



**The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service**

*The MBE for volunteer groups*

# **Solihull Bereavement Counselling Service Annual Report**

2023-2024



*Expressing my emotions and  
letting it all out, without feel-  
ing judgement, and feeling  
heard. I felt someone actually  
cared about my feelings.  
Thankyou"*

*Amelia*



## Chairs Report

It is with great sadness that I have to report the death of our Chair Person, Sue Rose, on 18th March 2024 after a very brief illness. Sue was in her eleventh year as Chair of SBCS and leaves a huge gap to fill. Her life was dedicated to public service in many different areas – she worked to make the world a better place and her leaving will be felt by many. SBCS owes her a great deal.

Recently, we have also suffered the loss of Trustee and Ray Walters and ex Counsellor Jan Flint. They both gave many years to SBCS and both will leave a legacy of support for bereaved people, given with generosity and kindness.

SBCS continues to be a very necessary service for many people. Undoubtedly bereavement is a normal event in so many people's lives and many get through it with the help of family and friends. However, the support received from our counsellors is vital for many, helping them rebuild their lives after the traumatic loss of their loved one. Our Service Manager's report gives details of the work that has been done in the last year. During the year we have continued to offer face to face and/or telephone counselling, offering flexibility to clients and counsellors alike.

Huge thanks go to the counsellors, to our Service Manager and to our staff who have given their services to SBCS unstintingly. The Trustees also give of their time and expertise and appreciation goes to them.

Following Sue's death I have stepped in as Chair Person for the completion of this year and will stand for election as Chair at the AGM. I have been connected with SBCS since its very beginnings in 1986, being the first Co-ordinator and I will do my best to continue to serve SBCS as best I can.

Isobel Ford

2023-2024



## Service Manager's Report

As I reflect on the year 2023/2024 I have to say that despite the challenges of food and fuel costs and rising inflation, I have felt it has been a more steady twelve months for SBCS.

As always, I have been proud as Service Manager to see how we have performed and continue to perform, helping those who need it.

We all encounter bereavement at some point. Grieving is a natural process, with its impact on mental and physical health well understood.

Many people can find their way through this time with the support of friends or family, plus there is still a certain societal expectation that we should 'get over it' in a relatively short time.

During 2023/2024 we delivered 1,553 counselling and assessment sessions and we received 255 referrals. Demand for our service continues, and it is the hope that our input may potentially reduce the need for more complex or longer-term interventions.

This year SBCS has been working closely with Cruse, Solihull Integrated Care Board (ICB) formally the CCG, and other partner agencies. Developing and working with a bereavement pathway for anyone wanting to access bereavement counselling easily and quickly across Birmingham and Solihull.

Supervision for our counsellors is provided monthly for 32 counsellors in groups of 4, for 3 hours. Our counsellors receive 1.5 hours per month each, which BACP states is the required number for safe practice. The team responsible for supervision are Bob Smallwood, Alison Wilkinson and Gail Roberts. I would like to thank them all sincerely for all that they give to SBCS, and offering counsellors additional supervision as and when needed.

# 2023-2024

I would like to thank Val Whitlock, Lisa McNamara and Kay Kennea for their support, hard work and commitment to the service, and helping me keep the wheels turning. I would also like to pay tribute to Sue Rose (Chair of SBCS) who died recently after a very short illness. She could be tough and formidable, yet knowledgeable, compassionate and caring. She will be missed by so many.

Thanks to the Board of Trustees for their support and trust in me; not forgetting our funders, Solihull Integrated Care Board, without whom this service would not be possible.

SBCS continues to develop strong relationships with partner agencies. We have good working relationships with Cruse, Marie Curie, Healthy Minds, Lyndon Clinic, Newington Centre, SIAS (Solihull Integrated Addiction Services) and many more.

Our counselling hours and number of referrals clearly show a need for bereavement counselling in the Solihull Borough, and, as an organisation, we endeavour to help those who need it.

Julie Swiffin M.A. P.G.Dip MBACP (Accred)  
Service Manager



## Counselling Service

### During 2023/2024

- ◆ We received 255 referrals
- ◆ We provided 1,553 counselling and assessment hours

The figures provided highlight our performance. The figures include counselling and assessment hours for SBCS clients.

Appendix 1 at the end of this report shows a breakdown analysis of the yearly client referrals for 2023/2024

# 2023-2024

*"I found talking about my feelings helped me understand my distress. I am a much happier person. I have completely changed from being very unhappy to being very happy and I thank Sarah for helping me."*

*Pauline*



## Counselling Service

Clients who do not progress to counselling are either signposted to other agencies, or the clients themselves decide that one-to-one counselling is not what they wanted at the time of the assessment. SBCS's aim is to assess clients within 5 weeks of their referral, and to allocate to counsellors within acceptable timescales. We train new volunteers each year, so we are fortunate to have counsellors available at all times. However, there are occasions during peak holiday periods when we have to delay allocations. Clients are always kept informed if there is a change to the standard allocation time.

We offer counselling appointments Monday-Friday from 9.00am till 7.00pm, ensuring we meet the needs of people who work, or have childcare issues. We offer face to face or telephone sessions.

# 2023-2024

"It has been good for me knowing that there was someone who I could talk to outside the family. It helped me come to terms with what has happened and showed me how to regain my life and move forward. Just like to say a big thankyou to everyone involved who run the service. You do a fantastic job."

Jonathon



## Volunteers

The service has 32 volunteer counsellors. Each counsellor manages a caseload, which can vary from one to five clients. To ensure cover for the number of referrals we receive each year, SBCS endeavour to have approximately 30 to 34 volunteer counsellors available.

Volunteers at SBCS need to have a Diploma in counselling, or be studying on a Diploma course. This high standard we require reflects in our service delivery and quality assurance.

We are very proud of our volunteers, and to show our appreciation we present a long service certificate at our Annual General Meeting to any counsellors who have completed 5 years service initially, and every subsequent 5 years thereafter. This is our opportunity to acknowledge the commitment and loyalty of our counsellors.

# 2023-2024

"For the first time in 46 years was able to actually talk about the event, talk about my feelings. The way the counsellor spoke, giving a trusting space, the counsellor made me feel safe to talk. Serina has been brilliant, has made me feel much better than I have felt in 46 years."

Angela

## Training and Supervision

In compliance with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Ethical Framework, SBCS continues to provide on-going training to all our counsellors.

Each counsellor is required to undertake a minimum of ten hours continuing professional development training (CPD) per year as part of their contract with SBCS.

SBCS has tried to reduce the costs of training by external trainers and are grateful to those who have lowered their fee because of our charitable status.

The following topics have been covered during the year (April 2023– March 2024)

Stress Management	April 2023	(5 hours in person)
Difference & Diversity	September 2023	(5 hours in person)
Trauma	October 2023	(5 hours in person)
Inner Child	January 2024	(5 hours in person)
Brief Solution Focused	March 2024	(5 hours in person)

BACP Ethical Framework states that supervisors remain competent to carry out their role by attending monthly external supervision. SBCS pays for the supervision of our supervisors.

Counsellors attend group supervision sessions for 3 hours per month. This meets BACP guidelines of 1.5 hours supervision per month per counsellor.

# 2023-2024

*"Opening up, learning about myself and why I react the way I do. As strange as it sounds, I've really enjoyed learning and talking openly. Harry was incredible."*

Laura



## Funding

Core funding from Solihull Integrated Care Board (ICB) is specifically for clients who live in the borough of Solihull or whose GP is part of the Birmingham and Solihull ICB.

We would like to thank our funders Solihull Integrated Care Board (Solihull & Birmingham Mental Health Trust) for having confidence in SBCS and work in partnership with us. Thanks also goes to Charitable Trusts, who donate funds and support us. Without you, our work would not be possible.

# 2023-2024

*"Very supportive, and understanding. Lovely therapist Sam, made a massive difference."*

*Sandra*



# Finance Report



## SOLIHULL BEREAVEMENT COUNSELLING SERVICE

### Accounts y/e 31 March 2024

	<u>Income</u>	<u>y/e</u>		<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>y/e</u>
<u>2023</u>		<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>		<u>2,024</u>
49,901	Core Funding	40128	52,961	Salaries	52,304
287	Client contributions	8719	2,016	Pensions	4,345
7,120	Major Donations	3527	744	Travel & other	867
			3,293	Office Expenses	2,446
75	Other Donations	233	1,870	Staff Supervision	2,356
2,900	Training Fees	1875	2,100	Training	2,025
603	Bank Interest	1693	450	Fees/Subscriptions	468
-			422	Insurances	421
131	Gift aid donations	330	-	AGM Costs	-
146	Gift Aid tax	0	-	Advertising	-
			-	Redundancy provision	21,667
			73	Equipment	-
				Bank Charges	60
				Web Costs	-
<u>£ 61,163</u>		<u>£ 56,505</u>	<u>63,929</u>		<u>£ 86,959</u>
-				<b>Deficit</b>	<b>-£ 30,454</b>
<u>£ 61,163</u>		<u>£ 56,505</u>	<u>£ 61,163</u>		<u>£ 56,505</u>

### Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

Deposit a/c c/f	£ 76,417	Equity b/f	86,527
Current a/c	£ 1,323		
Redundacy Provision	-£ 21,667	Deficit	-£ 30,454
	<u>£ 56,073</u>		<u>£ 56,073</u>

Malcolm Pratt  
Treasurer  
11 April 2024

I have examined the books and accounts of Solihull Bereavement Counselling Service and certify that the above is in accordance therewith.

CAROL HENDERSON

Financial  
Examiner. 29.4.24



## Staff

We have 5 Trustees and this is an appropriate time to thank the Board of Trustees for their support and commitment to the service.

Over the year the service employed one full-time Service Manager, three part-time office staff, and three clinical supervisors.

Service Manager	37 hrs per week
Counselling Co-ordinator	7 hrs per week
Administration Assistant	7 hrs per week
Administration Assistant	10 hrs per week
Supervisors x 3	7.5 hrs. – 10.5 hrs per month, depending on how many supervision groups they supervise.

2023-2024

*"Counselling has improved other relationships within the family. I understand my grief and continuing my life positively. Very grateful to have been able to access the service, and to have met and worked with the service".*

*Olivia*



## Achievements 2022-2023

### Achievements for 2023/2024 were:

- ◆ Ensured our counsellors received guidance, support, and training through supervision in the ongoing transition from face-to-face to telephone work.
- ◆ Continuing our in-house CPD to all counsellors, in person.
- ◆ Maintaining our supervision groups via Zoom/ in person
- ◆ The opportunity to now offer clients telephone counselling in addition to face-to-face counselling, whilst still ensuring our service meets the needs of individuals, and keeping clients and counsellors safe.
- ◆ Being able to keep up with demand for our service and continuing to keep our waiting times at a reasonable level, ensuring this is managed appropriately.

# 2023-2024

*"It was easy to talk in confidence to someone who was understanding and non-judgemental. I would like to thank the service and Jean in particular".*

*June*

## Appendix 1

April 2023 - March 2024

Referrals

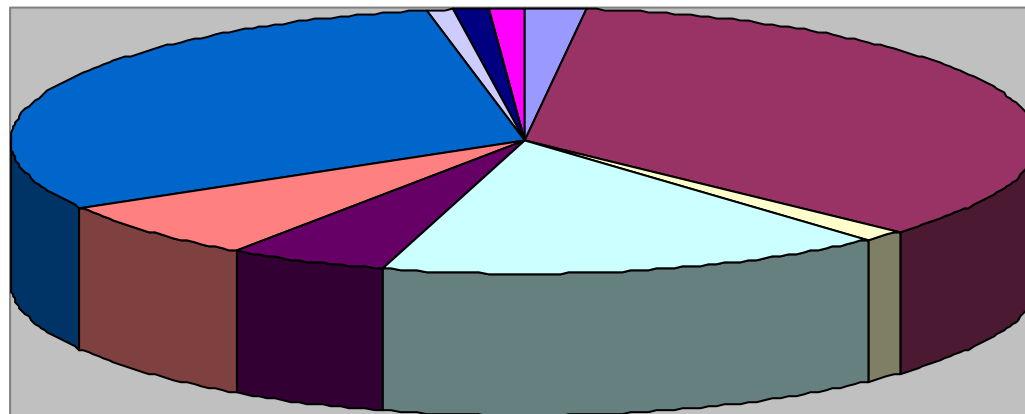
255 Male 61

Female 194

### Referrals Analysis

Column 1		Column 2		Column 3		Column 4		Column 5	
Age Group years	Totals	Source of referral	Totals	Death of	Totals	Cause of Death	Totals	Interval from Death to Referral	Totals
11-17	1	Self	32	Husband	48	Cancer	71	Under 1 month	0
18-25	17	GP	96	Wife	10	Heart related	46	1 -3 months	80
26-39	59	Family	3	Father	45	Other illness	55	4 -7 months	45
40-55	57	Health workers	20	Mother	69	Stroke/Aneurysm	8	8 -12 months	35
56-70	82	Hospital/Hospice	0	Sibling	17	Suicide	8	13 - 18 months	13
71-85	34	Social Services	0	Child	19	Accidents	7	19 - 23 months	11
85 & over	5	Voluntary Agency	20	Grandparent	15	Road Traffic Accident	0	2 - 5 Years	51
		SBCS Website	73	Partner	15	Covid 19	7	6-10 Years	10
		Friend	7	In- Laws	0	Murder/Assault	1	11-20 Years	7
		Employer	3	Other relatives	10	Term, still, neo	3	Over 20 Years	3
		Educational Welfare	1	Friend	6	Old Age	12		
				Term, still/neo	1	Liver Failure due to Alcohol	6		
						Pneumonia	11		
						Brain Tumor	5		
						Dementia	15		
<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>255</b>

## Appendix 2 PLACE OF DEATH



■	Solihull Hospital	2
■	Heartlands Hospital	57
■	Good Hope	6
■	Diff Hospital	38
■	Marie Curie	6
■	Nursing/Resid	15
■	Own Home	96
■	Other	10
■	Accident/Scene	8
■	Hospice	17



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Treasurer  
11 April 2024

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CAROL RENWICK

Financial  
Examiner.

29.4.24



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*Carol Renwick*  
CAROL RENICK

Financial  
Examiner.

29.4.24