



A member of the Action
Mental Health Group
Celebrating 25 years of counselling



Annual Review
2017/18

Chairperson's Foreword

Stephen Robinson



In 2018, New Life Counselling celebrates its 25th anniversary, so this is a good time to look back to our roots and to reflect on what we have achieved. It is also a time to look forward and plan the next chapters in the life of our organization.

The focus of New Life's work has always been to offer vital support to those in need. We have worked with adults and young people within local community settings, since the organization was established as a youth and parent resource centre in 1993. Since then we have added counselling for adults (1994), therapy for children (1998) and family therapy (2001) and these three strands continue to be the focus of most of our work in 2018, across a range of discrete projects.

We have become a significant provider of services within Northern Ireland and have built close partnerships with a range of stakeholders, including our funders, both statutory and voluntary. In celebrating our 25th anniversary, we would like to extend our gratitude to our funders, in particular the PHA and the Health Trusts (Belfast and South Eastern), as well as to all parties who have played a part in funding our services over the years, allowing us to carry out our important work within local communities.

During 2018, New Life Counselling has begun an exciting new chapter, through our recent formation of a group structure with Action Mental Health (April, 2018). Although we are very much in the early stages of this new relationship, it already brings us a sense of hope that we can now begin to work closely together, to develop and implement plans that will improve and develop our services within Northern Ireland. Of course, we face a challenging funding environment, which is undoubtedly exacerbated by the failure of our devolved assembly and by the uncertainty that Brexit brings. However, we will continue to meet these challenges, being guided as an organization by our board of trustees and our senior management team.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank our board members, for their commitment to our organization. During 2017/2018 we have seen considerable change and development of our board. Several trustees have retired, or moved onto new roles elsewhere and eight new trustees have joined us. The changes have reinvigorated our board and I would like to encourage continued engagement from all board members, in building a successful team that includes board, senior management, administrative staff and all of our counsellors.

We have also seen considerable change in our senior management team during this period. Karen Collins, our CEO for ten years, has moved on to new challenges elsewhere and we are delighted to have appointed Norma Patterson as our interim CEO. Norma brings a great deal of experience to this role, as a leader and manager and also as a clinician. Her energy and commitment is tremendous and I would like to thank her for the clear vision and creativity that she brings to the role. Thanks also to our team leaders and clinical staff led by our new clinical manager, Andrew Sutherland and to our administrative team led by Bernie McAteer.

As I conclude this foreword, I would like to emphasise the importance of the work of New Life Counselling during the past twenty-five years and during the years ahead. New Life counsellors work with our

clients, to support them, to help them to change their lives and sometimes to save their lives. Northern Ireland still faces considerable challenges dealing with adversity, inequality and the legacy of the Troubles. However, we are now living in a time when it is becoming more acceptable to talk about our mental health and we hope that this trend will continue, so that there is less stigma and more understanding of the reality that mental health issues will affect many of us at some point in our lives. We hope that during the years ahead New Life Counselling can support more individuals and families to improve their mental health and wellbeing, through the opportunities that partnership with Action Mental Health will bring.

Chief Executive's Foreword

Norma Patterson



This has been a very exciting year for me to take over New Life Counselling as interim CEO. The opening of our Bloomfield office in early 2017 has prove to be a very positive development with many referrals being seen from this new venue. This year we have delivered almost as many sessions from our East Belfast Office as we have from our North Belfast one. This proves the high level of need from this area as well as Ardoyne where our head office is located. We were delighted to receive funding from Henry Smith to expand our family therapy service into East Belfast and to maintain this vital specialist service which will begin in April 2018. Our child services have continued and we are delighted to now provide so many services to looked after social work

clients supported by their social worker this is a much needed service. The need for us to work closely with CAMHS services and to establish a seamless referral process for children into community based counselling services pre and post CAMHS is vital, as is Trust funding for our work to integrate services in the stepped care model. We are also exploring how our work can be targeted to children with high ACE scores due to the important research outcomes from the USA. Our adult work continues to grow and develop in the areas of suicide prevention, victims and survivors support and postvention. We ceased to deliver services under the SHIP project this year as ,on balance, we felt the focus on paperwork and statistical analysis did not fit with how we wish to work with clients.

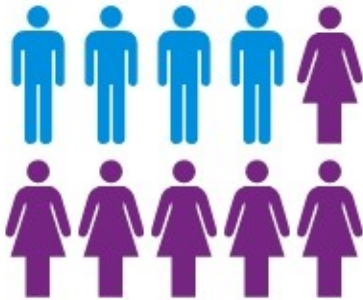
Another exciting development during this year has been the formation of a group structure with Action Mental Health. Although we are very much at the starting point of this relationship it is already clear the substantial benefits that us working together will bring to our respective groups of clients.

We have been delighted to welcome several new Board members during 2017-18; this has substantially strengthened our clinical governance and brought a wealth of new skills to our Board.

It has been a real pleasure and an honour to lead such a committed, energetic and passionate team who are so totally committed to delivering high quality counselling services to all ages throughout NI. I am very excited for the future of our work together.

2017/18 Impact at a Glance

37% Male



63% female

**12,895
sessions**

**2,094
clients**

Breakdown of
Client Numbers

Family
Therapy

57

585

OKAY

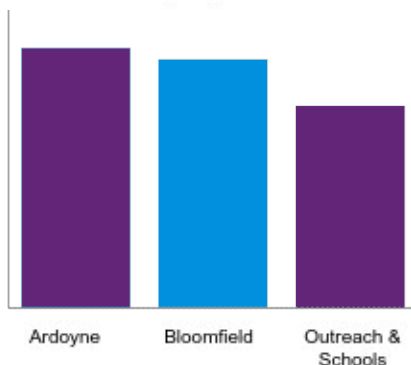
Adult

1452

59

Groupwork
sessions

Delivery by Location



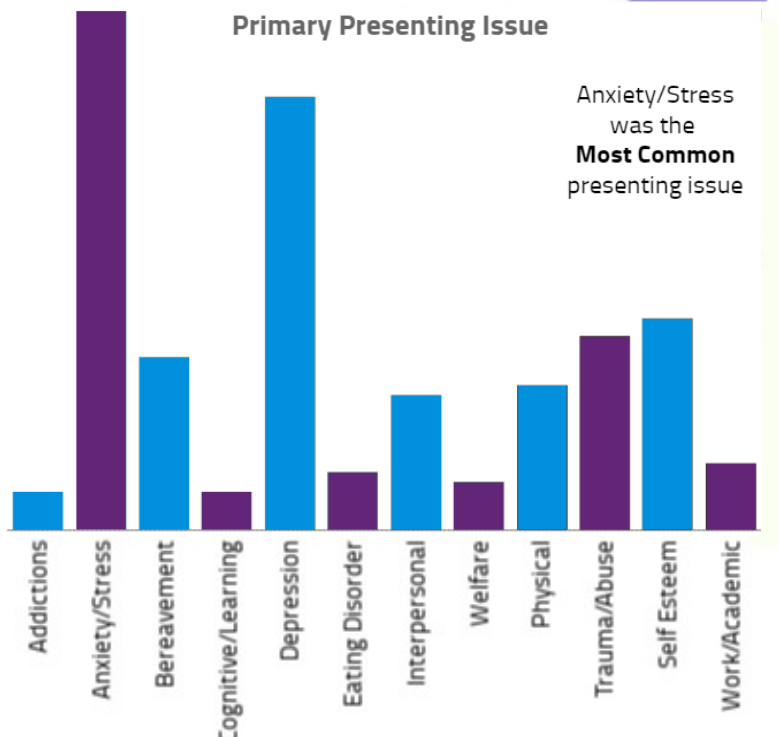
Achieved BACP
Service Accreditation



Formed Partnership
with Action Mental
Health



Primary Presenting Issue



Anxiety/Stress
was the
Most Common
presenting issue

2,289
LIKES ON FACEBOOK
facebook.com/newlifecounselling

1,242
FOLLOWERS ON
TWITTER
[@NEWLIFE_NI](https://twitter.com/NEWLIFE_NI)



What Our Clients Say



98%

felt we responded well to their needs



97% said "Very Well"

"How well did your therapist listen to and understand your problems?"

Made me realise that i'm not pathetic or hopeless, that I can deal with things and there is light at the end of the tunnel.

If I didn't go to counselling I don't know where I would be right now.

My counsellor was amazing; she helped me to relax and to calm myself when needed. Thank you so much.

This has been life changing for our family and my son. Thank you all very much.

It has helped me to see and cope with my life in a brighter and more positive way

I could not be more thankful for my sessions with my counsellor. It helped me out of a dark place.

Brilliant! In a completely different frame of mind leaving from when I came in.

It helped me to manage urges to self harm and to cope better with stress at work.

Thank You!

We would especially like to thank the following funders who makes New Life Counselling's work possible:

- Public Health Agency
- Department for Communities (Neighbourhood Renewal)
- Belfast Regeneration Office
- Victims and Survivors Service
- Education Authority
- Belfast Mental Health Hub
- Henry Smith Charity
- Northern Mental Health Hub
- South Eastern Mental Health Hub
- Urban Villages
- BBC Children in Need
- Big Lottery Fund – Supporting Families
- Big Lottery Fund – Empowering Young People
- Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- Cash 4 Kids
- Edmund Rice Foundation



Evaluation Outcomes Summary (CORE Net)

This was the first year that the new CORE net system has been in place, allowing us to analyse clients' clinical and reliable change. (**Summary of closed cases – planned, Apr 17 – Mar 18*)

****Reliable Improvement** means the client has statistically moved by 5 points on the CORE measure. **Clinical and Reliable change** means the client has moved both from above to below the clinical cut off and has moved a statistical amount.

(NB: Percentages below include combination figures relating to Clinical & Reliable change. There was insufficient data during the reporting period for 11-16 years to accurately reflect Clinical & Reliable change)

Client Group (NLC)	Reliable Improvement	Clinical & Reliable Change	Deterioration
	(%)	(%)	(%)
<u>Community Clients (All Ages)</u>	65	41	1
<i>Anxiety / Stress / Depression primary presenting issues</i>			
<u>Young People (11- 16 years)</u>	51	n/a	1
<i>Step 2-3 mild to moderate mental ill health</i>			
<u>VSS Clients (+18 yrs)</u>	57	31	1
<i>Impacted by the NI conflict,</i>			
<i>Primary referral presentation includes, trauma, bereavement, injury</i>			
<u>Belfast Wellbeing Hub (+18 yrs)</u>	53	33	
<i>Step 2-3 mild to moderate mental ill health</i>			

Income and Expenditure

Income (£)		
	2016/17	2017/18
Donations and legacies	47,363	42,679
Revenue Grants	984,256	926,931
TOTAL	1,031,619	969,610

Expenditure (£)		
	2016/17	2017/18
Counselling Services	853,327	831,743
Support Costs	160,850	136,604
TOTAL	1,014,177	968,347

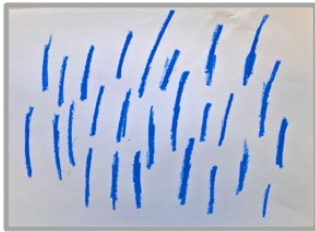


Only Kids and Youth (OKAY) Counselling

The OKAY team are a mix of child and youth therapeutic specialists who use art, music, drama and play to work with and support troubled young people and children, helping them to express emotions in healthier ways and to feel better. In 2017/18, 585 children and young people were seen by our OKAY team through a number of projects:

- Community work delivered in our premises in North and East Belfast
- Independent Counselling Service in Schools (ICSS)
- Our Families Together partnership Project with Parenting NI
- Our partnership with 4 other Healthy Living Centre in North Belfast through "Supporting Families North Belfast"
- Children in Need funded work for children who have been bereaved or experienced separation.
- Our Urban Villages Youth Access outreach project working with youth groups to teach resilience and stress management.





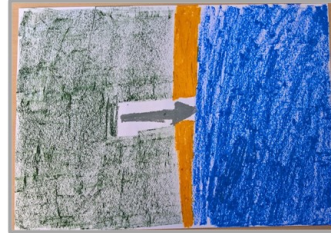
CASE STUDY:

(All names and identifiable information have been changed & client permission obtained for all the case studies published within this report.)

Sam, aged 15, came to New Life Counselling because he was experiencing anxiety, particularly in social situations. It was sometimes so bad that he would be physically sick.

Sam worked with an Art Therapist to explore his feelings, learn how to manage his anxiety and build his confidence. Using a mixture of art-making and mindfulness / breathing exercises, Sam was able to understand more about how he was feeling and what his anxiety did to his body, and so how to manage it more. He also found the art very helpful and it became a new language to express how he was feeling.

When Sam finished working with New Life Counselling, his confidence had increased and he was no longer experiencing a lot of anxiety. He said that he felt so much better, it was even hard to remember how he felt at the start.



Counselling for Adults

The Adult Counselling Project provides counselling for clients aged from 18 years old and there is no upper age limit. Clients attending the Adult Counselling Project are varied in their presentations and issues. Our team of professionally accredited, registered counsellors are experienced practitioners who work from a variety of modalities and approaches. We are client led and so tailor our interventions to best meet the needs of the client. Clients' problems cannot always be solved, but through counselling individuals can find ways to live a better and happier life despite difficulty. This year, we delivered 8,645 counselling sessions to adult clients through a number of projects.

CASE STUDY:

Jim was referred by VSS. Counselling was a new experience for him. He had never asked for help before and did not find it easy to talk. Jim had experienced trauma during the troubles and many years later continued to experience depression and anxiety. He had difficulties sleeping and would describe himself as alcohol dependent. He availed of talking therapy, and through the safety of the relationship with his therapist, was able to explore thoughts and feelings around his experiences. Using psychoeducation, and from a place of understanding of the impact of the trauma on his life past, present and future, he was able to work with the psychological and emotional injury and to work through the loss of his friends, family and job due his self-destructive behaviour.

"Counselling let me see myself in a different light and that I can face the future with a lot more confidence and less fear."



John self-referred after noticing the New Life office in his local community. Following the breakdown of his marriage he was feeling alone, sad and confused. He doubted his ability to 'go on with life' and made a suicide attempt. Found by a friend, he was taken to A&E, but initially refusing support, he returned to his home. John was a retired art teacher, and following his assessment for counselling, was offered art therapy. Through this creative process he was able to identify, acknowledge and express his feelings and allow himself to grieve the loss of his relationship with his wife. He was able to improve his self-care, coping strategies and support. He connected with a local men's group and his mental and emotional wellbeing improved enabling him to find long term and sustainable change in other areas of his life.

"It gave me skills to look after myself better and techniques to help me after I finished counselling."

Jenny was referred by her GP for OCD. Due to intrusive thoughts, which challenged her sense of safety, she developed rituals which took many hours to complete daily. This was especially problematic whenever she attempted to leave the house. Her routine of checking the doors, windows and electrics took so long that she was often late for work, resulting in her losing her job. She became depressed and isolated. With the support of a family member she attended cognitive behavioural therapy and worked to reduce the rituals as she talked about the underlying thoughts and feelings connected to various life experiences. She worked hard to reduce her rituals and this challenged her belief that her family would be harmed. Through psycho-education and a willingness to test out her beliefs, this client managed to find change.

"Counselling has changed my life. It has given me the tools to address my issues. I have gained an understanding as to why I feel the way I do and what I need to do to find change."



Counselling for Families

In the modern day, it seems there are more and more challenges facing the family unit. Family therapy provides an opportunity for family members to come together in a safe environment to talk about their difficulties, understand each other's thoughts and feelings, and work together to make useful changes in their relationships. Our Family Therapy service in 2017/18 has kindly been supported through the Henry Smith Charity and the Supporting Families Project (Big Lottery Fund).

CASE STUDY:

Family S was referred for family therapy due to parents having difficulty managing their 7-year-old son's behaviour. Mum's increasing sense of helplessness led her to withdraw from him both emotionally and physically. In response, their son's behaviour became more demanding and disruptive to family life and had begun to interfere with his ability to settle at school and engage in learning. Other factors influencing a sense of helplessness included mum's physical well-being following a recent operation and subsequent medications and ongoing infections. Dad's employment was demanding, and at times he would work 12 hours per day and return home exhausted, which negatively impacted his emotional well-being.

Parents and children engaged in work to explore patterns of communication and increase awareness and understanding of how these redundant behaviours had become unhelpful in getting the needs of the family members met. We explored with the parents how they were already supporting one another and how these behaviours could be increased with the time they had available, as well as how they could meet their own needs by re-engagement in interests and hobbies of their own. It was noticed that their conversations were dominated by their fears and anxieties related to mum's health. By engaging in interests and other topics of conversations, health was defocused and energy for life began to return. We worked with the parents to develop a shared parental approach which reduced mum's stress and she began to feel able to engage in discipline and shaping the children's day with daily activities and routines. We encouraged the parents to spend individual time with each child for 15 minutes per day.

We engaged children in learning and recognising emotions and took a family approach to expressing emotions such as anger, anxiety and aggression. We encouraged family nights of board games and cinema nights at home with pizza, with the children choosing what film to view. As parents and children engaged in this work, competition for parent's time reduced significantly and parent's energy and confidence in managing their son's behaviour increased.

Their son had been on a waiting list for ADHD assessment, and this took place while the family were engaged in family therapy. We were able to help mum and dad process their son's diagnosis and discuss how they wanted to manage his behaviour, increase their knowledge about his symptoms and explore options of how they wanted to move forward. Following completion of family therapy, family reported they are:

"...optimistic about the future ... (our) relationship appears stronger. Routines within the family have been developed and structure is much stronger than before."



Counselling for the Deaf

Our counselling service for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing is delivered by a counsellor with Level 3 BSL, making it the only service of its kind in Northern Ireland. This service allows these individuals, who would previously have had difficulty accessing therapeutic support, to receive counselling in a safe and confidential space, allowing them to gain a clearer understanding of themselves and improve their life and their choices.

CASE STUDY:

Jackie had experienced sexual abuse as a child and had struggled with relationships throughout her life.

She entered counselling following a particularly serious incident of physical abuse by her present partner. She was hospitalised and on her discharge was referred to New Life after attending her GP. She used self-harm to work with her feelings of shame and self-hate. With a signing counsellor and in a confidential safe space, she was able to disclose the extent of the childhood abuse and talk about issues and experiences for the first time. This was life changing for her. She was able to separate herself from the abuser and began to see herself as a survivor. She started to feel differently about herself and her self-care increased. This improved her mental and emotional well-being. As her self-respect grew so did her confidence and self-esteem. Jackie is beginning to rebuild her life developing interests, forming friendship and planning for the future.

"I never thought I could feel like this. For the first time in my life I feel free and am beginning to really enjoy my life. Counselling was really hard but I would recommend it to anyone."

Postvention

Being bereaved by suicide has been described as 'grief with the volume turned up'. New Life Counselling provides a family liaison service for individuals and families who have lost a loved one through suicide. We understand that every suicide impacts many people left behind within the family and community, so we provide a bespoke bereavement service for all those impacted by the loss.

CASE STUDY:

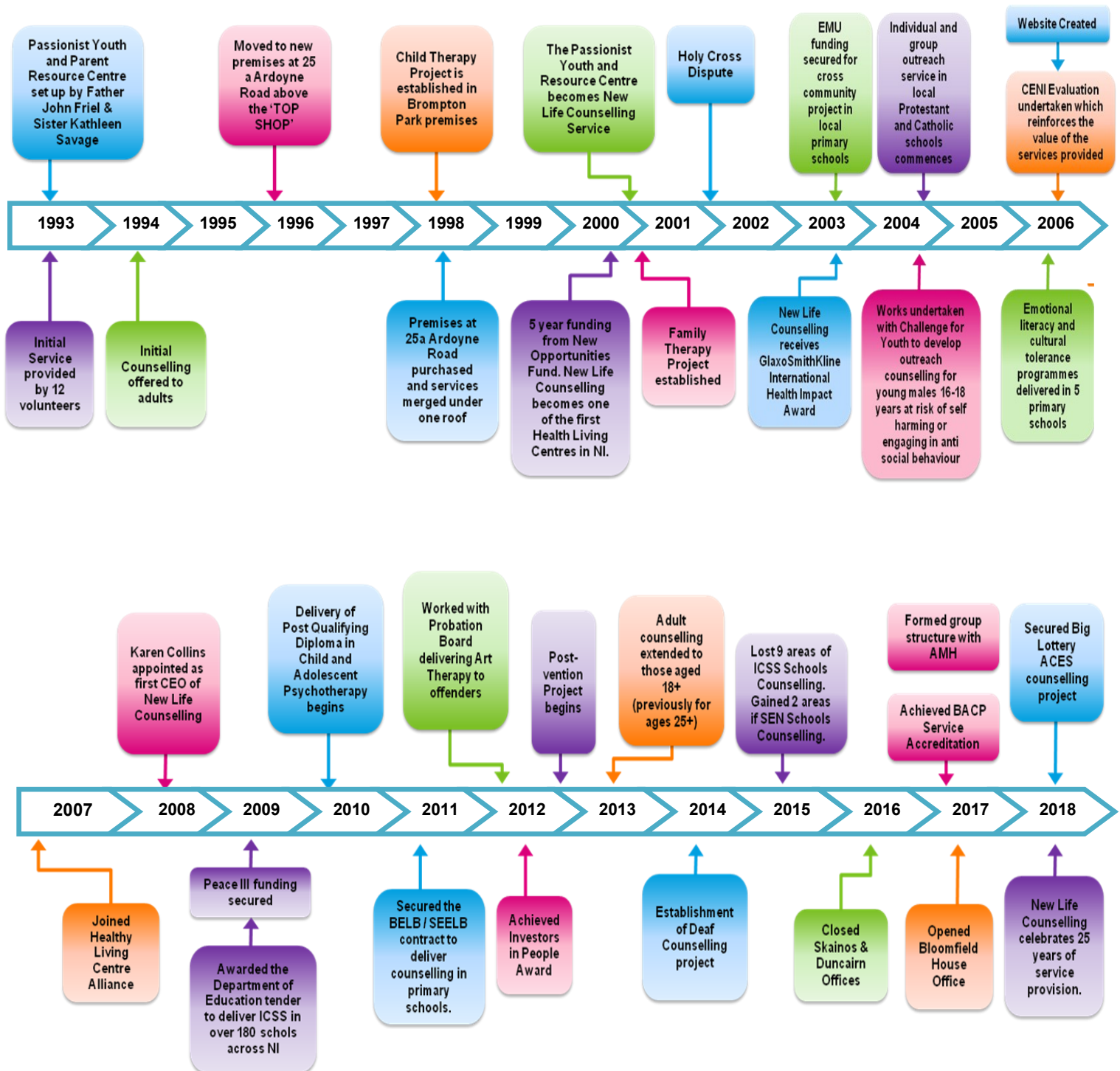
Following a referral from the Trust, we contacted Joan to introduce New Life and the service that was available to her and her family. Joan's daughter Eileen had died by suicide. We provided a home visit and six members of the family attended: Eileen's two brothers and their partners, and both of Eileen's parents. Following on from that visit, contact was kept with all those who felt they wanted and needed support and weekly telephone sessions were provided. In their own time, both of Eileen's parents chose to access one to one counselling, as did their 7 year old grandson who missed his Auntie very much. His grief manifested in certain behaviours that were causing him some difficulties and distress. He attended 6 weeks of play therapy. The family were supported individually and collectively in their grief. They were signposted to other agencies for financial and practical help and advice.

"I will never get over losing my beautiful daughter but the counselling has helped me to learn to live with it. I cried in every session for months and my counsellor just patiently listened and helped me with my grief. It took a long time. I will never understand why my daughter chose to do what she did but I have a family here to love and live for...she would have wanted me to go on."



1993– 2018

Celebrating 25 Years of Counselling



Board of Directors

Stephen Robinson	Chairperson
Diana Press	Vice Chair (resigned March 2018)
Heather Cousins	Treasurer (resigned March 2018)
Gabi Mornhinweg	
Dr Gerard Lynch	
Tom McEneaney	(resigned July 2018)
Susan Cooke	
Suzi Hunter	
Annie Melaugh McAteer	
Louise O'Boyle	
Jonathan McAdams	
Damian McAuley	(appointed April 2018)
Angela Craigan	(appointed April 2018)

Senior Management Team

Norma Patterson	Chief Executive Officer
Andrew Sutherland	Head of Clinical Services
Sarah Grant Jones	Adult Team Leader
Alison Templeton	OKAY Team Leader
Wendy Stewart	Family Team Leader
Bernie McAteer	Support Services Co-ordinator

Contact Details

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BT4 1RH

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HMRC XR33055

Company Registration Number NI 40330

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