

COMMUNITY ACTION FOR LOCALLY MANAGING STRESS

Report of the Trustees for the Year Ended 31 December 2023

The Trustees, who are also the directors under the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 present their report and the audited financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023. The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Accounting and Reporting by Charities" in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Governing Document

Community Action For Locally Managing Stress (known as 'CALMS') is a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on the 5 December 1996 and accepted as a charity by the Inland Revenue. The company was registered with the new Charity Commission for Northern Ireland (Regulator of Charities in Northern Ireland) on the 4 June 2018.

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. In the event of the company being wound up, members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £1. The number of members at the 31st December 2023 was 5, but increased to 6 by 4 November 2024.

The charitable objects of the charity are the preservation and protection of health of the people in the North West of Ireland who suffer from stress generally as well as those affected directly or indirectly by violence and to advance the education of the public in and about the cause of stress and its management within the community, by and in particular, associating the statutory authorities, community and voluntary organisations and the inhabitants in a common effort to improve health education and through the provision of social services, educational and recreational facilities and practical assistance with the object of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.

The charity meets the public benefit test, as the organisation provides services, which can be accessed by members of the public who are in need of such services (as per guidance issued by Charity Commission).

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Objectives and activities

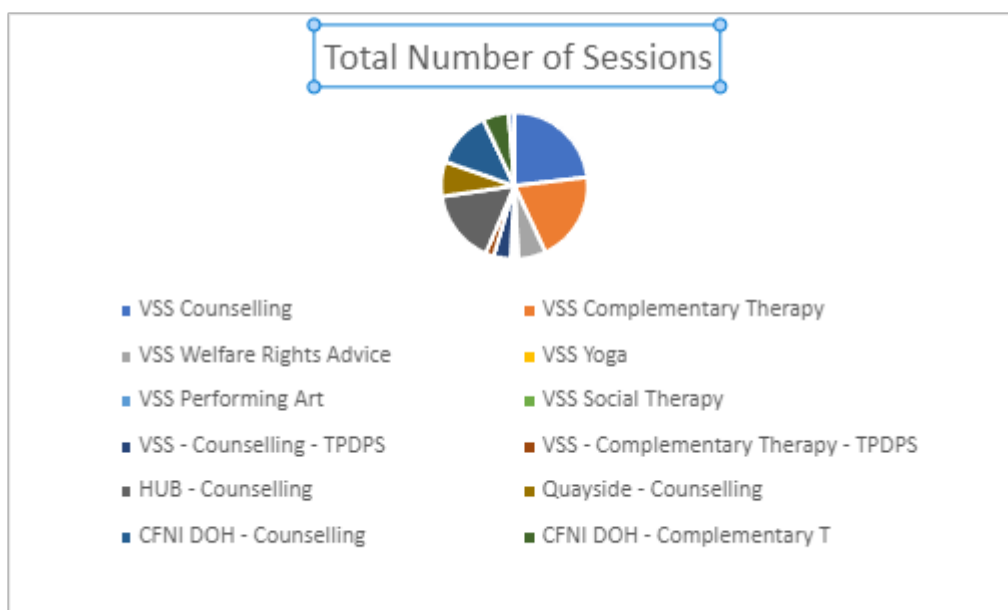
CALMS first came together in Derry/Londonderry city towards the end of 1994. It emerged as a tentative response to a clearly felt need for structured and effective assistance and support for people suffering from stress and stress-related illnesses. During the 1990s, CALMS expanded and grew as a neutral (in NI terms) organisation which helps groups and individuals cope with and manage stress. As we move towards the end of our third decade, CALMS is now based in its own dedicated premises in Derry/Londonderry city centre. This goal was only achievable when the Department for Communities came forward and supported us to buy our own unique premises. We are a company limited by guarantee, which has achieved charitable status, and is managed by a Board of Directors. The CALMS Board brings together people from a range of backgrounds and with a variety of experiences and expertise. Four members of staff are now in place with volunteers and sessional workers also used to help develop and deliver a range of services. Those services include:

- Counselling
- CBT Therapy;
- Complementary treatments;
- Stress Management Programmes;
- Personal Development Programmes;
- Volunteering opportunities, including pathways to employment, which is a central ongoing focus for us progressing of volunteers, placements, and our service users into employment;
- Social Therapy outings;
- Welfare Rights.

Across the above-mentioned services, we have provided 5,869 sessions to 1,276 beneficiaries. We can assure our beneficiaries and stakeholders that we adhere to the highest standards in terms of the competence, training, and supervision of our staff and therapists. The charts below show a further analysis of our services and programmes.

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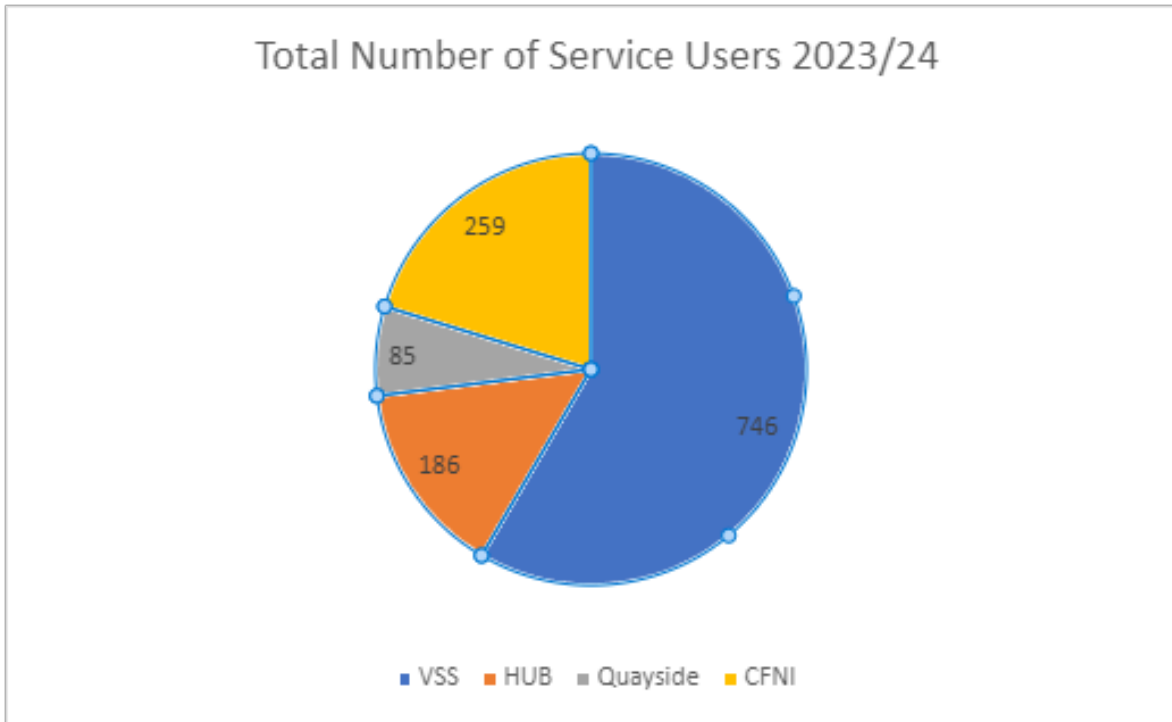
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Number of Sessions provided	
VSS Counselling	1,358
VSS Complementary Therapy	1,170
VSS Welfare Rights Advice	360
VSS Yoga	41
VSS Performing Art	52
VSS Social Therapy	4
VSS - Counselling - TPDPS	220
VSS - Complementary Therapy - TPDPS	108
HUB - Counselling	953
Quayside - Counselling	450
CFNI DOH - Counselling	741
CFNI DOH - Complementary T	337
CFNI DOH - Helpline	72
CFNI DOH - Workshops	3
	5,869

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Number of Service Users	
VSS	746
HUB	186
Quayside	85
CFNI	259
Total Service Users	1,276

In terms of our purpose little has changed: we continue to work to our mission, objectives and principles as stated in our governing documents. CALMS’s vision is one of a greater Derry/Londonderry urban area where: the dangers and consequences of stress are recognised, people and organisations work to prevent stress, people who experience stress are helped to cope with it and therefore not damaged by it. Our aim is *“To leave people and organisations better placed to prevent, reduce, and deal positively with stress and the effects of stress”*.

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When delivering services and programmes we continue to be guided by the following five core principles and values:

Welcoming and inclusive. CALMS will be a place of comfort for all, supportive of each other and non-judgemental. Our new premises, funded by Department for Communities, has enhanced our services and allows us to expand our delivery. On behalf of CALMS, a sincere thank you to DfC for acknowledging our work and for investing in mental health services.

Service quality. CALMS's services will match or better accepted best clinical/professional practice. We continue to support and assist our team by sourcing up to date training. Thank you to VSS for their investment in good quality training.

User focused. CALMS exists to empower its users, leaving them better placed to cope with stress. Its working practices will be structured to provide that empowerment and to prevent dependency.

Partnership-oriented. CALMS is not the font of all knowledge in terms of stress management, and we continue to work positively and collaboratively with others in the field. This includes all our partners: VSS, Department of Health, Talking Therapies and Quayside Medical Practice and the University of Ulster.

Providing value. CALMS knows through its ongoing research with the University of Ulster that our services are effective and that we do provide value to those who engage with us, be they users, funders or all our stakeholders.

Just like all our partners in the community and voluntary sectors, we are in difficult financial times - one could say a crisis. Long-term strategic funding is essential and getting more difficult to source. However, despite this crisis and being on the front line of the cost-of-living crisis, we continue to support our people and communities, all while facing rising demand for services, falling income, and rising operational costs. Our volunteers and friends of CALMS continue to fundraise to keep us afloat. The work carried out by these wonderful individuals must be recognised and acknowledged. They are such an asset to CALMS and to our service users.

2023 was another excellent year for us. We addressed some key milestones. Sincere thanks to Department for Communities and V.S.S. for assisting us to purchase and refurbish our new building which was completed late 2022. The launch of our new premises was held in September 2023, and it was a fantastic opportunity for us to show

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our clients and stakeholders our new building and to update them on new and innovative services and opportunities going forward.

Some of my personal highlights from our activity this year include:

- C.A.L.M.S new and unique premises - enabling us to expand our services, and to offer a place of comfort and safety for our service users.
- Our new building has enabled us to increase our client base by 20%
- Our mentions in the local press regarding our launch has highlighted the new building and services has raised our profile to the local community.

As always, we must extend our gratitude to our funders V.S.S. WHSCT, Quayside Medical Practice, CFNI/ DOH and Jobstart for their financial support, as well as to donors for their continued support.

Our success is also directly linked to the hard work of our highly skilled team and volunteers. Thanks to them we addressed our targets and objectives.

I'd like to personally thank every team member for their energy, commitment and consistency in driving our project forward see outputs below.

This year, our plans for expansion include:

- Launching our social economy project “*CALMS Plus*” under the auspice of CALMS
- Increasing our client base, working in partnership with Woman’s Aid and offering services for private clients
- Sourcing and tracking funding to support our new social economy initiative and our marketing ambitions
- Continue and strengthen our relationships with the University of Ulster.
- We will continue to offer placements for the University Students.
- Continue to conduct research with our partners in the University of Ulster and to monitor and evaluate our work to ascertain our effectiveness and accountability.

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There are also some plans which are in their early stages, but I look forward to sharing them with you all soon.

Thank you all for continuing to support C.A.L.M.S.

On behalf of the team and the directors at CALMS we look forward to continuing to assist individuals to reduce and manage stress effectively, leaving them better placed to lead normal and fulfilling lives.

Straight from the heart – Testimonials from our service users

“The events were all easy to go to and everyone was very open to talk to. I was a bit nervous at the start but fine then once I settled down. It was great to get out and meet people.”

“To have the events made life feel normal again and made me feel more normal. I can only sing their praises. And I made lots of new friends – genuine friends. What CALMS did for me is like a gift.”

I waited many years to seek help and then I was so desperate after lockdown, I had to get help. The events have brought me back to better than normal. I am now more confident and more open and more willing to speak about how I feel with friends and other people.”

“I was withdrawn and stressed during lockdown. I did not know what to do with myself. The events took me out to meet new people. My husband has Parkinson’s disease, so it helped lift my mind, get me out of the house and gave me a break from being a career.”

“Oh yes, life wasn’t good in lockdown because you couldn’t see anyone, even your own family, in person. I became very nervous about going out and had to build up my confidence again. The people in CALMS made me see I was not alone and not the only person going through it.”

“I was feeling very low due to a loss. Just getting out with strangers was good for me and going for coffee with people with you would never meet. Lovely to chat and hear stories you would never hear. It made me laugh for the first time in ages. Weather was always on our side – great being out in the fresh air.”

“Yes, it did help. It was just meeting and seeing different people.”

“It was great to meet up with people and see people I had not seen for a while. It was fantastic to hug and shake hands with people. I was very isolated and lonely as I live

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out in the country – it really helped me re-engage with people as I had lost confidence being around others.”

Recruitment and Appointment of Directors

The Directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law. The traditional business skills, along with service users, community and voluntary groups are well represented on the Board of Directors and the Directors are requested to provide an updated list of skills they are able to bring to the company each year and in the event of particular skills being lost due to retirements, individuals are approached to offer themselves for election to the Board of Directors.

Directors.

Trustees Induction and Training

New trustees are invited to familiarise themselves with the charity and the context within which it operates. Briefing sessions jointly led by the Chairperson and the Chief Executive cover:

- The obligations of trustees.
- The main documents which set out the operational framework for the charity, including the memorandum and articles.
- Resourcing and the current financial position as set out in the latest published accounts.
- Future plans and objectives

All Trustees receive an Enhanced Access NI check and training on Child Protection, Vulnerable Adults, Lone Working, Health and Safety, Complaints and Equal Opportunities. Training on Good Governance, Managing Performance, Risk Management, Strategic Planning and GDPR is also provided to Trustees.

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Risk Management

The Board of Trustees conduct on a regular basis a review of major risks to which the charity is exposed. This review is updated annually. Where appropriate, systems and procedures are established or updated to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Significant external risks to funding have led to the development of a new Fundraising Strategy and the establishment of three social enterprises to allow for alternative funding methods for the charity's activities. Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of comprehensive procedures for the authorisation of all transactions and projects.

Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety rules for staff, volunteers and visitors. All policies and procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure they meet with the needs of the charity and changes to the law.

Organisational Structure

The Board of Directors meets at least 4 times a year and is responsible for the strategic direction and policy of the charity. The trustees have ultimate legal and financial responsibility for the affairs of CALMS, although the management of the organisation has generally been delegated to the staff, through the Chief Executive (Elaine Porteous).

Internal and external factors

The trustees have made a full assessment of the internal and external factors that may affect these financial statements and do not deem any factors material enough to have an impact.

Financial review

The charity has had another successful year. The charity's income decreased by 5% to £366,628 (2022 - £389,726) whilst total funds carried forward increased to £86,657 (2022 - £69,427).

Reserves policy

The trustees have established the level of reserves (that is those funds that are freely available) that the charity ought to have. Reserves are needed to bridge any funding gaps that may occur and should be maintained at the equivalent of 3 months

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expenditure in order for the charity to continue its activities. The trustees consider that an ideal level of reserves would be £40,000. Unrestricted reserves at the 31 December 2023 were £20,526 (2022 - £9,102). Whilst short of our target reserves we are pleased that unrestricted reserves have increased during the year.

We, the trustees of CALMS believe that CALMS is working to its original aims and objectives whilst abiding to its Memorandum and Articles of Association.

Statement of trustees' responsibilities

The trustees (who are also directors of CALMS for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for the year. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- state whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

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- there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.


Auditors

A resolution will be proposed at the AGM that L Duffy & Co be re-appointed as auditors to the charity for the ensuing year.

The trustees declare that they have approved the trustee's report above

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees by


Nikki Yau
Chair


Marie Brown

4 November 2024