



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

The MBE for volunteer groups

Solihull Bereavement Counselling Service Annual Report



2024-2025

*'To be able to talk to Sonia
about my feelings, my loss of
Bas, to say things out loud and
have Sonia respond with words
that made me feel heard and
the loss acknowledged.*

*Sonia is caring and genuine she
made me feel understood and
I cant thank her enough'*

Jayne



Looking back over the past year SBCS has continued its valuable contribution to supporting the Solihull Community. First and foremost our work with people experiencing bereavement through various types of loss has continued unabated.

A huge debt of gratitude is owed to our Counsellors who freely give of their time and to our Supervisors who ensure our work is to the standard expected of a BACP affiliated professional organisation. None of this would be possible without the dedication of our Service Manager Julie Swiffin and her office staff. Again much appreciation goes to them all.

During the year we have had to say goodbye to Kay Kennea, our Office Administrator and we wish her well in her new life in Devon. Her role has been taken on by Val Whitlock who is also our Counselling Co-ordinator. Meanwhile Lisa McNamara continues in her role as Finance Administrator.

We have also reviewed and updated our Constitution and welcomed two new Trustees to the Board, Sue Clements and Kate Jones. There is still one vacancy. Should anyone be interested in supporting the work of SBCS in that way please contact the Office. My thanks go to all the Trustees, especially Malcolm Pratt our treasurer for his meticulous care of our finances, for their unstinting support of the service.

As always it is a privilege to be connected with SBCS and you will see from various comments from clients that are included in the report that our work makes a huge difference to many people's lives just at a time when they are struggling. I can only give a heart-felt vote of thanks to all involved.

2024-2025

As always it is a privilege to be connected with SBCS and you will see from various comments from clients that are included in the report that our work makes a huge difference to many people's lives just at a time when they are struggling. I can only give a heart-felt vote of thanks to all involved.

Isobel Ford



Service Manager's Report

The start of 2024 was a difficult one as several of our long-standing colleagues died. I would therefore like to take a moment to remember Ray Walters, Jan Flint and Sue Rose. They were all a huge part of SBCS for many years and I worked closely with them all. They were all kind, thoughtful, and good people, and we still miss them today.

There's no doubt 2024/2025 has been a year of change for SBCS, as we welcomed 2 new Trustees to SBCS, and remember those who have died. But there's also no doubt we are in a stronger position to take on new challenges and build on what we do best, making a difference to the lives of bereaved people.

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 2024/2025 we delivered 1,366 counselling and assessment sessions and we received 225 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) and other partner agencies 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, Gail Roberts and Harry March. I would like to thank them all sincerely for all that they give to SBCS, and offering counsellors additional supervision as and when needed.

2024-2025

I would like to thank Val Whitlock, Lisa McNamara and Kay Kennea (Kay left the service in December 2024) for their support, hard work and commitment to the service, and helping me keep the wheels turning.

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

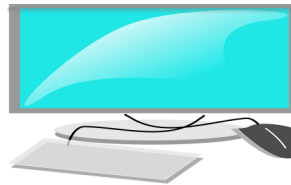
VOLUNTEER



32 volunteers donated their time



We provided 1,366 counselling and assessment sessions



1,673 unique users viewed our website



We received 225 referrals

2024-2025

"Learning the stages of grief and also the ways of channelling my emotions in a positive way. Lorraine was absolutely brilliant, she was so helpful and made me feel comfortable about my feelings."

Dan

Appendix 1 at the end of this report shows a breakdown analysis of the yearly client referrals for 2024/2025



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.

2024-2025

"It has given me the opportunity to share my thoughts and feelings about my bereavement. Some of the thoughts I shared with my counsellor, I had not shared with anyone before.

This was my first experience of counselling and I have found it to be a positive one. My counsellor showed empathy at all times and was a good listener."

Stephen



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.

2024-2025

"Lorraine has been so helpful in listening and understanding where my bereavement and grief is moving and manifesting.

Lorraine's brilliant active listening and caring approach, and the understanding of what 'goals' should look like. It was an amazing safe place."

Bethany



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 2024– March 2025)

Suicide Awareness	June 2024	(5 hours in person)
Autism Awareness	January 2025	(5 hours in person)
Safeguarding	March 2025	(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.

2024-2025

"Fantastic experience, this has really helped me cope. The counsellor was excellent, non judgemental, caring and empathetic.

A great experience.

I am so thankful for the support. They understood my emotions and grief."

John



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.

2024-2025

"It helped me get through a really tough part of my life. The things I have learnt will help moving forward.

Speaking to Paul has been so lovely and the outlet I knew I needed and more .

I want to thank Paul again, I will never forget how much he helped me."

Lucy

Finance Report



Accounts to 31/03/2025

<u>Income</u>	<u>y/e</u> <u>2025</u>	<u>y/e</u> <u>2024</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>y/e</u> <u>2025</u>	<u>y/e</u> <u>2,024</u>
Core Funding	42982	40,128	Salaries	51864	52,304
Client Contributions	8815	8,719	Pensions	4556	4,344
Major Donations	8800	3,527	Travel & other	960	867
Other Donations	575	233	Office Expenses	2604	2,446
Training Fees	2280	1,875	Staff Supervision	2455	2,356
Bank Interest	1810	1,693	Training	705	2,025
Gift aid donations	1004	330	Fees/Subscriptions	466	468
Gift Aid tax	712		Insurances	440	421
			AGM Costs	0	
			Advertising	0	
			Equipment	552	
			Bank Charges	60	60
			Web Costs	0	
	<u>66978</u>	<u>56,505</u>		<u>64662</u>	<u>65291</u>
<u>Deficit</u>		<u>8,786</u>	Surplus	2317	
	<u>66978</u>	<u>65,291</u>		<u>66978</u>	<u>£ 65,291</u>
Deposit a/c c/f	£ 78,906		Equity b/f	77,740	
Current a/c	£ 1,151			-	
Cash in hand	£ -		Surplus	£ 2,317	
	<u>£ 80,057</u>			<u>£ 80,057</u>	

Malcolm Pratt
Treasurer
31 March 2025

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

Financial Examiner

Date



Staff

We have 7 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 (Finance)	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.

2024-2025

"I have found the sessions to be really helpful. I still miss my husband and coming home to an empty house is no longer as painful as it was. I'm learning to deal with the day to day running of the house and have more confidence, I was surprised with that.

I now go out with friends and help out at a charity shop once a week. I have also joined a small craft group.

Thank you so much"

Heather



Achievements 2024-2025

Achievements for 2024/2025 were:

- ◆ Ensured our counsellors received guidance, support, and training through supervision.
- ◆ 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.

2024-2025

"Since my counselling sessions I have made progress in coming to terms with the loss of my mother.

I understand how my grief was affecting my ability to deal with other situations in my adult life., and the sessions with Maria really did save my life.

I just wanted to say a massive thank you again for your service."

Rebecca

Appendix 1

April 2024 - March 2025

Referrals 225

Male

51

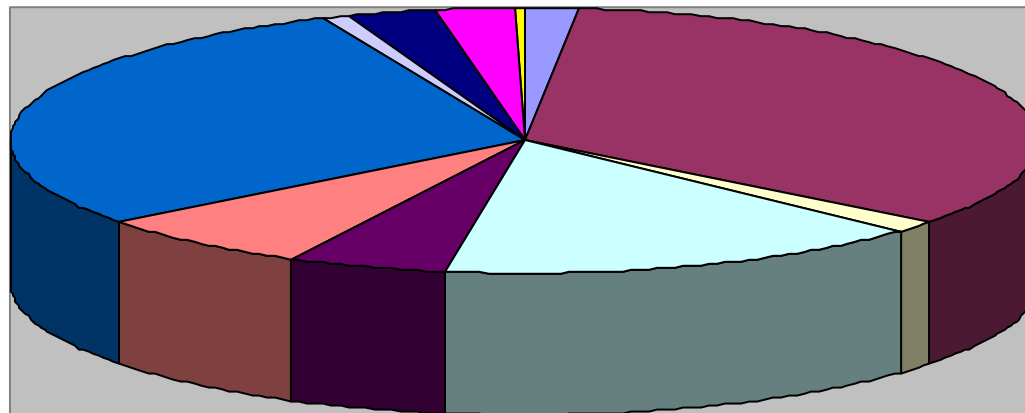
Female

174

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	0	Self	6	Husband	35	Cancer	61	Under 1 month	4
18-25	9	GP	87	Wife	6	Heart related	46	1 -3 months	69
26-39	56	Family	6	Father	46	Other illness	48	4 -7 months	44
40-55	66	Health workers	35	Mother	64	Stroke/Aneurysm	4	8 -12 months	32
56-70	64	Hospital/Hospice	2	Sibling	18	Suicide	13	13 - 18 months	16
71-85	27	Social Services	1	Child	13	Accidents	7	19 - 23 months	10
85 & over	3	Voluntary Agency	9	Grandparent	13	Road Traffic Accident	0	2 - 5 Years	39
		SBCS Website	72	Partner	12	Covid 19	2	6-10 Years	7
		Friend	5	In- Laws	3	Murder/Assault	0	11-20 Years	1
		Employer	1	Other relatives	7	Term, still, neo	2	Over 20 Years	3
		Educational Welfare	0	Friend	7	Old Age	8		
		Church	1	Term, still/neo	1	Liver Failure due to Alcohol	3		
						Pneumonia	9		
						Brain Tumor	10		
						Dementia	12		
Total	225	Total	225	Total		Total	225	Total	225

Appendix 2 PLACE OF DEATH



- Solihull Hospital 3
- Heartlands 59
- Good Hope 3
- Diff Hospital 40
- Marie Curie 9
- Nursing/ Resd 13
- Own Home 69
- Other 13
- Accident scene 8
- Hospice 7
- N/K 1



Accounts to 31/03/2025

<u>Income</u>	<u>y/e</u> <u>2025</u>	<u>y/e</u> <u>2024</u>	<u>Expenditure</u>	<u>y/e</u> <u>2025</u>	<u>y/e</u> <u>2,024</u>
Core Funding	42982	40,128	Salaries	51864	52,304
Client Contributions	8815	8,719	Pensions	4556	4,344
Major Donations	8800	3,527	Travel & other	960	867
			Office Expenses	2604	2,446
Other Donations	575	233	Staff Supervision	2455	2,356
Training Fees	2280	1,875	Training	705	2,025
Bank Interest	1810	1,693	Fees/Subscriptions	466	468
			Insurances	440	421
Gift aid donations	1004	330	AGM Costs	0	
Gift Aid tax	712		Advertising	0	
			Equipment	552	
			Bank Charges	60	60
			Web Costs	0	
	<u>66978</u>	<u>56,505</u>		<u>64662</u>	<u>65291</u>
<u>Deficit</u>		<u>8,786</u>	Surplus	2317	
	<u>66978</u>	<u>65,291</u>		<u>66978</u>	<u>£ 65,291</u>

Deposit a/c c/f	£	78,906	Equity b/f	77,740
Current a/c	£	1,151		-

Cash in hand	£	-	Surplus	£	2,317
	£	<u>80,057</u>		£	<u>80,057</u>

Malcolm Pratt
Treasurer
31 March 2025

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

Lynsey-Jayne REYNOLDS

Financial Examiner

Date

1/5/25



CHARITY COMMISSION
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Independent examiner's report
on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name SOLIHULL BEHAVEMENT
COUNSELLING SERVICE

On accounts for the year
ended

31.3.2025

Charity no
(if any)

518753

Set out on pages

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

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 30 /
01 / 2025

As the charity trustees of the Trust, 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 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 (other than
that disclosed below *) in connection with the
examination which gives 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

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.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not
apply.

Signed: L Reynolds

Date: 30/11/2025

Name:

LYNBEYAYNE REYNOLDS

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

ACCA

Address:

2 VIADUCT VILL
BASMALE
NEWPORT NP10 8FR

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters
of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of
charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of
any items that the
examiner wishes to
disclose.