



timetotalk
WEST BERKSHIRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

**PROMOTING THE
PSYCHOLOGICAL &
EMOTIONAL WELLBEING OF
YOUNG PEOPLE AGED 11-25 IN
WEST BERKSHIRE**

INTRODUCTION

Time to Talk West Berkshire is a free at the point of delivery, confidential counselling service for young people in need, aged 11 to 25, in West Berkshire. We are the only organisation in West Berkshire offering free counselling to those under 18.

We support thousands of young people and offer counselling sessions in 11 locations across West Berkshire. Since 1987, our team of 30+ highly experienced, qualified counsellors, has supported a diverse set of needs such as bereavement, family breakdown, low mood, anxiety and gender dysphoria. Every young person is assessed within two weeks, essential to providing some early intervention and assessment of risk.

MISSION

To provide an emotional and psychological well-being support service for young people aged 11-25 and parents. This is delivered through quality-controlled counselling, a supported online programme and community outreach activities. Clients should be connected to West Berkshire (resident, in education/training, working or registered with a GP there). This service is free at the point of delivery and helps our clients deal with their specific challenges in a sustainable and confidential way.

VISION

A West Berkshire where all young people feel empowered and have the same opportunity to reach their full potential and grow up to be actively engaged in society as happy, confident, and achieving adults.

We follow the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy's Ethical Framework and our counselling services are fully accredited by BACP.

bacp
collective mark

**Accredited
Service**

DURING 2023-24

700

**YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARENTS
GIVEN COUNSELLING BY OUR
SERVICE**

7015

SESSIONS DELIVERED

111

**YOUNG PEOPLE AND PARENTS
USING OUR SUPPORTED ONLINE
PROGRAMME**



OUR TEAM 2023-24

TRUSTEES

Geoff Hogg (Chair of Trustees), Georgina Punter, Elizabeth O'Keefe, Paul Stratton, Tracey Leeson, Amanda Hatcher, Jack Marriott

OPERATIONS TEAM

Davina, Kate, Tammy, Judy, Jackie, Clare, Tia

COUNSELLING TEAM

Alannah, Amy, Annie, Becky, Caroline, Catherine, Cheryl, David, Donna, Emma, Gemma, Hannah, Helen, Holly, Jane, Jenny, Jessie, Kamila, Kate, Laura, Louise A, Louise D, Mel, Natalie, Neil, Olivia, Rachel, Rena, Rose, Rupert, Sally, Steve, Sue, Susan, & Viki

ASSESSMENT & SUPERVISION TEAM

Amy, Rena, Rupert, Viki, Kate, Micheal, Mandy, Martha, Sara & Davina

ONLINE PROGRAMME SUPPORTERS

Tia Bartlett, Alison, Charlotte, Clare, Debbie, Helen, Isabel, Natalie, Rosie, Serena, Tracey, Wendy

EVENTS TEAM

Debs, Carol, Amanda, Tracey & Georgina

FUNDRAISING

Claire

23/24 UPDATE



A YEAR OF RECOGNITION

In November, we were humbled to receive the Greenham Trust - Young People Charity of the Year award. Standing alongside other exceptional youth charities in our community, winning this accolade was a testament to the dedication and impact of our team. Following closely on the heels of this honour, securing a spot on the Newbury Monopoly board was a delightful surprise and confirmation of our organisation's significance within our local community.

February saw another momentous occasion as we attended the West Berkshire Community Champion Awards. Though the competition was fierce, we were deeply honoured to be highly commended for the Community Champion Group Award, recognising our commitment to making a positive difference. March ushered in yet another wave of recognition as we received a nomination and commendation at the Newbury Town Council Civic Awards for our invaluable contribution as a local community group.

And finally, but by no means least, another achievement this year came with the crowning moment of being named the 'Charity of the Year' at the Newbury Weekly News Best in Business Awards. This prestigious honour not only validates our dedication but also serves as an inspiration for us to continue striving for excellence in everything we do.

As we reflect on these milestones, we extend our gratitude to all our supporters, volunteers, donors and team members who have been instrumental in our success. Each award and commendation serves as a reminder of the impact we've made and the lives we've touched.

SERVICE MANAGER REPORT

COUNSELLING

Once again this year we have helped a record number of young people. Across our service, we have provided counselling to 688 young people and a further 12 parents have received counselling with us. We have also helped 111 people using our online support programme. This has been an amazing achievement, one of which we are extremely proud.

Young people and parents continue to have the choice of face-to-face, video or phone counselling, and they continue to have a choice of location if they select face-to-face counselling.

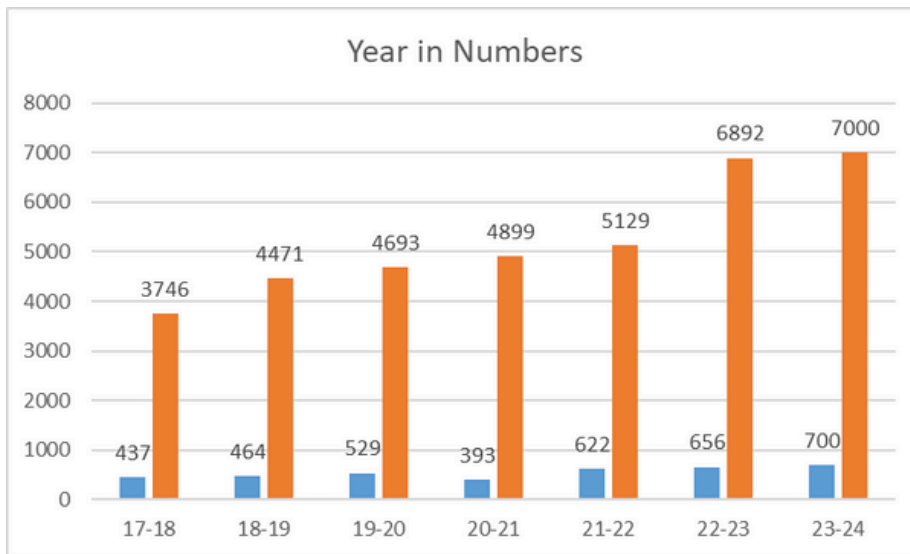
We have continued our work in secondary and primary schools offering counselling during the past year in 6 different schools.

WAITING LIST

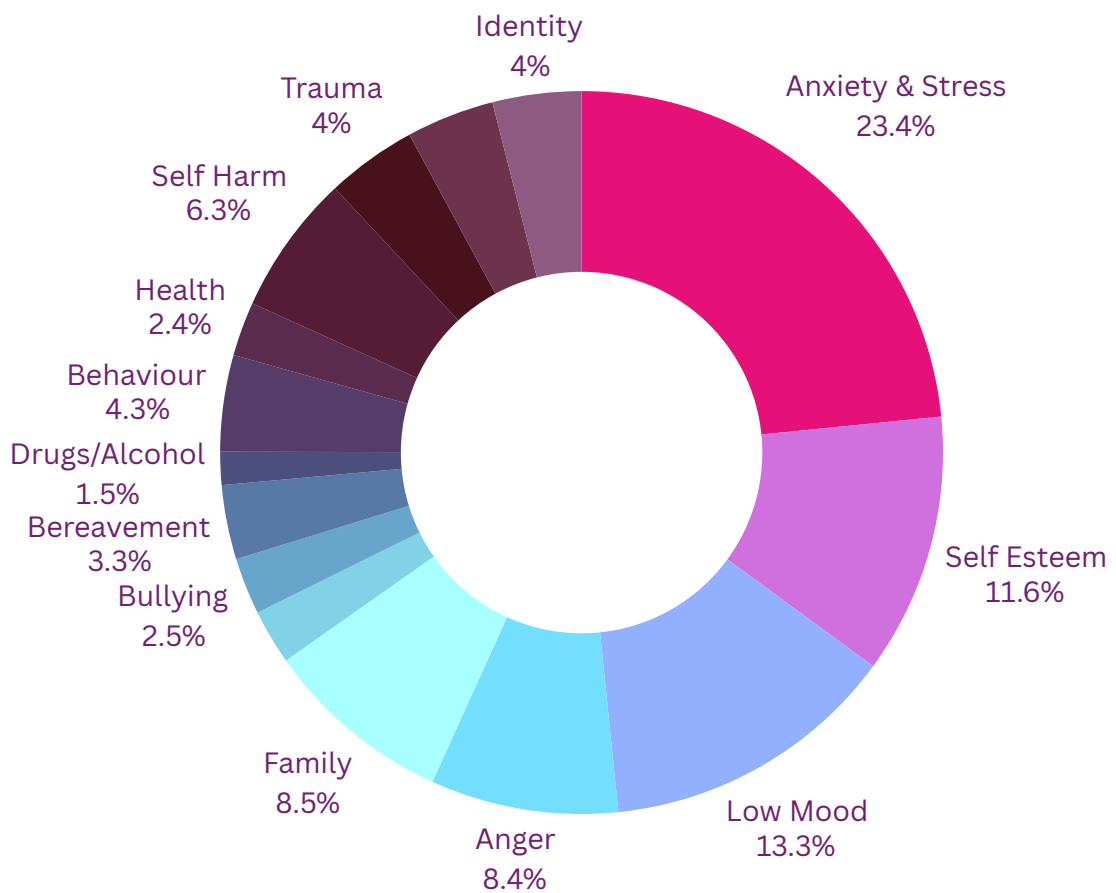
The demand for our service continues to grow. Our appointments are always offered on a first come first-served basis. We explain to prospective clients the expected wait time at the time of booking and we regularly keep in touch with them. We support clients whilst they are on our waiting list and signpost them to other help that might be available, including digital support from our online support programme where appropriate.

We work hard to see clients as quickly as possible and by implementing additional counselling sessions we have been able to keep our waiting list at an average of 103 young people. The waitlist peaked this year in March at 121 young people, and the average wait time for counselling with us is just over 9 weeks

STATISTICS



CLIENTS SEEN / NUMBER OF SESSIONS



CLINICAL LEAD

HIGH QUALITY SERVICE RECOGNITION

As I write this, bathed in rare Spring sunshine, I am also basking in the recognition of our recent accolades - Greenham Trust's Young People's Charity of the Year and Newbury Weekly News Charity of the Year. However, we believe in a continued cycle of improvement and are not resting on our laurels. No perfection, just progress. Similar to the way a person grows and changes in counselling, we believe there is no such thing as perfection or 'arriving'; we keep working on where we can make improvements to serve young people better.

We pride ourselves on providing unwavering support to our core team of counsellors, with annual reviews and response to feedback, this is underpinned by continued annual BACP accreditation. Time to Talk was also invited to speak at the annual BACP conference for Services and Courses - keeping the conversation alive. These developments are likely to stretch across the next few years and we are grateful to be part of the national conversations, which include trying to get a counsellor in every school.

This past year has seen an increase of 17% on referrals and it's not just the numbers that are climbing; the complexity and severity of issues young people are experiencing is on the rise too as a greater number identify themselves as experiencing neurodiversity. It can be hard to distinguish whether the presenting symptoms are due to trauma or neurodiversity. Maybe it's a product of today's lifestyle, as well as being a positive response to the break down of stigma and the advances in neuroscience. Meaning that we know far more about people's brains and the effect of trauma, as well as neurodiversity.

In summary, we are arming ourselves with the necessary tools to tackle these challenges and growing and evolving every step of the way.

SCHOOLS AND OUTREACH

CONSOLIDATION AND TARGETED SUPPORT

In schools, we are extending our “partnership working” to ensure that we can support individual schools in ways that complement and enhance existing provision. We recognise that every school is different and there is not one solution that fits all. Working with schools we have identified issues that are affecting the whole school or particular cohorts and have introduced a variety of different approaches covering student, parent and staff support. Including whole school assemblies looking at resilience, workshops looking at hands on ways of supporting peers and presentations covering staff and parent wellbeing. At each event we encourage feedback regarding other requirements and then build this into future work.

We have worked hard this year to make sure that we are using our counselling and psychological knowledge to the maximum, combined with feedback from young people in the sessions, to ensure that we deliver a more targeted approach. For example, we recognised that pupils in year 11 and year 13 seemed to have been more affected by exam pressure than in previous years and so we worked with schools to introduce additional support around exam stress.

Outreach covers both the delivery of counselling sessions in locations other than Broadway House, Newbury and also our programme of presentations and workshops. This year we have increased the number of sessions in Thatcham to meet a growing need. Room hire costs have risen considerably this year which has meant this location has the highest cost per individual counselling session across all our service. However, we remain committed to delivering this valuable provision. We continue to provide qualified and experienced counsellors to schools that requested to have an in house independent counsellor and we have maintained provision of counsellors in rural GP surgeries where demand for our service is high but it is harder to access.

SUPPORTED ONLINE PROGRAMME

DIGITAL SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE & PARENTS

Since being established in July 2022, our Supported Online Programme has supported over 200 young people and their parents on the platform. However, it is during the latter part of 2023/2024 that the programme has seen some incredible success. Tia, our Supported Online Programme Lead, who joined Time to Talk in January 2024, has been leading a team of dedicated supporters. These supporters are volunteers who play a crucial role in assisting programme users, offering guidance, and keeping them motivated throughout their journey. Our volunteers work tirelessly, navigating clients through each module with care and encouragement.

The programme has been well received with a combined satisfaction rate of 93% from our client feedback exceeding our ambitious goal of 90%. Our success is also measured through engagement looking at the amount of time a client will spend on the programme and how many times they actively log in. This has almost doubled since December 2023.

The most popular modules have been:



The programme supporters receive introductory and continuous training, including research-based advice on writing a good review, how to support parents within our programme and understanding the struggles young people face.

PARENT WORK

Time to Talk continues to offer a small, but extremely important, number of counselling sessions to parents in our community. These sessions provide parents with a place to discuss their own ideas and issues and work through any problems they might have. In this way, we not only help that parent but also positively affect the whole family.

This year we have helped a number of parents in counselling and many others have benefitted from our online programmes which focus on parenting anxious children and teenagers.

Parents are very grateful for our help and the feedback we receive reinforces the importance of these sessions. Over the coming year we are hoping to increase the number of parent sessions we offer and help even more people in West Berkshire.

"The best thing about counselling was having someone to talk to in a confidential setting, not feeling judged and being able to build a rapport with the counsellor."

"It was a calm and relaxed approach & feel. Suggestions were always helpful...All positive!"

"I must say all the staff at time to talk are such high level with their professionalism and approach to their work. I have been very impressed and pleased to have access to this service. Thank you."

"Counselling gave me a greater perspective on my life. help me navigate previous struggles. made me more aware of certain things. To not suppress emotions/feelings. getting to know myself better. "

FUNDERS

The demand for funding from trusts, foundations and donors has become increasingly competitive to secure especially for core funding which is essential for us. With the cost-of-living crisis and increased costs, demand on charities and funders has grown considerably and for the first time we have had to dip into our reserves to ensure we meet the increasing demand for our service. We aim to maintain 6 months of reserves to ensure that we continue to meet the demand and are able to support clients for the first time and those who return to us over a number of years as they face different issues in their young lives.

In 2023/2024 we secured circa £130K funding from a variety of trusts and foundations, and donors for which we are hugely grateful. Fundraising is a 'rollercoaster' of highs and lows and our team work tirelessly to ensure we present the charity requirements and all the amazing work undertaken to make a change to the lives of young people. It is not always easy to do this on paper and our strongest relationships are with those who come and meet the team and hear in person about the work we do. The team is passionate about the charity, and we hope that this comes across in all the applications and approaches we make to funders without whom we could not support so many 100's of young people, their parents and wider network.

On behalf of everyone involved in the work we do - Thank You for your support.



FUND RAISING

In a time where the cost of living is at the forefront of everyone's lives, there are still remarkable individuals who selflessly find the time and energy to fundraise for Time to Talk West Berkshire. Their efforts resonate deeply, reminding us of the power of generosity and solidarity in tackling important social issues. The past year has seen over £15000 raised by individuals fundraising on behalf of Time to Talk. We extend our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of them for their invaluable contributions and unwavering support.



Ian Jones took on the immense challenge to reach the summit of Aconcagua, the highest mountain in the Americas. Amount raised: £602

Father and son Bart and Ethan Kuijten cycled from Land's End to John O'Groats an arduous 1016 miles. Amount raised: £1501



Lewis Hill completed the Great South Run in a very impressive time. Amount raised: £755

For the whole of 2023 the team at 21/12 Barbers raised awareness for men's mental health with the sale of the "Cut the Stigma" tee shirts and donating the funds raised. Amount raised: £600



Catie Colston successfully completed the Magnificat Tour Cycling challenge, an incredible 111km around West Berkshire. Amount raised: £1105

The Xtrac Cycling team took on and completed the London to Brighton Charity Cycle Race. Amount raised: £1460



Cheam school nominated Time to Talk as one of their charities for the year, running various fundraising events including their Christmas Fair & Raffle. Amount raised: £9358

EVENTS 2023/2024

The events team organise a series of engaging events aimed at raising crucial funds for Time to Talk. Diverse activities such as quizzes and competitions, pop up boutiques and workshops are planned with a focus on community involvement and awareness. Collaborating with local businesses and volunteers, this creates a robust network of support, ensuring that each event not only brings in much-needed financial resources but also fosters a greater understanding of mental health issues within the community.

During 2023/2024 the amount raised was circa £38,000.

In July 2023 the events team organised another Pop Up Boutique. Once again hosted by a generous local supporter. Around 20 local businesses were invited to exhibit and sell goods to a large number of invited shoppers who bought tickets to attend. The event was sponsored by The Funghi Club, Sweetie Pie Patisserie and Crown Coffee. Amount raised: £4000



Time to Talk was once again chosen as the nominated Charity for the Thatcham Rotary Club annual "Great Thatcham Duck Race". Time to Talk had a stall offering a raffle and games to raise further funds. Amount raised: £4000



The very popular Time to Talk Quiz & Curry Nights with raffle were held across the year at the Bowlers Arms, Newbury. The quizzes took place in November, January and March with our excellent quizmaster, alongside a raffle for some excellent prizes. Amount raised: £3000



The Wreath Making workshop held in December got everyone in the Christmas Spirit. People were invited to purchase tickets to attend and received guidance in wreath making whilst taking on board some refreshments. Amount Raised £860



EVENTS 2023/2024

Highclere Society organised a Time to Talk Highclere Quiz where people were invited to submit a team and at the same time enjoy beer and wine all of which was donated by Sharp's Autos . Amount raised: £950



HELP US SUPPORT YOUNG PEOPLE'S MENTAL HEALTH

The John Foster Cup
Time to Talk West Berkshire Golf Day 2023
Thursday April 20th 2023
at Donnington Grove Golf Club

£500 per team of 4

The programme for the day will include:

- Breakfast rolls/tea or coffee
- 18 holes of golf
- 2 course dinner
- Prize giving

To register your interest please [click here](#)



DONNINGTON GROVE



Golf Day and Auction 2023

The second annual Time to Talk Charity Golf Day that took place at Donnington Grove Hotel and Golf Club held on Thursday 20th April 2023 was a huge success. This event is the largest and most prestigious that Time to Talk organises. On the day we welcomed 26 teams which made a total of 104 supporters. Running alongside the event, for further fundraising, the online auction was held with lots of amazing prizes to bid for, all donated from our fantastic sponsors.

As a result of everyone's hard work and support over £24,600 was raised and a fabulous day was had by all who attended.



OUR COUNSELLORS



During 2023/24 we had a total of 45 counsellors all striving to support young people. Our counsellors play a crucial role in fostering emotional and psychological well-being during a pivotal stage of life. They provide a safe, supportive space for youths to explore their feelings, navigate challenges, and develop coping strategies for issues such as anxiety, depression, family dynamics, and peer relationships. By offering empathetic listening and evidence-based therapeutic techniques, counsellors help young individuals build resilience, improve their self-esteem, and establish healthy patterns for managing stress. Their work not only addresses immediate mental health concerns but also equips young people with tools and skills that promote long-term mental wellness, contributing significantly to their overall growth and success.

CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

I have now completed my first year as Chair of Trustees for Time to Talk and what a fantastic year it's been. I feel privileged to be part of such a wonderful organisation that delivers a vital service to young people in our community in a very professional manner.

Time to Talk's success can be measured by the 90% positive feedback that we receive from our clients and also by receiving four separate awards in recognition of all the work we do. All of this has been achieved due to our very strong team of trustees, staff and volunteers. I thank them all for their diligence and enthusiasm.

Prior to me becoming Chair, T2T went through a period of significant and positive change in terms of structure and systems. My focus in the past year has been to ensure these changes are "bedded in". Our strategic plan has been to make small improvements to existing initiatives rather than start new projects; nearly all of these improvements have now been successfully implemented.

However, we know that we need to do more. Demand for our services is ever-increasing and we want to expand the work we do with young people in schools and with parents of young children, as well as growing our existing counselling and supported online services. This all requires additional funding, as our counselling services are provided to clients free of charge, and we will continue to work hard to secure this.

I am privileged to be working with such a strong team of staff and trustees and feel confident that Time to Talk will be able to continue and grow our essential work with young people in the medium to long term.