



LIFE-FORCE CENTRE COUNSELLING SERVICE

**Client Referral & Feedback
Annual Report
1st April 2025 - 31st March 2026**



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Introduction

The LIFE-FORCE Centre is a professional independent Counselling Service situated in the heart of Colchester, close to the city centre on East Hill.

The Centre has run a therapeutic Counselling Service for over 30 years. 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:

- 7 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.
- 14 Certified Team Members. This category includes Team Counsellors who meet all the requirements of being a team member of the Service.
- 4 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.

***“I have ... used Life Force and will continue ...
I like how easy it is to refer, and how quickly I start sessions, and how
they match and listen to what I can afford to pay.”***

“Got a call the day after, and an appointment within 2 weeks.”



Analysis of Appointment Register

The Appointment Register serves as a comprehensive record of client referrals to our counselling team 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 in the year 1st April 2025 - 31st March 2026: 526

The year 2024 - 2025 the total number of clients was 471, so this is an increase of 55 clients.

Client snapshot profile

Gender:

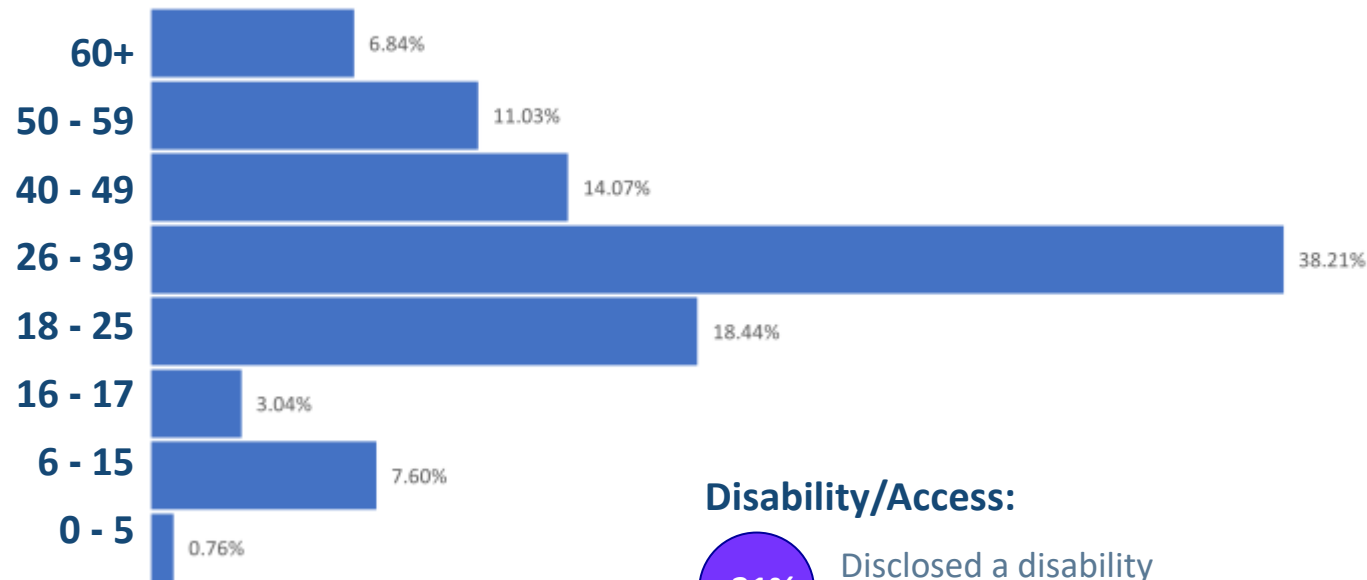


In 2025-2026 the current trend for the client base to be slightly more female centric than male has continued, with nearly 59% of clients being female and approx. 40% of clients being male. The number of those wishing to be identified as other has

Age Range:

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

Nearly 38% of clients aged between 26 to 39 years old, 18% are young adults and 32% being older than 40 years of age.



Ethnic Origin:

The data* shows that 97% of clients have White British & Other White Background, 3% come from other ethnic groups, this is less diverse than previous years.

Disability/Access:



Disclosed a disability (learning or physical)*

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.

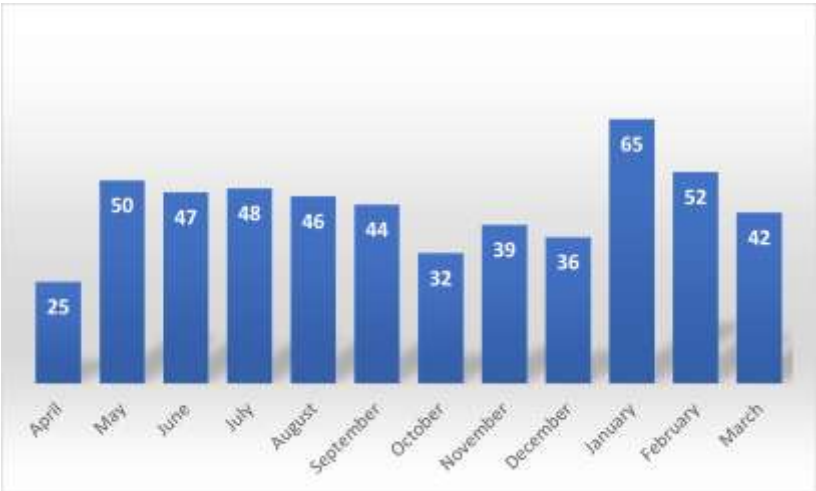
*Data taken from our Client Feedback forms



Analysis of Appointment Register

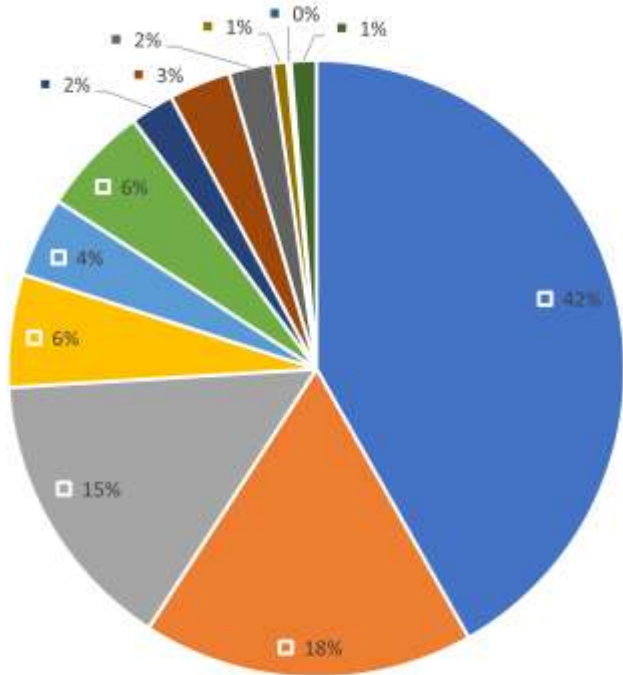
Allocation of Clients by Months:

Allocation of clients by months are shown to the right.
January continues to be the most popular month to seek counselling and April saw the lowest number of clients.
However, the trend in the last year is different to previous years with consistent numbers of clients throughout the year, including August which has been lower in previous years.



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.



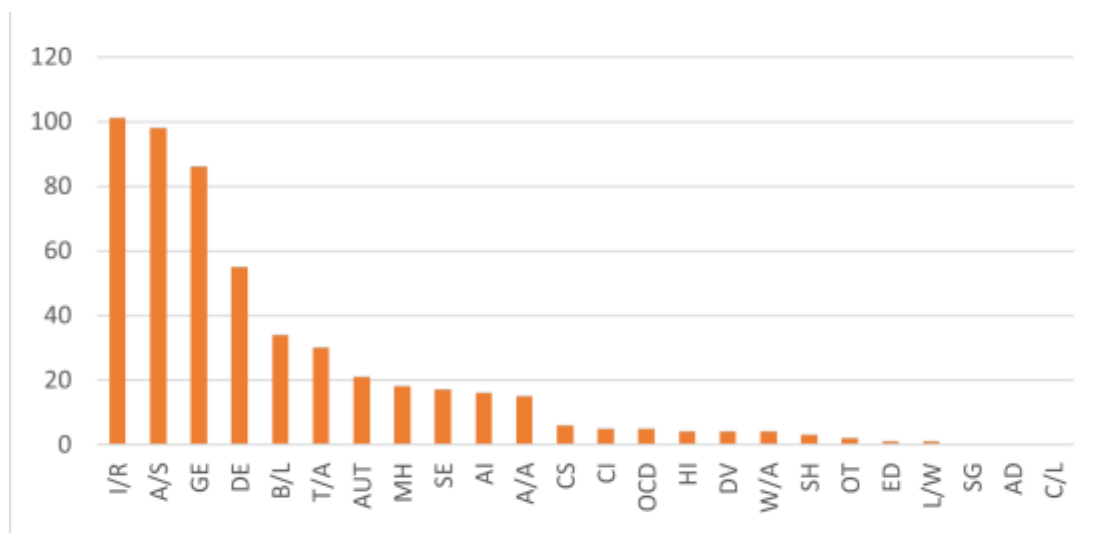
Family Member / Friend Acquaintance	219	41.63%
Been Before	91	17.30%
Website	78	14.83%
Voluntary Organisation (e.g. Mind / Relate)	31	5.89%
GP Surgery	30	5.70%
Independent Counsellor / Psychotherapist	22	4.18%
Other Doctor / NHS	17	3.23%
Education Based Organisation	12	2.28%
Walked Past	12	2.28%
Employer / Work	7	1.33%
Other	4	0.76%
Unknown	2	0.38%
Social Services	1	0.19%



Reason for Attending

Relationship Issues, Anxiety/Stress and General/Everything continue to be the top three reasons for attending counselling, making up nearly 55% of reasons stated during the referral process.

The next category of Depression & Post-Natal Depression was the reason given by 10.46% of clients.



Code	Reason for Attending	Percentage
I/R	Relationship / Family / Redundancy / Divorce	19.20%
A/S	Anxiety / Stress/ Panic / PTSD	18.63%
GE	General / Everything / Past Issues	16.35%
DE	Depression / Post-Natal Depression	10.46%
B/L	Bereavement / Loss / Separation / Death & Dying	6.46%
T/A	Trauma / Abuse/ Bullied / Rape	5.70%
AUT	Autistic Spectrum Disorder	3.99%
MH	Diagnosed Mental Health Condition	3.42%
SE	Self-Esteem / Low Confidence	3.23%
AI	Anger Issues	3.04%
A/A	Addictions / Alcohol & Drugs / Gambling	2.85%
CS	Crisis Situation/Suicidal	1.14%
CI	Childhood Issues	0.95%
OCD	OCD	0.95%
HI	Health Issues	0.76%
DV	Domestic Violence	0.76%
W/A	Work / Academic / Training Requirement	0.76%
SH	Self-Harm	0.57%
OT	Other	0.38%
ED	Eating Disorder	0.19%
L/W	Living / Welfare / Special Needs	0.19%
SG	Sexuality / Gender	0.00%
AD	Adoption	0.00%
C/L	Cognitive / Learning Disability	0.00%



Analysis of Client Feedback Forms

Only 6% of clients who attended counselling during the year of 1st April 2025 – 31st March 2026 provided feedback, this is less than last year. We aimed to grow responses this year by continuing to provide counsellors with a Client Feedback Form addressed to each client and by posters throughout the Centre. The Client Feedback Form is available in hard copy at the Centre and online on our website.

We will continue working to increase the number of feedback responses received from clients.

83.2%

of our clients were new to the service

100%

of our clients found the client leaflet helpful

50%*

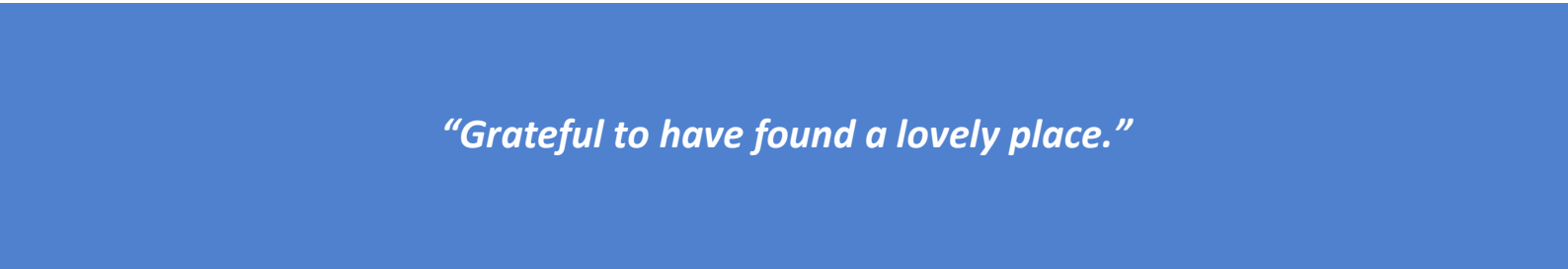
of our clients found our website helpful

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 50% 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.

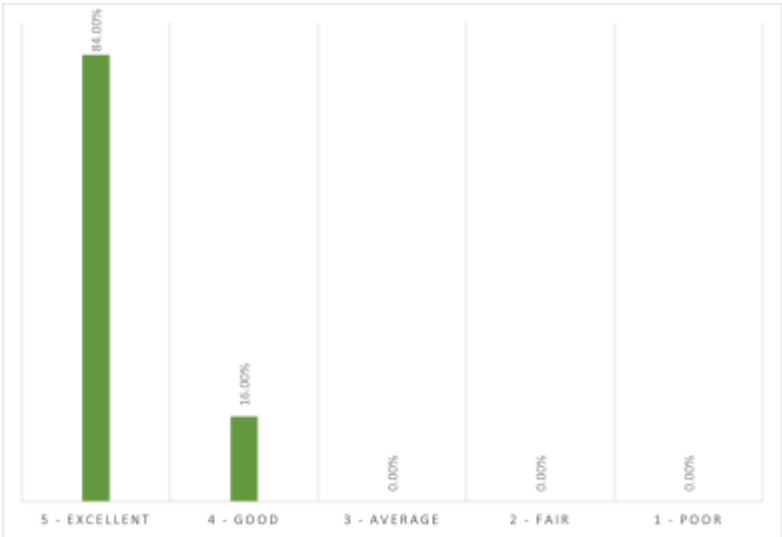


“Grateful to have found a lovely place.”

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.

100% of our clients rated LIFE-FORCE staff as excellent/good.



Appointment Waiting Times

100% 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 1-2 working days of initial contact and tries to arrange an appointment within 7-10 days whenever possible.

“Only had to wait a week. It was a quick process.”

100%

are happy with the
waiting times

100%

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. 100% 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.

“Helped me talk out feelings & problems & now have coping strategies. I found out what I was needing to do for myself to get where I want to be which is what I wanted.”

How Beneficial is Counselling

We asked clients to reflect on whether they found counselling to be beneficial or not and to comment accordingly. 100% found counselling to be beneficial.



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. Major 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 100% found the overall service provided by LIFE-FORCE counselling to be good/excellent, with no one rating it as average or below.

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 would definitely recommend the service to others."

"I have been recommending it to everyone around me for a while and will continue to do so."



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 2026-2027

Marketing Aims

Throughout 2025-2026 we developed our website to offer more online functionalities to both our counsellors and clients. We have been utilising our more user friendly Service posters and Service Information Leaflets to make people aware of the service by providing GPs and local organisations with more Service information and literature, along with regular marketing campaigns through MailChimp.

- We will continue to promote the Service through regular email and postal marketing campaigns throughout 2026-2027. We also aim to establish our social media presence.

Referral Sources

- The Office will continue to collect data from Referral Source Form to enable us to grow our Marketing Database with active referring organisations.
- We aim to explore partnerships with other organisations and alternative outreach channels to increase public awareness of our services.

Promoting Client Feedback

We had a slight decrease this year of clients providing us with feedback, despite efforts in improving the way clients were encouraged by way of being given paper forms towards the end of therapy.

We have undertaken a full review of the process and next year, to save both costs and time, the Office will contact the client after closure inviting them to complete the online feedback form if they provided consent for us to do so. Team Counsellors will no longer need to deal with client feedback requests or forms.

Counsellor Recruitment

We continued with our ongoing commitment to provide low-cost counselling to clients, including those that are not suitable for a student counsellor.

- This means that we will be recruiting new Counsellors to join the LIFE-FORCE Team that are willing to offer low fee counselling.

Centre Maintenance

We continued to ensure the Centre is decorated and welcoming to the highest standard. This is essential for creating a positive and inviting atmosphere. A well-maintained, visually appealing space not only reflects professionalism but also makes visitors, clients, and staff feel comfortable and valued.

- Work will be ongoing with larger projects taking place in the Easter, May Bank Holidays, Summer and the Christmas break.

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 ongoing counselling provided by our team counsellors.



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

*“XXX has been excellent, can’t thank
him enough for my journey.”*

*“. An even better experience in each session
than I had hoped for. I honestly believe it
was a massive help getting me through was
what a very tough time.”*

*“When I started counselling I was at the lowest point in my life,
burnt out and signed off sick. The counselling supported my
journey to better mental health, greater understanding of self,
feeling able to return to the workplace. Sessions were
beneficial, productive and always seemed to fly by.*