

Analysis of Client Referral Information & Client Feedback 2020-2021

LIFE-FORCE Counselling Service monitors the level of service it is providing and service users through two systems:

A. The Appointment Register

B. Client Feedback Forms

Below is our report from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021 for each of these systems.

A. Analysis of Appointment Register

A new electronic client Appointment Register was introduced in the Summer of 2020. This new version of the register now includes some of the information that used to be in the previous Equal Opportunities Form and Client Evaluation Form, including 'How did you hear about us?' and 'Reasons for coming'. This means the analysis of the Appointment Register now not only gives the full picture of client referrals to the counselling service throughout the year but also provides more useful information in full detail. It also details the number of clients seen, their age, gender, and how they heard about LIFE-FORCE. These details are taken during the client referral process for all clients and then entered into the Appointment Register database.

1. Total Number of Clients

- 462 Clients
- A drop of 33% from last year when the number of clients was 693
- LIFE-FORCE Centre was closed 24th March until 26th May – approx. 2 months

The last 12 months have been challenging for all businesses due Covid-19 and the associated lockdowns. The impact of this was that LIFE-FORCE saw fewer clients than normal; a drop of 33% from the previous year.

The LIFE-FORCE Counselling Team worked very hard during this difficult time, and we were pleased with the number of clients we were able to help remotely, and with the swift introduction of Covid-19 Policies we were able to open up again as soon as the government regulations allowed to provide an essential mental health face-to-face support service.

When looking back at the bigger picture, there has been an overall growth of the business over the last few years, and we have seen the number of clients increase year on year.

2. Gender

2020-2021	Number of Clients	Percentage
Female	275	59.52
Male	187	40.48
Total	462	100

In 2020-2021 we saw almost 60% female clients to 40% male clients. At first glance this seems to be comparable to the last two years where the split has been roughly the same, however going back further the tendency was for there to be more males than females, with males making up the higher percentage of clients.

History - Number of Clients and Gender

Year	Female		Male		Total No. Clients
	No.	%	No.	%	
2020-2021	275	59.52	187	40.48	462
2019-2020	425	61.33	268	38.67	693
2018-2019	341	56.46	263	43.54	604
2017-2018	241	37.66	399	62.34	640
2016-2017	258	46.07	302	53.93	560
2015-2016	196	41.70	274	58.30	470

3. Age Range

2020-2021

Age	No. Clients	Percentage
<6	3	0.65%
6-16	72	15.62%
17-19	20	4.34%
20-29	155	33.62%
30-39	103	22.34%
40-49	45	9.76%
50-59	42	9.11%
60+	21	4.56%

2019-2020

Age	No. Clients	Percentage
*6 - 16	80	11.66%
17 – 19	32	4.66%
20 – 29	193	28.13%
30 – 39	175	25.51%
40 – 49 ~	114	16.62%
50 – 59	63	9.18%
60 or above	29	4.23%
Not known	7	

The data shows that this year the age range of clients coming for counselling follows a similar pattern to those we have seen in the past. Although there has been a slight decrease in clients aged 40 to 49 years old and a 5% increase in clients under 16 years old, and also a 5% increase for those aged between 20 to 29 years old. However, over 50% of clients were aged 17-39 years old and 15% of clients were children aged 6-16 years old.

4. How did you hear about LIFE-FORCE?

FF	Family Member / Friend Acquaintance/Colleague	188	41.50%
BB	Been Before	87	19.21%
WS	Website/Internet	75	16.56%
VO	Voluntary Organisation (e.g. Mind / Relate)	23	5.08%
EW	Employer / Work	18	3.97%
IC	Independent Counsellor / Psychotherapist	16	3.53%
EO	Education Based Organisation	13	2.87%
GP	GP Surgery	9	1.99%
OT	Other	9	1.99%
NHS	Other Doctor / NHS	6	1.32%
WP	Walked Past	6	1.32%
SS	Social Services	2	0.44%
LP	Legal Profession (e.g. Solicitor)	1	0.22%

Yet again, referral from a friend, family member or acquaintance remains by far the most common referral method at 41.5% and it is a positive reflection of the good work of all involved at LIFE-FORCE that clients continue to recommend us. Further supporting this, is the fact that those that have been before to LIFE-FORCE return for further counselling support. We are also pleased to see the website is helping guide clients to us, along with referrals from other professional organisations.

However, the figures show that only a small percentage of 1.99% heard about us through their G.P. This is something we were already aware of, but this information has prompted us to promote the service with local G.P surgeries by sending out a new up to date A4 coloured poster about our services.

5. Reason for Attending

Code	Reason for Attending	No.	Percentage
A/S	Anxiety / Stress/ Panic / PTSD	97	21.00%
I/R	Relationship / Family / Redundancy / Divorce	72	15.58%
DE	Depression / Post-Natal Depression	68	14.72%
GE	General / Everything / Past Issues	38	8.23%
AI	Anger Issues	28	6.06%
B/L	Bereavement / Loss / Separation / Death & Dying	27	5.84%
T/A	Trauma / Abuse/ Bullied / Rape	26	5.63%
MH	Diagnosed Mental Health Condition	20	4.33%
AUT	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	16	3.46%
C/L	Cognitive / Learning Disability	13	2.81%
A/A	Addictions / Alcohol & Drugs / Gambling	10	2.16%
CS	Crisis Situation/Suicidal	10	2.16%
SE	Self-Esteem / Low Confidence	8	1.73%
OCD	OCD	6	1.30%
HI	Health Issues	5	1.08%
CI	Childhood Issues	4	0.87%
SH	Self-Harm	3	0.65%
W/A	Work / Academic / Training Requirement	3	0.65%
ED	Eating Disorder	2	0.43%
SG	Sexuality / Gender	2	0.43%
OT	Other	2	0.43%
AD	Adoption	1	0.22%
DV	Domestic Violence	1	0.22%
L/W	Living / Welfare / Special Needs	0	0.00%

Anxiety/stress, relationship issues and depression continue to be the top three reasons for attending counselling, making up over 50% of reasons stated during the referral process.

The next key categories, making up 5% to 10% of referrals each, are general/everything/past issues, anger issues, bereavement/loss and trauma/abuse/bullied/rape. Then we see other reasons making up less than 5% each of referral cases such as addictions, crisis, self-esteem, OCD and health issues. A smaller number of clients attended counselling for issues such as adoption, eating disorders and domestic violence with each of these categories making up less than 1% of all referrals. We will seek to raise awareness of our services with the local woman's refuge and the police. This pattern appears to be typical of previous years.

B. Analysis of Client Feedback Forms

Overview

In April 2020 we introduced a new **online** Client Feedback Form. This new form combined elements from our previous Equal Opportunities Form and Client Evaluation Form together with the aim of making it easier for clients to provide basic but essential feedback. The areas covered in the new electronic Appointment Register were removed from this new Client Feedback Form.

Overall, we received back 32 counselling feedback forms to analyse from April 2020 to March 2021. Out of 462 clients, this is less than 7% of clients and a significant drop as historically we have received feedback from around 23% of clients with 165 and 151 forms returned in the previous two years.

However, this drop in submissions was not solely due to the move from paper feedback forms to an electronic form on our website. There was also a major reduction caused by Covid-19 and the closure of the Centre along with some clients switching to remote counselling rather than face-to-face.

Once the Centre reopened for face-to-face sessions we tried a few different approaches to increase the number of feedback forms we were receiving. Initially we instigated a text reminder system and following GDPR guidelines asked for consent from clients during the referral process to do this. We found low numbers of clients gave consent so the decision was made to stop this text reminder system. Next we re-introduced the Client Feedback Form as a paper version, which enabled the counsellor to give clients the option of either going online or using the paper copy as a way of providing feedback at the close of therapy.

Last year's report noted that clients very rarely used the Client Information Folder provided in the Rainbow Room, so this has been discontinued and a thorough review of the website has been completed in order to make sure it provides all the relevant information that existing, new and prospective clients might need. When asking clients if the website was useful, all of those that had visited it agreed that it was. In addition, the Client Service Leaflet and Client Information Leaflet were also seen as helpful; the latter is given to clients during their first session with a counsellor.

The Client Feedback Form asks clients 6 questions in which they can rate their experience of counselling with LIFE-FORCE.

Question 1

In addition to your recent counselling sessions at LIFE-FORCE, have you had counselling before?		
Answer	Submissions	Percent
Yes, at LIFE-FORCE	4	12.5%
Yes, elsewhere	18	56.3%
No	10	31.52%

The majority of clients 87.5 % had not visited LIFE-FORCE previously and were therefore new clients to the Service. Just over half of our clients 56.3% had previously been for therapy elsewhere and it is encouraging that people choose to seek counselling out again and further, felt drawn to explore counselling at our Centre. It is also positive that 12.5% were returning clients with 31.2% being new to counselling.

Question 2

Was the Counselling Service Leaflet helpful?		
Answer	Submissions	Percent
Yes	27	84.4%
No		0.0%
Haven't read it	5	15.6%

The Client Service Leaflet is available in our foyer in the leaflet rack and is also included in our marketing pack when promoting the Service. It aims to give clients general information about what the Service has to offer including types of therapeutic approaches, presenting issues, fees and how to contact us to arrange an appointment.

The clients who have read this leaflet seem to find it helpful, but we are wondering if there were thinking that this question relates to the Client Information leaflet as per the next point below. Therefore, we think it might be more straight forward to remove this question from the survey in the future.

Question 3

Was the Client Information Leaflet helpful?		
Answer	Submissions	Percent
Yes	25	78.1%
No		0.0%
Haven't read it	7	21.9%

The Client Information Leaflet is given to clients on their first visit and gives clients information about what to expect from counselling including the process and professional standards. We can see that most of our clients do in-fact read the Client Information Leaflet and find it to be helpful.

Question 4

Was the website helpful		
Answer	Submissions	Percent
Yes	20	62.5%
No		0.0%
Not visited	12	37.5%

Comments
Website was very accessible
Clear and helpful
Found website online when searching for counselling

The LIFE-FORCE website is constantly monitored and evolving to meet the needs of our clients and it seems to be doing this job very well. It is important to note that 12% of clients have not visited the website indicating that the paper versions of the Client Service Leaflet, Client Information Leaflet and Client Evaluation Forms are still needed at this current time.

Question 5

Please indicate your ethnic origin		
Answer	Submissions	Percent
White British	30	93.8%
White Irish		0.0%
Other White Background	1	3.1%
White & Black Caribbean		0.0%

White & Black African		0.0%
White & Asian		0.0%
Other Mixed Background		0.0%
Asian Indian		0.0%
Asian Pakistani		0.0%
Asian Bangladeshi		0.0%
Other Asian Background		0.0%
Black Caribbean		0.0%
Black African		0.0%
Other Black Background		0.0%
Chinese		0.0%
Other Ethnic Group	1	3.1%
Unknown		0.0%

The data shows that in terms of clients we are continuing to see historic patterns continue with White British making up 93% of clients, which matches the ethnicity of Colchester as an area.

Question 6

Please indicate your religion		
Answer	Submissions	Percent
Agnostic	7	21.9%
Atheist	5	15.6%
Buddhist		0.0%
Christian/C of E/R. Catholic	13	40.6%
Hindu		0.0%
Jewish		0.0%
Muslim	1	3.1%
Spiritualist	3	9.4%
Other	3	9.4%
More Details for Other		Submissions
None		1
Haven't made my mind up yet		1

In terms of religion 40.6% of clients indicated that they are Christian, 21% were Agnostic and 15% Atheist.

Question 7

Please indicate any special needs or physical learning disabilities		
Answer	Submissions	Percent
Epileptic		0.0%
Physical Injury		0.0%
Walking Stick		0.0%
Learning Disability		0.0%
Blue Badge Holder		0.0%
Other	1	3.1%
More Details for Other		Submissions
Mild autism		1
None	31	96.9%

Out of this small pool of respondents only one noted they had a disability, autism. LIFE-FORCE Centre has a dedicated therapy room which is mainly used for clients with disabilities/requiring wheelchair access, along with a disabled friendly toilet and disabled access.

Question 8

How did you find the general approach of the LIFE-FORCE office staff e.g. were they helpful and sensitive etc? Ho do you rate their overall professional approach?		
Answer	Submissions	Percent
1 - Poor		0.0%
2 - Fair		0.0%
3 - Average	1	3.1%
4 - Good	6	18.8%
5 - Excellent	25	78.1%
Comments		
Thoughtful, and approachable		
The team listens and understands your needs on a personal basis, making you feel safe and comfortable in the choice of counselling you need.		
The pairing process to a counsellor was excellent		

Professional approach. Fast getting back to me. Sensitive over situation and helpful
Friendly, approachable, and caring
Very professional on first phone conversation
Very professional and contacted me straight away.
Very sensitive and professional

97% rated LIFE-FORCE staff as excellent/good

“The team listens and understands your needs on a personal basis, making you feel safe and comfortable in the choice of counselling you need”.

The Service is pleased to hear that our Service referral staff are providing a professional and also caring approach, as this is something we consider to be very important.

Question 9

After contacting LIFE-FORCE, how long did you wait for your first appointment? How do you rate this level of service?		
Answer	Submissions	Percent
1 - Poor		0.0%
2 - Fair		0.0%
3 - Average		0.0%
4 - Good	7	21.9%
5 - Excellent	25	78.1%
Comments		
A few weeks, given that it was Christmas in between I thought this was very good.		
I can't remember exactly how long it took but it didn't feel like a long wait		
Within a day I was contacted to know when I could begin and who I would like to start my counselling sessions with.		
Everything was arranged very efficiently from first contact to booking the appointment.		
We waited a week		
We had an appointment the following week.		
Less than 24 hours		
It took a while as I was waiting for a Student		
Delayed due to Covid-19 so hard to rate but would have been relatively quick		
1 week		

5 days
Very efficient, not long to wait.
About a week.
Didn't have to wait. I think a week if that.
2 or 3 weeks, very quick turnaround.
A week
The same day

100% of clients felt the level of service they received from LIFE-FORCE was excellent/good regarding how long they waited for an appointment.

“Everything was arranged very efficiently from first contact to booking the appointment”.

The Service always aims to contact clients within 24 hours of initial contact and tries to arrange an appointment within a week whenever possible.

Question 10

How did you find the general approach of your counsellor e.g. warm, open, skilled? How do you rate their professional ability?		
Answer	Submissions	Percent
1 - Poor		0.0%
2 - Fair		0.0%
3 - Average		0.0%
4 - Good	4	12.5%
5 - Excellent	28	87.5%

Comments
XXXX listened and took in all that I said and gave a helpful path for me to follow
I have to say the counselling I received was second to none and so helpful in a time I felt so vulnerable and would like to thank Life-Force for that support.
XXXX is warm, empathetic and understanding in why and what I needed to work on myself to help me. She is professional and caring with her counselling and never leaves you feeling like nothing is impossible to overcome.
Our counsellor was excellent, made us both feel welcome, relaxed, helped us begin, guided us through, listened and discussed points that were relevant and needed discussing. XXXX was excellent. Direct, relaxed, helped us find our way through our issues to recognise what, how why we were doing things the way we were. She has changed us both for the good.
XXXX was a perfect match for both XXXX and I, she is a very good listener and explains things with logic and sense. I would recommend XXXX to anyone who wants a direct approach.

XXXX is an amazing counsellor. She oozes warmth, openness, integrity and ease. She has such insight, knowledge and strong accurate intuition which she skillfully and seamlessly blends in her caring approach. I will be forever thankful to her.

Very warm and easy to approach. From what I have seen I'd say professional ability fantastic. Counselling isn't for me directly though. The counsellor has been fantastic, so easy to approach, always smiling. I knew my daughter would love her. She has enjoyed every week and sad it has come to an end. XXXX was really understanding and offered her time if I needed to talk or had any questions.

Thank you XXXX, I feel free!

Perfect for me. Friendly and supportively challenging

Warm and professional

Very warm and our child took very quickly to her. Activities in sessions seems well planned and resourced. XXXX has been very professional with a lovely manner. Our child has looked forward to her weekly sessions very much

XXXX is excellent and very skilled

Wasn't sure at first but never felt any judgement and warmed to her.

Very kind

Exceptional, easy to talk to, warm and understanding

Warm, open, easy to talk too

100% of clients rated the professional ability of their counsellor as excellent/good.

"I have to say the counselling I received was second to none and so helpful in a time I felt so vulnerable and would like to thank Life-Force for that support".

The Service always appreciates positive comments from clients regarding the quality of the therapeutic work provided by our Counselling Team.

Question 11

Upon reflection please rate to what extent you found the counselling to be beneficial, or not. Please comment accordingly.

Answer	Submissions	Percent
1 - Poor		0.0%
2 - Fair		0.0%
3 - Average	1	3.1%
4 - Good	9	28.1%
5 - Excellent	22	68.8%

Comments

The counselling was for my daughter. Unfortunately she only has 5 sessions and did not want to open up.

The counseling has helped me reconsider aspects of my life and work and a slightly different approach to life.
It enabled me to talk openly about the circumstances surrounding my son's death
I wouldn't have got to the place I'm in now without it
The counselling has been so beneficial for me to come to terms with and overcome what I needed to work on myself.
Totally opened our eyes to see and recognise why we were behaving the way we were, helped us make the changes.
I found the counselling very beneficial, it helped me to understand how the past had impacted on me.
Words cannot do justice to the level of support and warmth that was shown to me, beyond lucky to have met an all round amazing person to help me through personal struggles and also open my mind to many other walks of life. Just an absolutely fantastic person :)
Again not for me directly, difficult to answer. As this process was for peace of mind. Not just but needed reassurance. I guess you could say I have been reassured.
It opened my eyes to things I believed I dealt with previously but clearly hadn't
Helps to speak to about problems with an impartial person
Since beginning the sessions we have seen a reduction in our child's aggressive behaviour
Counselling sessions were a useful place to test out my ideas about how to manage better. Helpful to have some direct challenges to my thinking laid out.
As I am autistic somewhere confidential to talk out problems is a life-line. Thank you life-force
So beneficial! Would recommend to all.
Very useful and a great life-line.
Highly beneficial
Very beneficial, it's really helpful
Very beneficial in a difficult time
Very beneficial

97% found counselling to be beneficial.

"The counselling has been so beneficial for me to come to terms with and overcome what I needed to work on myself".

It is encouraging for the Service to hear such positive feedback from clients as the office generally does not have any contact with clients after the referral stage and therefore we do not hear from clients.

Question 12

How good did you find the Centre's facilities, atmosphere, therapy rooms and the environment?		
Answer	Submissions	Percent
1 - Poor		0.0%
2 - Fair	1	3.1%
3 - Average	3	9.4%
4 - Good	13	40.6%
5 - Excellent	15	46.9%

Comments
Because of Covid-19, I had telephone counselling which I didn't think would work first of all but turned out to be even better because I was in my home and felt safe.
The centre feels welcoming and warm and has an atmosphere to it that makes you feel at ease and in a safe place.
Very good, spacious and comfortable
Could be a bit more cozy/homely feel
Work going on was noisy and a little disruptive at times. Waiting room was the kitchen due to Covid adjustments
Waiting room is very silent and a bit daunting. Maybe some background music.
Comfortable seating, clean, airy rooms, large waiting area
Clean and relaxed

87.5% found the Centre's facilities and atmosphere to be excellent/good. This remaining 12.5% still found the Centre to be good/fair.

"The centre feels welcoming and warm and has an atmosphere to it that makes you feel at ease and in a safe place".

The Centre is continually updating, decorating and maintaining the building which is usually carried out when the premises are closed during bank holidays, August and Christmas week. However sometimes work has to be done during open hours due to the Service being available Monday-Friday 9am-9pm and Weekends 9am-6pm. We always aim to make sure this is as disruptive as possible and advise the team in advance of any potentially noisy work so that they can either rearrange session times or warn clients beforehand.

Question 13

Would you consider recommending the Counselling Service to others? Rate how good overall you found the Service to be.		
Answer	Submissions	Percent
1 - Poor		0.0%
2 - Fair		0.0%
3 - Average	1	3.1%

4 - Good	7	21.9%
5 - Excellent	24	75.0%
Comments		
I have now completed my therapy counselling		
I would recommend anyone who feels like life is too much to handle to try counselling with Life Force that is affordable, constructive and generally make you feel like you are listened to.		
Yes definitely.		
Yes definitely.		
Yes undoubtedly		
Yes I would		
Would definitely recommend		
Yes, for various needs it could be beneficial and would help children with more extreme needs.		
Excellent attention to detail made me feel confident that the sessions were value for money and that individualised treatment was delivered.		
Yes have done. Great service.		
I have already recommended several times		
Yes		

Finally, 97% found the overall service provided by LIFE-FORCE counselling to be good/excellent, with only one person rating it as average.

"I would recommend anyone who feels like life is too much to handle to try counselling with Life Force that is affordable, constructive and generally make you feel like you are listened to".

As 41.5% clients come to LIFE-FORCE via recommendation it is important that such a high percentage of clients would recommend the Service.

Conclusion

Due to COVID-19 and therefore lower number of clients and feedback forms, it is hard to make comparisons with the feedback from previous years. However, from these we can see that LIFE-FORCE is providing an excellent service from initial contact with our warm and professional staff during the client referral process, to timely provision of a first appointment and then supportive and beneficial counselling provided by our team counsellors.

Action Points

1. Marketing to GPs, police and woman's refuge.

This work has already been started and all our local GP surgeries have been emailed along with a recently developed A4 coloured poster about the Counselling Service. We have also updated our links page on our website and emailed all these organisations sending them the A4 poster and inviting them to link back with us should they so wish, and this includes the woman's refuge now called Next Chapter. We have also contacted other local organisations and sent them our marketing email, however this work is still ongoing. We will also contact our local police station and send them our marketing pack.

2. Review of first year of Online Client Feedback forms

Having reviewed the comments above at question 2, we have decided to remove this question from the form so that we know clients are definitely providing feedback about the Client Information Leaflet and not the Counselling Service Leaflet.

3. Promoting the return of Client Feedback Forms.

Receiving feedback from clients is very important to us as an organisation. This will help us ensure we keep on providing the professional counselling service expected from LIFE-FORCE. We will continue to remind counsellors to ask clients to complete the form either in paper copy or online.

17th June 2021