

# ANNUAL REPORT



# CONNECT CHRISTIAN COUNSELLING SERVICE

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Charity No. : NIC108290

# **Connect Christian Counselling Service**

**8 Moat Street, Donaghadee, BT21 0DA**

**Annual Report for the 2022 -23 Year**

The past year has once again seen Connect Christian Counselling Service achieve our purpose to provide a safe, free of charge, professional counselling service for the community. This service has been provided by our dedicated team of volunteers. We currently have 8 counsellors and 4 administration staff. The team are supported by our Management Board, who oversees the practice and diligently guide our work.

All the Connect volunteers are totally committed to the service and of course to their clients. Since opening in 2003 we have had 970+ requests for our services. Since our last AGM there have been 58 requests for our services, although not all continued into counselling. Some clients are still being seen from previous years, as we do not limit the number of sessions, but tailor the therapy for the individual's needs. Counsellors have 2 to 6 clients allocated to them at any one time.

The need for our service is still very great, and we continue to have many referrals from the NHS via GP's, Community Mental Health teams and the McQueen House Assessment Centre in Newtownards hospital, as well as self-referrals. As we operate on 2 evenings and 1 morning, we have a maximum of 9 sessions to see our clients each week. Unfortunately, this often means that we have a waiting list for our service, and some clients cannot wait for an appointment.

The counselling team appreciate the hard work of our management board members, not just for their diligent oversight of the service, but also for their effort in arranging fundraising events to resource the work. We had a very successful event in First Donaghadee Presbyterian Church. Kate, from Dunn's Shoe Shop, kindly organised a Shoe Show with other craft stalls. This was a very enjoyable evening which, while beneficial to our funds, also highlighted the work of Connect to the community.

In order to comply with our professional body's practice standards, all the counsellors must complete 30 hours of CPD (continuous professional development). Connect kindly provides the team with two training events each year, to assist with these requirements. This year we had training on Transactional Analysis (communication styles) presented by Dr Karen Doherty and Attachment, Shame and Resilience presented by Janice Thomas.

It is good to be able to report that we have helped several young clients, since lowering our age threshold to 16-year-olds last year.

We appreciate the continued support of our external supervisors. All of the counsellors are required to have 1½ hours of supervision each month, to maintain their professional registration. This remains the organisations biggest overhead.

Two of our accredited counsellors are also qualified supervisors which allows us to supervise counsellors on placement while they achieve their practice hours. Then they must be supervised externally, to separate line management roles from supervision, which is best practice, although not mandatory.

Our goal for the coming year is to continue to provide the high professional standards of practice we have achieved over the last 20 years and help as many people with mental health issues as we possibly can. I am glad to say our waiting list is comparatively short at the moment compared to earlier this year.

The volunteers are serving in this ministry by giving of their skills and time, week after week, but it only continues because of community support and through all our prayers.

Signed by : 

Position : Director of Counselling

30<sup>th</sup> November 2023

Charity No NIC 108290