



ANNUAL REPORT AND RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025

York Women's Counselling Services
Registered Charity Number 1207150
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York Women's Counselling Service Annual Report

Trustees' Annual Report for the Period

Period start date: 1 April 2024

Period end date: 31 March 2025

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Report of the trustees for the year ending 31st March 2025

The trustees are pleased to present their annual report together with the charity's receipts and payments accounts for the year ending 31 March 2025.

The Trustees consider that they have complied with their duties to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.

Message from the Chair of Trustees

I am delighted to present this report of the trustees for the year ending 31 March 2025. This is my first as chair of trustees since stepping into the role after Susie Braithwaite stepped down in April 2025. I want to take this opportunity to thank Susie and our previous deputy-chair, Liza Miller, for their dedication and the invaluable changes that they introduced during their tenure. This annual report highlights the impact that their leadership has had on the charity - not least in the income generation and new staff structure which is now embedded.

YWCS is all about women supporting women and at its heart are our excellent volunteer counsellors and psychotherapists who give up their time freely for our clients. Their unwavering dedication, and that of our exceptional staff team, to providing an excellent service for the women we support has seen the charity go from strength to strength which is detailed in the ['Summary of Achievements'](#) section below.

To our clients, the charity exists for you. Thank you for entrusting us.



Anjelica Finnegan, Chair of Trustees

Reference and Administration Details

Charity name:

York Women's Counselling Service (YWCS)

Other names charity is known by:

YWCS

Status:

Charity Incorporated Organisation

Registered charity number:

1207150

Principal address:

15 Priory Street, York, YO1 6ET

Trustees

Trustee Name	Office (if any)	Dates acted
Susie Braithwaite	Chair	April 2019 - April 2025
Liza Miller	Deputy-Chair	November 2020 - April 2025
Sarah Williams	Treasurer	March 2023 - February 2025
Val Baxter		February 2022 - February 2025
Laila Hamade		January 2024 - February 2025
Sally Jude		February 2022 - present
Anna Reader	Vice Chair (from April 2025)	March 2023 - present
Anjelica Finnegan	Chair (from April 2025)	February 2024 - present
Jen Saunders		October 2024 - present
Imogen Bellerby	Treasurer	February 2025 - present
Esther Knight		April 2025 - present

Policies and Procedures

YWCS implemented a new three-year Strategic Plan in April 2023. This plan guides our Operational Plan and rolling budget.

The themes of our Strategic Plan organise our Operational plan. This plan and our budget are regularly reviewed, and progress against agreed-upon performance indicators is tracked monthly and quarterly. Trustees take responsibility for overseeing designated areas according to their expertise.

We have agreed on reporting structures and protocols for governance, including trustee meetings to review organisational progress and assess risk four times annually. We have formal role descriptions for our Board officers: chair, Deputy Chair, and Treasurer. This year, we have appointed a new Treasurer.

Equal Opportunities

YWCS is a women-only service. We are committed to enabling equality of opportunity in all our practices. We seek to ensure that no woman, whether a member of the public, a beneficiary of our service, a volunteer counsellor, whether qualified or a trainee or a member of staff, receives less favourable treatment on the grounds of protected characteristics which are as follows: age, disability, (including mental health and hidden disabilities), gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion and belief (including those with no religion or belief), sex (though YWCS lawfully restricts membership to women only) and sexual orientation. People who come to YWCS may expect to have their differences welcomed, respected and understood.

Staff and Volunteers

All trustees volunteer their time and receive no remuneration or other benefits. Volunteers may claim expenses incurred as a result of volunteering.

All trustees, staff and volunteers undergo a formal recruitment and vetting process prior to joining the organisation. This is followed by a comprehensive induction with mandatory training in safeguarding, data protection and privacy.

Relationships

YWCS is a member of the York Council for Voluntary Services and NCVO, which are useful sources of advice and support.

Claire Barnard of CGA York provides our payroll function pro bono. We also thank Chelle Thirsk of CGA, appointed as our Independent Examiner from 2024/2025.

We have continued to develop relationships with key expert volunteers to support and develop specialist work areas. These include Richard Halford of Anaplan, for the development of technical and digital innovation and marketing. Our expert volunteers include further fundraising professional Charlotte Walton, who supports our Fundraising Working Group.

We are also part of PEPSY, a networking group comprising other York counselling services, and the York Mental Health Consortium, comprised of voluntary sector mental health service providers.

Risk Identification and Mitigation

YWCS has an active Risk Register that is reviewed at each Trustee meeting, and this year, we have been working to improve this process.

Our regular oversight includes reference to our register of policies, each of which has an agreed review period, which are addressed as they arise. Where the need for a new policy is identified this is developed in consultation with staff where appropriate and added to the register.

In addition to our now comprehensive suite of policies and online courses, which enable our volunteers to access mandatory training at their own convenience, we have a Health and Safety process, cash counting, and in-house accounting processes.

All these serve to increase the robustness of our governance and reduce organisational risks.

The trustees have sought to continue reducing the risk derived from the narrow funding base YWCS has depended on in previous years. We've worked to ensure the security of our multi-year grant and that all reporting is up-to-date and accurate.

Objectives and Activities

Summary of Objects

To relieve women who are in a condition of need due to relationship difficulties, domestic abuse and family problems, by the provision of a counselling and support service.

Summary of Main Activities

Run by women for women: Our programmes are designed to provide the best and affordable counselling in a confidential and safe setting for women who are experiencing difficulties because of current or past emotional stress and trauma, regardless of their ability to pay.

1. Providing 1-2-1 counselling to women in York and the surrounding areas

Run by women for women, our counselling service provides high quality, affordable counselling in a confidential and safe setting for women who are experiencing mental health difficulties because of current or past emotional stress and trauma, regardless of their ability to pay. YWCS asks clients to commit to some payment for their counselling within agreed limits ranging from £15 - £35, which is much less than the cost of private counselling. We aim never to turn women away because of an inability to pay for help and have our dedicated Spring Fund for women who cannot afford to contribute.

Clients can refer themselves to our service online. All prospective clients are contacted with an offer of an initial assessment over the phone. The assessment takes the form of a discussion which covers the key issues facing the potential client and whether YWCS can support them. If counselling is deemed suitable, the potential client is placed on our 'waiting list' whilst a suitable counsellor is identified and has capacity to take on a new client. We check back in with clients who are waiting to be allocated to reassure them and understand their continuing need. Conducting these assessments over the phone has reduced the time that potential clients must wait from referral to being allocated to a volunteer counsellor and being able to start their sessions.

Whilst most of our clients choose to have in person counselling sessions, we offer sessions virtually to those who need or prefer it. This means that we have the capacity to reach those women who are otherwise unable to access counselling in person - whether due to ill health, cost of travel, limited access to childcare and so on.

We are the only organisation in York that does not impose a maximum number of sessions per client. Other counselling services have a cap on the number of sessions, typically 6-12. Instead, the number of sessions that each client receives is based on the amount of time they need as an individual to help them address their problems fully. Clients are with YWCS on average for 15-20 weeks (reviewed every 6 sessions).

Our volunteer counsellors and psychotherapists come from a range of backgrounds and are all members of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) or equivalent. Many of our volunteer counsellors have clinical experience in specialist areas such as eating disorders, domestic abuse, child sexual abuse, pre-and post-natal depression. Our counsellors can also offer a choice of different models of therapy such as EMDR, DBT, dramatherapy and art therapy. This expands the choice for our clients and where possible clients are paired with a counsellor most appropriate to their needs.

2. Supporting the development of our volunteer counsellors and psychotherapists

We are committed to equipping and supporting our volunteer counsellors and psychotherapists to deliver high-quality counselling. Our YWCS Learning and Development

Policy outlines YWCS's approach to supporting ongoing learning and development of staff and volunteers. We continue to provide online courses to enable flexible access to mandatory training for all those volunteering or working with YWCS, including on safeguarding, GDPR and Confidentiality, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

We also have a high quality CPD programme which provides our counselling team with a variety of in-person and online training sessions. These are planned with the challenges our clients have often faced, and the skills and knowledge base our counsellors need to help them. In October 2024 we welcomed Dr Una McCluskey to YWCS to present her model for exploring the dynamics of attachment in adult life called Exploratory Goal-Corrected Psychotherapy (EGCP).

3. Increasing our reach in the community

To increase our reach in the community this year, we continue to network with other organisations, facilitate email contacts from prospective clients, and create and increase our presence on local social media. In addition, having Betty's and the Lord Mayor of York supporting us through their respective charity of the year schemes not only provided us with much needed funding to expand and professionalise our service, but also opened new connections and increased our profile. This has emphasised to us how important building community is as a small, relational charity.

Summary of Key Achievements

1. Provision of 1-2-1 counselling to women in York and the surrounding areas

- In 2024/25 we received 82 new enquiries from women seeking counselling, whilst this number is slightly down from the year before (88), our volunteer counsellors delivered 1085 sessions in the year, a 12.3% increase from 2023/24. This indicates that the women receiving counselling are being assessed as needing more support. This echoes what we are hearing from our sister organisations, that women's needs are becoming more complex.
- We know that our service works for the women that access our support. Our clients reported an improvement in their mental wellbeing following support from YWCS. On average, our clients started their counselling reporting moderate to severe psychological distress and ended their sessions reporting low levels of distress. At the end of their counselling with YWCS, our clients all strongly agreed that they would recommend us to other women that needed counselling, and all strongly agreed or agreed that their counselling sessions were helpful to them. Some of the feedback from our clients include:

"I have found YWC above and beyond my expectations. I have felt respected, listened to and would recommend this to any other ladies in crisis or need"

"It was really helpful being offered the service at a reduced contribution while I didn't have work/regular income. It was helpful being able to do some sessions by Zoom to still access the service when I couldn't attend the office. I hope I don't need to come back but I feel confident I would be supported if needed".

"I liked availability of more than 6 sessions. The initial assessment was very in depth which was helpful, felt listened to."

"I have become a confident person and I feel I have a voice and have learned to deal with situations rather than avoid them. I have gained empathy. I am ready to go now and deal with stuff better than I did. I don't get anxiety and panic attacks anymore."

"I am really grateful to have been able to access this. I have felt a real shift more than any other counselling I have received before in my life. I do believe that is due to having a longer period of time to develop that relationship and to observe patterns"

- 25.6% of our clients were given access to counselling through our The Spring Fund. This assistance has made counselling available to women who do not have the means to make any financial contribution. From 21/22 to 24/25, there has been a 159% increase in the number of sessions offered under the Spring Fund.
- This year has seen us successfully secure funding from the National Lottery's Awards for All and the Purely Cust Trust to establish a Trauma Service to support women experiencing severe trauma-related symptoms such as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. Part of this is offering NICE approved Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR) which facilitates faster and more effective healing for clients as well as upskilling all counsellors in trauma-informed practice. We will see outcomes from this service in 2025/26.

2. Support of the development of our volunteer counsellors and psychotherapists

- Our Counselling Manager plays a vital role in overseeing and developing our team of 20 volunteer counsellors, ranging from recruitment and induction to training and support. Some of our volunteer counsellors are trainees and so our Counselling Manager ensures they receive sufficient mentoring and support whilst they are qualifying. All our counsellors receive monthly 1-1 supervision from an external supervisor according to professional guidelines, and regular team meetings are held. The charity continues to support qualified volunteers by contributing towards their clinical supervision costs.

- Our premises comprise 4 counselling rooms (3 single and 1 group space) and an office within York CVS, Priory Street Centre. We can derive valuable income by subletting a limited proportion to both private counsellors and to our own YWCS counselling volunteers for their private practice. It provides an ideal and safe space for our trainee counsellors to set up in private practice following completion of their training, and the preferential rates given to our volunteers helps us to retain and develop our volunteers.
- Our CPD programme provides our counselling team with a variety of in-person and online training sessions. These are planned with the challenges our clients have often faced, and the skills and knowledge base our counsellors need to help them. Discussion of case studies in team meetings, mentoring and informal training by our Counselling Manager are also provided to enhance learning. Due to taking time to embed our new staff structure, our external training programme comprised just one course this year. In October 2024 we welcomed Dr Una McCluskey to present her model for exploring the dynamics of attachment in adult life called Exploratory Goal-Corrected Psychotherapy (EGCP). This training was open to our own counsellors, but we also offered it to other interested professionals.

3. *Financial stability*

- Mindful of the cost-of-living increases and the pressures facing our client group, we aim to have a diverse income stream from a mixture of grants, income from external CPS events, room hire, and counselling donations. This year, we have continued to reduce the reliance on counselling contributions from our clients. At the end of 2024/25 these totalled 12% of YWCS income as against some 18% in 2023/24.
- From our community fundraising we raised £48,857 - this includes the Lord Mayor of York's Charity of the Year, our Cook Off event and Betty's Tea Room Charity of the Year scheme.
- Our grant income totalled £57,129. This represents a 209% increase in last year's grant income.
- We are excited to welcome a new Treasurer to the board, Imogen Belby, who is committed to ensuring that all trustees understand the charity's finances and is providing support to the director.

4. Increased reach in the community

- Having been selected for both the Lord Mayor of York's Charity of the Year and Betty's Tea Rooms Charity of the Year, we have been able to raise the profile of YWCS.
- The success of our now annual Cook Off fundraising event also highlights the value added of building relationships with local businesses to raise our profile, spread knowledge about YWCS and our services, and raise funds. Generously hosted by The Cookery School at The Grand, this year's event saw three corporate teams - London North Eastern Railway (LNER), Anaplan, and Yorvale - go head-to-head in a heated culinary competition, in support of York Women's Counselling Service (YWCS). Thanks to the generosity and enthusiasm of everyone involved, we raised an incredible £5,304.50, which goes directly towards providing essential counselling services for women in York.

5. Operational Effectiveness

- We started this financial year without a director, having decided to introduce this role in 2023/24. In September 2024 we were delighted to recruit Ruth Linton to the role of Director, and the new staff structure is now embedded.
- The Office Administrator Role has also played a key role in enhancing the work of the organisation. This includes assisting with the induction of new staff, volunteers and trustees.
- Our Contact Relationship Management database (CRM) continues to support our work and can now provide valuable service usage information, helping us to better monitor and assess our impact, analyse our performance and to build a community of supporters. In addition, it continues to ensure compliance across all aspects of data protection legislation and to enable the remote working of our team.

Financial Review

Statement of the Charity's Policy on Reserves

York Women's Counselling Service recognises the need to have an appropriate level of reserves to safeguard its effective operation and to be able to carry on its work in periods of significant challenge, with adequate time to adjust its strategy to new circumstances.

Our aim is to ensure the charity's sustainability and protect the women we support. With that in mind, the Trustees agreed to a new Reserves Policy in July 2021, which outlines our approach and seeks to move YWCS to a position where free reserves are equal to 6 months of operating costs. At the end of 2024/2025 we held a cash balance of £88,212, of which £28,112 were restricted funds. This represents 6.5 months of operating costs.

Further Financial Review Details

Our main sources of funding this year have been grant funding, community fundraising thanks to the Lord Mayor of York and Betty's Tea Rooms, as well as donations from our clients for their counselling.

Our thanks must also go to the following bodies, whose support has been so invaluable during the year:

The Purey Cust Trust

Two Ridings Community Foundation

Bramall Foundation

York Rotary Club

Eva Reckitt Trust

Big Lottery Fund - Awards for All

Whitwam Family Charitable Trust

York Common Good Trust

Pavers Foundation

Office of North Yorkshire Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner

We would also like to thank the individuals who gave us money during the year and those who organised fundraising events on our behalf.

The majority of the income has been/will be applied to the organisation's core running costs.

The main costs incurred are rent, salary for our three staff, and supervision costs, plus the cost of our database and additional technology that enables remote working, our website, and the provision of our training programme.

Future Plans

Our focus is always on providing excellent quality, affordable counselling to women in York and the surrounding areas. 2024/25 has seen significant change within the organisation with a new Director joining the staff team and embedding the new staff structure.

Looking ahead at 2025/26, we have a mostly new trustee board with the honorary positions of Chair, Deputy Chair and Treasurer all being handed over to new people. This coincides

with our three-year strategy coming to an end in 2026. Therefore, we have some big questions to ask ourselves as we looking ahead at developing our new strategy, including what growth looks like for YWCS.

Much of what we want to do in 2025/26 will be about maintaining a steady course whilst continuing to embed the new staff structure and maintaining the excellent progress we have made over the last 3 years across the following three areas:

1. **Maintaining counselling excellence:** We pride ourselves in delivering excellent, affordable counselling to women in York and the surrounding areas. Our trauma service will be providing training to all counsellors to ensure that their practice is trauma-informed and we will be training an additional counsellor in EMDR so that we can expand this offer to clients that would benefit from it. We will also have two external CPD events this year on topics that will benefit our counsellors practice - this includes a panel on Vicarious Trauma.
2. **Maintaining our income levels:** We, like most small charities, face the dual challenge of increased competition for funding and increased demand on our services both due to the number of people needing support and the complexity of the issues facing them. We had an excellent year in 2024/25 due to being the charity of the year for both the Lord Mayor of York and Betty's Tea Rooms, as well as excellent success through grant applications and we want to build on this. Our external CPD events will also bring in much needed income, and we will explore how we can ensure that this is embedded into our yearly work plans.
3. **Building the YWCS Community:** Our reputation amongst counsellors and those who are aware of us is excellent. We want to increase awareness in the community of YWCS to not only ensure that women know about our services should they need them, but also help our community fundraising efforts.

In addition to this, we want to attract the best volunteer counsellors to YWCS and we do this in part through our excellent CPD provision, discounted room hire for their private practice and support through our counselling manager and team meetings. We want to go even further this year and hold regular events to bring all our volunteers and staff together to celebrate the work that we do through a Summer and Winter Celebration.

Declaration

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustees' report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature



Anjelica Finnegan (Jan 27, 2026 15:05:31 GMT)

Full Name: Anjelica Finnegan

Position: Chair of Trustees

Date 27-Jan-2026

Signature



Anna Reader (Jan 27, 2026 21:00:50 GMT)

Full Name: Anna Reader

Position: Deputy Chair of Trustees

Date 27-Jan-2026

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees of: York Women's Counselling Service
On accounts for the year ended 31st March 2025
Charity Number 1207150
Set out on pages 13 and 14

Responsibilities and basis of report

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity for the year ended 31 March 2025.

As the charity trustees of the charity, 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 charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 and, in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

The accounts have been prepared by the independent examiner from the charity's accounting records and information provided by the trustees.

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 give me cause to believe that, in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts do 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 order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: *Chelle Thirsk*
Chelle Thirsk (Jan 28, 2026 09:04:24 GMT)

Date: 28-Jan-2026

Name:
Chelle Thirsk
FCCA ATT(Fellow) FMAAT

Address: 3 & 4 Park Court, Riccall Rd, Escrick, York, YO19 6ED

Receipts and Payments Accounts



YORK WOMEN'S

COUNSELLING SERVICE

York Women's Counselling Service

1207150

Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from

1st April 2024

To

31st March 2025

CC16a

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 £
A1 Receipts					
Donations	20,472	-	-	20,472	20,087
Registration & Course Fees	2,579	-	-	2,579	1,232
Grants	24,774	32,356	-	57,130	18,458
Fund Raising	44,259	-	-	44,259	7,175
Rental and Other Income	15,505	-	-	15,505	16,705
Gift Aid Refunded	1,603	-	-	1,603	1,273
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total (Gross income for AR)	109,191	32,356	-	141,547	64,930
A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total receipts	109,191	32,356	-	141,547	64,930
A3 Payments					
Supervision and Wages	58,181	1,341	-	59,522	47,893
Training	1,390	1,800	-	3,190	3,922
Professional Support Services		3,760	-	3,760	-
Rent	18,580	1,463	-	20,043	14,481
Insurance	521	-	-	521	486
Telephone	947	-	-	947	945
Printing, Postage, Stationery, Computer Supplies and General Expenses	2,380	54	-	2,434	1,351
Membership Fees	402	-	-	402	1,347
Website & Software	1,269	-	-	1,269	1,084
Fund Raising Expenses & Card Fees	7,226	-	-	7,226	2,963
Sub total	90,896	8,418	-	99,314	74,472
A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)					
Office Furniture	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
Sub total	-	-	-	-	-
Total payments	90,896	8,418	-	99,314	74,472
Net of receipts/(payments)	18,295	23,938	-	42,233	9,542
A5 Transfers between funds					
A6 Cash funds last year end	41,805	4,174	-	45,979	55,521
Cash funds this year end	60,100	28,112	-	88,212	45,979

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

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 £
B1 Cash funds	Paypal Account	108	-	-
	Bank Account	59,992	28,112	-
	PAYE	-		
	Total cash funds	60,100	28,112	-
		Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
B2 Other monetary assets	Debtors	40	-	-
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		Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
	Supervision and Wages	Unrestricted	212	
	Creditors	Unrestricted	14	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees		Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
			Anjelica Finnegan	27-Jan-2026
			Anna Reader	27-Jan-2026