



**Client Referral & Feedback  
Annual Report 2023 - 2024**



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# Introduction

LIFE-FORCE has supported clients for 30 years. The LIFE-FORCE Centre is a professional independent Counselling Service situated in the heart of Colchester, close to the town centre on East Hill.

The Centre runs a therapeutic Counselling Service. Counselling is provided in-person at the LIFE-FORCE Centre and remotely. The Service is open to individuals of all ages including adults, children, young people and couples.

The focus of our evaluation is:

- Review actions from previous year
- Provide and maintain excellent professional standards
- Maintain minimum waiting times
- Continue to provide highest level of care
- Review feedback from clients regarding the quality of the counselling service and suggestions for improvement
- Set objectives for the year ahead

## Research Methods

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

- **The Appointment Register**
- **Client Feedback Forms**

## Description of Service

LIFE-FORCE was founded in 1990 and the Centre was established in 1994.

The Counselling Service provided is of the highest professional standards and is run according to the BACP (British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy) Ethical Framework for the Counselling Professions.

The Centre has seven therapy rooms, which include the Emerald, Amber, Coral, Amethyst, Topaz, Sapphire and Play Rooms. All the rooms are purposely furnished and are used exclusively for counselling sessions, meetings or training sessions. The LIFE-FORCE Centre provides an essential mental health & emotional support service, offering face-to-face counselling and also telephone & online sessions.

The Centre runs an affordable Counselling Service and aims to provide counselling sessions to all enquiries whenever possible.

The Service receives referrals from many local authorities and GP Practices, individuals may also self-refer.



## Staffing & Resources

LIFE-FORCE ensures all Team Counsellors practising within the Counselling Service provide annual evidence of relevant Continuing Professional Development (CPD) activity, along with up to date renewal documents including; BACP membership, professional indemnity insurance, DBS Enhanced Certificate and ICO Certificate of Registration, and when applicable Child Protection Training. Team Counsellors are required to be listed on a professional register which is recognised by The Professional Standards Authority.

The Counselling Service additionally ensures that all therapists involved receive appropriate regular supervision according to BACP guidelines. It also encourages and supports team members to work towards applying for individual BACP accreditation.

LIFE-FORCE currently has:

- 8 Senior Team Members. This category includes Team Counsellors who have gained individual BACP Accreditation and have been on the team for more than 5 years.
- 12 Certified Team Members. This category includes Team Counsellors who meet all the requirements of being a team member of the Service.
- 9 Students on placement, enabling the Service to provide a low cost adult counselling service depending on client suitability.
- 5 Office Staff - Centre Director, Service Support Manager/Health & Safety Officer, Counselling Service Manager, Counselling Service Assistant & Clerical Administrator.

***“From the first moment, all staff took time to listen and were sensitive and understanding to how I felt. I appreciated the information given to me including confidentiality.”***

***“We were spoken to very quickly by the office staff and a session was booked in very quickly”***



# Analysis of Appointment Register

The Appointment Register serves as a comprehensive record of client referrals to our counselling service throughout the year. It includes information such as the number of clients seen, their age, gender, and how they learned about LIFE-FORCE. These details are collected during the client referral process and meticulously entered into the Appointment Register database, providing valuable insights into the demographics and referral sources of our clientele.

**Total Number of Clients: 494**

## Client snapshot profile

### Gender:

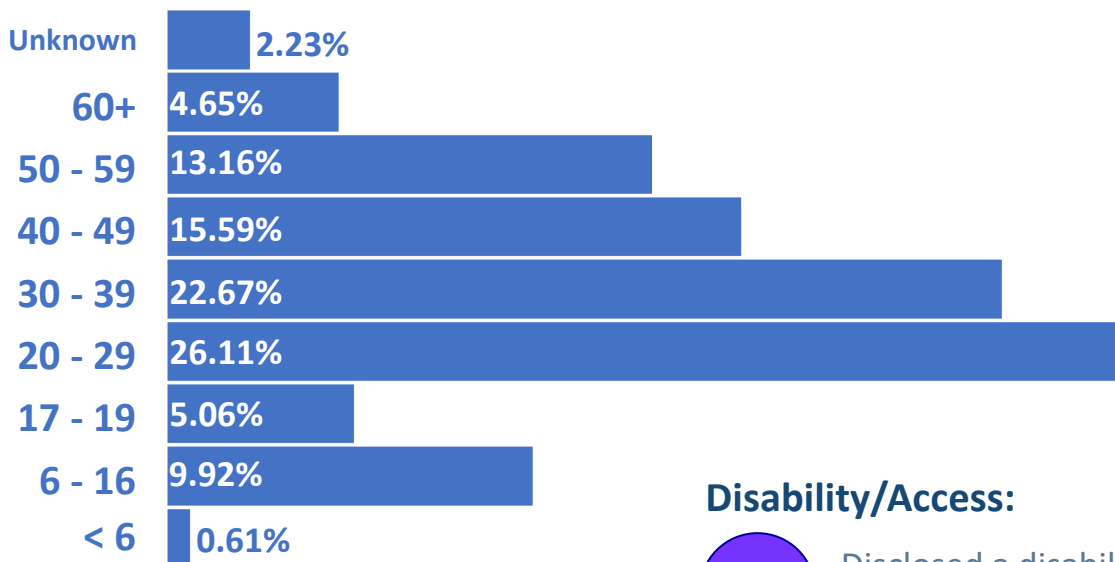


In 2023-2024 the current trend for the client base to be slightly more female centric than male has continued, with nearly 60% of clients being female and approx. 40% of clients being male. The number of those wishing to be identified as other has decreased.

### Age Range:

The data shows that this year the age range of clients coming for counselling was as follows:

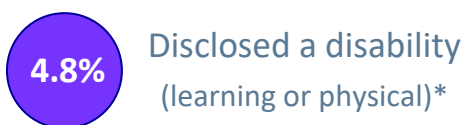
48% of clients aged between 20 to 40 years old, 16% being younger than 20 years old and 34% being older than 40 years of age.



### Ethnic Origin:

The data\* shows that 85% of clients have White British & Other White Background, 15% come from other ethnic groups, this is more diverse than previous years.

### Disability/Access:



LIFE-FORCE Centre has a dedicated therapy room on the ground floor which is mainly used for clients with disabilities/requiring wheelchair access, along with a disabled friendly toilet.

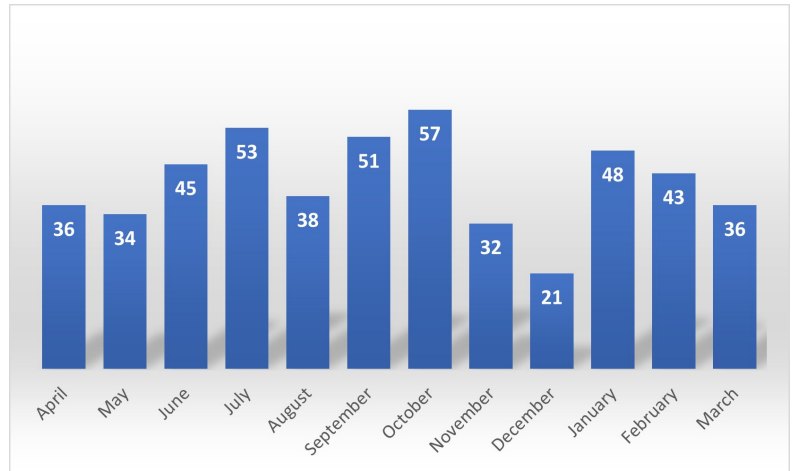
\*Data taken from our Client Feedback forms



# Analysis of Appointment Register

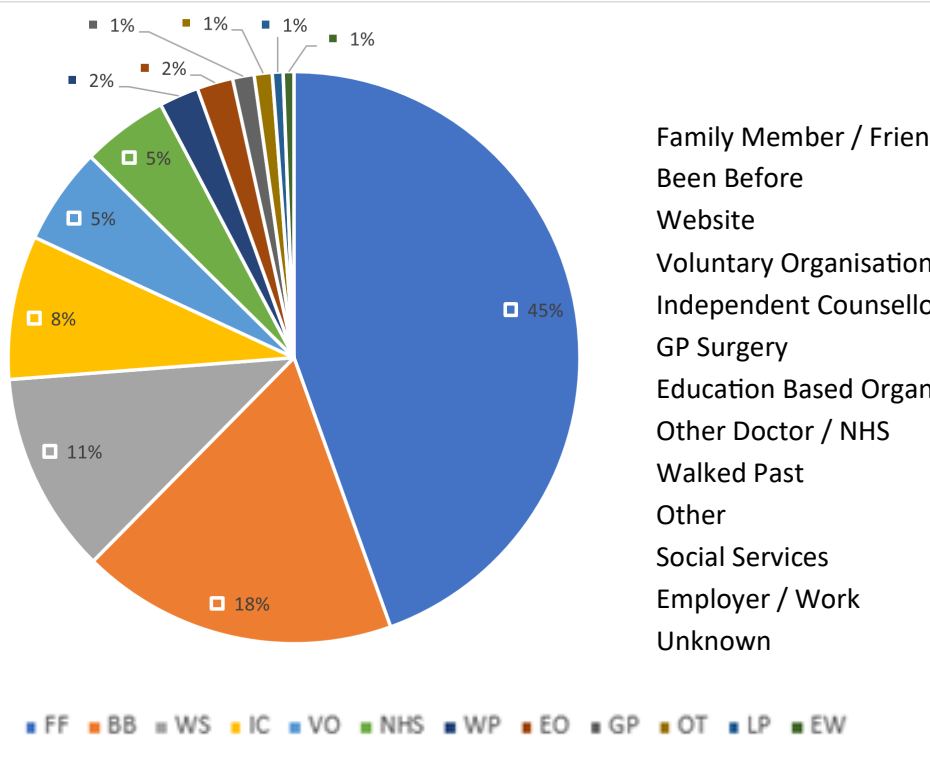
## Allocations Month by Month of clients:

Allocations of clients by months are shown to the right. January, September and October were the popular months to seek counselling. November and December saw the lowest number of clients.



## Client Referrals to LIFE-FORCE

The main sources of clients continue to be word of mouth from family members or friends, followed by those that have been before and then clients who have found us through our website. Referrals from organisations remain much the same as last year.



Family Member / Friend Acquaintance	219	44.33%
Been Before	88	17.81%
Website	56	11.34%
Voluntary Organisation (e.g. Mind / Relate)	40	8.10%
Independent Counsellor / Psychotherapist	27	5.47%
GP Surgery	24	4.86%
Education Based Organisation	11	2.23%
Other Doctor / NHS	10	2.02%
Walked Past	6	1.21%
Other	5	1.01%
Social Services	3	0.61%
Employer / Work	3	0.61%
Unknown	2	0.40%

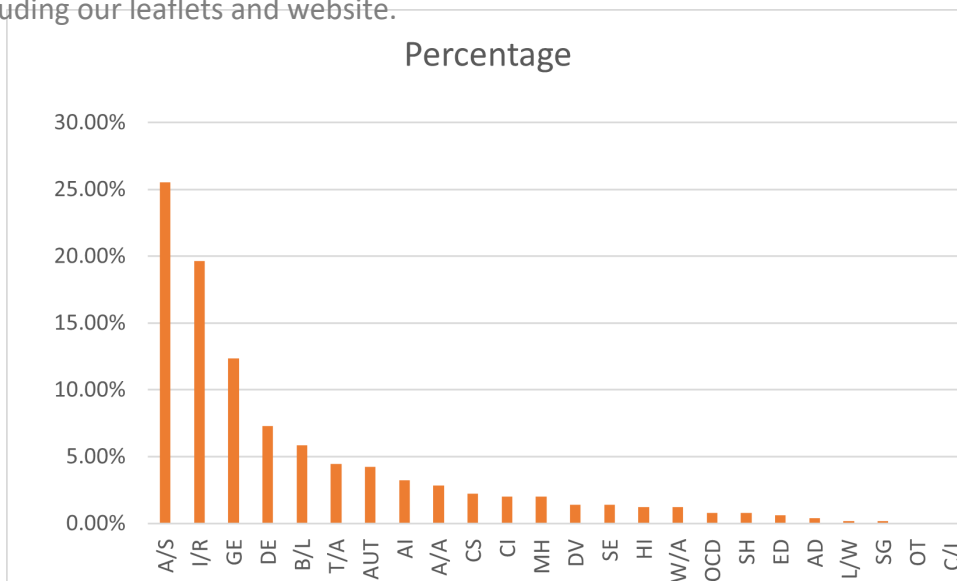


## Reason for Attending

Anxiety/Stress, General/Everything and Relationship Issues are the top three reasons for attending counselling, making up over 50% of reasons stated during the referral process.

The next category of Depression makes nearly 10% of referrals, this is a slight change from last year where it was the 3<sup>rd</sup> highest reason for attending counselling sessions.

Looking at the reasons for client referrals, over the next year we plan to raise awareness of our services by providing more local organisations with information and improving the information on our marketing materials including our leaflets and website.



Code	Reason for Attending	No.	Percentage
A/S	Anxiety / Stress/ Panic / PTSD	126	25.51%
I/R	Relationship / Family / Redundancy / Divorce	97	19.64%
GE	General / Everything / Past Issues	61	12.35%
DE	Depression / Post-Natal Depression	36	7.29%
B/L	Bereavement / Loss / Separation / Death & Dying	29	5.87%
T/A	Trauma / Abuse/ Bullied / Rape	22	4.45%
AUT	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	21	4.25%
AI	Anger Issues	16	3.24%
A/A	Addictions / Alcohol & Drugs / Gambling	14	2.83%
CS	Crisis Situation/Suicidal	11	2.23%
CI	Childhood Issues	10	2.02%
MH	Diagnosed Mental Health Condition	10	2.02%
DV	Domestic Violence	7	1.42%
SE	Self-Esteem / Low Confidence	7	1.42%
HI	Health Issues	6	1.21%
W/A	Work / Academic / Training Requirement	6	1.21%
OCD	OCD	4	0.81%
SH	Self-Harm	4	0.81%
ED	Eating Disorder	3	0.61%
AD	Adoption	2	0.40%
L/W	Living / Welfare / Special Needs	1	0.20%
SG	Sexuality / Gender	1	0.20%
OT	Other		0.00%
C/L	Cognitive / Learning Disability		0.00%



# Analysis of Client Feedback Forms

Only 8.5% of clients (42 out of 494) who attended counselling during 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024 provided feedback. We aim to grow responses over the following year by providing counsellors with a Client Feedback Form addressed to each client. The Client Feedback Form is available in hard copy at the Centre and online on our website.

**78.6%**

of our clients were new to the service

**90.5%**

of our clients found the client leaflet helpful

**83.3%**

of our clients found our website helpful

## Client Information Leaflets

A Client Information Leaflet is provided to clients on their first visit and gives the client information about what to expect from counselling; including the process and professional standards. We found that most of our clients do tend to read the Client Information Leaflet and find it to be helpful.

## Our Website

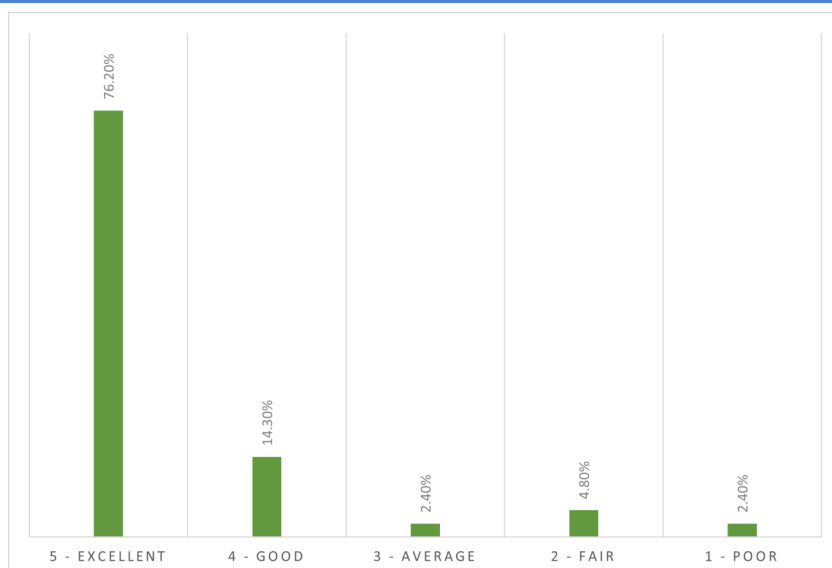
The LIFE-FORCE website is constantly monitored and evolving to meet the needs of our clients. It is important to note that 16.7% of clients have not visited the website indicating that the paper versions of the Client Information Leaflet and Client Evaluation Forms are still needed at this current time.

*“The counselling enquiry form is an AMAZING system as other places I've looked require a phone assessment and this is something many anxious people will never put themselves though.”*

## General Approach of Staff

We asked how clients found the general approach of the LIFE-FORCE office staff e.g. were they helpful and sensitive and to rate their overall professional approach.

90.5% of our clients rated LIFE-FORCE staff as excellent/good.





## Appointment Waiting Times

93.8% of clients felt the level of service they received from LIFE-FORCE was excellent/good regarding how long they waited for an appointment.

The Service always aims to ring clients within 1 working day of initial contact and tries to arrange an appointment within a week whenever possible.

*“I was so pleased that I was contacted so quickly and given a time and day immediately for sessions”*

**94%**

are happy with the waiting times

**86%**

of our clients found counselling beneficial

**93%**

rated our facilities excellent/good

## General Approach of the Counsellors

We asked how clients found the general approach of their counsellor e.g. warm, open, skilled and how they rated their professional ability. 97.7% of clients rated the professional ability of their counsellor as excellent/good.

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

*“My counsellor is fantastic. So approachable, professional, very knowledgeable and skilled. She is very warm, sensitive and easy to communicate with. My sessions always flowed really well and achieved so much.”*

## How Beneficial is Counselling

We asked clients to reflect on whether they found counselling to be beneficial, or not and to comment accordingly. 86% found counselling to be beneficial, with 11.9% finding it only of average benefit.



## **Centres Facilities, Atmosphere and Therapy Rooms**

We asked clients to rate the Centre's facilities, atmosphere, therapy rooms and the environment. 93% found the Centre's facilities and atmosphere to be excellent/good. The remaining found the Centre to be average. The Centre management staff are continually updating, decorating and maintaining the building. Works are usually carried out when the premises are closed during bank holidays, for a brief period in August and Christmas week.

## **Recommendation and Rating of the Overall Service**

Asking if clients would consider recommending the Counselling Service to others, nearly half of our clients this year came from being recommended by family or a friend. We asked clients to rate the Service overall and 97.7% found the overall service provided by LIFE-FORCE counselling to be good/excellent, with only two people rating it as average.

The Service is encouraged that a large proportion of clients would or already have recommend the Service to family or friends. We also always appreciate positive comments from clients regarding their counselling experience.

*Would you recommend?*

*"I already have. Brilliant 10/10"*



# Summary of Recommendations

To continually improve the professional standards of the Counselling Service provided to our clients, based on the analysis of both completed Team Counsellor and Service User Feedback forms.

## Action Points for 2024-2025

### Marketing Aims

During this year we will aim to redesign our Service posters and Service Information Leaflets to make these more user friendly. We will send out Service information to the G.P surgeries, local police station and other relevant organisations. We will also continue to update the Counselling Service information on our web site.

Develop new website and send out regular marketing via MailChimp.

### Waiting Area

Having reviewed the client feedback we look to return the Centre to pre-covid set up and waiting areas to be made available again and more welcoming.

### Review of Client Appointment Register & Client Feedback Questions

It is important that we review the information we take from clients, and the feedback questions we ask to ensure that the information is still necessary and beneficial for analysis. To consider adding to the Client Feedback Form an additional section for further comments / suggestions.

### Promoting the Return of Client Feedback Forms

Last year, 2023-2024, due to low number of Client Feedback Forms, we reviewed the procedure regarding how and when the counsellors give this form to the client in order to ensure this is done towards the end of the therapy.

Instead of the Client Feedback Form being included within the Client Information Leaflet this was replaced with a new Client Feedback Request Sheet and this is given to the client at the start of therapy. The counsellor points this out to the clients and inform them they can complete an online version of the form at anytime during the therapy. This new leaflet details a clear link to the website and the electronic Client Feedback Form.

A hard copy of the Client Feedback Form is now provided addressed to the client, with the client referral documents, the counsellor retains this and gives it to the client during the closing sessions.

The Counselling Referral Policy was updated to reflect this development and all counsellors were informed of these changes on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2023. Client Feedback Forms were moved to more prominent position in foyer.

## Client Feedback Conclusion

The Client Feedback Form enables us to see that LIFE-FORCE continues to provide 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.



*“XXX was amazing. So comforting & brilliant at her job.”*

*“Really friendly and helpful, sensitive and quick to arrange a session”*

*“The counsellor was excellent in her approach. Non-judgmental and calm”*

*“From the first moment, all staff took time to listen and were sensitive and understanding to how I felt. I appreciated the information given to me including confidentiality.”*