



Winchester Youth
Counselling



2024/25 Impact Report

Our Year in Review



*Thanks for
stopping to look!*



Hello there,

I am pleased to share the 2024-25 round-up of Winchester Youth Counselling's impacts.

This year, the demand for support remains strong, and the issues that young people come for help with have become more complex, so we have carefully adapted to cater for this. To meet this need, our new drop-in sessions and support groups for young people and carers have been a fantastic supplement to our individual counselling services. The increases that we have made to our provision of outdoor therapies have also helped those who find traditional counselling hard.

As a team, we have come together to develop our strategy and values for the future, to ensure that we continue to serve the community around us from the ground up and using best-practice. We have welcomed fantastic new staff, volunteers and four new Trustees, and crucially we have strengthened and grown our Youth Board, ensuring that all we do is led by young people, for young people.

I hope that you enjoy learning a little more about what we have done, and stick with us for the exciting journey ahead.



Hannah

**Dr Hannah Reidy
Chief Executive Officer**



What young people needed

“It was my first time trying walk and talk counselling and I can honestly said [sic] it’s been the best therapy I’ve received in years. Being out in nature helped me start being more active and appreciate my surroundings a lot more “
(Young person finishing Walk and Talk therapy)

“I mostly enjoyed talking and it’s lovely to know how everyone is, you are all kind and caring. It’s helped me more than you know”.
(Young person at Nature Therapy)

Young people came to us for support with:

- Anger
- Anxiety
- Bereavement
- Body Image
- Bullying
- Depression
- Relationships
- Gender Identity
- Low-mood
- Neurodiversity
- Self-Harm
- Sexuality
- Suicidal Thoughts
- Trauma

...and more.

“Amazing how therapists tailor the number of sessions to you. The standard NHS 6 sessions has never been effective for me, so this gave me the chance to dive deeper into my thoughts and really deal with them. Thank you”
(Young person finishing individual counselling)

“I enjoyed being outside, I have learned that being outside is good for you”. (Young person at Nature Therapy)





Projects



We continued to deliver our vital core work, alongside some fantastic new projects in 2024/25.



Support for Young People

Counselling:

Free, longer-term 1:1 counselling with a qualified or trainee youth counsellor, registered with the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists.

Walk and Talk Counselling:

The same, high quality 1:1 support, delivered outside in the beautiful natural surroundings of Winchester.

Winner of the CPRE Hampshire Health and Wellbeing Award 2024!

Nature Therapy:

Counsellor led, engaging outdoor group activities for 11-16 years old, to improve wellbeing and mental health.

Drop-in Services

Free, friendly and inviting wellbeing sessions, supported by qualified counsellors in various locations across Winchester.

Ukrainian Refugee Support Group (Through the Homes For Ukraine (HFU) Support Service on behalf of Winchester City Council)

A free support group for young people affected by the war in Ukraine, including activities and a hot meal.

NEW PROJECT IN 2024

Support for Parents and Carers

1:1 Parent Consultations

Free 1:1 sessions with a qualified counsellor, to help better support a young person in their care that is struggling with their mental health.

Parent Support Workshops

Professionally led, themed workshops for parents and carers; based on our most common parent support requests.

Neurodiversity Support Group for Parents

A monthly support group for parents and carers of young people who are neurodiverse, offering practical advice and peer support.

NEW PROJECT IN 2024

Our 2024/25 impacts



We received nearly **1 referral a day**

A 49% increase from last year

These young people were supported with through 1:1 support, group work, drop-in services, or were signposted to other services.



We supported **263 Young People** with 1:1 sessions. On average, clients were supported for 18 weeks.



Had 79 safeguarding alerts. **42% involved suicidal thoughts, risk or attempts** and 11% involved self-harm.



Over 110 parents had a 1:1 consultation or joined our support groups or workshops



We were joined by over **375 attendances** at our youth drop-in services



Over 80% of our clients* reported improvements in their overall wellbeing



205 people used our online resource hub, developed by our Youth Board



Had 4933 website users and **50614 page visits** on our website.



Reached 29,900 people on social media.
A 172% increase from last year.

*which completed questionnaires at the start and end of counselling

Feedback



“From counselling I gained a sense of myself, Its helped me to work with my anxiety; I **don't feel so trapped by my anxiety**”

What our clients say...

“Everyone at WYC was warm and welcoming and **[it's] an incredible charity.**”

“WYC was an amazing charity and stepping stone into counselling. It helped me change my perspective on certain things in my life and I'd recommend them highly.”

“I'd recommend WYC to young teens and adults who are looking for support for their mental health and don't know where to start. The team are so kind and understanding and helped me at a time that **I just needed someone to listen**, for that I am incredibly grateful.”

What parents say...

“Through counselling, they have **gained the ability to manage mainstream education,** the ability to progress their independence”

“I just wanted to say thank you for the session you conducted with me this evening. You were the first person to understand how it feels to be a parent of a young person who is really struggling. I felt truly animated about the conversation that we had. X is going through quite a tough time and the session will help me to support X more.”

“I just wanted to thank you for working with X, it has really made a difference. And for all of your time and advice you have given us... Thank you again for all your support and patience, it means a lot.”

“We had a warm friendly welcome, and our child's needs were definitely taken into consideration at all times. The counsellor had good experience when dealing with our lady at difficult challenging sessions. We have seen such a difference after her sessions ended. Her confidence and the way she dealt with things and expressed herself are manageable . It was a pleasure to have met you all and thank you for helping our young lady.”



Youth Board

Highlights

- The board attended a nature therapy session with our nature therapy lead, Jill, at Winnall Moors.
- Charlotte, Astrid and Iona visited our drop-in service and gave feedback on how to improve it.
- Created a 'how to find us' and 'what happens' guide for clients attending our drop-in
- Iona provided a video for social media for International Youth Day, showing the importance of having a youth voice here at WYC.
- Charlotte attended our Corporate Well-Being Day and provided information to local organisations about the youth board and the amazing work they do.
- Astrid stepped into the role of an actor for the day, starring in our Mental Health Week social media post. Astrid provided the acting and voiceover to share an ex-client's personal experience with WYC.
- Iona, Katie, Olivia and Tae shared on social media how their voice contributes to WYC and how their voice influences our community.
- Held 12 Youth Board meetings, and attended Trustee meetings regularly as well as assisting with recruitment and staff interviews, fundraising and community events,
- Gave final review of our 25-26 business plan and strategic outcomes

"I wanted to join the youth board because I am **eager to contribute** my energy, experience, and insights to help **address issues that matter** to myself and the younger generation as a whole." - Kez

"I wanted to join the WYC Youth Board because I feel **it's important to have a space where young people have the opportunity to express issues that are important to them** such as mental health and self-esteem". - Tae



New members this year:

Tae and Iona joined in August 2024, **Astrid, Kez, Katie and Olivia** joined in January 2025.

Community

The local community raised more than **£66,914** through donations, sponsorship and Friends of WYC.

A huge **thank you** to the amazing local people, groups and businesses that went to such great efforts to support WYC in 2024/25

THANK YOU!



Team

We've welcomed several new team members this year that have settled in well alongside our existing team. In September, Dr Hannah Reidy commenced as Chief Executive Officer. We have also introduced some brand-new roles to WYC, including Trusts and Grants Fundraising Manager (Erin Tollefsen), Research and Administration Officer (Bryony Williams), and our Community and Events Fundraiser (Corinne Swayne).

Across the year, some fantastic new counsellors have also joined the team. Our operational and clinical team is now fully staffed, focussed and ready to move into 2025. Our clinical team is now utilising a shared leadership model, with Rose Milford and Lucy Clarke as Clinical Co-Leads, and Jill Guppy supporting and advising them.

We also welcomed several new Trustees to our Board: Kirsteen Hook, Michael Mander, Andrew Newberry, Susannah Webber, Michelle Flynn, Dason Bodilly and Julie Todd. We are extremely fortunate to now have ten outstanding Trustees that govern and safeguard the charity



Values

During our Team workshop in November, we brought together WYC Staff, Volunteers, Trustees, Youth Board and other key stakeholders to formalise our organisational values. We are delighted that our core values are shared by so many of us and we continue to embed these across all aspects of our work:



*Compassion, Collaboration, Courage,
Curiosity and Integrity*

Looking Forward

Our 2024-2029 Strategic Priorities:

1 To generate more funds and help more children and young people with quality therapeutic support.

2 To respond to the evolving need of children, young people and their families and better evidence our impact

3 To build on our position as a youth led organisation advocating for positive outcomes in mental health

4 To strengthen our commitment to good governance and transparency, ensuring the highest levels of accountability and public trust.

5 As we move into 2025/26, we will be reviewing and building upon these strategic priorities. We will be working to highlight the links between the natural world and mental wellbeing as well as focussing on diversifying our income and our community engagement: you'll be seeing lots more of us around Winchester next year!



Spotlight on...

Outdoor Therapies

Outdoor therapies are fast becoming an essential part of our service.

This year, WYC offered over 430 sessions in nature through our nature therapy (30 sessions) and Walk and Talk Counselling (403 sessions). The option to go outside and experience the therapeutic benefits of nature is something so many of our clients enjoy.

Outdoor therapies also known, as 'ecotherapy' or 'nature therapy' have increased in popularity in recent years.¹ Many studies have suggested there is a wide range of psychological and physical benefits of taking part in outdoor therapies and being in the outdoors.

Benefits of Outdoor Therapies and Spending Time in Nature Include:

Reduces

- 🌿 Stress and anxiety²
- 🌿 Blood pressure³
- 🌿 Social isolation⁴

Increases

- 🌿 Mental wellbeing and happiness⁵
- 🌿 Physical activity⁶
- 🌿 Connection with the natural world⁷

In addition to these psychological and physical benefits, nature therapy is suggested to be a cost-effective method compared to alternatives, as it can help to reduce the potential costs by reducing the quantity of medication and healthcare interactions.⁸ Also, a project by Forest Research estimated that people regularly visiting UK woodlands save mental health services £185 million annually.⁹



“The natural world is the co-therapist in our work. Young people often feel safer in nature and the benefits include developing more confidence, feeling less stressed and anxious, developing social connections and helping young people develop a ‘village mind-set’ where everyone is respected and valued including the natural world. This is why WYC also provides training days to other professionals, helping them to provide walk and talk therapies and nature therapy groups.”

Jill Guppy, WYC Founder and Clinical Advisor

8. (Hinde et al., 2021) - <https://doi.org/10.3390/ijerph18211599>
9. (Forest Research, 2021) - <https://www.forestresearch.gov.uk/news/115156-mental-health-benefits-of-visiting-uk-woodlands-estimated-at-185-million/>

1. (Wood, 2020) - <https://www.naturalhealthnews.uk/article/ecotherapy-aims-to-tap-into-nature-to-improve-your-wellbeing/>
2. (Kondo et al., 2018; Zhang et al., 2022) - <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.healthplace.2018.03.001>
3. (Twhig-Bennett & Jones, 2018) - <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.envres.2018.06.030>
4. (Sachs et al., 2024) - <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0169204624000707>
5. (NASP, 2023) - <https://socialprescribingacademy.org.uk/media/dmzbrff1/nasp-briefing-natural-environment.pdf>
6. (Mental Health Foundation, 2021) - <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-06/MHAW21-Nature-research-report.pdf>
7. (Martin et al., 2020) - <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/abs/pii/S0272494419301185>



Our Supporters

We would like to sincerely thank every individual and business that gave money, time and in-kind donations to WYC in 2024/25. Your support has been nothing short of essential in helping us make our impact as far reaching as possible. We would like to offer a particular thank you to The South Downs Social Cafe, for hosting our Drop-in service, that has seen over 300 visits from young people this year.

We would also like to thank our wonderful funders for the 2024/25 year, who made our impact possible.

Energise Me, Hampshire Youth Access, Know Thyself Charitable Trust, Oak Foundation, Sir Jeremiah Colman Charitable Trust, The Blagrove Trust The Charlotte Bonham Carter Charitable Trust, The Legge Family Fund, The National Lottery Community Fund, The Sir Jules Thorne Charitable Trust, Winchester City Council

With special thanks to the members of **Royal Winchester Golf Club**, for raising over £20,000 for WYC through their 'Charity of the Year' fundraising. and

The Friends of WYC monthly donors



If you would like to become a **Friend of WYC** and give a one off, or monthly donation the process is quick and easy, and you can make a real, long-term impact on the life and future of a young person:

Scan here to become a Friend of WYC!




How you can help


There are many ways you can get involved with WYC, both individually and at your place of work.




If you are a previous user of our service, a parent or carer, or a member of our wonderful community that has used and loved our service, **sharing your story to inspire others, is a powerful way to help us.** Contact fundraising@winchyc.org to speak with our team.

Other ways to get involved:

 Individual and Group challenge events: we love cheering on the community heroes that challenge themselves and raise through sponsorship- we have some fantastic events that we recommend for people of all ages and levels of fitness.

 Corporate Partnerships: We absolutely love working with local businesses that share a passion for supporting young people. Donations and Match funding, Charity of the Year and in-kind support, are some of the many ways you could get involved.

 Volunteer for us. Our Community Champions programme is a flexible, varied role that helps us immensely, to maximise our impact in the community and our fundraising.

And lastly...

If you or a young person that you know is struggling with their mental health, please take a look at our online resource hub, as well as our projects and way we may be able to support you.

Follow us and keep in touch



Facebook &



Instagram

@WinchesterYouthCounselling

Our website and Resource Hub www.winchyc.org

Please note: this report is separate to our accounts and has not been examined as part of our accounts process.

