

**Cúnamh Annual General Meeting**

**26<sup>th</sup> July 2023**

**Staff Report**

**For Period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023**



This report summarises the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

As I did at last year's A.G.M. I wish, once again, to reflect some of the feedback from the clients who have benefited from the services which Cúnamh offer, as it provides an insight to the diverse range of services and programmes delivered during this period.

### **Re: Wim Hoff Breathwork Weekend**

*"The weekend was life changing, I've started getting up in the mornings again and doing my walks and taking a cold shower every day. I feel amazing."*

*"An overall amazing experience which pushed me outside my comfort zone. A great way to connect to people, share stories and have a laugh. Felt completely vitalised afterwards."*

*"Cannot believe I stayed in an ice bath for 3 minutes, so excited to tell my family about this amazing experience".*

*"So blessed to be on this weekend with such amazing like-minded people."*

*"I have never done anything like this before, I never thought that breathing could take you to a place outside of yourself before".*

*"Absolutely amazing experience. Don't know where all the tears came from, but I couldn't stop them. Thank you all so much."*

### **Re: Social Trip to Glenveagh Park**

*"It was so nice to get away for the day, we had great craic and really enjoyed getting to visit somewhere we never would have opportunity to visit because we don't drive".*

*"Thanks to Cúnamh for an amazing wee day out, we had a great time and loved exploring the grounds of this beautiful castle".*

*"Great day out and was so nice to go for dinner afterwards. I don't usually go out for dinner, and it was such a treat. It was so nice to get talking to so many different people and hear about their lives and have a laugh".*

### **Dublin Trip**

*"Just a message to everyone at Cúnamh to say thank you for organising a great trip away to Dublin. We all had the best time. The tour of Kilmainham and Glasnevin Cemetery were hugely informative and enjoyable. We can't thank you all enough for this. Keep up the good work".*

### **Peaceful Painting Programme**

*"I was very reluctant at the beginning to do this programme as I felt I would be useless at it. Brenda was so good and patient with all the group. I couldn't believe some of the work I was*

*creating over the weeks. I didn't want to miss any sessions as I enjoyed it so much. I really got lost in the work, it was so therapeutic".*

*"This was a great programme which I would recommend to anyone, I wish we could have went on longer".*

*"Loved every minute of this programme, I can't believe the work I produced with Brenda's guidance. I will certainly be keeping it up at home".*

*"I didn't think art could be so relaxing and I also didn't believe I could do as good as I did. I can't wait to continue doing this at home. Thanks to all for this experience".*

*'I attended a painting class in Cunamh for 6 weeks. I was amazed by what I discovered I could do. I hadn't painted since school. The tutor taught us basic techniques and gave us encouragement on a one to one basis, with ideas and suggestions. Cunamh then provided some members of the group with an art set. I still paint at home, it is pure bliss. Many, Many thanks!*

*"I was so touched by the incredible warmth of your reception and your kindness. Many thanks to you all, keep up the great work".*

*"Thank you for all for being welcoming to be from the first day I came in to Cúnamh. I am so grateful for all the help you have given me, and I feel in a much better place than when I first walked through the doors".*

*'Thank you Brenda and all at Cunamh. I was given the motivation to get out fishing again. Ive met up with old friends and enjoyed standing by the river. Getting the license has enabled me to go to new places and take it seriously. Being out in the fresh air again, in good company for 5 hours is hard to beat.'*

*'Actually getting a new outdoor coat and walking boots made me want to go out more. Just having them is a good enough reason to go. I love it If it's raining I can just put the hood up and walk for an hour. Just putting one foot in front of the other is very therapeutic and I'm always more relaxed when I come back in'*

*'I didn't think I would be interested in going to the gym but was encouraged by my therapist at Cunamh about the real benefits of physical exercise and decided to give it a go. At first, I just had a quick dip in the pool and used the steam room and was enjoying just getting into a routine doing this. Now I use the treadmill, the exercise bike and cross trainer. It's true!... exercise changes everything.'*

*"To all the amazing people at Cúnamh. This place has turned my life around; the warmth and friendliness has allowed me to be open and feel safe to do the work and benefit fully from the CBT and counselling. I enjoyed the complementary therapy also. The benefits cannot be underestimated."*

## **Summary of Cúnamh Work**

This year was very exciting, albeit not without its challenges. We launched our beautiful outdoor space, completed BACP organisational accreditation, successfully completed an application for PEACE Plus 5 year funding, and entered new contractual agreements for service delivery.

Staff convened several events, for clients and partner groups. These included: Mindfulness in Practise; Peaceful Painting classes; Book Clubs; Meal & Movie nights, Gardening programmes, as well as several social support trips and respite breaks.

Aaron Deane facilitated an amazing breathwork weekend, which has been hugely life changing.

Michael Murphy from Dove House Advice Services provided a weekly Benefits and Welfare Advice clinic.

The organisation continued to actively participate in the Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) Practitioners and Caseworkers Forums. These enable Caseworkers to share, engage and reflect the positive impact which the various Casework support frameworks have upon victims and survivors, as well exploring solutions to ongoing barriers.

We continued to work closely with the WHSCT Talking Therapy HUB to deliver psychological therapies to vulnerable members of our community and we know from feedback that this essential service is saving lives and helping to rebuild families and communities.

82 individuals were referred to Cúnamh from the HUB during this period.

We had the pleasure of hosting 4 volunteer placements and I'd like to thank Claire, Alisha, Veronica and Caroline for their contribution to Cúnamh during this time.

As well as facilitating many interviews with researchers and students we were delighted to participate again in community-based initiatives, in partnership with Triax, Dove House, & Tar Abhaile, as well as provision of advocacy services to CALMS and The Koram Centre. We were grateful for support from Relatives For Justice and The Ashton Community Trust for assistance

with applications to the Troubles Permanent Disablement Payment Scheme, and The Pat Finucane Centre for advocacy support.

The Cúnamh Clinical Leads and I actively contributed to the development of the new Regional Trauma Network. This is an exciting partnership comprising VSSNI funded organisations; all 5 Department of Health Trusts; The Executive Office; Dept of Health; CVSNI and VSSNI. The Partnership Board was formally ratified in November 2022.

We developed a new partnership with the HSE in Donegal for the delivery of CBT-E to young people referred by the CAMHS team.

## **Service & Programme Delivery**

### **Talking Therapy Service.**

208 Individuals accessed Talking Therapy (Trauma/Generic Counselling & Cognitive Behavioural Therapy)

1835 Talking Therapy sessions were delivered.

All talking therapies were measured using the CORE (Clinical Outcomes in Routine Evaluation) system. These indicated that Anxiety & Depression and Trauma were the most prevalent presentations. 67 % of those who completed therapy reported a significant improvement in their health & wellbeing. These included:

- Restored & improved family relationships
- Ability to make sensible decisions
- Maintenance of sobriety
- Alcohol & Drug reduction
- Increased confidence about future
- Reduced anxiety and stress
- Increased level of motivation
- Greater understanding of bereavement process
- Reduced risk of suicide ideation
- Increased awareness of the impact of trauma
- Increased social activity & engagement
- Greater ability to engage with people
- Reduced medication dependency
- Ability to make life & work adjustments

### **Complementary Therapy Service**

81 Clients received a combined total of 405 complementary therapy sessions.

Complementary Therapies were measured using the MYMOP (Measure Your Medical Outcome Profile) questionnaire. Anxiety, Stress, Mobility and Physical Pain were reported as the main symptoms. 83% of clients reported a significant improvement in their daily living activities. These included: socialising; walking, mobility, exercising and sleeping. Reported symptom reduction included Depression, Anxiety, Stress, Insomnia and Chronic Pain.

### **Health & Wellbeing Casework**

152 Clients were supported with a range of services and small value items. These included:

- Gym memberships.
- Acupuncture.
- Education & Training Courses/  
Student Support Costs
- Additional Psychological Therapies
- Walking boots and raincoats
- Fishing licenses
- Art and craft sets
- Heat lamps for arthritic pain.
- Gardening equipment
- Self-help books

The Health & Wellbeing Casework programme was measured using the WSAS (Work And Social Adjustment Scale).

69% of beneficiaries reported an improvement in their wellbeing.

### **Welfare Advice**

60 Clients were supported with welfare and benefits advice. 134 Sessions of advice were provided by the Dove House Advice Services.

### **Eating Disorder Project.**

218 sessions of CBT-E were delivered to 30 young people.

The young people who received support from the Eating Disorder project staff reported the following benefits:

- Increased levels of self-worth
- Less anxiety and obsessing about weight
- Improved relationships with peers and family
- Greater attendance at school
- Greater ability to cope with daily stressors

## **Public Benefit 1V**

### ***To provide a durable community-led support system.***

The organisation continued to pro-actively network and engage with the VSS sector organisations to ensure that victims and survivors receive the most appropriate support to meet their individual needs.

Garraí Cúnamh was officially opened in June 2022 by Mayor of Derry City & Strabane Council, Sandra Duffy. We had the pleasure of welcoming the new Victim's Commissioner Ian Jefferson to the launch, as well as CEO VSSNI Margaret Bateson and Andrew Walker VSSNI. The garden has provided the organisation with a much-needed extra therapeutic space and has been enjoyed by clients and volunteers since. I'd like to acknowledge the voluntary dedication of Ken and Frances for ensuring the garden thrives, as well as the many clients, who have contributed to its ongoing growth.

We continued to enjoy a positive, collaborative partnership with the Talking Therapy HUB staff, G.P. practises and Mental Health Practitioners.

Cúnamh staff, volunteers and directors participated in various strategic planning events. These included: VSSNI meetings; CVSNI Consultations; VSSNI Caseworker and Practitioner forums; Regional Trauma Network development meetings, as well as regular participation in community led strategic planning events with other sector providers.

We welcomed several new staff members to the team this year. Caroline Cooper was appointed as Clinical Co-ordinator in November and Brenda Graham was employed as the new Health & Well being Caseworker in March. We also welcomed back Elaine Morrison as the Finance Manager in April.

Each year it has been with immense pride to be able to acknowledge the continued growth in skills, professionalism and abilities within Cúnamh, and this year is no exception. We completed an application process to acquire organisational accreditation with BACP and staff completed the following professional courses:

PD Diploma in CBT; Level 5 Diploma in CBT; Certificate in Systemic Practice & Family Therapy; Children In Northern Ireland Good Practice in Recording and Responding; Additional Suicide First Aid Training; Virtual Trauma Summit; Think Family Model; Systemic Family Growth:

Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk; Motivational Interviewing; Trauma and addiction; and Managing Violent and Dangerous Behaviour

Of course, none of this work could have been delivered without the support of our Funders. Victims and Survivors Service Northern Ireland (VSSNI); Children In Need; Western Health & Social Care Trust (WHST), Health & Safety Executive (HSE) and the private donations, which we received.

Finally, a word of gratitude to all the members of the Board of Directors, our team of Sessional Therapists, and the Cúnamh staff, past and present.

## Financial Review

At the Y/E March 2023, Cúnamh once again, have primarily been funded through the Victims and Survivors Service, but have also secured various other funded contracts, with a view to ensuring that all organisational costs are covered. These included:

- **VSS (LoO 17/0074) valuing £146,252** - New year Budget = **£176,874** (Apr '23 to March '24)
- **VSS (LoO 17/0074/GF) valuing £22,075** - New year Budget = **£25,638** (Apr '23 – Mar '24)
- **HSE Donegal – £8,250** - New year contract = **£17,930** (Aug '23 to Jan '24)
- **WHSCT – £19,000**

A new contract is in operation with the WHSCT, providing us with an income of £38.04 per session, increased slightly from last year. As it currently stands, it is estimated that this contract will have value anything between £15,000 and £20,000 this year.

- **Children in Need – £10,262** (Includes an additional £500 in Yr. 2)

We are into our 3<sup>rd</sup> and final year under the CIN contract, which provides £9762 p/a. This helps contribute to the organisation salary costs, together with a small element of supervision and programme costs.

As a result of continued stringent financial management, fully supported by the volunteers, staff and directors over the past 12 months, Cúnamh's unrestricted funds have increased by £464 from £19,609 to £20,073, thanks to generous donations from a range of supporters.

Overall funds as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023 stand at £27,040 with the Charity being solvent and, in a position, to meet all debtors.

During this financial period the charity continued to receive most of its funding by way of grant and contract income from Peace IV, Victims and Survivors Service NI, Western Trust & Social Care Trust, Health Service Executive and Children in Need.

## Reserves Policy

The Directors have reviewed the reserves of the charity and have established a policy whereby unrestricted funds amount to at least 3 months of the overall essential costs. These reserves are required to allow the charity to continue to operate for a minimum of 3 months

in the event of a significant drop in funding. This unrestricted target has been calculated to be £41,000 The current level of unrestricted funds available to the charity stands at £20,073 and as such the directors have considered the extent to which current activities and expenditure could be reduced should additional funding not be secured.

### **Structure, Governance and Management**

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 4<sup>th</sup> October, 2000 and registered as a charity on 4<sup>th</sup> December, 1997. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association.

### **Recruitment and Appointment of Management Committee**

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's Articles are known as members of the Cúnamh Board of Directors. All members of the Board gave their time voluntarily and received no benefits from the charity.

### **Trustee Induction and Training**

All trustees are already familiar with the practical work of the charity.

### **Risk Management**

The directors have carried out a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. A risk register continues to be used and this is updated as and when required or at least twice a year. Appropriate systems and procedures have been developed to mitigate the risks the charity faces. The on-going implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and activities ensures that internal control risks are minimised. The Cúnamh Board of Directors currently comprises 7 members from a variety of professional backgrounds, relevant to the work of the charity. Day to day responsibility for the provision of all the services, operational management and individual supervision of the staff resides with the Project Co-ordinator.

Cathy Nelis -Cúnamh Co-ordinator.

