

Southampton Mental Health Network

Registered Charity No: 1200515

Registered Office: Communicare in Southampton, 6 Northlands Road, SO15 2LF

**Report of the Trustees
October 2024 – September 2025**



The Trustees have pleasure in presenting their report and the financial statements of the Charitable Incorporated Organisation for the period **October 2024 to September 2025**.

Mission

Our friendly, welcoming & compassionate network first became active in 2019. Working together, we want to make Southampton a mental health friendly city, ensuring equality, diversity & inclusion for all. Our network is supported by Southampton City Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group's Integrated Commissioning Unit.

Our mission

- Improve attitudes, understanding and education around mental health in our city.
- Boost wellbeing & resilience.
- Be understanding and supportive of mental ill-health.
- Create welcoming and collaborative spaces for discussion.

The Year in Review

Following a period of intermittent and part-time staffing, the administrator (Chloe Naegeli) was appointed full time in April 2025. A Network focus has been to regain the momentum lost during this time - raising awareness of our mission within the city, diversifying our engagement with community groups, and widening our member base.

In April 2025, the Network agreed to lead on a citywide PR strategy, coordinating communications pertaining to mental health and wellbeing in line with the Southampton Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

Preparations were made to revitalise SMILE (Southampton Mental Illness Lived Experience), following a period of inactivity. The relaunch was planned for November 2025.

Progress was made in pursuing opportunities to engage with academic research, with the aim of assisting to produce reliable evidence on which to build future practice to improve mental health and wellbeing.

Admin Support

The ICU funding allows the administrator (Chloe Naegeli) to continue business as usual, including a weekly newsletter, web content, convening and providing administrative support for main and subgroup meetings, providing networking and collaboration opportunities, and representing the network at citywide / regional meetings.

Membership

Date	Members Representing an Organisation	No. of Organisations represented	No. of Individuals	Total Members
Sept 2024	50	43	23	73
Sept 2025	70	62	21	91

Attending Member Events

Another priority for us this year has been to support and attend as many Network Member events as possible. This has included the Re:Minds 10-year anniversary celebration Event and Our Version Media's 5-year birthday celebration. We were delighted to hold a stall at the Mansbridge Centenary Event, as well as support Unpaid Carers Southampton Afternoon Tea and attended Touch Network's Live Storytelling Events.

Representation at Citywide Meetings

From October 2024 to September 2025, SMHN was represented at 26 citywide and regional meetings, including:

- Mental Health Partnership Board
- Suicide Prevention
- SO: Linked meetings, Friday Forum and Coproduction Corner
- Working in Partnership Meetings, and Experience of Care Meetings, HIOW NHS Healthcare Foundation Trust
- Monitoring the implementation of Southampton's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy

PR and Media

Since 2021, Porcupine PR has guided the production of a PR Strategy and supported the network in its delivery. We have had a really successful year for PR, creating an estimated £126,000 in media coverage for an annual fee of £5,184. This includes 20 press releases, subsequent web copy and social media, 3 TV and 3 Radio interviews.

There has been a focus this year on establishing and coordinating the citywide PR strategy. This joint approach aims to create a series of unified messages, phrases, and hashtags that promote positive mental health across the city. By having consistent messaging across multiple platforms, we intend to amplify our voice and reach, engaging with a wider range of audiences that we had not reached before. Between April and October 2025, the group met to agree key events / days the group would like to focus on. It was agreed that the joint PR strategy would officially launch in September 2025.

Porcupine PR continues to produce content for the website and social media.

Website

Since 2022, Xebre Limited has been working with us to develop our website. During this period, the web content has undergone significant change. As we aim to make the website THE place to go for signposting to services within the city, we have been working on populating the "Find Support" and "What's On" (calendar) sections with as many services / groups in the city as possible. In doing so, we aspire that people visiting the website are able to find support appropriate to them.

Our PR concentrates on directing people to the website through our social media, press releases, networking events, and more recent 'find support' QR codes, and have seen an increase in website traffic as a result.

Projects

Making Southampton a Mental Health Friendly City

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, aimed at identifying areas requiring further elucidation, was launched in 2022 and remained open until September 2023. 188 responses were received. Rebecca Beddall and Andy Fulford analysed findings. These findings, alongside an executive summary, were shared with all Network members before being circulated to clinical leads and later to the broader public. This is publicly available on our website here: <https://www.smhn.org.uk/news/story.php?id=residents-workers-help-shape-sou-1282>

Two focus groups were held with Network members to create a plan to act on the results.

Medication Report

In July 2023, at the request of members, a focus group was held to hear the experiences of both patients and carers regarding medication for mental health conditions. This included prescription, dosage, side effects, and reviews. The report has now been finalised and shared with our NHS colleagues, to consider the findings.

Let's Talk Southampton

Three focus groups were held with members to explore opportunities for people to talk to each other in Southampton. This aligns with the results of the mental health friendly city surveys conducted by SMHN.

There was agreement that there are already many relevant groups or initiatives available in the city with limited ways for those who may appreciate them to find out.

This is something we aim to address through the website by adding more general 'wellbeing' activities to the Find Support section.

Members' Surveys and Feedback

SMHN continues to respond to requests from statutory providers, network members and community leads to circulate surveys, consultations and information. This is achieved through the weekly Roundup, website and social media.

Research

A notable achievement of this year has been our engagement with the world of research, something the Network has been aspiring to for the past couple of years.

This has included attending the NIHR ARC Wessex Quality Improvement event, directly inputting into the RSA (Royal Society of Art)'s Social Connectedness focus groups, as well as sharing research opportunities from the University of Southampton with the Network. Researchers have presented their work at main group meetings, circulated their information through the Roundup and provided input to the website and social media.

SMHN has also connected researchers with community groups they would not otherwise have access to for Dr Hannah Bowers' study on Depression vs Deprivation and Dr Skaiste Livencuite's study on Alcohol Use in Older Adults.

Fundraising

In May 2025, we held a fundraising quiz at Mettricks, Portswood, raising £420.75 from both ticket sales and raffle tickets. The quiz was attended by 38 people, making up 6 teams.

The Network raised £30.50 at the Mansbridge Centenary Event, selling raffle tickets for a hamper drawn on the day, as well as children's bubbles and fidget toys.

SMILE

SMILE (Southampton Mental Illness Lived Experience) sits under the umbrella of Southampton Mental Health Network. SMILE is not a support group, but an opportunity for those with lived experience to

contribute to making a difference to the way that services are designed and delivered for the residents of Southampton.

Objectives of SMILE:

- To tackle stigma and embrace diversity.
- To contribute to 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.

As a Trustee, Saire Herschel-Clarke led SMILE from the Autumn of 2021 until she stood down in January 2024. Saire has returned to lead SMILE but will not rejoin as a Trustee. David Cowley was elected as the Trustee representing SMILE at the AGM in February 2025. Thank you, Saire and David.

Following a period of inactivity for SMILE, Saire Herschel-Clarke has been working on recruiting new members. SMILE ran two focus groups to gather feedback on Board in the City's proposed Wellbeing Hub in July 25.

Saire Herschel-Clarke also launched her Stars for Stars campaign in May 2025, a scheme which recognises individuals and businesses that go above and beyond to create kind environments and promote good mental health. The first star was awarded in May 2025.

Future plans

- *Recruit new members:* widen awareness of SMHN, with a particular focus on expanding to businesses / the wider community for buy-in.
- *Maintain and further develop engagement:* encourage members to suggest areas they would like to explore/contribute to. Provide opportunities for Networking, information sharing, and the opportunity for organisations to work together.
- *Co-lead Southampton's Mental Health and Wellbeing Partnership:* continue to work with Public Health and SVS to monitor and evaluate the implementation of Southampton's Mental Health and Wellbeing Strategy
- *Joint PR Strategy:* continue to lead on the citywide PR strategy, promoting messaging about positive mental wellbeing across the city, strengthening and widening our reach
- *Website development:* move the website to a more practical and sustainable model. Continue to include as much information about city resources on the website as possible. Coordinate with other information directories (e.g., SLIC) and expand to include other activities that promote positive wellbeing.
- *Young People's app:* continue to provide up-to-date information about services which specifically support those aged 16-25.
- *Fundraising:* work together to attract funding for the charity and its member organisations
- *Support research:* continue and expand our contributions 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

- *Establish consultation panels:* recruit groups with personal knowledge/experience of a variety of situations/perspectives in response to requests from providers of services.
- *SMILE:* continue to develop SMILE, gathering opportunities for people with lived experience of poor mental health to provide feedback and engage with services.

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:

- An individual who lives or works in the city of Southampton
- 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

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 (stood down June 2025)

Parvin Damani

Gemma Pratt

Paul Lewzey

David Cowley

Ling Salter (appointed by Trustees May 2025)

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

Income and Expenditure for the Year to 30 September 2025

INCOME	Unrestricted Funds 2025	Restricted Funds 2025	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024
	£	£	£	£
Membership fees received during period	148	0	148	198
Fund raising events	701	0	701	794
Additional donations (unrestricted)	73	0	73	178
Restricted purpose donations	0	8,486	8,486	8,486
Total Income	922	8486	9,408	9,656
EXPENDITURE	Unrestricted Funds 2025	Restricted Funds 2025	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024
	£	£	£	£
Administration	170	0	170	262
Fund Raising costs	92	0	92	0
Training Event costs	225	0	225	0
Total Expenditure	487	0	487	262
	Unrestricted Funds 2025	Restricted Funds 2025	Total Funds 2025	Total Funds 2024
	£	£	£	£
Net Income for the Year	435	8486	8921	9394
Total funds brought forward	8486	1208	9694	300
Total funds carried forward	8921	9694	18615	9694

Balance Sheet as at 30 September 2025

	Unrestricted Funds 2025 £	Restricted Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2025 £	Total Funds 2024 £
Current Assets				
Cash at bank and in hand	1643	16972	18615	9694
Net Assets	1643	16972	18615	9694

We would like to thank...

Hayley Binstead, Director and Founder of Board in the City CIC, for her support of the Network since day one, as well as the provision of a free venue and refreshments for events.

Jess Spurrell, Senior Public Engagement Manager at the University of Southampton, for sourcing and providing the venue and refreshments for our AGM, February 2025.

Porcupine PR, for their time, dedication and support with all things PR, website, and the Network.

Barry Hampton, our finance volunteer, who provides all our receipts and writes the financial report.

Ann Jones, for diligently giving up her time each week to write the Roundup.

Sue Hayward and Ling Salter, for financially supporting the Network in our endeavours.

The Trustees, for giving up their time to support the network, providing strategic and practical support.

All our Network members, for their continued engagement and support.