

Abacus Counselling and Support

# Annual Report

2021 - 2022



**ABACUS**

**COUNSELLING & SUPPORT**

— SINCE 2007 —

*#Talking for change*

**Abacus Counselling and Support**  
**Annual Review Contents**

<u>Section</u>	<u>Page</u>
Introduction	3
Objects, Aims, Objectives, Values	4
Who's Who at Abacus	6
Partnership working	7
Chair of Trustees Report	8
Project Managers Report	9
Work Completed and achievements/outcomes/feedback	10
Statistical Information	11
Financial Summary Balance Sheet	13
Financial Report	17
Future Plans	18
Thanks to	19

## Introduction

Welcome to the 2021-22 Annual Report for Abacus Counselling and Support. The report summarises the work that the charity has completed, in order to continue to provide services of the last year. It also details some of the issues presented by the clients that we work to support. Clients may have several issues needing support to deal with, which they may have coped with for years. Helping clients to overcome these problems and give them the opportunity to move forward with renewed hope and new perspective, is always a privilege.

The report firstly sets out the charity's objects stated on its constitution, along with its aims, organisational objectives and values and who is involved in its running. There is a breakdown of who contributes to the charity and in what role. There is a report from the Chair of Trustees. The Project Managers Report goes into more detail, regarding the work completed this year. There is a variety of information on the output of the charity, using a variety of statistical data and feedback from clients. There is a summary of the Finances, for the last financial year, with comparison to the previous year. Finally, there is a summary of plans for the next year and thanks to various local agencies.

We hope you find this document to be useful and informative. If you have any questions, please contact us on [info@abacuscounsellingandsupport](mailto:info@abacuscounsellingandsupport). Finally I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the trustees and volunteers who have continued to provide their time and skills, to keep the charity running. Whilst the charity itself is small, the impact it has on a client's lives, is significant and long lasting.

## Objects, Aims, Objectives, Values

### Charitable Objective

Abacus Counselling and Support is a Registered Charity, number 1163844.

It's charitable objective as stated on the charity's constitution is to:

Protect and promote the mental and emotional health of people living in South Essex, by providing, developing and maintaining an affordable and accessible counselling service, with relevant and assessed support.

### Main Aims

Clients referred to the service will:

- go through a robust assessment process, to ensure the charity is able to provide support and the client is willing to engage with the support provided.
- Be provided with good quality counselling sessions, which is monitored effectively.
- Be supported to overcome personal and emotional issues, identified and agreed upon in the assessment process.
- Be able to have improved mental health, as a result of session provided.
- Be advised of alternative forms of support available, if the client/referral is identified as someone who cannot be supported by the charity, in the assessment process.

### Organisational objectives

The objectives of Abacus counselling and support are to:

- Develop a secure funding and income generation base from which to develop a sustainable and high-quality service, for clients supported to the charity.
- Ensure our services are delivered to a consistent high quality, which meets the targets set by funders and the needs of our service users, within the diverse communities of Southend and surrounding areas.
- Continue develop the board of trustees and volunteers for recruitment and training, to build a team best placed to deliver our services.
- Continue develop and assess the range of support the service providers, to ensure it continues to evolve and develop in line with changing needs of the community's mental health.

- Engage with key stakeholders and work in partnership with statutory bodies, the charities and commercial organisations to meet the needs of clients referred and improve the emotional and psychological health and well-being of the community.
- Identify and understand the needs, concerns and mental health problems of the community, by annual consultation and ongoing contact with clients and relevant local organisations.

### **Our Values**

**Safe:** we work at all times to ensure the safety of clients, workers and the community.

**Ethical:** we work to ensure that all counselling is in line with agreed ethical standards set out by the necessary professional bodies.

**Professional:** all support provided is of a high standard and carried out in line with agreed policies and procedures.

**Accessible:** support provided is accessible to clients regardless of their financial situation, age, gender or ethnicity.

**Partnership:** we will work in partnership with other agencies, to ensure that services are connected to meet the full range of client needs.

## Who's Who at Abacus Counselling and Support

### Board of Trustees

Steve Cooper - Chair

Lesley Butcher - Secretary

Janice Lyons

Sarah Cooper

Brenda Lewis

David Bannister

### Senior Management Team

Nick Chard – Project Manager/Treasurer (volunteer)

Norman Livermore – Operations Manager (Paid), Counselling Supervisor (sessional) and counsellor (volunteer)

### Volunteer Counsellors

Lynn Lynne (also sessional Supervisor)

Naomi Angel

Alex Watson

Hayley Robinson (Student Placement)

All counsellors are members of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), have regular supervision, have their own professional indemnity insurance and take part in regular training and CPD.

### **Partnership Working**

Abacus Counselling has links to a number of local organisations, in and around Southend.

Abacus currently rent rooms from Hub 151, on West Road in Shoeburyness. A number of other community organisations work out of the venue and future partnership opportunities are being explored.

The charity receives referrals from a number of sources including Shoeburyness High School and Southchurch High School. Various teams in Southend Council refer to us, including Social Care and Early Help and Family Support. Some referrals come from medical organisations such as GPs, Community Nurses and Therapy for you.

If Abacus is not able to provide support, we can refer on to other community mental health agencies. We have forwarded clients on to Mind, Southend on Sea Rape Crisis, Southend on Sea Domestic Abuse Partnership and the Olivetree Centre in Eastwood, amongst others.

Abacus attends network meetings run by Counselling and Support Services Southend, Southend's Mental Health Partnership Forum and Castle Point and Rochford's Emotional Health and Wellbeing Board. This helps the charity to link further with other agencies providing similar support and gives it a voice, at a strategic level.

## Chair of Trustees Report

As Chair of Abacus once again it's my pleasure and privilege to write a few words towards this report, it's particularly significant as it's my outgoing report as I am stepping down as both Chair and Trustee of Abacus having done nearly seven years as Chair and even longer as Trustee. I can't believe it's been that long! However I'm confident that Sarah (who is also stepping down as Trustee) and I leave Abacus in a strong and healthy position.

As it says on the new and excellent website Abacus Counselling and Support is a registered charity, providing counselling services to any individual aged 13+ and couples, in South Essex. Abacus has been successfully providing support to clients in Southend, since 2007.

Once again it's safe to say that the services of Abacus (along with other counselling services) have never been more needed, both as we come out of the Covid Pandemic and head into a turbulent financial future. I want to place on record my appreciation to all those who have contributed to the work of Abacus, be they my fellow (volunteer) Trustees, Nick and Norman who do so much of the work required to keep Abacus going and to the Counsellors without whom there wouldn't be a counselling service.

I'm pleased to say that we (Nick) has again been successful in obtaining funding to enable Abacus to continue into next year and beyond. My hope is that Abacus continues to provide its excellent services and I look forward to hearing of it's many future successes.

Steve Cooper – (Outgoing) Chair of Abacus

## **Project Managers Report**

2021 to 2022 has seen Abacus slowly come out of the pandemic, with all the challenges this entailed. However despite this, the charity has still been able to offer affordable counselling sessions for the public.

Coronavirus predominantly affected delivery through affecting referral numbers and session numbers. Support was adapted to allow it to continue to be delivered regardless of lock downs and clients/councillors isolating. As restrictions steadily eased, sessions gradually returned to the standard delivery format or face-to-face sessions in the community hub. However virtual sessions can now be delivered, if required.

With restrictions now recently coming to an end, the next year should hopefully see a full return to pre-pandemic levels of work. However the charity and its workers will continue to remain vigilant regarding Covid, taking the necessary steps to maintain health and safety.

As well as continuing to fund and call costs for counsellors. Abacus was successful in applying for funding for a part-time salaried post for the Operations Manager. Having this post helped the charity to have a dedicated individual available for receiving new referrals, allocating them to counsellors. The aim being to ensure that referrals were processed and allocated as fast as possible. Clients frequently need support quickly. Having this role funded, meant the specific task was given priority. The need for a quick response to initial referrals was also necessary due to increasing demand mental health services, due to the pandemic. Anecdotal evidence suggested that statutory mental health services had long waiting list, to offer support. Abacus offered an important alternative to the NHS therapy service. Professional and effective support was accessible and offered quickly, to clients. The Operations Manager role also allowed the Project Manager to focus on other tasks.

The other main piece of work completed by the charity, was the development of a new professionally designed website. Specific mention goes to the designer at Yours Creative Lea and Abacus's trustee David Bannister, for assisting us in its development. The website was redesigned to provide a more professional look to the service provided, along with setting up a dedicated referral pathway to the Operations Manager. Due to technical changes with the website and domain hosting, this is still ongoing. Once this has been completed, relevant marketing materials will also be designed and rolled out. Abacus will also be promoted more to the community, to improve its visibility to prospective clients/referrers.

Financially Abacus maintains its reserves and generates some income from services delivered. A Book Keeper will be used in the next financial year, to help with managing the finances (see Financial Report).

Now the pandemic is receding and society is returning more to normal, Abacus is well placed to continue to offer high quality talking therapy that is financially and physically accessible, to the community of Southend.

### Work Completed and Achievements/Outcomes/Feedback

2021-22 saw a partial recovery of support offered to the community. However continued lockdowns meant some reduction to referrals received. The following pages show various graphs and charts, giving details of output.

31 referrals were received, in 2021. This is an improvement on 2020, which only had 20 referrals. This is still not to pre pandemic levels, but does show a partial recovery. 178 sessions were completed. Again a partial recovery from 2020, when 102 sessions were completed. Other graphs show this partial recovery.

Presenting issues showed family issues were the most common issue raised in sessions. After this domestic abuse, relationship issues also featured strongly. This would hint at the strain families are under, due to the pandemic. Depression and bereavement were also common factors.

When referrals were received, again varied throughout the year. A number were received at the start of the year. However then numbers were minimal, until June and July. There was another drop in August, but then were steady through the Autumn.

Due to data gathered from the Operations Manager, analysis of timescales for assessment and allocation can be provided. 50% of referrals are allocated within a week of being initially received. Over 50% were assessed within a week of being allocated. Over three quarters were started, within a week of being assessed.

How many sessions a client received varied equally from 6 to up to 24 sessions. Only one client received more than 24 sessions.

Charts show most referrals took about a week per step to be allocated, assessed and sessions started.

Evaluation and CORE scores both showed a reduction in symptoms, as a result of sessions.

The majority of sessions (119) were face to face. The rest were virtual, outdoor or by phone.

Specific Feedback form a client:

Client AC, 26yr old Female

“My counsellor was very understanding to the point where he could relay back what I said but in a different way that helped me understand my issues from a different viewpoint. He is easy going and very chilled.”

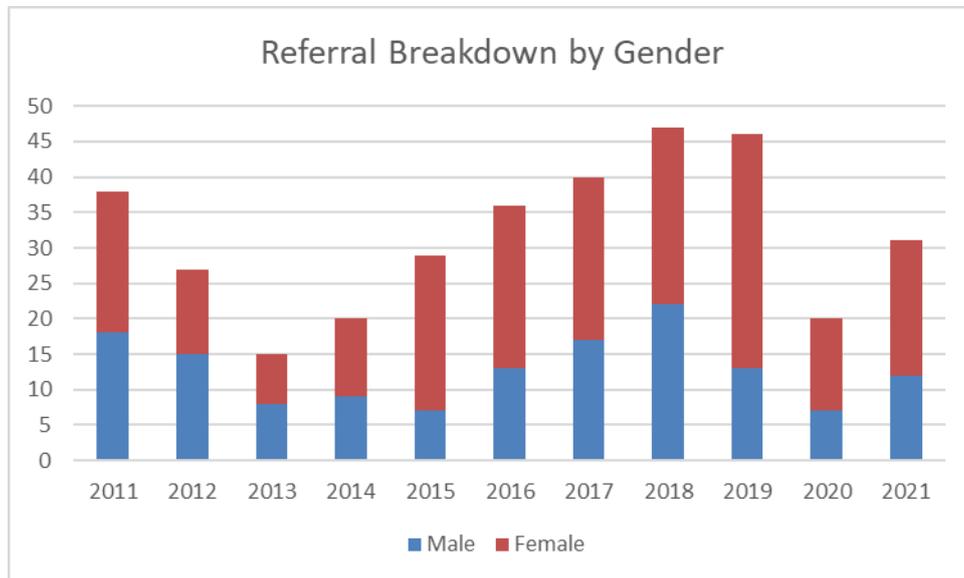
Client AW, 42yr old Female

“Having counselling was the best thing I have ever done for myself. I feel like I’ve started to heal and enjoy being me again. I am so grateful for all the help, tools, and support I’ve had.”

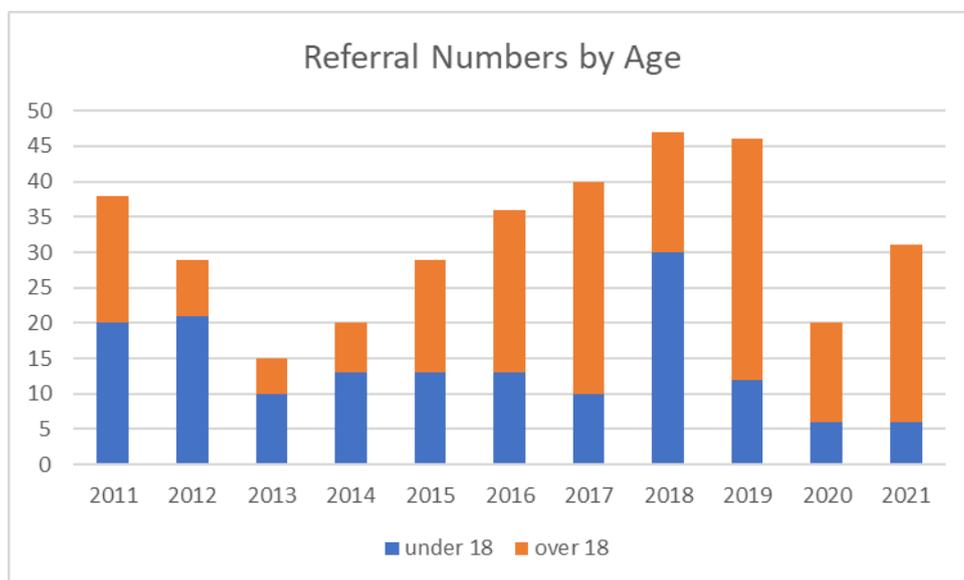
**Statistical Information on Work Completed**

**2011-2021**

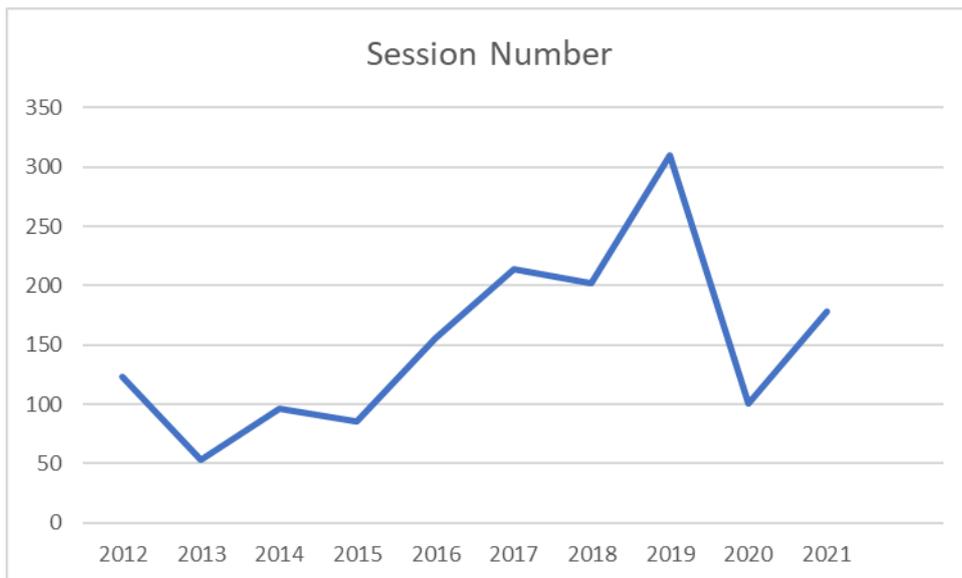
Number of referrals received from 2011 till 2022, detailing gender split



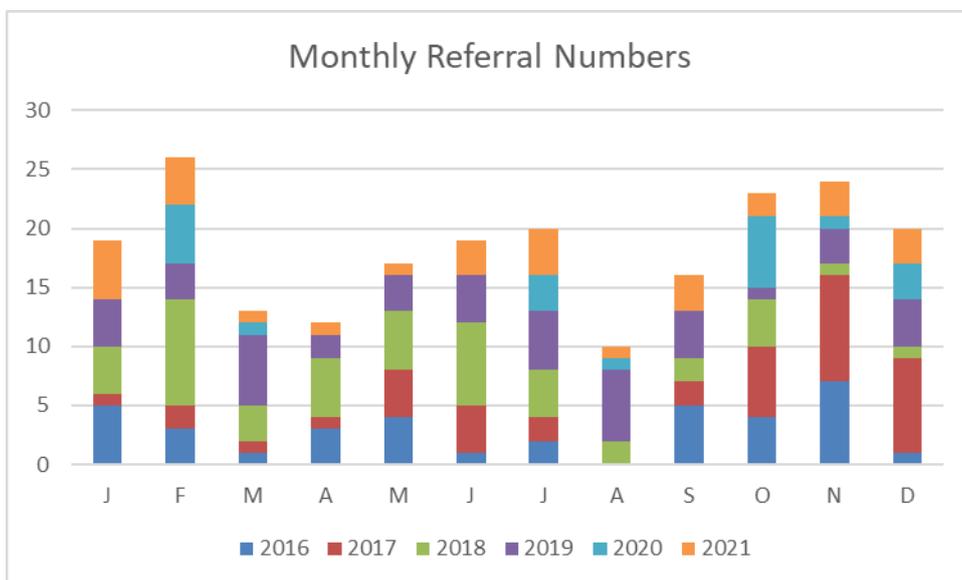
Number of referrals received from 2011 till 2021, detailing age split



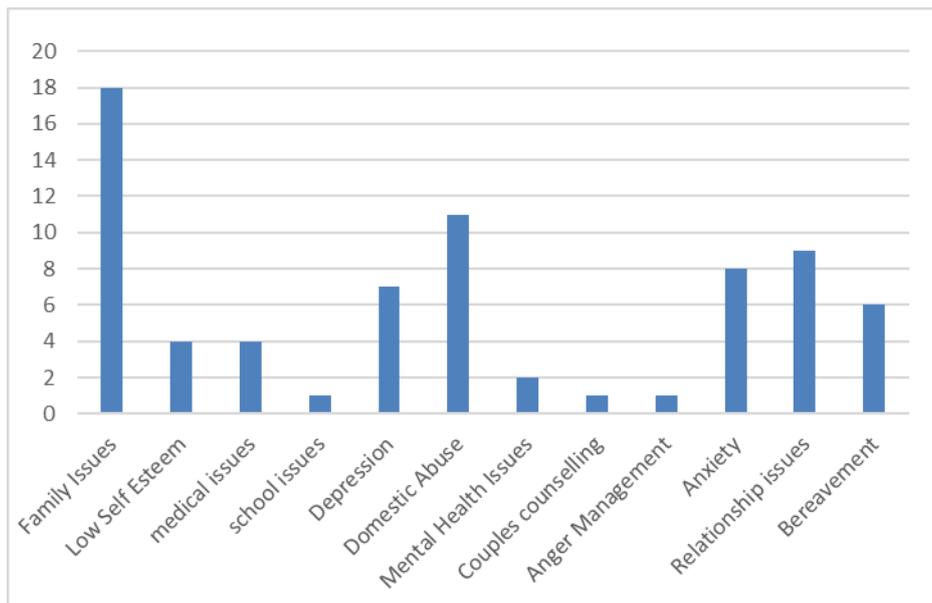
Session numbers 2011-2021



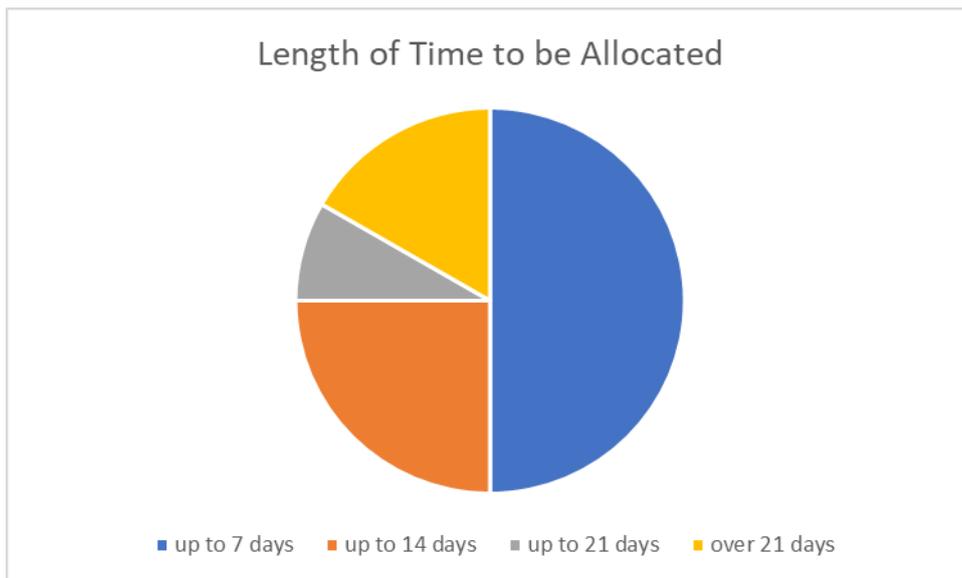
Referral numbers monthly breakdown 2016 – 2020

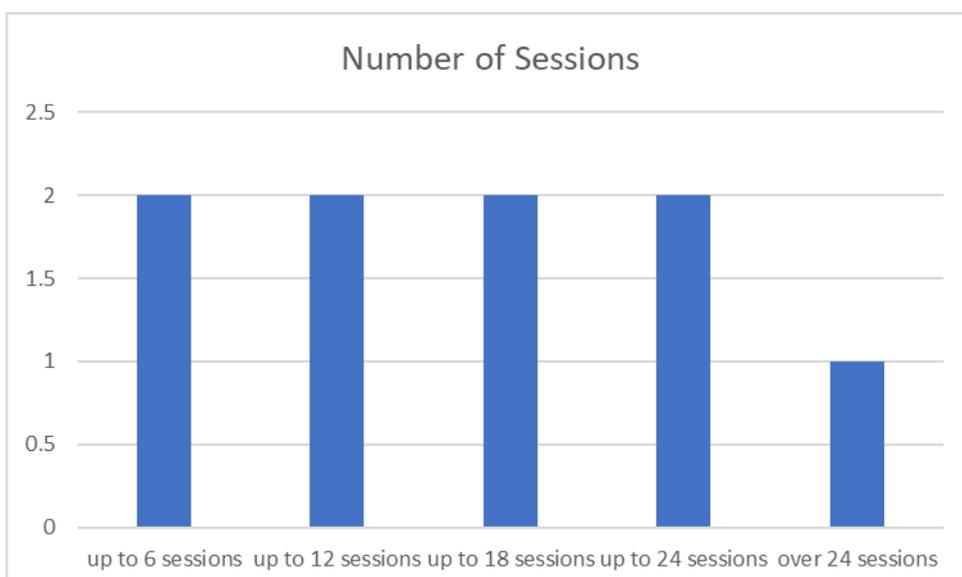
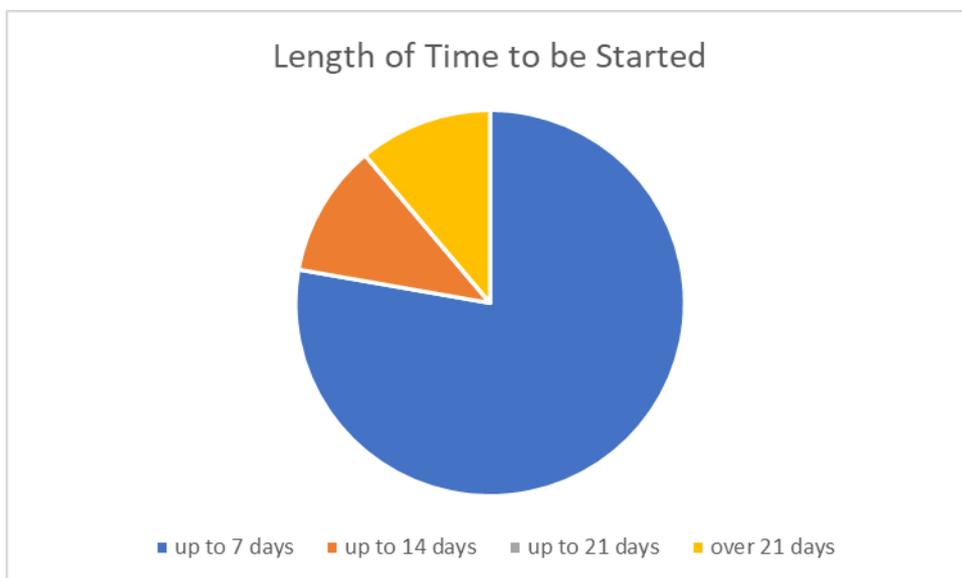
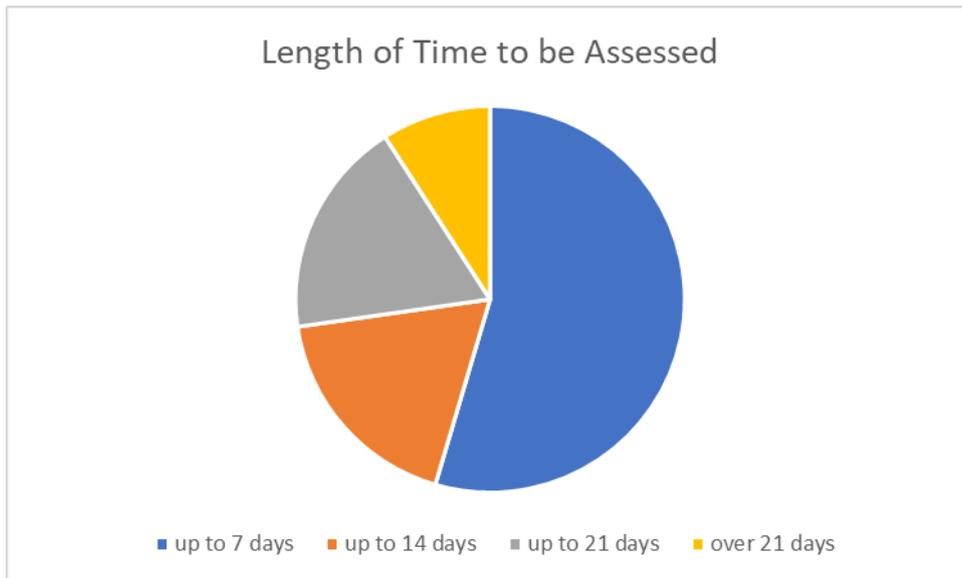


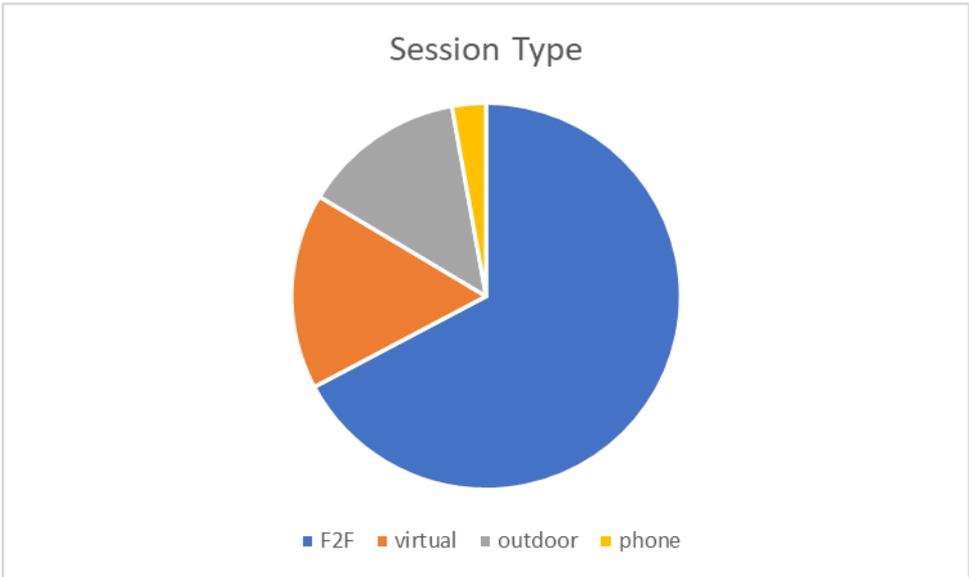
Range of Presenting Issues



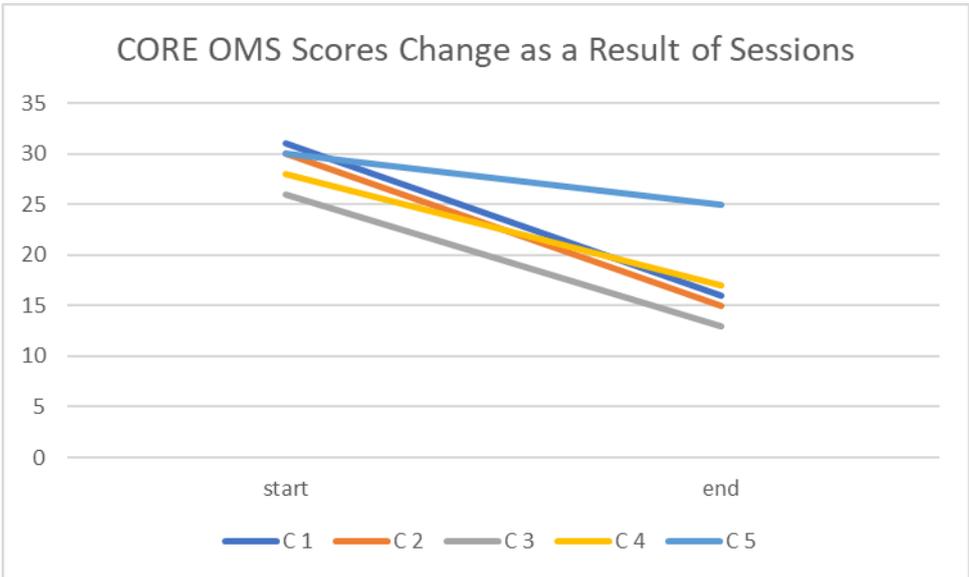
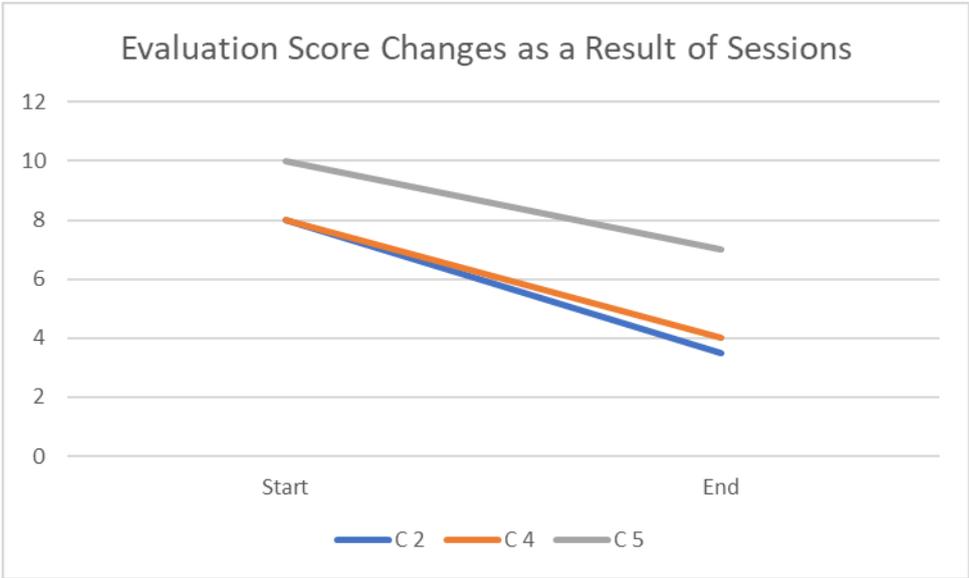
Initial Timescales







Changes in Scores



### Financial Summary Balance Sheet

Below are summaries of finances for April 2020 to March 2021 and April 2021 to March 2022, as comparison.

2020-21	2021-22
<b>Current Assets</b>	<b>Current Assets</b>
<b>Cash and Bank</b>	<b>Cash and Bank</b>
Bank Account	Bank Account
10,093.79	7,222.69
<b>Deposit Account</b>	<b>Deposit Account</b>
Petty Cash	Petty Cash
3,004.32	3,004.60
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>Total Current Assets</b>
<b>13,098.11</b>	<b>10,227.29</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>Net Assets</b>
<b>13,098.11</b>	<b>10,227.29</b>
 <b>Funds Position</b>	 <b>Funds Position</b>
<b>Restricted</b>	<b>Restricted</b>
ECF	Rosca
ECF 2	Groundwork
Rosca	ECF
4,708.87	1,344.84
G work	Project 4
856.97	<b>1,344.84</b>
<b>5,565.84</b>	
<b>Unrestricted</b>	<b>Unrestricted</b>
7,532.27	8,882.45
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>Total Funds</b>
<b>13,098.11</b>	<b>10,227.29</b>

#### Unrestricted Funds Breakdown (last yr)

Counselling sessions	1940 (1070)
Investments	0.28 (1.37)
Fundraising	0 (0)
Other Income	537.06 (2132.12)
 Total Income	 2477.34 (3203.49)

## **Financial Report**

The charity experienced a slight drop in its balance overall, between 2020 and 2021. But this did not affect output or delivery.

Funding from the Rosca Trust and Tesco's Bags of Help/Groundwork was used to cover core costs. This has only just recently been used up.

Funding was received from the Essex Community Foundation and the Big Lottery Covid recovery fund, to pay for the Operation's Manager post. This will shortly be coming to an end and will be reapplied to, to continue the funding.

Abacus was able to raise just under £2000, from its delivery of counselling sessions. £500 was also received in Gift Aid, from a previous donation. With current unrestricted funding and savings, the charity now has nearly £9000 in savings. This is an increase from 2020-21, when it was over £7500. Some of this will be transferred to another savings account with a higher rate of interest, than our current savings account. These savings are crucial in covering costs that occur between funding applications.

At the time of writing this report, Abacus has been successful in applying for nearly £9400, to pay for core costs. These costs include the use of a marketing Manager to run social media postings. We will also have a book Keeper, to help manage the charity's finances. We will also use online accounting services (Xero), to help monitor the accounts.

Abacus counselling has continued to have its accounts examined by David Robb. David has now retired but is still able to offer his services, via SAVS. The accounts review process is now carried out in the summer rather than nearer to the end of financial year in the autumn, to avoid time constraints at that time. The use of online accounting software and a Book Keeper, should make the accounts examination a faster and more efficient process.

### **Future Plans**

The impact of the Coronavirus has caused delays to the implementation of the business plan. Going forwards the aims for 2022-2023 are:

- Develop further links with community organisations and groups, in Shoeburyness and Thorpe Bay.
- Look at funding for Project Manager's role.
- Continue to recruit more counselling volunteers, to further expand the team.

Thanks to:

