



Riverside Counselling Service
Trustees Annual Report and Financial
Statements
2024-25

Charity Number: 1018853

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Legal and Administrative Information

Trustees

Chair – Adrian Marsh

Treasurer – John Morrow

Nicki Williams Grey

Suzy Hobbs

Umbreen Lenoire (resigned January 2025)

Phil Bridge

Fiona Pharoah (Clinical Trustee – joined November 2024)

Jayson Jaurige – (resigned June 2024)

Charity number: 1018853

Registered address

Friends Meeting House
45 Northfield End Road
Henley on Thames
RG9 2JJ

Chief Executive Officer

Sophie Wellings

Independent Examiner

Peter Goddard
Staplers Cottage
Shepherds Green
Henley on Thames
Oxon

Bank

Lloyds Bank
24 Broad Street
Reading
Berks
RG1 2BT

Chair's Report

As has been evident from the previous two annual reports, the post-COVID period has been a very challenging one for Riverside, as for very many other charities, and this past year has also been no exception. Despite the numerous challenges, there are grounds for optimism as we start the new financial year, with significant progress made on several fronts over recent months.

Organisational Leadership

As our last annual report went to press, we were in the midst of recruiting for a new CEO. I am pleased to report that after a thorough search, during which several strong candidates were taken to the final stage, we warmly welcomed **Sophie Wellings** as Riverside's new CEO in November last year. The final decision was unanimous – Sophie was clearly the best candidate by virtue of her previous experience as CEO of another community-based charity, clarity of vision, leadership skills and invaluable experience with fundraising. Sophie quickly got her arms around the organisation and has firmly taken the reins – the Trustees are delighted to have her on board and feel huge confidence in her leadership.

Fundraising and Finances

Despite the relatively benign picture painted by our end of year figures, once again during this financial year, fundraising and its knock-on effect on our finances have been the greatest challenge we have faced during the year. Our fundraising pipeline was unfortunately in quite a weak position as the new calendar year started, a situation exacerbated by receiving the bad news that we had been unsuccessful in securing ongoing revenue funding from South Oxfordshire District Council, whose funding round was over-subscribed to an unprecedented degree this year. This combination of circumstances prompted the tough but necessary decision to be taken to streamline our operations, particularly in the areas of our service which had been previously funded via the SODC grant. These tough decisions, and revamped efforts on the fundraising side by Sophie and a new external freelance fundraiser, have led us to a situation where we have a much stronger fundraising pipeline, backed up by some encouraging grant application wins. We consequently feel a greater degree of confidence in our financial security, though we are clearly not yet out of the woods and will continue to pay close attention to our finances and look for further opportunities to make efficiency savings, although thankfully no further service or staff reductions are currently planned.

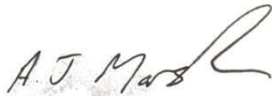
Service Delivery and Organisation

Our service delivery has remained significant with over 300 clients served with more than 5500 sessions via our initial consultation, ongoing counselling, group and drop-in sessions. This represents a slight reduction in activity compared with the previous year – inevitable given the financial restraints we have been under. Our client feedback continues to be excellent, with 98% of clients reporting themselves as likely to recommend the service to others.

These excellent results are down to the dedication of our counsellors and the clinical leadership team, ably led by Clare Crossley and Emilia McIntyre. I would like to thank Clare in particular for her vital work in the Head of Counselling role during a period of several months this year when we were between CEOs. This meant that a lot of extra responsibility fell on Clare's shoulders – a situation she responded to admirably.

Board of Trustees

During the year we have successfully recruited a Trustee with a clinical background – Fiona Pharoah, a retired psychiatrist who previously worked for the NHS. Fiona has quickly become a very active and valued member of our Trustee board. Whilst we have once again retained the majority of our Trustees, two have moved on during the year due to other commitments and changed location, and we thank both Jayson Jaurigue and Umbreen Lenoire for their valuable contributions over the last few years and wish them all the best with their future endeavours. We continue to look to strengthen and diversify our Board of Trustees.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "A.J. Marsh". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, sweeping flourish at the end.

Adrian Marsh

May 2025

Chief Executive Officer's Report

I joined Riverside Counselling Service in November 2024. Since joining, I have been impressed by the scale of the work that the Charity delivers and the dedication to clinical excellence and professionalism of our staff team, our counsellors and our supervisors. Riverside is committed to ensuring that our services remain accessible and affordable to all. Core to our ethos is removing barriers to accessing therapeutic services and ensuring that mental health services, which can change people's lives, are made widely available. We also work hard to remove the stigmatisation that accessing mental health support can still prompt.

Our service delivery

Over the last 12 months the therapeutic services that we have offered include:

1:1 counselling – this service is offered to young people (12+) and adults of any age. We offer this on a short term (12 weeks), medium term (20 weeks) and long term (44 weeks) basis. Referrals for this service come from a range of sources including: GP's, Social Prescribers, voluntary sector organisations and local health centres, amongst others. Our main source of referrals is self-referral. As part of the referral and assessment process clients are asked what has brought them to seek counselling support. The main presenting issues cited by clients are: anxiety (65%), depression (49%), stress (32%) and low self-esteem and low self-confidence (30%).¹ Over the last 12 months this service has been offered in four locations across South Oxfordshire – Berinsfield, Didcot, Henley and Wallingford as well as online.

Our model for the delivery of 1:1 counselling is through the contribution of volunteer counsellors. Our counsellors are all either completing the hours required by their training institution for their qualification or are recently qualified. Over the last 12 months our service has been supported by 44 counsellors who give up to 5 hours each week. Riverside retains a high number of qualified counsellors due to their commitment to our cause and the clinical excellence of the work that we do. The counselling and psychotherapy profession requires those involved in the work to commit to continuous professional development (CPD) and we support this by providing a comprehensive and professional programme of ongoing training opportunities. Our CPD is focused around issues that counsellors are encountering in the therapy room. During the last year, this has included sessions on working with neurodiversity and with transgender clients. We bring in people who are subject experts and with lived experience to deliver these sessions.

Therapeutic groups – we have run two therapeutic groups for adults over the last twelve months, one in Didcot and one in Wallingford. Our groups take place on a weekly basis and are for adults who have completed their 1:1 counselling with Riverside but feel that they would benefit from ongoing support. Our groups offer a 'family/sibling' dynamic experience which complements and leads on from the clients'

¹ Clients can select more than one presenting issue.

previous experience in the 1:1 counselling. The groups can be reparative as they provide a safe space where individual members have an opportunity to confront and potentially assimilate and heal from relational patterns that might be problematic. We have supported 12 adults across our two groups that have been run by skilled facilitators.

Drop-in – our drop-in service operates for Berinsfield residents. This service was set up to respond in a timely fashion to clients who need more immediate support. We work closely with the Berinsfield Health Centre and the Berin Centre to deliver this service which we offer both over the telephone and face to face. Clients are referred directly by their GP and can self-refer. We offer up to 3 sessions of support which is usually focused on a specific issue. Over the last 12 months, 51 clients have been supported by this service with 11 of these going on to access our 1:1 counselling service for ongoing support.

Our year in numbers

Over the last year we have:

- Delivered 5115 counselling sessions
- Received 336 referrals into our service
- Supported 298 adults with 1:1 counselling and 30 young people
- Supported 51 clients through our drop-in services in Berinsfield
- Supported 12 people through our therapeutic groups in Didcot and Wallingford
- Provided 1:1 counselling for over 100 clients who have paid £10 or less
- Run Stage One training in Young People's Counselling for 5 trainees
- Operated from four locations across South Oxfordshire
- Grown our online offer with 15% of clients accessing our 1:1 counselling service online
- Been supported by 44 volunteer counsellors of which 20 were qualified

The profile of those accessing our services has included: 70% females, 28% males and 2% non-binary and transgender clients. We see a broad spectrum of ages across our client base with the largest representation being in the 25-44 year age bracket. Over 90% of our clients are White British.

Our Impact

We measure our outcomes using a range of tools including client and counsellor feedback; case studies; satisfaction surveys and Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (CORE). CORE is a tried and tested psychological self-assessment tool. Clients are asked to complete the CORE questionnaire at the beginning of the intervention and again at the end.

Counsellor feedback

Our model of delivery means that counsellors benefiting from their time with us and taking their skills into community settings is as important a part of our work as the service we offer to clients. Our counsellors are the lifeblood of our service and come to us from a range of institutions and therapeutic modalities. The benefits are highly mutual and are the essence of what makes the quality of our work so high. Detailed below are some thoughts on her experience from one of our counsellors:²

“Sarah”

“I applied to Riverside because I wanted somewhere that would support me in a warm and experienced way. I never felt on my own. We all learn from each other and everyone has been so supportive and accepting of the challenges and uncertainties that the work brings. Riverside trainees give their time voluntarily and I wanted to work with a variety of people in a community setting. The locations that Riverside works from are familiar to me and I felt that I could ‘give back’ to those communities by being part of a local organisation.”

Offering affordable counselling with the option of long-term support for clients was important to Sarah. She comments, “This means that people can access support regardless of how much money they have available to them. I started at Riverside during the pandemic and affordability felt (and still feels) very important, as I believe everyone should have access to counselling if they want it. Riverside’s offer of long-term 1:1 work is really important. Some clients need more time to build trust with you and being able to work over months, rather than weeks, is a precious opportunity for both the client and the counsellor.”

Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation (CORE)

CORE is a tried and tested psychological self-assessment tool that is widely used in mental health settings. Clients complete the CORE questionnaire at the start of the counselling intervention and again at the end. The questionnaire asks clients about their day-to-day functioning and their answers provide a score in relation to their level of ‘distress’, which can range from ‘healthy’ to ‘severe’. Of the clients who completed their CORE questionnaire, 98% demonstrated an improvement in their CORE scores.

² Names relating to case studies have been anonymised

More fundamentally, this means that many of those who were struggling with day-to-day tasks were able to complete them and, at the more severe end, those who were living without hope, gained some.

The table below details the change in CORE scores for the last 12 months:

Core Score	Category	START		END	
<21	Healthy	1.4%		38.0%	
21-33	Low distress/disturbance	5.6%	32.4%	12.7%	78.8%
34-50	Mild distress/disturbance	25.4%		28.1%	
51-67	Moderate distress/disturbance	31.0%		9.9%	
68-84	Moderate/Severe distress/disturbance	21.1%	67.6%	8.5%	21.2%
84+	Severe distress/disturbance	15.5%		2.8%	

Satisfaction Survey

We ask clients to provide us feedback about their experience of our service from point of enquiry to receiving a service including the cost of our service provision and their view of its outcome for them. 98% of clients feel that the service they receive is timely and professional and say that they would recommend Riverside Counselling Service.

Our Year Ahead

Riverside Counselling Service has been through a challenging period financially over the last couple of years. Central to our planning and priorities over the next 12 months is increasing our organisational resilience and ensuring our financial sustainability. This will lead to a significant review of our service provision in order to explore opportunities for streamlining our service delivery to produce the requisite cost savings. Riverside is not alone in experiencing these difficulties. The voluntary and community sector is facing some very real challenges relating to fundraising. Trusts and Foundations fundraising is increasingly competitive, with many funders pausing or closing their applications process and those remaining open reporting being overwhelmed with applications. The cost of living continues to impact on public giving. It also impacts on what our clients are able to pay. Core to our ethos is ensuring that we remain affordable and accessible to clients which means that fundraising is essential to subsidise this commitment. We continue to look at ways that we can diversify our income and are incredibly fortunate to generate the income that we do from our counselling offer. Over the last year we have introduced a 'Friends of Riverside' scheme so that we can grow our supporter base. We will continue to add new 'Friends' over the next 12 months. The launch of the 'Friends of Riverside' scheme has been supported by the introduction of Riverside's first Patron, James Cracknell, OBE. We will be hosting our first 'Friends of Riverside' event in May with James providing the keynote address.

Thanks to our Trustee, Suzy Hobbs, this event will take place on a Hobbs of Henley boat.

The review of our service provision will mean that we are going to be reducing the scale of our operations which includes where we will be operating our services from. We will be focusing our 1:1 counselling provision in Henley and Wallingford as well as online and withdrawing our 1:1 counselling provision in Didcot and Berinsfield. This has been a very difficult decision for the Charity to make as we have been operating from both locations since 2017. The current funding climate makes this a necessary step for us. Alongside this, we will be scaling back our service provision to become a Monday to Thursday service and will be remaining open during periods where we have traditionally closed including Easter and August. We are also reviewing our client fee structure and introducing a 'Hardship Fund' to ensure that we can offer a minimum fee of £10 for weekly 1:1 counselling sessions, whilst also accommodating those for whom £10 is too much.

Over the next 12 months we are going to be developing an organisational vision and values and reviewing our mission statement. We will be working in partnership with Henley College to launch a competition for their students to design a new logo for the Charity. We want to strengthen how we convey the impact of our work and the difference that we make. As part of this we are also reviewing our website to make it easier for clients to navigate. Riverside provides a lifeline for many, we offer essential mental health services to communities who are often excluded from accessing 1:1 support due either to the lengthy waiting lists experienced via the NHS or the prohibitive cost of private counselling provision. We make a valuable and unique contribution in the local community and are committed to continuing to do so.

Our People

Riverside Counselling Service is about people. People who come to us in times of need - *our clients*. People who are developing their careers through their counselling training and post qualification – *our counsellors*. People who are employed by us to support our therapeutic service provision – *our staff, our supervisors, our Clinical Lead and our group facilitators*. People who give their time to ensure that our governance is robust and our financial practices are compliant – *our Trustees*. People who refer in to our service and/or provide spaces for us to hire – *our partners*. People who support our community fundraising and applications process – *our fundraisers*. People who make invaluable financial contributions to our work – *our supporters, our funders, our Friends*. People who act as spokespeople for our work – *our Patron and Ambassadors*. As a locally based small charity, people and community are at the heart of what we do. To all the people who have been part of our service, who have supported and continue to support what we do and how we do it –

Thank You

Treasurer's Report

The year showed a marked improvement on the prior year's results thanks to generous donations from our benefactors whose contributions are essential to our existence. Income from counselling sessions fell slightly as the number of sessions provided dropped by 14% but the effect on revenue was softened by an 8% increase in average fee income.

The overall cost of running the charity and providing the service during the year dropped by 8.5%. The move towards making the charity CEO led (started in the previous year) rather than clinical led had its full effect in this year which is why the comparisons of Clinical Management and Administrative Support look rather skewed between the two periods.

The welcome combination of increased revenue and reduced costs resulted in a surplus £61,000 better than the prior year and an increase in reserves of £15,000. Plans are in place to ensure next year will show further improvement in our reserves.

As ever we are hugely grateful to those individuals and organisations who so generously support us and without whom Riverside Counselling would not exist.



John Morrow

Treasurer

Analysis of Restricted Funds

Donor	b/fwd	Income	Expenditure	c/fwd
Thamesfield YA	6,269		6,269	0
SODC	5,896	0	0	5,896
Didcot Powerhouse		5,000	5,000	0
Magdalen		500	500	0
Doris Field		750	750	0
Berinsfield PC		1,000	1,000	0
Invesco Perpetual		3,000	3,000	0
John Hodges Trust		1,000	1,000	0
Berinsfield Garden Village		4,297	4,297	0
Christopher Laing		1,000	1,000	0
Groundwork		1,000	1,000	0
Oxford City Council		1,375	754	621
Shanly Foundation		5,000	2,976	2,024
Didcot Town Council		4,125	3,297	828
Openwork		15,000	12,500	2,500
Tony Lane Foundation		5,000	3,626	1,374
SODC Berinsfield		2,149	0	2,149
Berinsfield Health & Wellbeing		4,086	1,538	2,548
OCF		8,928	8,088	840
TOTAL	12,165	63,210	56,595	18,780

RIVERSIDE COUNSELLING SERVICE

(charity no. 1018853)

Report and Accounts for the year 1st March 2024 to 28th February 2025

Independent Examiner's Report

I report on the accounts of the Charity for the year ended 28th February 2025, which are set out on the following page and prepared on an accruals basis.

Respective Responsibilities of Trustees & Examiner:

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an Independent Examination is needed. It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of Independent Examiner's Report:

I am qualified to perform this examination as I am a retired member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales. My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiner's Statement:

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:

1. accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act;
2. the accounts do not accord with those records;
3. 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 investigation.



Peter Goddard
Staplers Cottage
Shepherds Green
Henley on Thames
Oxon

Accounts for the year to 28th February 2025

	Year to 28 th February 2025 Restricted	Year to 28 th February 2025 Unrestricted	Year to 28 th February 2025 Total	Year to 29 th February 2024 Total
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES				
Income:				
Fees Received from Clients		117,019	117,019	120,137
Fundraising and donations		22,254	22,254	11,316
Grants	63,210	81,038	144,248	116,485
Bank interest		905	905	640
Total Income	63,210	221,216	284,426	248,578
Expenditure:				
Clinical Management & Counselling	16,136	50,082	66,218	139,330
Supervision	4,570	20,202	24,772	25,883
Administrative Support	11,230	51,849	63,079	38,309
Room Hire	12,583	16,388	28,971	31,768
Assessment Support	6,326	30,246	36,572	21,380
Fundraising Staff Costs		20,754	20,754	13,856
Insurance	204	731	935	789
Stationery & Postage		40	40	289
Travel	224	1,263	1,487	891
Subscriptions	131	385	516	575
Equipment, IT & consulting	2,952	11,229	14,181	14,135
Telephone		79	79	30
Professional fees		107	107	3,749
Misc office costs	752	3,548	4,300	2,560
Training	1,068	3,905	4,973	490
Collection fees	419	1,939	2,358	1,203
Total Expenditure	56,595	212,747	269,342	295,237
Net result for the year	6,615	8,469	15,084	(46,659)
Funds brought forward	12,165	26,545	38,710	85,369
Funds carried forward	18,780	35,014	53,794	38,710
BALANCE SHEET				
Cash in bank	22,494	40,032	62,526	50,937
Accounts Receivable & prepayments		5,982	5,982	6,641
Accounts Payable	(3,714)	(11,000)	(14,714)	(18,868)
Current and Total Assets	18,780	35,014	53,794	38,710

Approved on 23rd June 2025

Adrian Marsh

Handwritten signature of Adrian Marsh in black ink.

Chair

John Morrow

Handwritten signature of John Morrow in black ink.

Treasurer

Notes to the accounts

Note 1: Basis of preparation

1.1 Basis of accounting

These accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) issued on 16 July 2014 and with the Charities Act 2011.

1.2 Going concern

The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis and the trustees are not aware of any events or conditions that cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern

1.3 Change of accounting policies or estimates

The accounts present a true and fair view and the accounting policies adopted are those outlined in note 2. There have been no changes in accounting policies during the year. There have been no changes in accounting estimates and there are no prior year adjustments.

Note 2: Accounting Policies

This standard list of accounting policies has been applied by the charity:

Recognition of income

These are included in the Statement of Financial Activities (SoFA) when:

- the charity becomes entitled to the resources;
- it is more likely than not that the trustees will receive the resources; and
- the monetary value can be measured with sufficient reliability.

Grants and donations

Grants and donations are only included in the SoFA when the general income recognition criteria are met (5.10 to 5.12 FRS 102 SORP). Where a donor puts stipulations on the use to which a grant or donation can be put the amount received is designated as a restricted fund and expenditure relevant to it is accounted for accordingly.

Tax reclaims on donations and gifts

Gift Aid receivable is included in income when there is a valid declaration from the donor. Any Gift Aid amount recovered on a donation is considered to be part of that

gift and is treated as an addition to the same fund as the initial donation unless the donor or the terms of the appeal have specified otherwise.

Support, trustee and employee costs

The charity has incurred expenditure on support costs during the year, had 4 part time employees who were paid £94,973 in total but made no payments to trustees or related parties.

Balance Sheet

All amounts are due within one year.

Creditors

The charity has creditors which are measured at settlement amounts less any trade discounts.

Debtors

Debtors are measured on initial recognition at settlement amount, subsequently they are measured at the cash amount expected to be received.