

Background and origin of the charity

Communicare in Southampton is a small, independent, local charity that provides good neighbourly support to the residents of the city of Southampton. It carries out its activities in close partnership with a range of other groups, ensuring that the needs of its beneficiaries are met as effectively as possible by those with the most relevant knowledge and experience.

In February 2019 Communicare led on the establishment of a network of organisations and individuals, linked through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with a vision to make Southampton a mental health friendly city.

Southampton's Integrated Commissioning Unit (ICU) awarded funding in April 2019 to support the development of the network and establishment of a service user network. This allowed Communicare to employ a part time Administrator and to undertake a range of low key activities to take the project forward.

By March 2021 membership had risen to seventy, including representation from statutory organisations (NHS, City Council), businesses, small community organisations and individuals. There was active engagement at all levels, allowing collaborative work to be initiated and built on. It became clear that to secure its long-term future the network would benefit from becoming a charitable organisation in its own right.

Working from within the existing framework members explored various options together, culminating in the recruitment of a Board of Trustees with a broad range of experience and perspectives. The Board led on the creation of a constitution for a Charitable Incorporated Organisation, which gained registration with the Charity Commission in September 2022.

SMILE (Southampton Mental Illness Lived Experience)

In March 2019, following consultation, users of mental health services in Southampton and others who had lived experience of mental illness, SMHN concluded that the "service users network" being created through the organisation should be aimed at all those with lived experience, not just those who had/would make use of services on offer.

The group was established and led by Bob Clark and Saire Herschel-Clark.

SMILE sits under the umbrella of Southampton Mental Health Network. SMILE is not a crisis group but member organisations can provide support to one another.

Objectives of SMILE:

- To tackle stigma and embrace diversity.
- To contribute towards making Southampton a more mental health friendly city.
- To raise awareness of mental health issues, draw on and improve people's experiences of using services.
- To work in partnership with member organisations of Southampton Mental Health Network to improve services.

Trustee Saire Herschel-Clarke led SMILE from the Autumn of 2021 until she stood down in January 2024. Saire has come back to lead SMILE but will not rejoin as a Trustee.

33 individuals have shown interest in SMILE. Plans for more active engagement will be rolled out now that clear leadership is back in place.

Activity from October 2023 – September 2024

The main focus during this period has been on maintaining the well-established networking opportunities provided and continuing the efficient functioning of the charity.

Communicare's funding from the ICU allowed the post of SMHN Administrator to remain open on a restricted basis throughout. With this support activities have included:

- Providing a weekly, online, newsletter for information exchange
- Convening meetings for all members with topical speakers
- Organising subgroup meetings to cover specific areas of work
 - SMILE (Southampton Mental Illness Lived Experience), which acts as a service users' network
 - Family, Friends and Carers' Group
 - Communications
 - Engagement
 - Funding
 - Focus Group: Time To Talk
 - Focus Group: Medication Report
- Offering opportunities for individuals and organisations to meet and explore areas where they could collaborate
 - New members sessions
 - "Networking for the Network", online speed networking
 - "Shuffle Club", informal social networking
- Representing SMHN at city-wide or regional meetings, including (but not limited to):
 - Mental Health partnership board
 - Project Fusion
 - Suicide Prevention
 - Southampton's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy development
 - Family Friends and Carers Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust
 - SO: Linked meetings & SVS Friday Forum
 - Solent NHS "Working in Partnership" Meetings
 - Research with Ling and UoS on mental health in older adults

PR and media

Since 2021, Porcupine PR has continued to guide on the production of a PR Strategy and to support the network in its delivery. During the period of this report the bulk of their time has been spent on assisting with establishing and developing the website. Achievements include:

- Producing written content for the website as requested to help boost SEO including backlinking
- Linked social media to the website to help with linking back to it and footfall

- Creating Young People's page and app - discussed work with Xebre Ltd to produce page and app, linked to the website, specifically aimed at those aged 16-25

Other general PR achievements for the 23-24 period include:

- 4 press releases, with subsequent webcopy and social media posts.
- Creating an estimated £50,400 in press / media coverage during the 23-24 period, including pieces in The Echo, In Common, About My Area, Council publications and Yahoo News.
- Strategy reworking
- 12 Communications Subgroup meetings

The focus of the next 12 months will be:

- Continue to help build and develop the website with content assistance and awareness generation.
- Develop the Young People's page and app
- Discuss and action the website launch
- Revise strategy if needed
- Issue six press releases – priorities include membership, fundraising, Family, Friends & Carers Events, The Young People's section of the Website, and supporting NHS and similar campaigns.

Website

A significant and time-consuming project over this period has been working on the Network's website.

Since 2022 Xebre Limited have been working with us to create our website, working closely with members to ensure that it meets the group's requirements.

During this period, we have been particularly focusing on the Young Person section of our website, which allows Young People to filter specific Young People's services by support type and area. Furthermore, we have developed the Young Person's Service Finder Tool (app), which provides tailored mental health support to suit that individual's needs. This includes a four-tier system, ranging from community support and self-help to NHS and crisis support, as well as taking into consideration other factors such as education provider (and the support they can offer), alcohol and drug use, and caring responsibilities. Young people are then able to browse the range of support services available to them, and can contact service providers directly, with a link to their website, phone number and email.

This was born of a focus group held in September 2023, allowing Young People's ideas to be incorporated into the thinking process and design of the app. The app and Young People's section of the website is now live, and the consultation / feedback period launched in September 2024. It can be found in the 'Find Support' section of our website.

Facts & figures

Membership

Date	Members representing an Organisation	Organisations represented	Personal/individual memberships	Total members
Oct-23	57	47	19	76
Sep-24	48	43	26	73

Engagement

The level of engagement of members is seen as an indication of the value they recognise in the Network's opportunities.

Engagement is measured by looking at those who undertook one or more of the following during the specified period:

- Opened the Roundup (online newsletter)
- Attended a meeting
- Has been in communication via email
- Is a new member

Figures for the end of the previous year are included for comparison:

Date	Number engaging	% engaging	Number of meetings	Number attending
Aug23 - Oct23	68	89	5	20
Nov23 - Jan24	72	90	7	36
Feb24 - Apr24	66*	83	5	10
May24 - Jul24	63	86	7	27
Aug24 - Oct24	62	76	6	15

*This included engagement by members whose membership lapsed in April 2023

Representation at city-wide & regional meetings

From October 2023 to September 2024, SMHN was represented at 37 citywide and regional meetings, including:

- Mental Health partnership board
- Project Fusion
- Suicide Prevention
- Southampton's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy development
- City Mental Health Partnership Board

- Family Friends and Carers Southern Health NHS Foundation Trust
- The Mental Health Collective
- SO: Linked meetings/Friday Forum
- Working in Partnership Meetings
- Research with Ling and UoS on mental health in older adults

Fundraising

In July 2024, we held a quiz at Board in the City and raised £538.46. The quiz was attended by 31 people making up 5 teams. It was a very entertaining evening and enjoyed by all.

We appreciate the support of the team at Board in the City for hosting and feeding us, and everyone who attended and helped on the night.

Surveys & consultations

In 2021, SMHN surveyed the general public to elicit ideas about what being a “mental health friendly city” meant to them. 500 responses were received, and the results were used to guide the Network's planning.

A second survey, picking up on areas where further elucidation was required, was launched in 2022 and remained open until September 2023. 188 responses were received. Findings were analysed by Rebecca Beddall and Andy Fulford. The executive summary will be shared with all Network members.

SMHN will continue to respond to requests from statutory providers to circulate surveys to relevant members of the public when they are seeking feedback on the services they provide.

Focus Group: Medication

At the request of members, we held a focus group to hear the experiences of both patients and carers regarding medication for mental health conditions, its prescription, dosage and side effects, reviews, etc. The report is in the final stages of drafting.

Focus Group: Let's Talk

During 2024 two meetings were held with members to explore opportunities for people to talk to each other in Southampton. This need for people to talk aligns with the results of the mental health friendly city survey that the network conducted. The top request for support was access to services, and the second was opportunities to make friends. In the second stage of the survey, we asked what access to services meant to people, and respondents said they needed opportunities to meet and talk to others.

Future plans

The following topics will be the main areas of focus for October 2024 – September 2025

- **Recruit new members:** widen awareness of SMHN, with attention to targeting sections of the community under-represented to date
- **Maintain and further develop engagement:** solicit feedback from members and engage with the wider community to encourage greater active involvement in areas that contribute to making Southampton a mental health friendly city
- **Co-lead Southampton's Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership:** continue to work with Public Health and SVS to develop and extend the group to monitor and evaluate the implementation of Southampton's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- **Website development:** continue to build and develop the charity's website
- **Young People's app:** work with Xebre Ltd to further develop the app, linked to the website, specifically aimed at those aged 16 – 25y
- **Fundraising:** work together to attract funding for the charity and its member organisations
- **Support research:** look for ways to contribute to projects that explore underlying issues that affect mental health and wellbeing
- **Lead on the "Get Southampton Talking" initiative:** respond to requests to bring people together to give more opportunities to relieve loneliness and isolation
- **Raise awareness around supporting good mental wellbeing:** establish effective ways to share our mission with residents, workers and businesses in Southampton underpinned by a clear PR strategy.
Facilitate the provision of public events to highlight understanding of how mental well-being can be integrated into everyday life
- **SMILE:** build on and develop the established network. Recruit a Trustee with lived experience of mental illness
- **Establish consultation panels:** recruit groups with personal knowledge/experience of a variety of situations/perspectives who can be called upon to contribute to thinking around relevant areas of planning and review

Membership

Members are asked to renew their membership annually and pay a £2 registration fee. This allows the charity to track its membership more effectively and ensure that members are positively opting into engagement with the organisation.

Membership of the charity is open to anyone interested in furthering its objectives and who, by applying for membership, has indicated their agreement to become a member and acceptance of the duty of members as set out in the constitution. A member may be:

- i. An individual who lives or works in the city of Southampton
- ii. An organisation supporting residents of the city of Southampton

If the Southampton Mental Health Network is wound up, the members of the Southampton Mental Health Network have no liability to contribute to its assets and no personal responsibility for settling its debts and liabilities.

Governance

Day-to-day operational activities are delivered by the SMHN Administrator, who is employed by Communicare in Southampton. This has been intermittent during this period, due to funding, and has had a significant impact on the day to day running of the Network. Line management is undertaken by Communicare's Manager.

The Administrator and Communicare's Manager report to the Trustees at their regular meetings. Strategic management, including adoption of policies, is undertaken by the Trustees. They also lead the various subgroups.

Trustees

Recruitment of Trustees

Six Trustees were recruited from within the membership of the Communicare-led network to launch the new charity. Care was given to appointing a Board that represented a wide range of perspectives and experience.

The Trustees that served during the year and up to the date of this report and are set out below:

- Susan Hayward Chair of Trustees
- Barry Hampton
- Parvin Damani
- Gemma Pratt
- Paul Lewzey
- Jacqueline Tuson (standing down at the Feb 2025 AGM)

We thank Jacqueline for her support and commitment right from the beginning of the Network, her guidance and wisdom as the family, friends and carers group lead, and for bringing her wit and thoughtfulness to our meetings. Jacqueline will be sadly missed as a Trustee, but we look forward to catching up with her in Network meetings in the future.

According to our constitution we can have up to nine Trustees. As of Feb 2025, we have 4 Trustee vacancies. If you are interested in this voluntary position, please get in touch with us at smhn@communicareinsouthampton.org.uk.

Risk Review

The Trustees have considered the major risks to which Southampton Mental Health Network is exposed and have put in place policies and systems to mitigate these risks.

Much of the activity of the charity continued to be delivered through Communicare this year, which is protected under the insurance policy of umbrella organisation: The Hampshire Good Neighbours Network provided by Capital Markets Underwriting Ltd.

We are developing a wide range of policies including Adult Safeguarding, Health and Safety, Equal Opportunities and Data Protection.

Cyber security is provided by Communicare in Southampton through subscription to Soda IT.

Financial statement

Financial Statement Southampton Mental Health Network CIO Registered Charity Number 1200515 Financial Accounts for year ending 30 September 2024

	2024	2023
	£	£
INCOME		
Membership fees received during period	198	128
Fund raising events	794	0
Additional donations (unrestricted)	178	122
Restricted purpose donations	8,486	105
Total Income	9,656	355
EXPENDITURE		
Mail Holding Facility Fee (SVS)	0	50
Restricted purpose expenditure	0	105
Additional expenditure	262	5
Total Expenditure	262	160
FUNDS HELD		
Opening Bank balance	300	0
Total Income	9,656	355
Total Expenditure	262	55
Closing Bank Balance	9,694	300
Opening Funds		
Restricted	0	0
Unrestricted	300	0
	300	0
Closing Funds		
Restricted	8,486	0
Unrestricted	1,208	300
	9,694	300

NOTE TO ACCOUNTS

Note 1 The restricted purpose income was for a website funding progress which, as at year end, remained a work in progress and for which disbursements will be made in due course

Note 2 An independent examination of the accounts was not undertaken because the income and expenditure of the Network were below the necessary threshold.