

Trustee's Annual Report and Financial Statements

For the Year Ended 30th March 2024



Cúnamh

(A Company limited by guarantee)

1st April 2023 – 30th March 2024

Registration number NI39355

Registered with the Charities Commission NI NIC101682

Legal and Administrative Information

Cúnamh is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 4th December 1997 and is recognised as a charity by the Inland Revenue. The governing document is a Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Directors:	Harry Anthony Crossan (Chairperson) Seamus Soal Charles Colm McMenamin Patricia Anne Murphy Antoin DeBrun Michael Doyle
Secretary:	Niall O'Somachain
Accountants:	McGroarty, McCafferty & Company Ltd Accountants & Tax Consultants 2 Carlisle Terrace Derry BT48 6JX
Business address:	171 Sunbeam Terrace Bishop Street Derry BT48 6UJ
Bankers:	Bank of Ireland Strand Road Derry BT48 7BT
Inland Revenue Charity Reference Number:	XR 25406
Company Number:	NI39355
Charity Commission for Northern Ireland Number:	NIC101682

Introduction

The Directors submit their report and financial statements for the period ended 30th March 2024. The financial statements of the charity comply with the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applicable to charities preparing their account in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard.

Purposes and Aims

Our charity's purposes as set out in the objects contained in the Memorandum of Association are to:

- To undertake and develop research in past traumatic stress and provide information and training to local communities, families and individuals on the effects of stress.
- To provide individuals with space to explore and understand their feelings in relation to past traumatic experiences.
- To provide individuals with a supportive and safe environment in which they can maximise and actively negotiate various routes for change in the development of their lives and community.
- To provide a durable community-led support system.

Ensuring our work delivers our aims

We review our aims, objectives and activities each year. This review looks at what we achieved and the outcomes of our work in the previous 12 months. The review looks at the success of each key activity and the benefits they have brought to those people we are set up to help. The review also helps us ensure our aim, objectives and activities remained focused on our stated purposes. We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities. In particular, the directors consider how planned activities will contribute to the aims and objectives they have set.

How our activities deliver public benefit

Our main activities and who we have supported are outlined below. All our charitable activities focus on providing a safe space in which individuals can commence a process of reflection, exploration and community growth all activities are undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the public benefit.

Director's Annual Report
For the Year Ended 31st March 2024

I would like to extend a very warm welcome to you all and especially to our recently appointed new staff members.

I'd like to commend Cathy and all the staff for the amazing work which they have managed to deliver this past year, despite the ongoing uncertainty regarding funding and increased demands within the sector. The staff worked as a team and successfully responded to all challenges. The work that they have been able to deliver during this period has been incredible.

This A.G.M. is to summarise the period from April 2023 to 31st March 2024.

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 invaluable and diverse range of services which Cúnamh provide.

"Jim helped me with all my problems, all the staff are so kind. Thank you."

"I feel I have been understood and helped to cope with my personal problems. I am happy that I can contact Cúnamh at anytime, if I need to."

"It helped me with understanding myself and situations that I have been in. It has given me more confidence in my ability to cope. I really felt heard. Fantastic service, welcoming, warm and I felt truly listened to. Thank you very much for your support."

"Made me more aware of my feelings and helped me to take on healthy habits and how to manage problems."

"Ursula is an amazing therapist. I feel I have a better understanding of myself and I feel a lot happier."

"Made me feel very relaxed and helped me through a lot. Thank you very much".

"When I started, I didn't know what to expect, but I have really found the benefit in my day to day life, can't imagine a better service. I felt very comfortable from day one, the staff are amazing".

"Helped me move on from my problems, service was excellent".

"Having someone to talk to and explaining things differently and teaching me how to deal with problems".

"I found peace with a lot of my struggles, Jim was brilliant".

"Brenda your support and help were amazing."

I can apply the techniques I have learned into my life. I feel a big change, positively. I will always be very grateful. Thank you”.

“I felt very comfortable from the minute I walked into Cúnamh. The staff are amazing. I really found the benefit in my day to day life. Can’t imagine a better service.”

“When having a bad week, I always feel better after seeing Carole. I am sleeping better and haven’t had a drink in months. All the staff in Cúnamh are the nicest people and I always feel great leaving.”

“Understanding my issues out loud and making decisions on situations. Getting out my emotions has really helped me a lot. Thank you.”

“I have found the sessions extremely helpful and got particular benefit from having complementary therapy alongside. When I began I thought I needed tools to deal with anxiety but have instead begun to identify the trauma that is the root cause. This is an amazing service that has had an extremely positive impact on me.

“Thanks, Michael, for all the help, couldn’t have got this without your assistance. I can sleep peacefully at night now not having to worry about bills.”

“To all at Cúnamh, and especially Michael. I was so worried about the assessment and you and Brenda really helped me through it. I am shocked but delighted with the outcome and I am very grateful.”

“When I started CBT I was suicidal and felt unable to cope with my life, and was just so overwhelmed by grief and sadness. This experience has made me realise that life is worth living, despite my loss. Thank you.”

“It has helped me to control my thoughts rather than my thoughts controlling me. It a great service. Thank you.”

Amazing Service which made a massive difference to my condition. I now understand what trauma is and why I’ve been struggling so much. Thank you, you are a great group of people”.

“Fantastic service. It ha given me the tools that I need to cope with my emotions when they are high.”

“Brilliant service. To say things out loud and understand them. Someone else to speak to, not family or friends.”

“Thank you for all your help and understanding while I have been here. Now out to the big wide world and put it into practice.”

“Have received a lot of new skills. Will be put on list for service to chat to keep me on the right path. Thank you so much for my new tools to deal with everything.”

“Thank you so much for all your help. I have looked forward to the sessions and have found the work amazing. I have a different outlook and approach to life. Physically I cannot put it down on paper but I can work it out in my head. “

“I felt a got a fantastic service and connected with the staff, loved the complementary therapy. Very good services all round.”

“You’re all brilliant”.

“Therapy has a positive impact on me, with a very friendly and welcoming team”.

“It helped me to relax and give me aa more realistic and achievable goal”.

“I think what has been provide has been very beneficial, I have nothing but praise for the services provided, I appreciate all the help and care received”.

"The service has taught me to prioritize. I have received a lot of new skills, tools to deal with life stresses".

"Incredible team. Welcoming, understanding. Overall lift to my perspective and ability to view and manage my emotions. Availability of these services are life changing but are scarce and hard to access".

"I was in a bad depression and therapy got me back on track. It was brilliant, amazing. I felt heard and cared about".

"I learned to look at things in a different light. I am a good person, a good mum, my opinion does count and I will be strong".

"So happy with my therapy, it was so helpful, and I feel that I can do things I was avoiding. This is a brilliant service and I would highly recommend your organisation to anyone looking for help".

"The service has been life changing for me, a very different perspective and has taught me skills for life".

"The organisation has provided unwavering commitment to my journey with compassion when I felt like crumbling. Each member of the team created a therapeutic haven. It was not easy to say goodbye to what has become a source of strength. I will always cherish."

"There's a 100% improvement in how I felt when I arrived. This is the best help I've ever had".

"To someone who has suffered trauma, this is a vital service for me to use, where I could be listened to and understood. This service could be improved by having more access in regard to having more resources which would result in more access for people. A heartfelt thanks to Jim for his listening ear and understanding. He is the best therapist I've ever met. And also I would like to extend my appreciation to Cathy. I was treated with dignity and respect, thank you".

"To everyone, from the second I walked through those doors you all greeted me with warm smiles that made me feel welcomed. You all gave me something to shoot for, and a shoulder to cry on when needed. I am happy I got to meet you all and thank you for all your help. I am forever grateful."

"Thank you all for your help, support and guidance, I would have honestly been lost without you".

Public Benefit 1

To undertake and develop research in past traumatic stress and provide information and training to local communities, families and individuals on the effects of stress:

We attained our BACP organisational accreditation, were successful in our application for PEACE Plus 5 year funding and re-negotiated continued contractual agreements for service delivery with the Western Health & Social Care Trust & The Health Service Executive.

Staff convened several events, for clients and partner groups, including a presentation to the Victims Commissioner and his office staff; the organisation of CBT-E training; presentations at Regional Trauma Network events and consultation meetings with clients regarding the Victims Permanent Disablement Pension Scheme.

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 enabled 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 client feedback reflects the benefits of this service.

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

We had the pleasure of hosting 1 student counselling placement and continued to liaise with the NWIFHE regarding expansion of placements.

As well as facilitating many interviews with researchers and students we were delighted to participate again in community-based initiatives, in partnership with Dove House as well as provision of advocacy services to CALMS and The Koram Centre. We worked in partnership with staff 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 Cathy actively contributed to the development of the new Regional Trauma Network and we were delighted to contribute to the formal launch of the RTN in February.

We have also actively contributed to the design of the new Victims/Survivors Strategy and the various RTN working groups.

Public Benefit 11

To provide individuals with space to explore and understand their feelings in relation to past traumatic experiences:

Talking Therapy Service.

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

1984 Talking Therapy sessions were delivered.

Complementary Therapy Service

89 Clients received a combined total of 453 complementary therapy sessions.

Health & Wellbeing Casework

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

Welfare & Benefits Advice

76 Clients were supported with welfare and benefits advice. 122 Sessions of advice were provided by the Dove House Advice Services.

Eating Disorder Project.

184 sessions of CBT-E were delivered to 26 young people.

HSE

42 clients were referred by the HSE, including provision of psychological support for parents.

Public Benefit 111

To provide individuals with a supportive and safe environment in which they can maximise and actively negotiate various routes for change in the development of their lives and community.

Feedback from clients who have received Counselling and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy throughout the past 12 months has 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

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. 63 % of those who completed therapy reported a significant improvement in their health & wellbeing.

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. 81% 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.

All clients who were supported through the VSS Individual Needs Programme received awards from the Financial Assistance; Support for the Bereaved and Injured schemes.

Gym memberships.

Acupuncture.

Education & Training Courses/

Student Support Costs

Additional Psychological Therapies

Fishing licenses

Heat lamps for arthritic pain.

Gardening equipment

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

71% of beneficiaries reported an improvement in their wellbeing.

Welfare & Benefits Advice

76 Clients were supported with welfare and benefits advice. 122 Sessions of advice were provided by the Dove House Advice Services.

Eating Disorder Project.

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. A new partnership comprising community-based organisations including PFC, RFJ, Ashton Community Trust, SEFF, WAVE, Ely, VSSNI, POBAL and Cúnamh was established to oversee the delivery of the PEACE Plus programme.

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. Roisin Lyndsay was appointed as a CBT Therapist, Lily Quigley as a counsellor.

The launch of the Regional Trauma Network in February was a significant milestone event. A lot of dedicated work and time has been invested in this important and unique partnership between all 5 Health Trusts, CVSNI, VSSNI, TEO, Dept. of Health and the 6 community-based groups.

The RTN working groups comprising Learning & Growth, Research & Development, Children & Young People and Monitoring & Evaluation have very active and Cúnamh is represented on 3 of them.

The contractual service level agreement with the CAMHS Donegal was renewed in September and an extended service was agreed, which included the need for support to parents.

The appointment of a dedicated advocacy worker to assist with applications to the TPDPs was a welcome step and we will commence promotion of this service once the waiting list is reduced.

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. As well as acquiring organisational accreditation with BACP staff completed the following professional courses:

Level 5 Diploma in CBT

Additional Suicide First Aid Training

Safeguarding Children and Adults at Risk

Trauma and addiction

CBT-E for Eating Disorders, Perfectionism in Young people with Eating Disorders

What is and why do young people self-harm

Depression and young people

Lunch & Learn online training sessions.

All organisational clinical and non-clinical governance, monitoring and evaluation obligations were professionally overseen by our Clinical Co-ordinator Caroline, and the organisation's financial and administrative requirements were professionally managed by Elaine.

Congratulations to Roisin and Lily for gaining their accreditation.

Of course, none of this work could have been delivered without the support of our Funders. Victims and Survivors Service Northern Ireland (VSSNI); BBC 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 Management Committee, who have worked so well together throughout this year.

Special thanks to our Staff Liaison Officer Harry for providing support, guidance and supervision to Cathy throughout the year.

Special thanks to Niall for his secretarial role and to all of you for your time and commitment.

Financial Review

At the year end March 2024, Cúnamh have been primarily funded by the Victims and Survivors Service NI, but have also secured various other contracts, which ensures that all organisational costs are covered. These included:

- **VSSNI (LoO 17/0074) valuing £196,561**
- **VSSNI (LoO 17/0074/GF) valuing £34,778**
- **SEUPB (Peace Plus) – New Year Budget = £33,011 (continuing on from VSS Gap to Year End Mar '25 and 4 subsequent years thereafter.**
- **HSE Donegal - £17,930. New Year Contract = £43,500 (February to December 2024)**
- **WHST - £20,998 for Year ending March 2024.**
- **Children In Need - £9,762 (plus additional £48.00 unspent Year end 2024)**

Overall funds as at 31st March 2024 stand at £30,622 with the Charity being solvent and, in a position, to meet all debtors.

During this financial year 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, HSE and Children in Need.

Despite Cúnamh continuing to operate in one of the most economically disadvantaged and impoverished geographical areas, the charity continues to receive generous donations from across the community to help support its work and the directors would like to express their sincere gratitude for all donations received. And, as a result of continued stringent financial management Cúnamh's unrestricted funds have increased to £24,000 for Year end March 2024.

Reserves Policy

The Directors have reviewed the reserves of the charity and have established a policy whereby Cúnamh should maintain a goal to achieve an unrestricted fund balance of at least 3 months of the overall salary and 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 £70,000. The current level of

unrestricted funds available to the charity stands at £24,000 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 4th October 2000 and registered as a charity on 4th 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. Currently the Cúnamh Board of Directors 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.

Harry Crossan

Chairperson Cúnamh Board of Directors