

Annual Report for the financial year ended 31 March 2010

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Offington Counselling Service
Offington Park Methodist Church
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BN14 7TN

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Board of Trustees
Chris Corin (Chair) Trustee since 1985 (Chair since 1995)
Roger Dale (Secretary) 1998
Roy Cox (Treasurer) 2000
Betty Gardiner 2006
Ulla Karim 2008
Jack Russell 2007
Nick Skinner 2009
Richard Wright 2008

Director
Paul Smith 1994 (joined OCS 1984)

Head of Counselling
Marjorie Dale 1987

Consultant
Psychiatrist Dr. Françoise Hutton 1997

Administrator
Marilyn West 1996

Independent Examiner David Barnes
2 Gorse Avenue
Worthing
BN14 9P

Bankers
HSBC
1 Broadwater Street West
Worthing
BN14 9BP

Offington Counselling Service (OCS) is registered by the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP), Registration No. 100338 and is a member of the WPF Therapy Network.

1 Introduction

Offington Counselling Service (OCS) was founded in 1983 by the then Minister at Offington Park Methodist Church, Rev Clifford Johnson, and Ian Wiseman, our first Director. The church provided the initial funding, and has remained OCS's headquarters. Over the last twenty seven years OCS has grown and flourished and provided counselling for over three thousand individuals. It has become the major counselling service in the Worthing area.

2 Structure, Governance and Management

2.1 Trustees

At the end of March 2010 there were eight trustees with Nick Skinner joining us during the year. The Trustees met five times in the last year, with sub groups working on financial and business planning and publicity. The Director, Paul Smith, reports to the Trustees at each meeting.

2.2 Operational Management

The Operational Management Committee, which is chaired by the Director, met three times during the year. Counsellor and Supervisor representation ensures they have a voice in the functioning of the organisation and the Trustees are represented by the Chair of Trustees. OCS's Training Officer, a member of the Operational Management Committee, organises meetings with the counsellors to discuss their needs and concerns.

The Director, the Head of Counselling and the Administrator meet together when necessary and the Director and the Chair of Trustees meet regularly.

2.3 Management of Counselling

The Head of Counselling, Marjorie Dale, has overall responsibility, with the support of other personnel, for all of the counselling activities of OCS, including client assessment, clinical supervision, counselling, regulation of the flow of clients and the record keeping associated with them. The role includes acting as the line manager of Supervisors and Assessment Counsellors and accountability is to the Director of OCS.

The 20 counsellors with OCS at the end of March 2010 comprise:

8 Staff Counsellors. These are Counsellors who have recognised training in Client Assessment and either: 450 hours of relevant supervised practice, leading to a wpf Diploma, awarded by central

assessment if necessary, or: BACP Individual Accreditation. OCS Staff Counsellors are eligible for paid work, including Intake Assessment and contract counselling.

4 Counsellors who are appointed once they have been awarded a recognised counselling diploma, are recommended by their supervisor and are interviewed by a panel including the Chair of the Management Committee; OCS's Director and an OCS supervisor.

8 Student Counsellors who are normally appointed at or after completion of the first year of their counselling diploma course and who are student counsellors are working towards attainment of practice hours necessary to the award of a counselling diploma; normally 100 hours in total.

Each counsellor is a member of a supervision group. OCS provides 6 weekly (1½ hour) supervision groups of 4 counsellors, plus one group of 2 senior Staff Counsellors who routinely carry a substantial caseload. Each supervision Group is led by one of 4 supervisors. The supervisors meet together monthly.

Objectives and Activities

In furtherance of our charitable objectives, we have continued to develop and maintain help and support for individuals and couples, whether the basis of their distress be mental or physical ill-health, social or economic circumstances, relationship difficulties, trauma or bereavement. We also offer counselling for young people, aged 14 to 18, in our 1-2-1 service. A further specialist service is Child Bereavement Counselling for families grieving the death of a child.

3.1

Achieving our Objectives

OCS is committed to providing a professional standard of counselling for those who would not otherwise be able to afford it. The extent to which we are able to do this has been a central theme in our work this year. As the WPF Therapy Network appraisal recognised, we "have been addressing issues throughout the centre which have been highlighted by the Trustee group as necessary moves in order to keep the centre viable". Providing assisted counselling is partly dependent on

- (1) receipt of fees which the client can reasonably afford,
- (2) income from employer-funded counselling, provided on a contractual basis, and
- (3) income from clients paying the standard fee.

We have a contract to provide counselling for employees of the West Sussex Primary Care Trust (PCT).

In general, however, providing assisted counselling relies heavily on the commitment and goodwill of our counsellors, who receive no payment for assisted sessions and only about half the amount paid by the fee-paying client or the employer. OCS is an organisation that has survived because of the great deal of goodwill and the extraordinary amount of time that so many people, including the key staff, have been prepared to give. We are very grateful to them. One of our first counsellors was Dorothy Fox. Dorothy died at the end of the year, she was an exceptional person and OCS and her clients gained greatly from her many years of service.

For those clients who are self-referred and who choose the assisted arrangement, an initial assessment session is arranged. The initial, exploratory meeting with an experienced “Intake Counsellor” is arranged

(1) to explore whether counselling is indicated, and, if so,

(2) to assist the Head of Counselling to appoint an on-going counsellor who will best suit the requirements of the client - both in terms of psychological needs and appointment times. An assessment fee is asked which is negotiable in cases of real hardship. There is typically a 4-week process time from first contact by the potential client to the first session of on-going counselling. (When a waiting list is current, a corresponding delay will occur.)

In the case of fee-paying short-term counselling, whether clients by self-referral or under employer-funded arrangements, clients are normally seen within 5 days of their initial contact. They are put directly in contact with our most qualified and experienced counsellors by our Administrator, working closely with the Head of Counselling.

3.2

Provision of Training

OCS’s Training Officer, Dian Eyres, is very responsive to the counsellors’ training needs. She felt OCS needed a place to come together as a counselling community, to find a space where we could filter information down to all, to talk over concerns and engage in informal training.

She set up Coffee Counselling and Us in April 2009 and held 3 sessions over the year.

- “Calling Time” on how to manage throw away comments at the end of a session and how sessions end.
- “Mixing and Matching” based on the 5 love languages as proposed by Graham Chapman.
- “Emotional Freedom Therapy and Energy Therapies” with Nicole Riley

These sessions are attended by a good mix of counsellors in training and the more experienced counsellors.

In addition Dian herself ran a workshop on Money Matters for the AGM and Dr. Adrian Hemmings led a workshop on CBT in October.

OCS has two funds set aside for training bursaries for OCS personnel.

3.3

Co-operation with statutory authorities, professional bodies and voluntary organisations

OCS is an organisational member and accredited centre of the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) Membership Number 100338. The BACP Ethical Guidelines are a major influence on our clinical practice and we are subject to its complaints procedure. We have to make an annual submission, on topics specified by BACP, demonstrating compliance with the specified criteria. The more searching, 5 yearly review was completed at the beginning of the year and we have had our accreditation renewed.

OCS is a member of The WPF Therapy Network, a national network of 30 counselling centres. As a member OCS is committed to working to the agreed, high standard of Counselling Service Guidelines and underwent a 5 yearly inspection and searching appraisal of our clinical and management

activities this year. The wpf appraisal visitors concluded that our “clinical work is presented as thoughtful and it has good supervision in place. The organisation is working well with different theoretical approaches and all staff seem willing to learn from each other.” They added, “The trustees are therefore very actively engaged with the centre management team and are providing good support for future plans.” We have received our centre certificate from WPF.

At the beginning of the year the Director headed preparation for a joint tender with Horsham, Chichester and Charterhouse counselling services for a major Employee Assistance Programme of counselling. After the bidder’s workshop it was decided that it was too big an undertaking for OCS and its partners to sustain.

4. Counselling Provided by OCS 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010

A Statistical summary 2008-9 figures in brackets

(within margins of error for precise start/finish dates)

4.1

Assessment Sessions (for Assisted Clients)

Number of Intake Assessments held during the year	65	(52)
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4.2

Affordable Counselling

Total number of clients receiving on-going counselling	106	(93)
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Total number of sessions	1,448	(1,361)
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4.3

Youth Counselling – free

Total number of clients seen during the year	12	(7)
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Total number of counselling sessions during the year	81	(83)
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4.4

Standard Fee Scheme – normally short-term

Total number of clients seen during the year	32	(23)
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Total number of sessions	257	(178)
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4.5

Employer Funded – typically a maximum of 6 sessions for each client

Total number of clients seen during the year	176	(151)
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Total number of sessions	621	(584)
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4.6

Total number of clients seen – all categories	326	(274)
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4.7

Total number of counselling sessions		
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during the year - (including Assessment)

2,472

(2,258)

During the year, OCS has been called upon to provide a substantial increase in employer-funded counselling under contract, notably with Primary Care Trusts. OCS has acquired a good reputation for rapid uptake for those in need and, from the feedback received, for providing a high standard of counselling. Our work for the PCTs provides essential support for maintaining our charitable commitment.

5 counsellors left during the year and 3 joined; during much of the year we had an average of 20 to 21 counsellors – an increase of 4 on last year. We have 20 counsellors working at present.

The new system of interviewing and recruiting counsellors in twos has helped us to fill more places effectively.

5 Financial Review

The continuing contract with the West Sussex Primary Care Trust has been one of the major achievements of the Director. The demand for our services by the PCT has continued to grow and has been significantly above budget once more. We have increased our other contract work too and provided 35 sessions for The Family and Parent Care Foundation. Last year we were concerned with the drop both in the volume of counselling under the assisted scheme, and the reduction in the level of client fees which had fallen to an average of £8.42 per session. There was no improvement by September which prompted a further push for higher fees. Thanks to hard work all round there has been a real improvement the annual average this year was £10.17 thanks to an average of £11.16 since September. The intake counsellors have been particularly important in the increase in fees from new clients. The number of clients in the fixed fee scheme increased in the second half of the year too. The net result of this activity is that the current year's balance of income and expenditure shows a surplus of £3017 rather than the deficit for which we had budgeted.

Last year it was decided to delegate one Trustee to deal with marketing. Nick Skinner has redesigned our leaflet and carried out some market research, we shall be refreshing our website soon. The leaflet makes it clear that our standard fee is £35 per session but that if clients are unemployed, on benefits, or are unable to pay the standard fee, OCS is able to support a number of clients at a reduced fee. Outside feedback on the new leaflet has been that it is 'excellent - nice and clean with all the information readily to hand.'

6 Conclusions and Plans for the Future

The increase in the level of work and income since September has been most encouraging. The challenge will be to continue this in a difficult economic climate. Further development in our publicity and marketing will be a priority. OCS has been well served by our key office holders over many years. Our Director, Paul Smith, is leaving us at the end of March 2011 and we shall be looking at our organisational structure to see the best way of filling the gap and meeting our future needs.

Appendix 1
Structure and Membership

Board of Trustees: Chris Corin (Chair) since 1985

Roger Dale (Secretary) 1998

Roy Cox (Treasurer) 2000

Betty Gardiner 2006

Ulla Karim 2008

Jack Russell 2007

Nick Skinner 2009

Richard Wright 2008

Operational Management Committee:

Paul Smith – Director

Marjorie Dale - Co-ordinator of Counselling

Lyn Jennings - Supervisor representative

Marilyn West – Administrator

Dian Eyres – Training Officer and counsellor representative

Pat Marini - Counsellor representative

Chris Corin – Trustees representative

Administrator:

Marilyn West since 1996

Supervisors:

Ivan Thorpe from 1993

Holly Connolly 2008

Lyn Jennings 2003

Christine McKenna to July 2009

Nicole Riley from July 2009

Consultant Psychiatrist: Dr Françoise Hutton since 1997

Counsellors: Amanda Ashman joined OCS 2005 SC (Staff Counsellor)

Terry Atkinson	1995 SC
Melanie Barnard	2007 SC till July
Nicola Begley	2008 S (Student Counsellor)
David Bensusan	2009 S
Karen Bonetti	2009 S
Marjorie Dale	1987 SC
Sara Eschbaecher	2005 SC
Dian Eyres	2005 SC

Amanda Halford	2008 S till December
Malcolm Hartley	1987 SC
Sacha Hebden	2007 C(Counsellor)
Linda Jones	2008 C
Svetlana Kelleher	2007 C
Pat Marini	2008 S
Sam McDonagh	2007 S
Denise Pease	2008 S
Cathy Servante	2009 S
Martin Shanahan	2008 S
Mo Simpson	1990 C till December
Desiree Squire	2007 C
Pat Stewart	1997 SC
Anne Watson	1999 SC
Jayne Williams	2008 C till February
Julia Ziewe	2008 S