

Links Counselling Service Ltd

(A company limited by guarantee, not having a share capital)

TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

for the financial year ended 31 March 2024

The trustees present their Trustees' Annual Report, combining the Directors' Report and Trustees' Report, and the audited financial statements for the financial year ended 31 March 2024.

The financial statements are prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their financial statements in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102).

The Trustees' Report contains the information required to be provided in the Trustees' Annual Report under the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) guidelines. The trustees of the company are also charity trustees for the purpose of charity law and under the company's constitution are known as members of the board of trustees.

In this report the trustees of Links Counselling Service Ltd present a summary of its purpose, governance, activities, achievements and finances for the financial year 31 March 2024.

So far as the trustees are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charity's auditor is unaware and they have taken all reasonable steps as trustees to make themselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that the company's auditor is aware of that information.

The company is a registered charity and hence the report and results are presented in a form which complies with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and, although not obliged to comply with the Statement of Recommended Practice applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland FRS 102, the organisation has implemented its recommendations where relevant in these financial statements.

Mission, Objectives and Strategy

Objectives

Links has four main areas of work:

- 1) Links Counselling Service: A confidential counselling service offered in a safe environment where individuals from all communities have the opportunity to explore difficulties and work towards constructive change and growth. It is a capacity-building and personal development programme, which aims to help people to develop the skills they need to help themselves.
- 2) Youth Work: Centre-based/community-based and detached youth work. Participants are young people from Lurgan and wider Craigavon area aged between 10 and 25 from Protestant and Catholic backgrounds. Programme Activities are mainly based in The Underground and are facilitated by qualified and experienced youth workers. Programmes include: personal development, education, citizenship, single identity/community relations work, creative arts and social/recreational activities.
- 3) Community Resource Provision: Providing capability programmes, center based community activities, which draws people from all communities and encourages collaboration between community groups. Offering room hire at low cost to other community and voluntary groups, thereby contributing to the social economy and generating income for Links charitable activities.
- 4) Adult Community Programmes: adult education, community relations and leisure programmes that take advantage of the Underground building as a shared space in the center of Lurgan.

Financial Review

The results for the financial year are set out on page 15 and additional notes are provided showing income and expenditure in greater detail.

Achievements - April 2023-March 2024

2023-2024 has been a significantly challenging year in the face of a growing mental health crisis across Northern Ireland. With the need for services outstripping the resources available within the third sector, Links has worked tirelessly to find creative strategies to fulfil the mission of our organisation, which is to ensure that "No One Journeys Alone" through difficult times.

This mission propelled us to grow the reach of our service into other areas, schools, and partnerships, increasing capacity and sharing resources. As such, we have been able to open new counselling centers across the Northern and South-Eastern Trust areas in an attempt to localise resources and make them accessible to communities in need.

This year we have been thankful to partner with other sectors, collaborating with strategic planning processes in aid of raising awareness and resources for early intervention strategies in the field of mental health. With the evidence we have gathered on how effective counselling can be, and the impact it can make on an individual's wellbeing, it is our hope to keep lobbying for investment in this vital community resource.

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TESTIMONIES

"The help I received was second to none. In a friendly, easy atmosphere. I thank Links immensely for giving me of their time so generously. A wonderful charity. Thank you" Female – Aged 74

"I can't thank Links enough, my counsellor has been a great listener, easy to talk to, warm and compassionate and for someone like myself, who finds it hard to talk about issues and problems, I opened up to her with ease. I can't find the words express my gratitude to Links and my counsellor on how much of an impact she has made on me and my situation.

She has given me so many tools and helpful exercises to help me through my difficult times and given me the self-belief that I can get through this hard time. I am forever grateful for this."

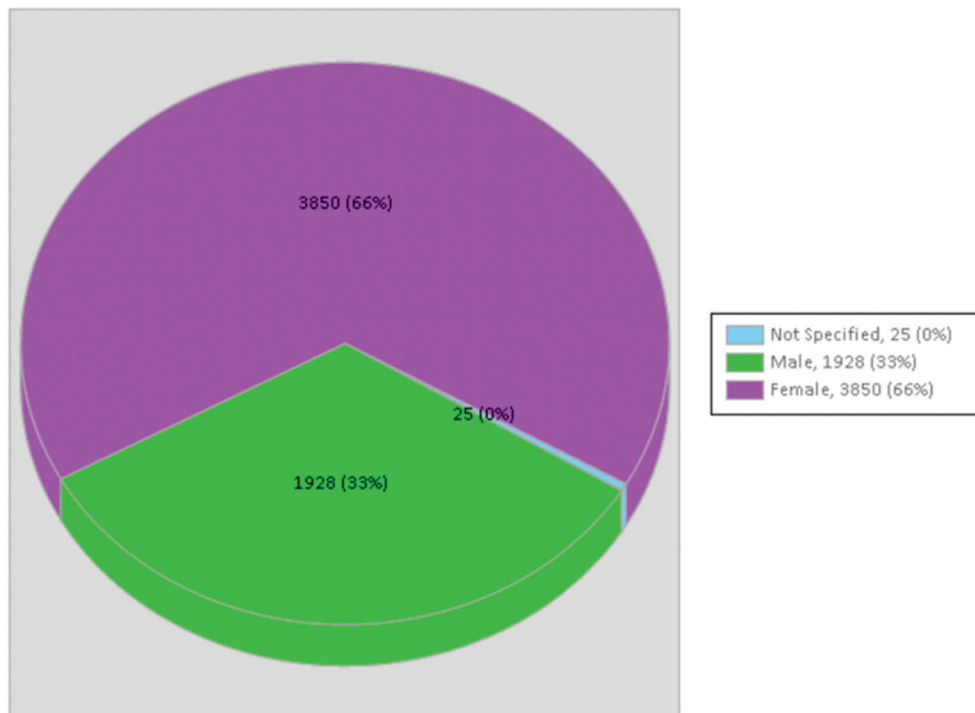
"I have found this service so beneficial for my mental health and wellbeing and without it I would not have the tools to combat my daily anxiety. My Counsellor was amazing and very easy to talk to and I felt incredibly supported by her."

"Links has been an incredible help. I felt that I was listened to and given some creative techniques and reading materials to help alleviate my anxiety and mental health. Could not be happier with how the past 6 weeks have went!

STATISTICS

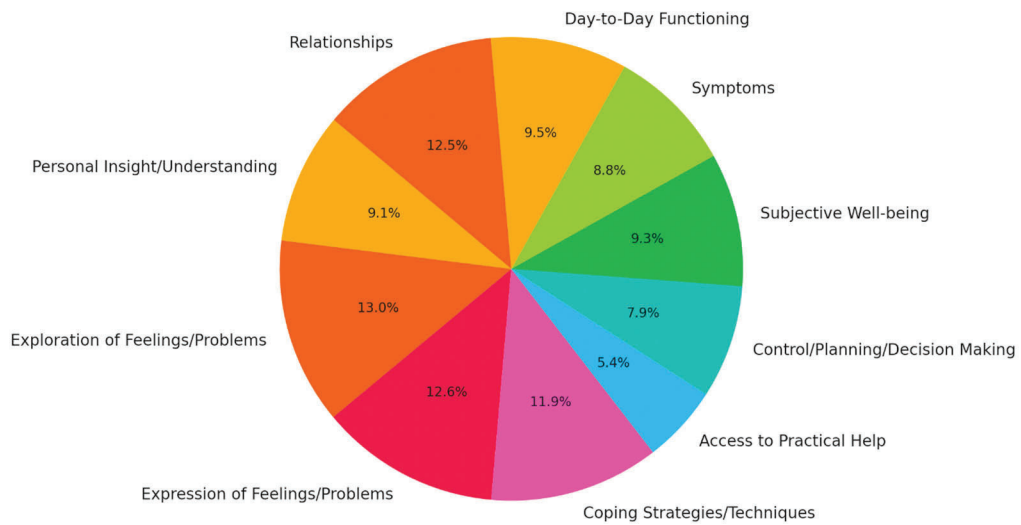
From April 2023 to March 2024, we have delivered 25235 sessions of counselling across all geographical areas of our service. 5803 people have received support through one-to-one counselling sessions, group programmes and walk in clinics..

Client Genders



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Proportion of Clients Reporting Improvement by Therapy Benefit Category

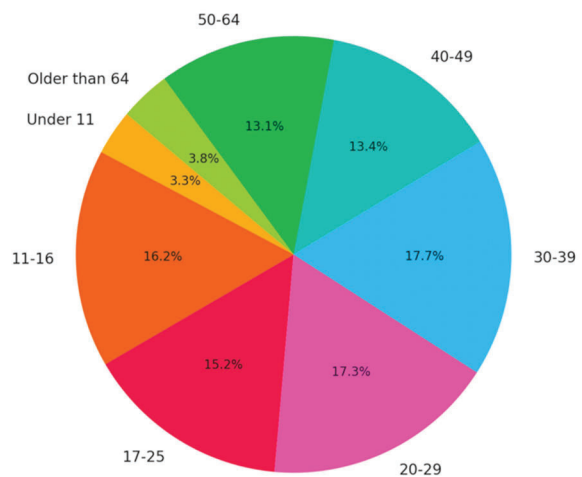


The above pie chart shows the proportion of clients who reported improvements across various therapy benefit categories. Each slice represents a specific area, illustrating the impact of therapy in terms of client-reported benefits.

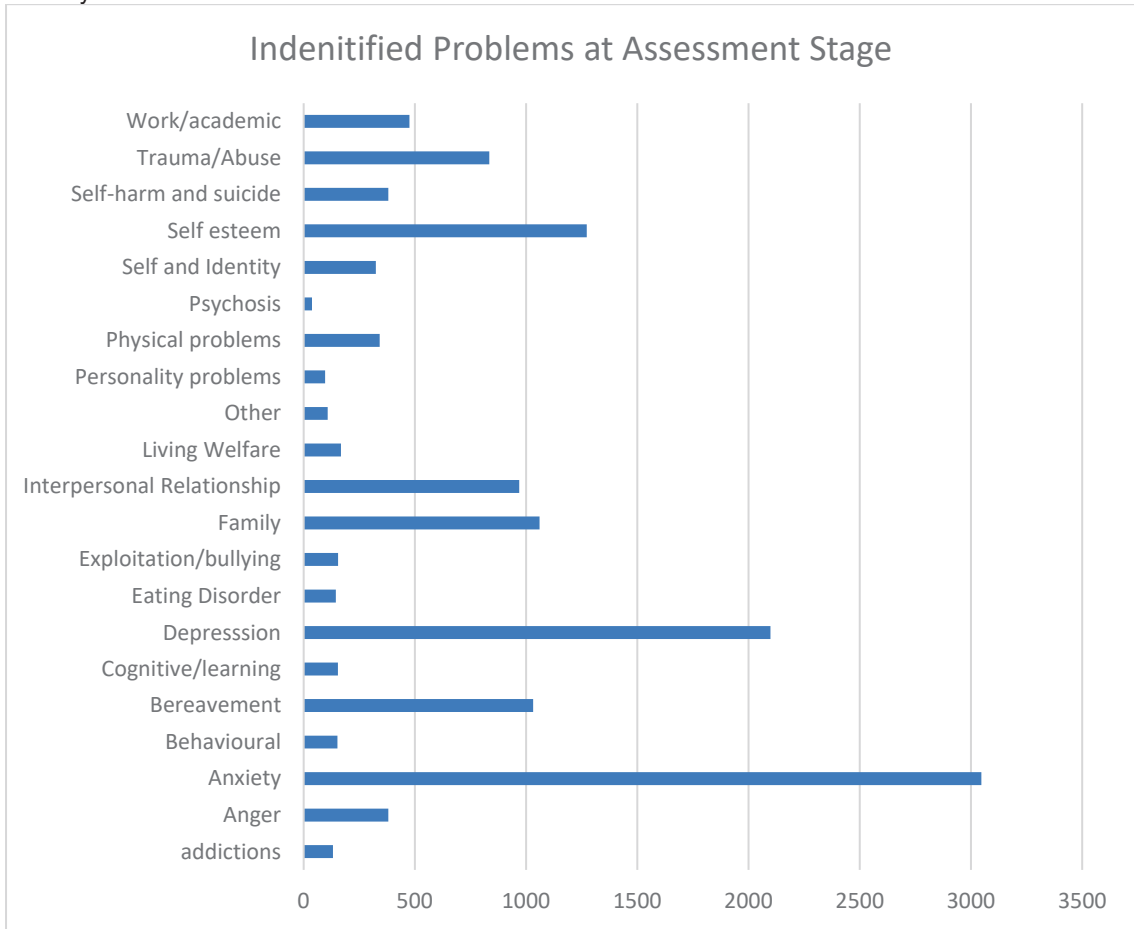
Based on the combined data from both documents, here's a summary of the age groups of clients who have accessed the service:

- **Under 11:** 216 clients
- **11-16:** 1,044 clients
- **17-25:** 984 clients
- **20-29:** 1,119 clients
- **30-39:** 1,146 clients
- **40-49:** 865 clients
- **50-64:** 846 clients
- **Older than 64:** 244 clients

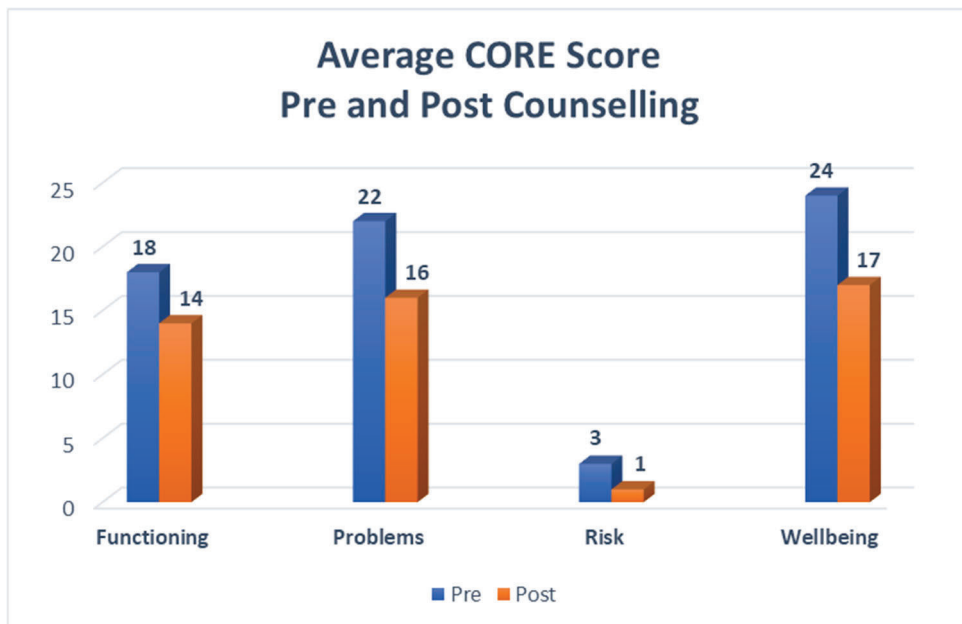
Age Distribution of Clients Accessing Therapy Services



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The highest presenting problems for clients seeking counselling is anxiety, depression, low self-esteem, bereavement and family issues



Using CORE-OM measurement tools, the average **First Session score overall was 20**, placing clients before counselling in the top of the 'moderate' cut-off margin of experiencing.

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The overall average **Last Session score then reduced to 12**, showing that a majority of clients left counselling with a score that placed them in the bottom of the 'mild' cut-off margin for functioning, symptoms and wellbeing.

Statistically these outcomes suggests that overall client's levels of distress have significantly reduced, proving that therapeutic interventions have significantly helped our clients.

NEW CENTRES

This year we have been able to open a new counselling centre in Ballymena, working along the Northern Trust and key community stakeholders to support the people of Ballymena. We are now able to offer therapy for children, young people, and adults within the locality.

Open day at Links Ballymena with the Mayor and the Links Ballymena Team.



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Funders we have worked with this year



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Financial Results

At the end of the financial year the company has assets of £647,486 (2023 - £720,672) and liabilities of £57,060 (2023 - £122,758). The net assets of the company have decreased by £(7,488).

Trustees

The trustees who served throughout the financial year, except as noted, were as follows:

Nadia McMullen (Appointed 7 November 2023)
Mrs. Ruth Craig
David Blevins (Resigned 7 November 2023)
Mr. Leonard Adamson
Mrs. Andrea Parks
Mr. Philip Ruddell Emerson
Mr. George Watson (Resigned 7th October 2024)
Dr. Graham Gault
Mr. Stanley Abraham

In accordance with the Articles of Association, the trustees retire by rotation and, being eligible, offer themselves for re-election.

The secretary who served during the financial year was:

Mr. Stanley Abraham

Compliance with Sector-Wide Legislation and Standards

The company engages pro-actively with legislation, standards and codes which are developed for the sector. Links Counselling Service Ltd subscribes to and is compliant with the following:

- The Companies Act 2006
- The Charities SORP (FRS 102)

Public Benefit

In setting our objectives and planning our activities for the year the trustees have given careful consideration to the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland's statutory guidance on public benefit to ensure that the activities have helped achieve the charity purposes and provide a benefit to the beneficiaries.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 8th November 2024 and signed on its behalf by:


Trustee


Trustee

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STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

for the financial year ended 31 March 2024

The trustees, who are also directors of Links Counselling Service Ltd for the purposes of company law, are responsible for preparing the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees as the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law) including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" Section 1A (Small Entities). Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company and of the surplus or deficit of the company for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

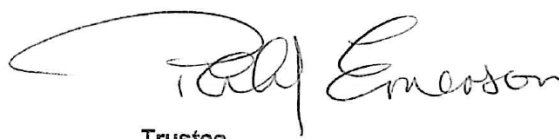
- select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the relevant financial reporting framework, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in operation.

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the above requirements in preparing the financial statements.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Approved by the Board of Trustees on 8th November 2024 and signed on its behalf by:


Trustee


Trustee