

Trustee's Annual Report

April 2023 – March 2024

It has been a pleasure to serve another year as a Trustee, and Co-Chair, of the Centre For Health and Wellbeing. At the beginning of the year we welcomed Raymond Blaney; Hanna Burton; Linda Doherty Riley and Katherine Orr to join the existing Trustees Cara Cash Marley (Co-Chair); Bernie McGlade (Treasurer) and Karen Laverty (Secretary) and Caoimhin McNulty. Throughout the year each Trustee has brought skills and experience that has made a valuable contribution to the governance and direction of travel of the Centre. Cara's skill set and experience has been missed during her time on maternity leave, as has Caoimhin's who resigned as a Trustee due to the demands of his employment.

Overall it has been a calm year, the uncertainty and fear instilled in the community from the pandemic has receded, and the Centre has continued to serve the needs of the community, the level of service delivered only restricted by the amount of funds available.

Thanks are due to the Department for Communities and the Victims and Survivors Service, for continuing to provide funding, supporting the Centre and it's service users, despite the inactivity and uncertainty around the Northern Ireland Executive for most of the year.

The annual accounts reflect a significant increase in income received from Belfast Health and Social Care Trust from approximately £22,000 last year to £43,000 this year. This is reflective of the Centre's ability to respond to increasing numbers of Carer referrals over a wider geographic area of Belfast. Surplus generated from this increasing income makes a valuable contribution to the Centre's ability to cover costs, and to the sustainability of the therapists delivering at the Centre, bringing employment and resources to the area.

I would like to thank the Halifax Foundation for Northern Ireland and the Edward Gostling Foundation for their support of the Centre's counselling service for which there is a steady demand. The Centre is not a counselling organisation but we are proud of the fact that we were able to step up and respond to client need through the provision of counselling. This would not be possible without the funding support provided. Additional in year funding was supplied by the Victims and Survivors Service to for complementary therapies in response to client need.

In total during the year with complementary therapies, counselling, personal development classes, outreach activities and a listening ear service telephone service to vulnerable carers, the Centre for Health and Wellbeing provided a positive mental wellbeing service to approximately 700 people, which is a considerable achievement.

The services cannot be delivered without the dedicated work of staff, Nigel and Patricia, and our team of 12 complementary therapists and 2 counsellors, all of whom are highly valued by the charity and its service users.

At the Centre we are acutely aware of our client needs and it is our focus to respond in a timely and meaningful way. Speaking with our clients it is clear to me how much they appreciate the service and how highly staff and therapists are thought of. This has been the case since the Centre opened its doors and is something we are justly proud of.

I would also express my thanks to Tony Clarke and his team from Clarke & Co for their support with financial administration and to Lawrence Shearer from O'Hara Shearer for the audit and presentation of financial statements.

Speaking with Tony and Lawrence, I know that despite funding and financial challenges, the Centre's financial health is robust, depending on continued funding support, ensuring we remain viable and in a position to continue to serve the mental wellbeing needs of the local community.

The return of the NI Executive I hope will provide stability to Northern Ireland and to the voluntary and community groups that play such a vital role within the community. The demands on the Health Service and limited budgets will always be there but I do know that, with continued funding, the Centre for Health and Wellbeing will continue to respond to community need for improved mental and physical wellbeing.

Lorraine Mills 15th January 2025

Co-Chairperson

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "L Mills". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L" and a small "Mills" following.