



ABACUS
COUNSELLING & SUPPORT
— SINCE 2007 —

Annual Report

2022 - 2023

Client AW, 41 year old female

"Having counselling was the best thing I have done for myself. I feel like I've started to heal and enjoy being me again. I'm so grateful for all the help, tools and support I've had from my counsellor."

”

Client PS, 42 year old male

"It was very good to be able to talk genuinely and wholeheartedly."

”

Client LM, 18 year old female

"The charity has made a huge impact on me and I have recommended it to others."

Client WS, 14 year old male

"My counselling really helped me and I learnt a lot on how to see myself better."

Abacus Counselling and Support Annual Review Contents

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Introduction

Welcome to the 2022-23 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.co.uk

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 life, 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

Lesley Butcher – Chair
Brenda Lewis
Steve Harvey

Janice Lyons
David Bannister
Paula Buck

Senior Management Team

Nick Chard – Project Manager/Treasurer/Secretary (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)

Contractors

Lea Williams of Yours Creative Lea – Marketing

Andrew Clark at A Clark Accounts – Book Keeper

Professional Standards

All counsellors are members of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and/or National Counselling Society (NCS). They have regular supervision, have their own professional indemnity insurance and take part in regular training and CPD. These requirements ensure Abacus works towards providing its values of providing a service that is Safe, ethical and Professional, for clients.

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. It now also sees clients at St Luke's Community Centre, on Cluny Square. It is currently planning on running activities for groups who meet there.

The charity receives referrals from a number of sources including Therapy for you and other medical professionals and Southend Council. However many come direct from the community.

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.

Project Managers Report

2022 to 2023 has seen Abacus fully come out of the pandemic, with referrals numbers and client sessions making a significant recovery. This may possibly reflect a level of pent-up demand for mental health services which has been developing, over the pandemic. Despite this, Abacus has managed to keep up with demand and continue to offer affordable counselling sessions for the public.

The opportunities of covid (such as they are) allowed Abacus to improve its health and safety procedures and have the capacity to run virtual sessions, when necessary. Now the pandemic is over, these developments have been embedded into the workings of the charity.

Abacus had a change of trustees in 2022. Steve Cooper stepped down as Chair and his wife Sarah Cooper also stepped down. In turn the secretary Lesley Butcher stepped up as Chair of trustees, with project manager Nick Chard being treasurer and secretary. David Bannister agreed to act as minute taker, at trustees meetings. Abacus also welcomed two new trustees, of Steve Harvey and Paula Buck.

Funding continued for the Operations Manager role, being completed by Norman Livermore. This dedicated role gives specific time to managing client enquiries and taking referrals, allocating them to counsellors and booking rooms. This funding came from Essex Community Foundation and is currently funded for 2 years. Statistics gathered (see below) show the effectiveness of this role, with clients generally being allocated and starting sessions within a month.

Abacus has continued to develop links with the communities, helping to provide more support to fundable groups. Abacus has started to run counselling sessions at St Luke's community health, on Cluny Square in Southend. It is currently in the pilot stage, running sessions and planning group activities, to community groups and attendees.

Abacus continued to attend a variety of community events for example at Garons Park, Victoria shopping centre and at Hub 151. These events continued to raise the profile of the charity and engage with communities.

Abacus continues to use the services of Lea Williams, to help manage and run its online marketing presence. Abacus also continues to use the services of Andrew Clark, to help with book keeping. Both are very useful and help the charity access specialist services.

Now the pandemic is over, Abacus can look forward to move forward in expanding its amount and range of services to the community.

Work Completed and Achievements/ Outcomes/Feedback

2022 saw a partial recovery of support offered to the community. Though some work to regain output pre-pandemic needs to be done. The following pages show various graphs and charts, giving details of output.

28 referrals were received, in 2022, a slight drop from last year. These were mostly adult females. Only one referral was under 18. 236 sessions were completed, showing a continued recovery of output on a per session basis.

Referrals were received on a regular basis throughout the year. But there were a few periods when non were received (April, May), which was unusual.

Presenting issues showed a range of issues. The main ones listed were anxiety, bereavement, Domestic Abuse, depression and family issues. This would correlate with the community coming out of a pandemic, with lots of bereavement and family issue, along with general mental health problems. This year we also had a few couples counselling sessions being run.

Timescales for client passing through the system were just as good if not better, compared to last year. Length of time to be initially allocated, in 2021-22 – 50% took up to 7 days. However in 22-23 two thirds took 7 days. Roughly two thirds of referrals again took 7 days to then be assessed. None took over 21 days. Roughly 75% took 7 days to start sessions. None took more than 14 days to be started. Finally most clients needed up to 6 sessions, in 2022-23. Few needed more than this. This shows a good throughput of clients and avoided a waiting list, due to clients taking a long time to be completed.

Evaluation and CORE scores both showed a reduction in symptoms, as a result of sessions. One client had only marginal decrease in core score. But this client only attended few sessions before ending sessions. Interestingly their evaluation scores showed a significant decrease, but Core scores – a more clinical assessment - showed little change.

Specific Feedback form a client:

Client G, 57yr old Female

“My counsellor was excellent - Thank You. The person who did my assessment very kindly listened and helped me to have the correct counsellor, for me and my situation”.

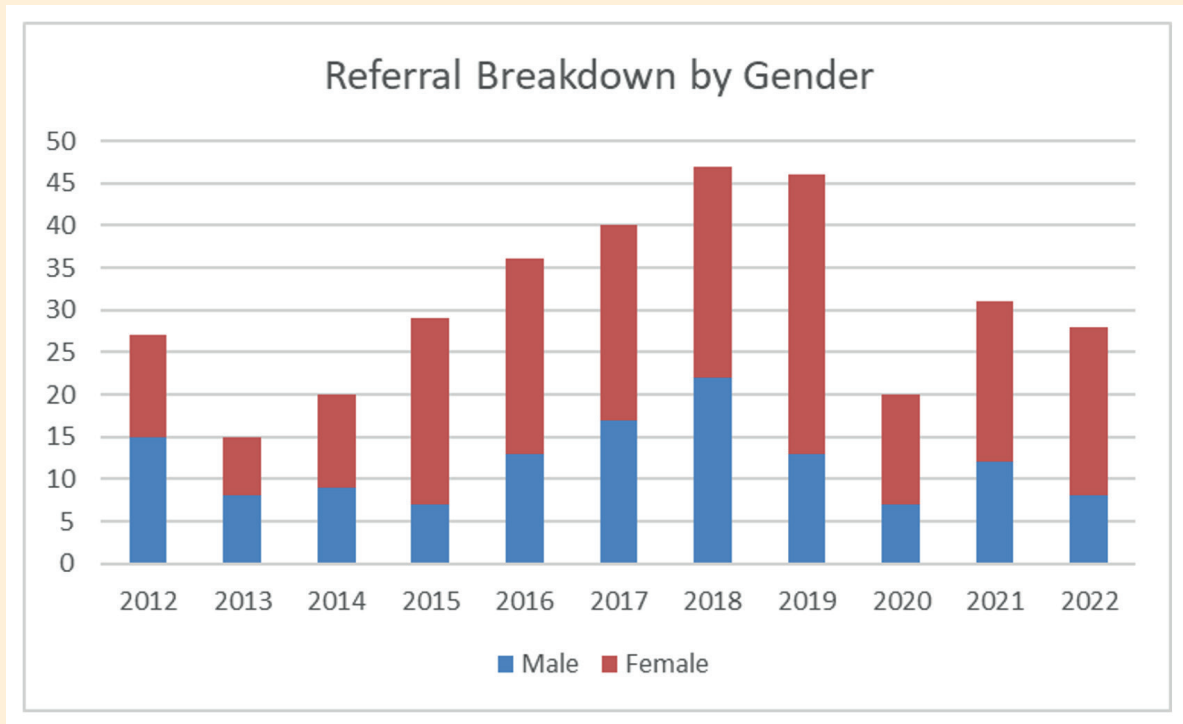
Client J, 81yr old Male

“Absolutely brilliant and my counsellor came to my home for each session and made it more comfortable.”

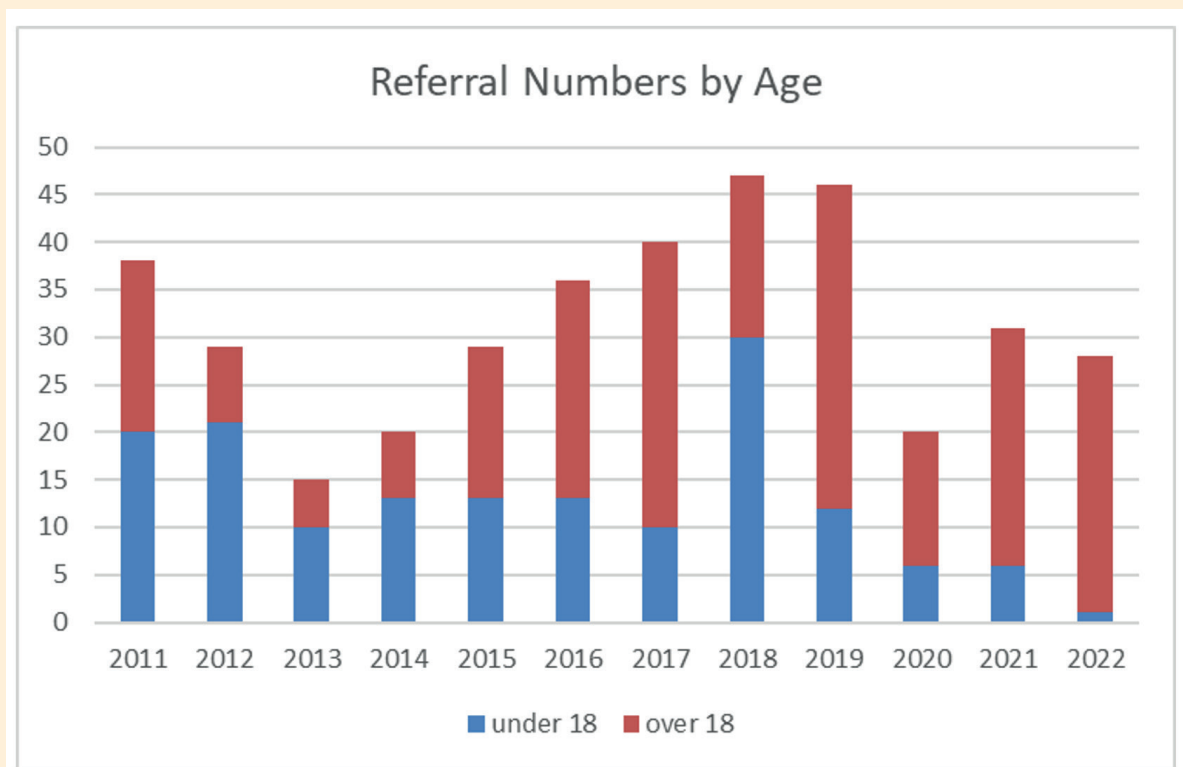
Statistical Information on Work Completed

2011 - 2021

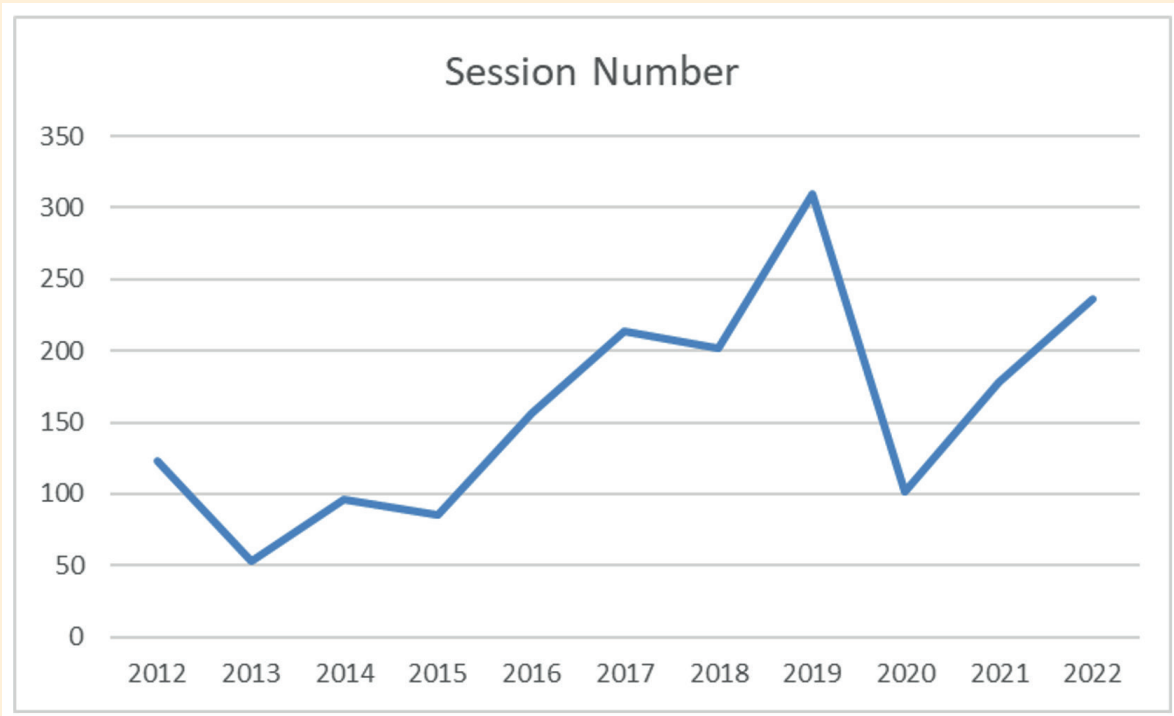
Number of referrals received from 2012 till 2022, detailing gender split



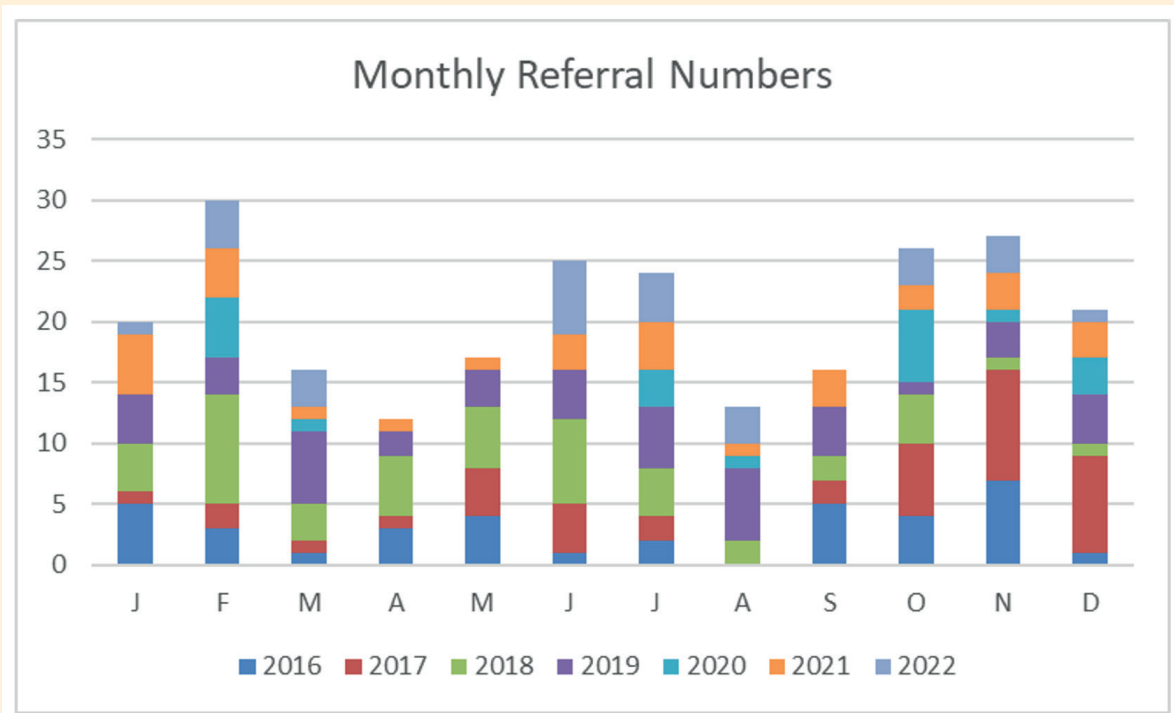
Number of referrals received from 2011 till 2022, detailing age split



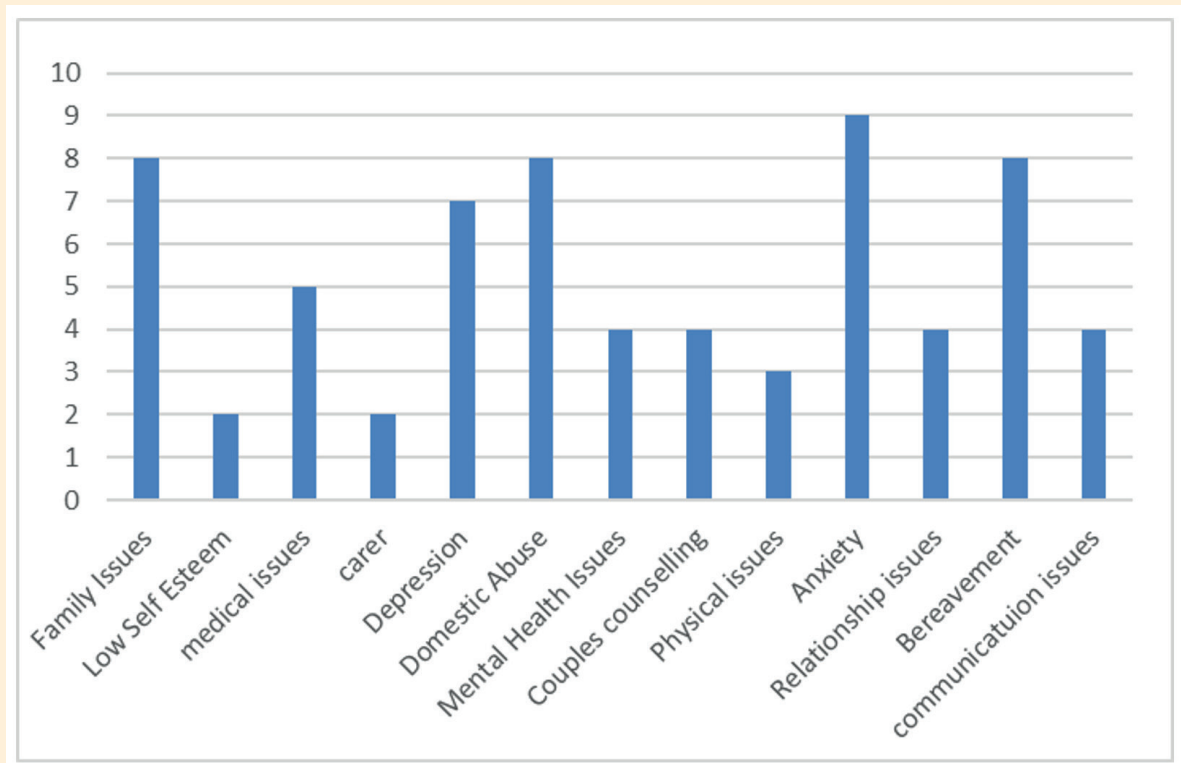
Session numbers 2012-2022



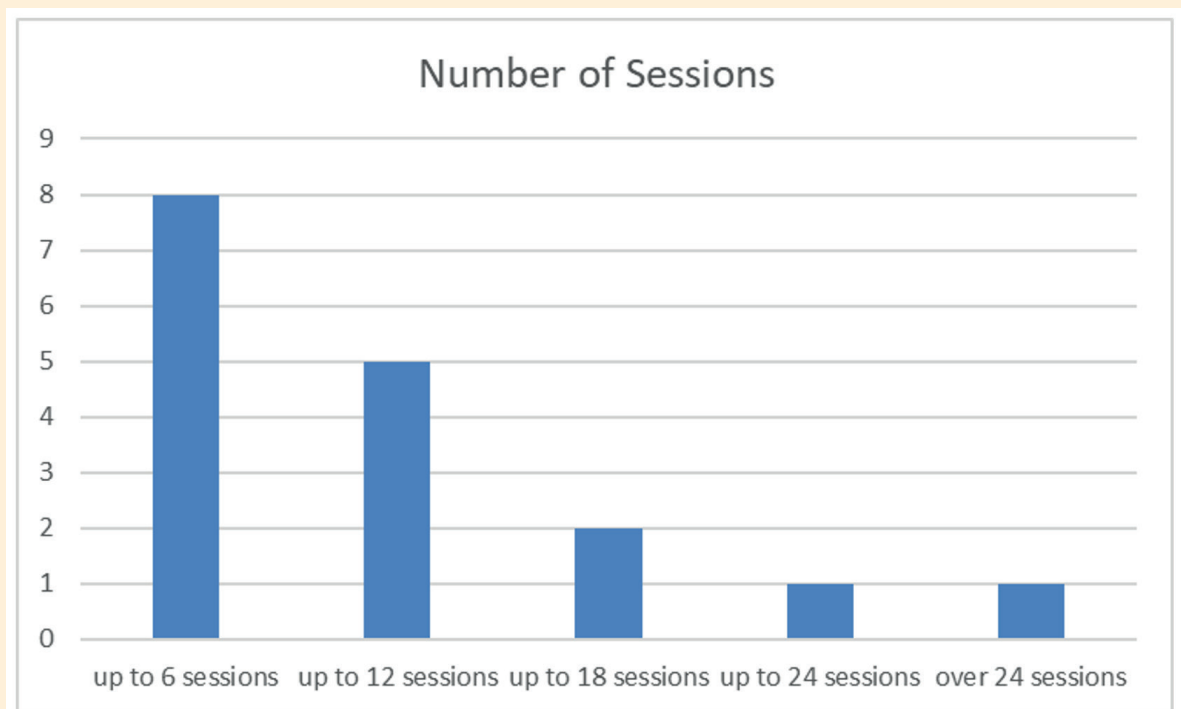
Referral numbers monthly breakdown 2016 – 2022



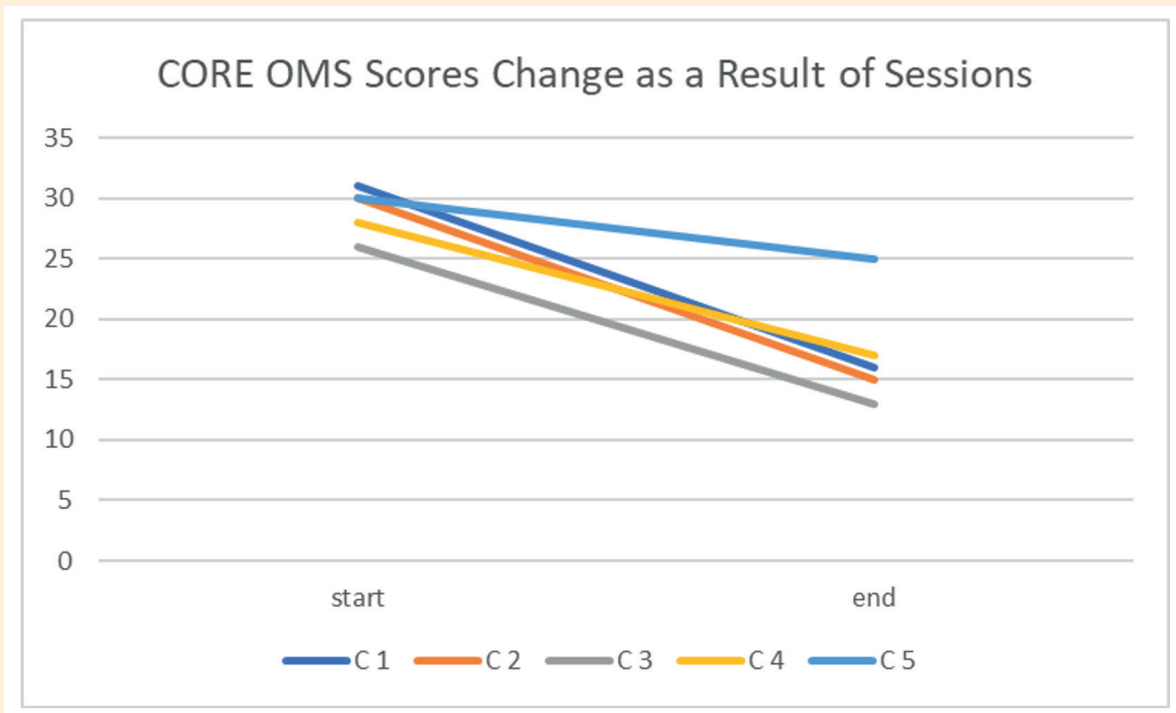
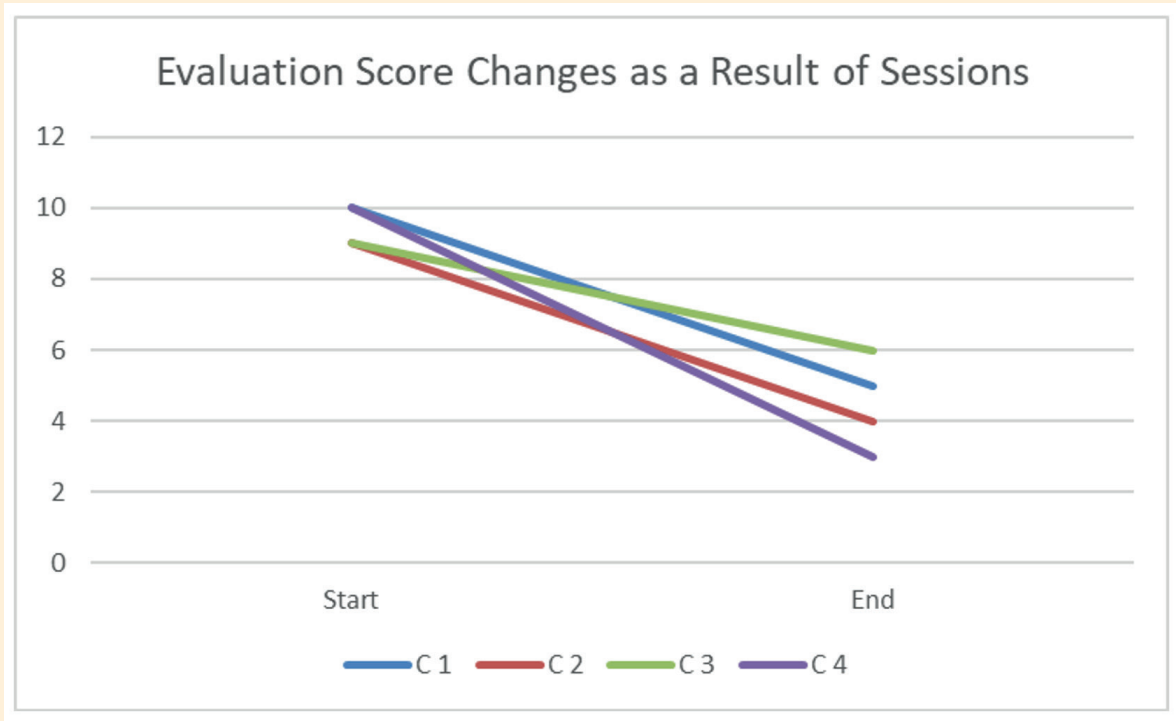
Range of Presenting Issues



Number of Sessions Clients Needed in Therapy



Changes in Scores



Financial Summary Balance Sheet

Below are comparison summaries of finances for April 2021 to March 2022 and April 2022 to March 2023.

2021-22

Current Assets

Cash and Bank

Bank Account 7,222.69

Deposit Account 3,004.60

Petty Cash

Total Current Assets 10,227.29

Net Assets 10,227.29

Funds Position

Restricted

Rosca

Groundwork

ECF 1,344.84

Project 4 **1,344.84**

Unrestricted 8,882.45

Total Funds 10,227.29

2022-23

Current Assets

Cash and Bank

Bank Account 21,516.85

Deposit Account 3,011.17

Petty Cash

Total Current Assets 24,528.02

Net Assets 24,528.02

Funds Position

Restricted

ECF 0

CIF 9,608.29

OM pay 2,500.00

FSJ 0.00

ICCT 1592.00 **13,700.29**

Unrestricted 10,827.73

Total Funds 24,528.02

Unrestricted Funds Breakdown (last yr)

Counselling sessions	2,400 (1940)
Investments	6.57 (0.28)
Fundraising	0 (0)
Other Income (Donations/Gift Aid)	2,609.86 (537.06)
Total Income	5,016.43 (2477.34)



Financial Report

The charity experienced an increase in income both from restricted and unrestricted income, in the last financial year. This is due to more income coming in from sessions and more funding applications being successfully completed.

Restricted Funding

Funding was continued to be received from the Essex Community Foundation, to pay for the Operation's Manager post. This fund was successfully reapplied to, and awarded a 2 year funding settlement, to keep continuity and stability. It must be noted the funder decided to make a 2 year settlement, it was not requested in the application.

Core costs were paid for from the Community Investment Fund, run by SAVS and Southend Council. As well as core costs for delivery, this helped pay for Safeguarding training for the service. We were able to have this funding for a second year, to ensure continuity of service and funding.

Other funding came from The Inter Church Caring Trust, to help pay for room hire for sessions. This allows Abacus to keep more of its income, as previously this was covered by income from sessions. FSJ Charities funded online safeguarding CPD for trustees and counsellors.

Bookkeeping was continued to be provided by A Clark Accounts and managed on Xero accounting package. Monthly reports are provided, to monitor expenditure.

A funding application for the Post of Project Manager has been submitted to the Big Lottery.

Unrestricted funding and Other Income

Abacus generated £2400 from 236 sessions. This works out as costing just over £10 per session for clients, on average. This is a similar average cost to last year and shows Abacus continues to provide a financially accessible service to clients, which is excellent VFM.

Abacus was gifted over £2600 from donations. £2000 was from a private donor and £600 was from Essex Community Foundation, to help cover costs related to

the increased cost of living crisis. An increased interest rate, led to more interest on the reserves account.

Reserves and Financial stability/sustainability

As of the April 2023, Abacus currently has over £10 000 of unreserved income available. Whilst this is a significant amount, Abacus now has increased outgoings with salary. The reserves can be used to cover shortfalls if one fund is not successful in being renewed. But multiple unsuccessful funding applications would cause a significant drain on reserves. Therefore, continued careful management of reserves and funding applications is required. This is to ensure reserves are continued to be built and the risk of major demands on the reserves due to multiple unsuccessful funding applications, are avoided/minimised.

Future Plans

Going forwards the aims for 2023-2024 are:

- **Develop further links with community organisations and groups, across Southend.**
- **Explore the possibility of running group activities.**
- **Continue to recruit more counselling volunteers, to further expand the team.**
- **Look to expand online therapy services, to support more clients.**
- **Further develop financial reserves, through increased investments and savings and paying for all running costs with funding applications.**





community
investment
board



Essex
Community
Foundation



- Hope
- Community
- Sharring

SAVS

Southend Association of Voluntary Services



Thank You!