

# **COUNSEL for LIFE** **ANNUAL REVIEW**

**2022/2023**

We are pleased to report that **COUNSEL for LIFE** continues to grow and adapt to the changes necessary following the Covid-19 pandemic. We continue to provide a professional counselling service to the local community and beyond.

## **Result of Covid-19**

Although restrictions imposed on us by the Government have been lifted, the activities of Counsel for Life have not fully returned to the pre-pandemic methods of counselling.

Our counsellors have continued to provide one to one counselling sessions with our clients, but still mainly by either telephone conversation or on Zoom. Many clients are reluctant to return to face-to-face counselling although we have received several requests for face-to-face meetings and as a result we have made arrangements to hire external premises for this purpose.

This transpired following a thorough analysis of our premises at 10 The Broadway and the decision that it would not really provide the most appropriate style of accommodation for suitable and safe face to face counselling sessions. The health and safety of all our clients and staff is always at the top of our priorities. We recognised that any hiring of external premises would still need to be within the local area, and we were pleased to find very suitable meeting rooms available in South Woodford and at All Saints Church Woodford Wells. As a result we have been able to continue to satisfy all our clients' requirements in whatever form of counselling they prefer, and our counsellors have co-operated fully in this process.

The decision was taken to re-locate our office, and we are very fortunate to be able to share accommodation at 10 Crescent Road South Woodford, which is the home of Mill Grove, another local charity. Here we can offer face to face counselling so that the overall situation is very satisfactory.

## **Accreditation with BACP**

The British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) are the professional organisation from whom we receive accreditation for carrying out our counselling services and who are closely involved with all aspects of our activities.

As reported previously, BACP no longer require re-accreditation every five years but there is now a rolling programme of annual assessment. This entails submitting updated procedure documents during the year which are then scrutinised by BACP on accuracy and their relevance to our counselling procedure. It has proved to be a detailed and time-consuming process undertaken by the team, but our procedures have been well received by BACP. This means that we can promote Counsel for Life as giving a very high standard of professionalism and effectiveness. This in turn gives our clients full confidence in our service.

## **Staff Changes**

We have been able to enhance our counselling team during the year which has helped considerably as we have also experienced an increase in counselling sessions as shown on the graph.

We are very pleased to welcome **Emma Murray**, a BACP accredited counsellor and psychotherapist with an MA in Integrative Counselling and Psychotherapy, **Karen Keys** a BACP registered counsellor with an Advanced Diploma and Couple Counselling Diploma, and **Susanna Somerville** a BACP registered counsellor with dual qualifications in counselling and coaching. We are delighted that these very experienced counsellors have joined our team, which demonstrates our ability to continue to provide the highest quality counselling for our clients.

Sadly we said farewell to Kevin O'Connor in November 2022. He joined in 2017 and became our clinical lead when Martyn Baker left in 2018. He proved to be a wonderful member of our team and we shall miss the time, expertise, and unwavering support he has given to Counsel for Life over the years.

Although we experienced a downturn in counselling sessions last year, we now see an increase, which was as expected with the relaxation of Covid restrictions. The introduction of additional counsellors has helped us to provide a balanced programme of counselling.

## Statistics



## Client Feedback

We are delighted to report that our counsellors continue to provide a very high quality relationship with our clients. These are some of the comments we have received:

- *Susanna was a brilliant counsellor and I really benefitted from meeting with her!*
- *Kevin, as my counsellor, I can't praise enough. I felt comfortable with him from session one. If he needed me to slow down, he'd guide me; if he needed more detail, he'd guide me.*
- *I can't rate this service highly enough. I was desperate to be able to speak to someone when I first contacted Counsel for Life. From the initial email contact, which was a quick response, to the first telephone assessment with Kevin, I felt listened to.*

## Donation Form

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**Contact:** for further details or if you think you can help with any of the above, please contact the Centre Co-ordinator, on **(020) 8504 1228**, or email **pwtcfl@aol.com**, or by post at **Counsel for Life**, 10 Crescent Road London E18 1JB