

# Trustees Annual Report 2024

## Tenterden Counselling Service (TCS)

Milroy House, Sayers Lane, Tenterden, Kent TN30 6BW  
Registered charity number: 1201106



TCS is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) governed by Constitution

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## Financial summary of the year | January, 2024 – 31 December, 2024

Following a drop in reserves last year, 2024 has seen a steady rebuilding, with TCS declaring a surplus for the year of just over £30,000, and ending the year with a renewed sense of purpose and ambition.

The Trustees would especially like to thank the dedicated members of our team who made this surplus possible by fulfilling key roles for TCS on a voluntary basis through much of 2024, saving the charity costs we estimate to be in the region of the surplus recorded.

This enabled TCS to review its reserves policy, which was updated on 9 January, 2025, committing TCS to hold a reserve of at least 8 months' operating costs to safeguard the charity by protecting its renewed financial resilience.

## Objectives and Activities

The trustees have given due regard to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in reviewing and setting out the charity's objectives and planning its activities.

The objectives of the charity are as follows:

**TCS exists to improve the mental health and relationships of people in and around Tenterden by providing high quality, affordable therapy for as long as it's needed, and by making the ask for help, ordinary.**

This report examines how TCS's activities in the reporting year have delivered these objectives.

## Services

TCS provides confidential, affordable, accessible, high-quality, one-to-one counselling services to the people of Tenterden and the surrounding area. The charity was established in 1983 as the Tenterden Advisory Committee, having identified the need for affordable counselling in Tenterden and the surrounding villages.

Since the pandemic we have seen an increased level of demand for our services, which showed no sign of decreasing in 2024. We are therefore committed to making an ever-growing positive impact on the mental health of the community in and around Tenterden. In 2024, roughly 1% of the local population used our services. Taken on its own, this figure is quite remarkable for a small charity with no public funding. Given the powerful transmissibility of mental health, we know that most of our beneficiaries have family and friends who, perhaps unknowingly, will also have benefited from our services, through improved relationships and wellbeing. Our impact ripples out and improves the mental health of our whole community.

From what our clients tell us, we know our service is genuinely life-changing. There are many more local people who would benefit if we can steadily expand our offering and raise our profile. The expansion and constant improvement of our services depends on sufficient funding, and in the *Plans For The Future* section at the end of this report, we outline our new strategy.

## Who We Help

Our services are available to anybody living in Tenterden and the surrounding area struggling with depression, anxiety, trauma, stress, loneliness, loss, bereavement, family problems, abuse or other issues. We are not a crisis service.

Our beneficiaries self-refer to our service, often having been signposted to us by their GP. Many of our beneficiaries are registered with Ivy Court Surgery, the GP practice nearest to our service.

We plan to deepen our connections with the other GP practices around Tenterden as we increase our counselling capacity.

### GP Voice

*“With the provision of NHS mental health services at an all-time low, to have a local counselling charity willing and able to provide high quality psychological therapies to our patients is something all the GPs at Ivy Court Surgery are truly grateful for. TCS is a trusted, well-established and highly-regarded service which offers open-ended counselling, something which is often needed by clients but rarely available in the NHS. Long may it continue to support our local patient population.”*

In 2024, we received 91 self-referrals. The most common issues highlighted in referrals were anxiety, depression, trauma, bereavement, family and relationship issues.

Of referrals:

- 24% were struggling with financial difficulties
- 12% were carers
- 12% were lone parents
- 76% had previously accessed other forms of therapy or mental health services
- 79% were female (compared to 54% of the local population, suggesting men are less likely to seek support for mental health challenges)
- 95% were white British (compared to 97% white ethnicity locally, according to ONS 2021)

Referrals to TCS in 2024 were fairly evenly spread across age groups, despite the population of Tenterden being more elderly (56% aged 50+, 27% 70+). This may reflect more openness among younger people to actively address mental health issues.

0-18 3% (we only provide services to adults)

18-24 10%

25-34 16%

35-44 19%

45-54 15%

55-64 16%

65-74 11%

75-84 6%

Unknown 4%

## Assessments

Following self-referral, we carry out a detailed assessment of each individual to determine their suitability for counselling. Not all those who self-refer go on to undertake an assessment. In 2024, we carried out 70 assessments.

Following assessment, we aim to avoid a lengthy wait before starting counselling. We try to keep our waiting times down by carefully balancing the marketing of our services with our supply of counsellors, counselling rooms and available sessions.

## Counselling

In 2024, we provided counselling to 86 individuals and undertook 1,390 counselling sessions, an increase of +4.6% on the year before.

51 clients started counselling and 45 finished counselling during the year.

We provide face-to-face counselling, with virtual sessions if necessary. The vast majority of sessions in 2024 were face-to-face. Sessions take place in rooms provided by TCS, not at the counsellors' own premises. The availability of suitable rooms for counselling is one of the constraints on our service. We plan to move to new premises in 2025 (see [Plans for the Future](#)).

## Affordable Counselling (pay what you can)

We believe a lack of money should never be a barrier to mental health. We ask clients to pay what they can afford for our services and will provide counselling for free if needed.

Three out of every four of the 86 clients we counselled in 2024 paid a subsidised rate owing to their financial circumstances (61 clients or 73%). The “actual” cost of each counselling session was set at £50 and the average contribution by clients was £24 (down from £25 in 2023).

### *Client Voice*

*“I strongly feel that, because the fees are not fixed at a high level, this service is accessible to so many more people. The very people who are experiencing shrinking access to any psychological services within the NHS.”*

## Open-ended Counselling (for as long as needed)

Open-ended work enables a relational approach to counselling, in which a strong relationship between the client and the counsellor can become a catalyst for insight and an experiential model for positive change. Open-ended therapy can also give clients the time and security they need to share and explore past traumas, gradually gain understanding of them and so reduce their impact on daily life.

This open-ended approach sets TCS apart from many similar organisations and, we believe, increases the likelihood of lasting, positive outcomes (something we will endeavour to evidence in coming years). It is often cited by clients as a highly valuable and essential part of our service.

Our open-ended approach means that the duration of our therapy varies considerably, with a (mean) average duration between 6 and 12 months. Two thirds of clients (64%) who ended their TCS therapy in 2024 had been with us for between 3 and 17 months.

## Counsellor Community

We regard a thriving counsellor community as being essential to delivering a positive impact from our services. In 2024, we grew from 10 to 12 qualified counsellors and took on two trainee counsellors. Providing a route for trainee counsellors to gain experience and progress towards qualification within a truly supportive counselling community is an indirect but important positive impact of our service.

Our counsellors, many of whom also practice privately, cite the sense of community and connection they gain from TCS as being of considerable personal and professional value, and trainees often stay with the service when they qualify.

### *Counsellor Voice:*

*“What I value most about TCS is being part of a community, being able to get support from other counsellors and supervisors, and being able to work other than on my own.”*

Our counsellor community is rich in its diversity of theoretical orientation and level of experience, from trainees, through recently qualified to experienced counsellors.

All of our Clinical Supervisors are well-qualified with decades of experience. They provide fortnightly supervision to all of our counsellors in line with BACP guidelines, supporting their professional development and their client work, bringing professional gravitas to TCS' counsellor community, and underpinning the professionalism and quality of our service.

### *Client Voice:*

*“My counsellor's empathy, integrity and presence all helped me feel safe enough to make full use of the therapy offered. And their knowledge and psychological education and experience was clear from the start.*

## Client Feedback

We ask our clients to complete a short survey on completing their counselling. Unfortunately, only 7 clients completed this survey in 2024, so we are reviewing our process, with a view to collecting feedback from a higher proportion of clients.

Those who did complete the survey in 2024, provided overwhelmingly positive feedback:

Did TCS listen to you and treat your concerns seriously?

*Please rate from 1 ("not at all") to 5 ("very much so")*

Av. 4.9

Do you feel that the service helped you to better understand and address your difficulties?

*Please rate from 1 ("not at all") to 5 ("very much so")*

Av. 4.9

Did you have confidence in your counsellor and their skills and techniques?

*Please rate from 1 ("not at all") to 5 ("very much so")*

Av. 5.0

On a scale of 0 – 10 how satisfied were you with the service?

Av. 9.9

Additional comments provided by clients highlighted:

- the life-changing impact of the service;
- the existence of a safe space in which to explore difficult issues and emotions;
- the care and empathy of counsellors;
- and the high level of trust in our counsellors and the service more broadly.

### **Client Voice:**

***“My counselling helped me to work through a range of difficulty emotions that had been swamping me. My quality of life has improved and I have a better view of the events that led me to seek counselling in the first place. My relationships are, from my point of view, clearer and more genuine. My moods are steadier and happier. And my confidence has improved. I feel positive about the future and better able to cope with any adversity that may come my way.”***

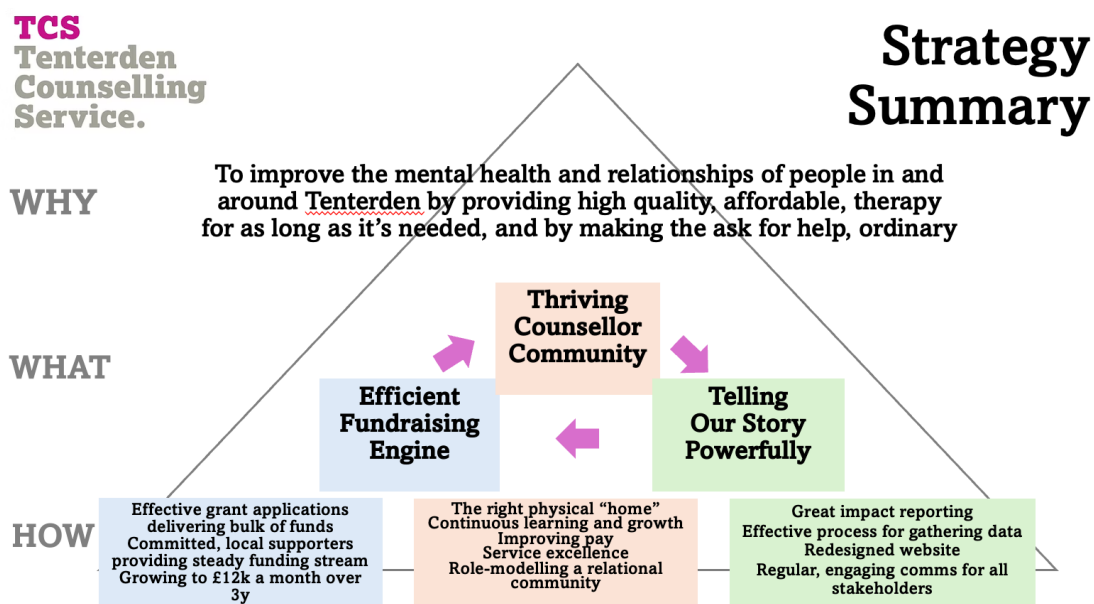
## Plans for the Future

After a lack of fundraising success in 2023, TCS was compelled to consider closure. It survived thanks to dedication and commitment from its trustees and its clinical team. This rebirth has, at times, been painful. But it has also generated new energy and ambition to ensure TCS not only survives but thrives going forwards, playing a vital role in improving the mental health of an entire community.

We have created a simple strategy built on three, inter-connected pillars:

- An efficient fundraising engine
- A thriving counsellor community
- Telling our story powerfully

Our efficient fundraising engine will enable us to fund a thriving (and growing) counsellor community; through its work we will gather and share powerful stories of positive impact; to make us an attractive proposition for potential funders, and so on.



To help us develop an effective fundraising approach we are working with Funding For All, a local charity offering specialist fundraising support, advice and mentoring.

An important development for 2025 is securing new premises for our services. As mentioned earlier in the report, having sufficient and appropriate rooms in which to conduct counselling sessions is one of the constraints on our service. We have now found a space on Tenterden High Street with more rooms, better suited for counselling, with the potential for a common room for our counsellors to share – something they will value hugely. This space will also enable us to run a programme of CPD sessions for counsellors, helping them develop their skills, while keeping up-to-date with best practice and the rapidly-changing societal influences on mental health.



We hope to move into the new premises in the summer of 2025. With this new space secure, we are planning to expand our counselling team by another four, enabling us to continue to increase the number of sessions we offer and clients we serve. We also hope to recruit a part time clinical lead. The clinical lead will have a strategic focus on the needs of our clinical team, and on constantly increasing its effectiveness in responding to and meeting the mental health needs of our community. This will free up our clinical trustee to focus on governance, and our clinical supervisors to focus on supervising.

In order to be a compelling proposition to potential funders, we recognise the need to raise our profile locally (we remain unknown to many, despite operating in Tenterden for more than 40 years). We hope to recruit a part-time team member to focus on our community engagement. We also plan to revamp our website, publish our first impact report, produce regular communications for stakeholder groups and extend our public outreach in the community.

Among the stated objectives of TCS is to make the ask for help, ordinary. Working to overcome the stigma attached to seeking help for mental health will have a positive impact far beyond the clients we serve directly. Our goal is not simply to support the mental health of the individuals we serve, but to improve the wellbeing of our whole community.

## Board of Trustees

TCS is grateful for the service of the following Trustees during 2024.

Trustee name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year
Kimberley Trow		Resigned 26/3/24
Jonathan Dowling		Resigned 6/5/24
Jolyon Vickers		Resigned 31/5/24
Debbie Bray		Resigned 31/5/24
Christine Wilding		Resigned 31/5/24
Jill Perkins		Appointed 31/01/2024, resigned 31/5/24
Mark Harlow		Appointed 09/05/2024, resigned 3/9/24
Rachel De Silva		Appointed 06/05/2024
Catherine Farragher		Appointed 09/05/2024
Edward Perry	Chair	Appointed 03/09/2024

All new trustees are recruited by existing trustees, in line with the relevant policies, and as required to provide robust governance and deliver TCS' strategic plan.

All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no benefits from the charity. Any expenses reclaimed from the charity are set out in notes to the Accounts.

This 2024 trustees' annual report has been approved by the trustees on 15 May, 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



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Rachel De Silva, Trustee

# 2024 Accounts



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name	No (if any)
Tenterden Counselling Service	1201126

## Receipts and payments accounts

CC16a

For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	01.01.2024		31.12.2024

### 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 £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Business donations	3,300	-	-	3,300	2,700
Client donations	33,287	-	-	33,287	6,380
Individual donations (non clients)	64	-	-	64	31
Interest income	508	-	-	508	2
Grant funding	41,000	-	-	41,000	-
Gift Aid income	3,521	-	-	3,521	-
Transfer from TCS	1,214	-	-	1,214	29,100
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>82,894</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>82,894</b>	<b>38,213</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>82,894</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>82,894</b>	<b>38,213</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Bank fees	39	-	-	39	12
Contractors	11,100	-	-	11,100	5,900
Counsellors fees	27,885	-	-	27,885	5,920
Supervisors fees	4,857	-	-	4,857	1,485
Insurance	331	-	-	331	1,521
Insurance run off cover	489	-	-	489	489
General expenses	-	-	-	-	116
IT software	306	-	-	306	68
Legal expenses	-	-	-	-	5
Recruitment and training	-	-	-	-	59
Rent Milroy House	2,880	-	-	2,880	1,154
Milroy expenses	25	-	-	25	-
Rent West View	1,770	-	-	1,770	180
Subscriptions	253	-	-	253	75
Intakes	280	-	-	280	-
Intake meetings	170	-	-	170	-
Advertising & marketing	431	-	-	431	-
Printing & stationery	47	-	-	47	-
Team Development	1,604	-	-	1,604	-
Telephone & postage	41	-	-	41	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>52,508</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>52,508</b>	<b>16,984</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>52,508</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>52,508</b>	<b>16,984</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>30,386</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>30,386</b>	<b>21,229</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>21,229</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21,229</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>51,615</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>51,615</b>	<b>21,229</b>

### 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 £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Bank balance	51,614	-	-

	-	-	-
	-	-	-
<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>51,614</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>

(agree balances with receipts and payments account (s))

Agreement Error

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**Unrestricted funds**

**Restricted funds**

**Endowment funds**

to nearest £

to nearest £

to nearest £

## B2 Other monetary assets

Details			
Rent for Milroy	664	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-
	-	-	-

## 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 asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-
		-	-

## B5 Liabilities

Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
Rent West View 3 months	unrestricted	480	
Counsellors December fees	unrestricted	950	
Team Development	unrestricted	157	
Supervision	unrestricted	180	
Intake meetings	unrestricted	85	
Intakes	unrestricted	160	
Contractors	unrestricted	1,100	

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

Signature

Print Name

Date of approval

Rachel De Silva

Rachel De Silva

23.5.25

# Independent Examiner's Report



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

## Independent examiner's report on the accounts

### Section A Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees Tenterden Counselling Service

On accounts for the year ended 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024

Charity no  
(if any) 1201126

Set out on pages 1 and 2

#### Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31 December 2024.

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of 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 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 Charities 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.

Signed:

Date: 24 May 2025

Name: Leslie Michael Etheridge

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

Address: 93 High Street, Tenterden, Kent TN 30 6LB