

East Belfast Community Counselling

Annual Report 2017-18



East Belfast
Community Counselling

**THROUGH THE
LENS PHOTOGRAPHY
PROJECT**



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w.eastbelfastcounselling.com

Charity Commission No. NIC102563



Project supported by the PHA
supported by the Public Health Agency Through the CLEAR Project

Vision, Mission and Values

Vision

East Belfast Community Counselling's vision is of a future where everybody lives their lives fully as included members of the community.

Mission

Through a supported team of volunteers and counsellors, East Belfast Community Counselling provides broad-ranging counselling services to all those in need including the unemployed and disadvantaged in our local community

Values

People Centred

Our services are focused on and driven by the needs of our clients; we strive to be empathetic and to offer a friendly and welcoming environment.

Inclusive

We do not discriminate against anyone; we treat everyone equally and value the input of everybody working and volunteering for East Belfast Community Counselling.

Respectful

East Belfast Community Counselling is a non-judgemental service where all clients, volunteers and staff are treated with respect and dignity.

Quality

We offer a professional, honest and transparent service with integrity, based on agreed standards and are an Accredited BACP counselling service.

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Chairman's Foreword

East Belfast Community Counselling was established in 2010 and now, beginning its 9th year, it has firmly established itself as the leading provider of counselling services in East Belfast, although it also delivers its services in other parts of Belfast and N. Ireland.

This year and, as noted in previous Chairman's Forewords, the organisation has continued its impressive growth. Once again it has increased the number of clients it served, the number of contracts it has bid for and won, its revenue stream and the number of staff and volunteers it engages.

Importantly management has continued to pay careful attention to monitoring the quality of the delivery of its services so that they are not compromised with the increased activity. It has further invested in reviewing and updating its internal procedures and processes to ensure accuracy, speed and reliability of information gathering and its dissemination to all appropriate stakeholders. In particular, the IT systems have been audited and upgraded where necessary.

A full review of our performance against best practice corporate governance has also been undertaken and reported upon by a third party organisation to ensure the organisation adheres to the highest standards in this area as in others.

It was also gratifying to receive community recognition for staff efforts in winning the East-side Award for Contribution from a Community Project from the East Belfast Partnership Board.

8,842
counselling
and life-coaching
sessions
annually

Chairman's Foreword

Key milestones in the year include the following:

- New contracts with VSS building on the successful delivery of previous contracts
- New satellite offices opened on the Shankill Road and Bloomfield Avenue to respond to demand patterns over the years.
- Reviewing and updating the organisations IT systems with assistance from external consultants in response to the stringent, detailed and often complex reporting requirements of funders.
- Further developing Thrive – the private fee-paying sister company (CIC) which donates its surpluses to EBCC and helps reduce waiting times for those who can afford to pay.
- Successfully launching a professional training arm of the organisation under the Thrive CIC, currently managing its first cohort of students on the CPCAB Level 4 Life Coaching Diploma Programme
- Winning the Eastside Award for Contribution from a Community Project from the East Belfast Partnership Board.

As noted in last year's report, funding constraints remains a problem in expanding provision to reduce waiting times. The sources of funding remain predominantly short-term, splintered and diverse with each requiring its unique audit and reporting system. Nevertheless EBCCL has managed to meet the requirements of its funders and, again this year, through careful management added to its reserves as a safeguard against any future funding variations.

Ensuring that staff competences and morale is maintained at high levels remains a priority and it appropriate to recognise the efforts made by the Chief Executive in her level of commitment to these tasks. Once again she has performed well over and above the call of duty in these difficult times.

The Board which I have the privilege to chair also warrants my thanks and praise for their continuing dedication and invaluable support. I wish also to thank our Advisory Committee who act as excellent 'eyes and ears' for the organisation as well as supportive critics. We are all dedicated to maintaining EBCC's reputation as amongst the most respected providers of counselling support in Belfast and beyond.

Chief Executive's Report

This year has been another very successful year for EBCC, both in terms of outcomes for our clients and an expansion in services, particularly with the delivery of our Victims and Survivors services, our work with young people and Health Hub.

I am delighted to be supported in the charities work by an amazing dedicated team, who go above and beyond to make a difference to our service users.

This past year has seen demand for our services at an all-time high meaning that in 2017-18 the team supported 1735 individuals and carried out 10,410 counselling and life coaching sessions.

The work of the organisation was recognised this year, when we were delighted to win the Eastside Award for Contribution from a Community Project which recognises the hard work and commitment of all our staff, volunteers and trustees. The organisation has supported thousands of members of the community since the organisation began and we will continue to work tirelessly to improve the mental health and well-being of the community of East Belfast and beyond.

Our volunteer counsellors and fundraisers continue to make a real difference to our work, with their dedication and commitment they help us to increase our capacity and ensure that our services can benefit more people.

Looking to the future and building on the successes of the previous year is key for us, and our priorities include streamlining our case management systems, improving our online profile and offering more specialist therapies.

With the support of our staff and volunteers, we are looking forward to another successful year.

Roberta Richmond
Chief Executive



1326
Clients

Preservation, Protection and promotion of Mental Health and Well-being

Victims and Survivors Service - Trauma Counselling

The Victims and Survivors Service (VSS) is the delivery body named in the 10-year Strategy for Victims and Survivors published by The Executive Office (TEO) (formerly OFMDFM) in 2009. In April 2012 the VSS was established to provide support and services for all victims and survivors of Troubles/Conflict-related incidents.

The VSS provides a range of victim-centred services and support that responds to need and is safe, effective, and accessible.

The Victims Support Programme (VSP), which provides Health and Wellbeing and Social Support services to victims and survivors through our partners in the community and voluntary sector based in Northern Ireland.

Individuals can be referred into the VSS service at EBCC if they have been bereaved as a result of the Troubles, if the Troubles has had a psychological or physical impact on their lives or is the primary carer for someone who has been impacted by the Troubles.

The VSS counsellor delivers psychological therapy to clients of the service for a maximum of 20 sessions. The service works with clients exhibiting with a range of issues including anxiety, disturbed sleep, symptoms of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder, intrusive thoughts and nightmares, paranoia, anger management issues and addictions to alcohol and drugs.

These issues have developed as a result of Troubles related incidents including bereavements, punishment attacks, sectarian attacks, and as a result of experiencing re-traumatisation in their local area when faced with historical perpetrators and/or victims.



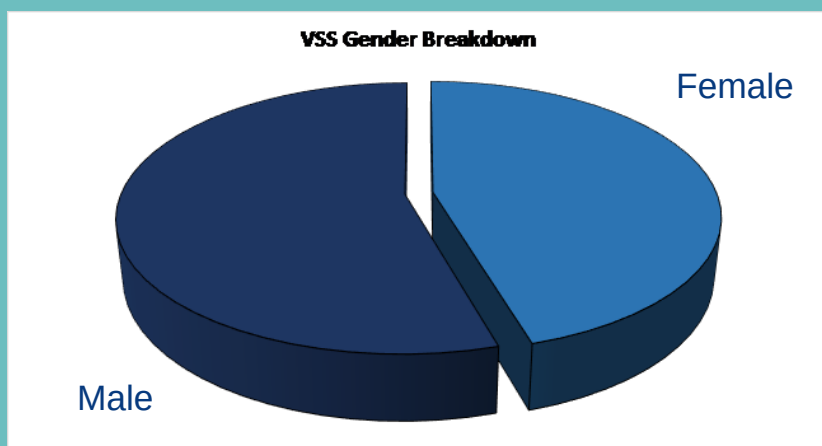
Preservation, Protection and promotion of Mental Health and Well-being

Victims and Survivors Service - Trauma Counselling

The project also deals with clients affected by trans-generational trauma. This can result in family issues and breakdown, gaps in parenting skills and dealing with the impact of addictions and trauma across generations.

This client group, because of the impact the Troubles has had on their mental health, is now also experiencing additional anxiety and stress as a result of the Welfare Reform programme and how this is impacting on their income. Many clients are in receipt of Employment Support Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and other benefits since their mental ill-health has often prevented them from working, or they rely on some benefits to enable them to work, such as meet additional costs of transport, etc. The migration of clients to the new benefits of Personal Independence Payment (PIP), and the incoming Universal Credit system, together with the associated re-assessment processes is having a major impact on clients who are already suffering with mental ill-health.

During 2017-18, the service worked with 77 clients.



Preservation, Protection and promotion of Mental Health and Well-being

Victims and Survivors Service - Health and Well-being

The Health and Well-being Caseworker Network is a programme funded by the PEACE IV Programme and supported by the Victims and Survivors Service to deliver assistance to victims and survivors in a coordinated way.

The Health and Well-being Caseworker based in EBCC provides individual victims and survivors with support to access high quality, tailored services and assistance when considering their holistic health and well-being needs. These can range from befriending to welfare advice, education and training support, disability aids and psychological therapies. The project also helps people engage with community, voluntary and statutory services in the local area, and makes referrals where necessary to additional support services.

The Caseworker can advocate on behalf of clients, and if necessary accompany individuals to services/appointments/activities where low confidence, low motivation and diminished trust may have left them isolated and marginalised and introduce victims and survivors and their families to shared spaces and services.



This project takes a proactive approach to researching relevant services, sharing this information with the wider Health and Well being Caseworker Network for the benefit of all the users of the services across NI.

The project has supported 88 users, with assistance in accessing welfare advice services, improving their IT skills, accessing holistic therapies and local community projects such as women's groups and local classes and activities.

Preservation, Protection and promotion of Mental Health and Well-being

S.H.I.P funded by the Public Health Agency

The **Self Harm Intervention Programme**, is a service offered to people who self-harm. It aims to prevent or minimise its repetition, prevent deaths by suicide and help family or carers cope with the issues of self-harm.

Referrals to counselling under the S.H.I.P programme are made through a number of agencies including Accident and Emergency, Home Treatment Crisis Response Teams and the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Team.

Referrals, continue to be received during the year and our counsellors trained specifically for this group, continue to support some of the most vulnerable in our society



The numbers of inbound referrals during the 2017-2018 year has increased substantially, Referrals are 70% higher than the previous year and as a result we have assigned additional counsellors to the this area of work all of which are qualified to work with those at a high risk.

Chronic Pain Management Support

With funding support from the **Hospital Saturday Fund**, this year we have been able to offer specialised services to work with service users who present with Chronic Pain and who are finding it difficult to have a reasonable quality of life. Using Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, counsellors have supported clients to change how they handle their pain and increase their range of activities.



Community Counselling Services

Belfast Trust Health Hub

The Health Hub project funded by the Belfast Trust, provides support to individuals who have been referred from their GP to receive 6-8 sessions of psychological therapy.

During 2017-18 the service increased in capacity significantly with 10 sessional counsellors and 2 part-time staff. The project delivered 2708 sessions, to 897 clients.

The project provides services to those over 18, and clients presented with mental health issues related to a wide range of underlying causes including abuse, drug and alcohol addictions, work related stress issues, dealing with the diagnosis of serious physical illnesses and personality disorders.



Open Door Project

Funded by the Department for Communities

East Belfast Community Counselling's Open Door project continues to grow and expand to deliver a much needed service in the local area. We continue to have outreach in Ashfield Girls' School and links with local community groups.



The young people who are using this service are experiencing a range of issues, related to school and personal life. These include exam stress, divorce of parents, other stresses at home and issues with sexuality and depression.

This project also works with parents providing one-to-one support for these clients in dealing with the issues their children are experiencing, but also in order that they can deal with wider family issues and circumstances.

Creative Therapies

Children in Need

During this period, Children in Need provided funding for the delivery of a Creative Therapies project aimed at children under the age of 14.

An increase in the number of referrals for children in this age group, and the complexity of their presenting issues led EBCC to develop this project. Young people were increasingly presenting with issues ranging from behavioural difficulties, trauma, anxiety and family relationship problems.

The goal of the project is to provide a medium for expression that bypasses words, thus helping the child connect with emotions about various personal experiences. The scope of the drawings is limited only by the imagination of the individual and by the creativity of therapists.

The children have an opportunity to explore and come to terms with issues/events that are affecting them and also discover abilities of which they were not previously aware such as concentration, problem solving, persistence in the face of difficulty and working collaboratively with the therapist



For many of these children working with a creative therapist is the first step towards finding ways of dealing with their feelings of loss, frustration and emotional trauma so that they can learn to trust, love and lead happier lives thus enabling them to form stronger relationships with their family and friends.

'Through the Lens' Photographic Project

This innovative project funded by the Public Health Agency through the CLEAR Project, was designed by EBCC to support and promote the **Take Five - Steps to Well-being programme** with our client group. The project involved the development of a photography exhibition, displaying images created by our clients.

The Take Five programme promotes five simple steps to help maintain and improve well being. These principles are to **Connect** with the people around you. **Be active**, exercising makes you feel good. **Take notice**, be observant, look for something beautiful or remark on something unusual. Reflecting on your experiences will help you appreciate what matters to you. **Keep learning**, learning new things will make you more confident, as well as being fun to do. **Give**, look out as well as in helping others can be incredibly rewarding and will create connections with the people around you.

The exhibition was launched and available for the public to visit in Hollywood Arches Library.



Organisational Achievements



From left: -----, Roberta Richmond CEO EBCCC, Tara Mills

This year EBCCC was awarded the **Eastside Award for Contribution from a Community Project**

The Eastside Awards is an initiative aimed at highlighting and celebrating all that is good about East Belfast, whilst showcasing the contributions being made to the economic, social and community development of the area. The Eastside Awards is organised by a small voluntary committee, chaired by East Belfast Enterprise and comprising members of the business and community sectors.



British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Accreditation

This year the organisation achieved Organisational Accreditation with the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). The BACP has developed and maintains the recognised quality standard for organisations providing counselling and psychotherapy services in the UK. In order to achieve the accreditation, organisations must demonstrate that they offer an accountable, ethical, professional and responsive service to clients, staff, volunteers and stakeholders. The scheme is open to any service provider, from small local voluntary groups to major commercial providers of employee assistance programmes.

We extend our thanks to our funders and our Corporate Sponsor George Belfast, Belfast City Airport for their valuable contribution



Trustees 2017-18

Professor Kenneth O'Neill BSc (Econ), ACMA, CDIPAF, DSc (Hons)
Mrs Siobhan Laverty FCA
Mr William Michael Cole BSc (Hons) Banking And Finance

Staff 2017-18

Roberta Richmond - Chief Executive
Eleanor Gibson - Administrator
Roisin O'Connor - Clinical Lead
Ruth Gillespie - Counsellor (Health Hub)
Pamela Kirkpatrick - Counsellor (Open Door Project until April 2018))
Joan Baird - Finance Officer
Terence O'Hare - Health and Well-being Caseworker (August 17- February 18)
Susan Ellis - Health and Well-being Caseworker (From March 2018)
Laura McCabe - Counsellor (Health Hub)
Isobel Magill - Counsellor (S.H.I.P)

East Belfast Community Counselling

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