



TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT

2023-2024

Registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)
No 1135647



TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT 5th April 2023 - 5th April 2024

Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity:

Chair: Christine Marsters (Apr 23 to Jul 23)
Co Chair: Craig Wilcox (Jul 23 to Apr 24)
Co Chair: Diane Boyd (Jul 23 to Apr 24)
Secretary: Sarah Taylor
Treasurer: Gwen Radcliffe
Michael Jakeways
Peter Burrows
Lita Gray
Kathryn Newell

Name of Clinical Business Manager and names of staff members:

CEOs: Denise Slater and Rachel Travers (Aug 23 to Mar 24)
Seconded Clinical & Business Manager: Pauline Maxwell (Mar 24 to Apr 24)
Professional Counsellors: Elizabeth Bond, Pauline Maxwell, Natalia Mae Lavin
Sessional Counsellor: Catherine Baines
Finance Officer: Karina Gilder

Structure, Governance and Management

Charity is constituted as:

Charitable Incorporated Organisation

Summary of objects:

CHAT exists for: The preservation and protection of the emotional and mental health of young people, aged 9-25 years in Oundle, Thrapston and surrounding villages of North East of North Northamptonshire by:

1. Offering free information, counselling and mentoring services
2. Providing early support to individuals, as an alternative to or prior to NHS clinical intervention work, reducing the cases seeking access to NHS clinical services

3. Providing, maintaining and developing up-to-date quality information resources for young people
4. Working with other organisations, in order, to strengthen the support available to young people.

Trustee selection methods:

The Trustees are local people with an interest and experience in counselling, youth work, local government or other relevant leadership and management experience. They are appointed at the AGM, which reviews the appointments annually.

Management:

Trustees work closely with the charity CEO to ensure the smooth running of the charity and service delivery. Together, they are responsible for the strategic planning to ensure the delivery of the client services in accordance with the Charity's objectives and for supporting funding applications to ensure the financial security and future of CHAT.

They liaise with other professionals and attend meetings, lifting CHAT's profile, increasing the awareness of CHAT's presence in the community, earning it recognition and respect. Trustees provide support to the employed staff, for example personnel processes, financial management and health and safety advice, to ensure that CHAT is run in a professional and legal manner.

The Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit in all their decision making.

The part-time employed CEO supports Trustees in the development and implementation of the strategic development plan, undertaking the key administrative tasks and client management. They maintain a close working relationship with the staff on operational and procedural issues. The CEO represents the Charity at the Reach Collaborative meetings and other local community meetings. In addition, the CEO acts as the Designated Safeguarding Lead whilst the Chair is designated Caldicott Guardian and Data Protection Officer.

Summary of Main Activities:

CHAT Youth Counselling employs two part-time counsellors. A self-employed counsellor is available to enable CHAT to respond to periods of increased client waiting lists. They work primarily through local schools or from the CHAT office in the Courthouse, Oundle.



Prince William School, an 11-18 secondary, has an annually reviewed Service Level Agreement. CHAT provides a confidential service 5 days a week in term times, in a designated protected space. A weekly outreach counselling provision takes place in the early evening in Thrapston. In addition, occasional work is undertaken at other local primary schools in the Northeast of North Northamptonshire. Most sessions are individual face-to-face with a professional. Online or telephone sessions are available on request for those clients encountering issues with direct access.

All counsellors are professionally qualified and undergo regular clinical supervision and participate in ongoing professional development activities.

Referrals are taken through the CAMHS Referral Management Centre, directly from GPs and other medical professionals, schools, parents and the young people themselves. Following an initial assessment, professionals provide a six-session course of either counselling or therapeutic mentoring, as appropriate. At this point, there is a review resulting in one of the following outcomes: case closure, a referral to another support agency, or an extended counselling agreement, as required.

Achievements and Performance this year (in terms of Objects):

1. Offering free information, counselling and mentoring services
2. Providing early support to individuals, as an alternative to, or prior to NHS clinical intervention
3. Providing, maintaining and developing up-to-date quality information resources for young people
4. Working with other organisations in order to strengthen the support available to young people

Summary of achievements and updates for the year

CHAT Youth Counselling is commissioned by the NHS (Integrated Care Board) to provide a service for 11–18-year-olds and vulnerable clients up to the age of 25-year-old.

The year has seen significant staffing changes across all levels and a large amount of trustee & staff time has been spent ensuring the service was maintained whilst recruiting for key roles. A new CEO was appointed in August 2023, however they then resigned in March 2024. The decision was made by the trustees to appoint a Clinical & Business Manager to replace the CEO in June 2024.



These roles have now been filled and the coming year will bring positive improvements within the team and performance.

Between April 23 – April 24 we delivered 1516 individual counselling sessions to 208 11-18 year olds. Predominantly these originated from Prince William School, however sessions were also delivered in a number of primaries (Thrapston, Oundle, Nassington) and in the office and online.

Of these 1516 sessions, 29 were referrals from the RMC and 397 were deemed to be Tier 2.5, these are all the young people whose needs are more complex and who would perhaps have seen CAMHS in the past.

In addition 84 Rapid Response sessions were delivered, which are high risk cases that must be seen within 1 week.

At Thrapston café, we delivered 51 cafes between April 23-24 to 62 individuals. Of these 38 young people made multiple visits to the cafe. The café is staffed by 2 full time counsellors and a volunteer. There are discussions at REACH about the cafes extending their age range from 8-25, which should make them even busier in the new year.

CHAT continues to use a range of social media platforms to improve communication with potential clients. Its Instagram has 218 followers and 93 followers on Facebook. The CHAT website provides links to other county-based and local websites, e.g., Northamptonshire Health Care Partnership Directory.

CHAT's area of operation covers a wide rural area in North Northamptonshire. This year, focus has remained on improving access for young people and their families in the Thrapston area. It has proved positive with continued clients accessing CHAT's range of services from the Thrapston area, along with continued use within Oundle and other local areas.

Counsellors report that the issues being presented by clients at initial assessment remain similar to those of previous years, with self-harm, family issues and anxiety remaining high. Bereavement/Loss and relationships continue to be present as issues. Low mood/self-esteem



issues increased as CHAT widened counselling access to clients in the younger age group and with the continuing impact of the pandemic on young people. It has been noted that clients do not always define the issues clearly at the initial assessment, with underlying issues appearing during support, e.g., self-harm and suicidal ideation.

Client evaluative feedback on CHAT services still remains 100% positive, with no complaints being received. This is expected to continue due to the professional service that is provided.

CHAT staff provide various information leaflets, guides and online links to clients and families, covering a range of mental health issues. These continue to be updated and distributed as required. Staff maintain their expertise and knowledge through their membership of BACP; through subscription to emailed newsletters, e.g. NAYC, Youth Access, Barnardo's, NSPCC, ICO; and through the research and development in mental health provision published both nationally and locally.

All staff have up to date with training on the Lamplight recording system. Admin staff have had extended data training to ensure all reports and data submitted to MHSDS are accurate. Topics covered in CPD events have included autism and ADHD, and accessibility awareness for how young people access mental health services, in particular those with ASD.

These training opportunities help CHAT to continue to deliver a high-quality service to its clients. Performance reviews for all staff took place in January and were directed towards sustaining and embedding good practice. Staff suggestions for enhancing its services were sought during these meetings.

CHAT continues to work closely with the other local youth counselling charities via the Reach Collaborative. Regular meetings have taken place with CEOs and Chairs of Trustees to develop continuity and consistency of counselling coverage; to submit joint bids for funding; and to plan the delivery of shared counselling and therapeutic interventions, emotional support and other activities to young people and their families living within Northamptonshire. A shared Strategic Plan has been developed, reviewed and updated to steer the direction of the Reach Collaborative. Resources have been co-produced and shared to the benefit of young people within the county, e.g., Self-Harm bags and Mood Boost booklets. A common Safeguarding recording and reporting system, MyConcern, has been explored by Reach.

The CHAT CEO has continued to represent the charity with local groups, GP surgeries, local government bodies, the Northamptonshire Early Help Service, CAMHS and with all local schools.

CHAT continues to be a member of the Mental Health Transformation Board, as all members of Reach have.



CHAT Youth Counselling has focused its developments on the areas identified in its Strategic Development Plan. These are reviewed periodically by Trustees with a new updated plan ready to implement in the first part of the next year.

The key priorities are to extend the access for young people to youth counselling support within our geographic area. CHAT staff have embedded the core services and contributed to the additional independently funded projects ready to move into Weldon Academy in the near future.

Promotional reports, posters and adverts continue to be placed in the local press and printed publications, and regular presentations are made within school contexts communicating the free nature of CHAT's services. This has contributed to the increase in self and family referrals being received. It is planned to expand on CHAT's social media presence over the forthcoming year which will assist in providing greater access to the service provided.

We have continued to attract funds from Thrapston Council, Waitrose, The Freemasons, and the Oundle & District Care charity to permit the support of young people aged 9-10 and 19-25-year-olds. The support from local organisations has been much appreciated.

CHAT has continued to review its policies. These have included Health & Safety/Risk Assessments, Volunteering and Client Care, Data protection, Grievance and Problem Solving, and Whistleblowing, as well as Safeguarding & Child Protection and financial policies. These activities have resulted in the ongoing development of the charity's operating practices. There have been no serious incidents during this financial year.

The Board is looking to expand on its solid trustee base to help grow the service and ensure targets are achieved in the forthcoming year ahead. They are also looking ahead with the appointment of a new CBM [Clinical & Business Manager].

Financial Review

The Trustees aim to hold a reserve fund of 6 months expenditure against the time when NHS/ICB/Public Health funding is no longer available, to provide time for further funding applications, whilst withdrawing from client work in a professional manner. The current calculation is that reserves should not fall below £75k allowing for redundancy provision.

During the financial year the reserve was reduced by £34,220.46. Of this, £14k was money received in advance the previous year for core work, £12419.72 was returned to funders on the

closure of the Happier Families project and £6075 was reallocated to REACH partners following CHAT session targets being missed in 22-23.

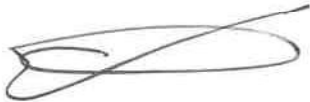

Trustees review the reserve holdings on a regular basis. Cash flow was a problem in the first half of the year, following the changes from monthly to quarterly invoicing for tier 2.5 payments. Therefore, Trustees decided to move to short notice or shorter fixed term accounts on the maturity of one-year fixed term deposits held on the CAF Deposit Platform, managed by Flagstone investments. This provides further flexibility and has taken advantage of rising variable interest rates.

Further details can be found in the examined accounts, appended.

Declaration

The Trustees declare that they have approved the Trustees' Report above.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees

Signature	Full name	Position
	Craig Wilcox 5/2/25	Co-Chair
	Gwen Radcliffe 5/2/2025	Treasurer

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR ENDED 5TH APR 2024

	Note	Restricted Funds £	Unrestricted Funds	Total 2023/24	Total 2022/23
Incoming Resources					
NHS Contract +2.5		£78,643.69	£0.00	£78,643.69	£78,618.00
Project Funding	1	£26,476.00	£0.00	£26,476.00	£36,076.95
Data Flow		£6,650.00	£0.00	£6,650.00	
Donations		£0.00	£6,700.46	£6,700.46	£3,500.00
Interest		£0.00	£4,435.37	£4,435.37	£3,017.96
REACH Reallocations	2	-£25,490.72	£0.00	-£25,490.72	-£16,951.00
Total		£86,278.97	£11,135.83	£97,414.80	£104,261.91
Direct 'Charitable' Expenditure					
Salaries, Pensions & NIC	3	-£98,611.88	-£10,956.88	-£109,568.75	-£95,403.77
Travel costs - Staff		-£1,111.77	-£123.53	-£1,235.30	-£2,466.32
Travel costs - Volunteers		£0.00	£0.00	£0.00	£0.00
		-£99,723.65	-£11,080.41	-£110,804.05	-£97,870.09
Support Costs					
Supervision & Training		-£2,693.88	-£299.32	-£2,993.20	-£4,343.40
Communications		-£1,641.99	-£130.84	-£1,824.43	-£2,420.66
Data & Safeguarding systems		-£1,166.40	-£129.60	-£1,296.00	-£550.00
Accommodation		-£8,229.28	£0.00	-£8,229.28	-£8,092.08
Advertising/Recruitment		-£1,596.30	£0.00	-£1,596.30	-£484.50
		-£15,327.85	-£559.76	-£15,887.61	-£15,890.64
Management and Administration					
Governance		-£1,904.69	£0.00	-£1,904.69	-£1,473.82
Accounting		-£1,260.90	£0.00	-£1,260.90	£0.00
IT Equipment/Depreciation	4	£0.00	-£554.25	-£554.25	-£884.57
Sundry Office Costs		-£1,322.41	£98.65	-£1,223.76	-£916.94
		-£4,488.00	-£455.60	-£4,943.60	-£3,275.33
Total Resources expended		-£119,539.49	-£12,095.77	-£131,635.26	-£117,036.06
Net incoming resources		-£33,260.52	-£959.94	-£34,220.46	-£12,774.15
Transfer between funds		-£68,368.67	£68,368.67	£0.00	£0.00
Total funds brought forward		£143,591.19	£34,613.34	£178,204.53	£190,978.68
Total Funds carried forward		£41,962.00	£102,022.08	£143,984.07	£178,204.53

Balance Sheet at April 5th 2024

	April 5th 2024	April 5th 2023
Computer Equipment	£4,953.67	£4,519.91
Accumulated Depreciation	-£3,961.67	-£3,407.66
Net Book Value	<u>£992.00</u>	<u>£1,112.25</u>
Current Assets		
Debtors	£0.00	£0.00
Cash at bank	£59,061.52	£11,028.67
Cash on deposit	£84,451.96	£166,735.27
Cash in Hand	£1.50	£1.50
	<u>£143,514.98</u>	<u>£177,765.44</u>
Less current liabilities		
Creditors	-£522.91	-£673.16
Suspense Account	£0.00	£0.00
	<u>-£522.91</u>	<u>-£673.16</u>
Total Net Assets	<u>£143,984.07</u>	<u>£178,204.53</u>
Represented by		
Restricted funds	£41,962.00	£143,591.19
Unrestricted funds	£102,022.08	£34,613.34
Total Assets	<u>£143,984.07</u>	<u>£178,204.53</u>

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR YEAR ENDED 5TH APR 2024

1. Project Funding

In 2023-24, in addition to core funding from NHS, funding was received via REACH partners for the following projects.

	Tier 2.5	Rapid Response	Data Flow	Wellbeing Cafe	Total
Fund holder	Service Six	the lowdown	Youth Works	the lowdown	
Received 23-24	£37,973.70	£5000.00	£6500.00	£21476.00	£70947.70
Unused at 5.4.2024	£12420.00	£3625.00	£194.00	£0.00	£16239.00

'Tier 2.5' funding from NCCG aims to extend youth counselling provision to offer emotional wellbeing support and counselling to children and young people referred to REACH who exceed the threshold of Tier 2, the core contract, but do not meet the threshold for CAMHS at Tier 3.

Rapid Response funding is to deliver emergency counselling for young people referred by A & E departments.

Wellbeing Café. Friendly mental health professionals are on hand to listen to and help individuals in their time of need, providing advice, support or signposting / referrals to the relevant team or organisation. Parents and carers are also welcome to drop-in.

2. REACH reallocations

The Happier Families project closed in this area during the year. The sum of £ 12410.72 unused was returned to Youth Works. In addition reallocations of 2022-23 funding were agreed by REACH resulting in a payment to the Lowdown of £6075 and £8062 to Youth Works.

Restricted funds at 5.4.2024	
Current projects	£16,239.00
Previous project funding to be used to meet deficit budget for 2024-25	£25,703.00
Total	£41,962.00

Consequently, a further transfer from restricted to unrestricted funds has been made.

3. Staffing

Staff costs include salaries, employers NIC and employers pension contributions plus payments to sessional counsellors. CHAT Youth Counselling applies for, and receives, the NIC Employer's Allowance of £5000.

The unrestricted expenditure shown on the financial activity sheet is the proportion of these staff costs which are associated with counselling clients not covered by the NHS contract. CHAT Youth Counselling applies for, and receives, the NIC Employer's Allowance of £5000.

4. IT Equipment

Depreciation of computer hardware is calculated using the double depreciation method based on their residual values at the end of a 4-year period.

Tangible Fixed Assets	Purchased	Original Cost	Value April 22	Value April 23	Value April 24
Laptop Treasurer	Jan 19	£431.60	£50.00	£0.00	£0.00
Laptop Manager	March 21	£1,149.97	£699.99	£475.00	£250.00
Laptop Finance Off	April 21	£648.98	£374.49	£237.25	£100.00
4 l pads *	April 20	£2289.36	£872.34	£400.00	£400.00
Laptop CEO	August 23	£434			£242.00
		£4,953.67	£1,996.82	£1,112.25	£992.00

ACCOUNTING POLICIES

- ☑ Income is recognised as received or when receipt is certain.
- ☑ Direct charitable expenditure represents the salaries and expenses reimbursements for staff and volunteers.
- ☑ Support costs represent the accommodation and communication infrastructure required to support the staff and volunteers.
- ☑ Management and administration costs represent expenditure not connected with the costs of the staff and volunteers.

Independent Examiners Report to the Trustees of CHAT Youth Counselling

I report on the accounts of Oundle CHAT Youth Counselling, charity number 1179806, for the year ended 5th April 2024.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act;
- follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act); and
- state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's statement

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from you the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below

Independent examiner's statement

In the course of my examination, subject to not having seen the Trustees Report, no matter has come to my attention:

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that, in any material respect, the trustees have not met the requirements to ensure that:
 - proper accounting records are kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act and
 - accounts are prepared which agree with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act; or
2. to which in my opinion attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed: 

Graham Darbourne

TC Group

The Old Town Hall

Oundle

PE8 4AL

Date: 5th February 2025