



Walsall Bereavement
Support Service

Annual Review 2016-2017



Providing caring, bereavement support
for the people of Walsall since 1996

To all the funders, staff members, trustees, and volunteers who are so totally committed to supporting the bereaved people of Walsall, I say a huge 'Thank You!'

Dr Bob Crundwell – Chair of WBSS



WBSS has had a very productive year both in terms of the numbers of bereaved adults and children that we supported and in securing the funds that we need to deliver our valuable services to the people of Walsall. However, as we approached the end of our financial year in March 2017, we were very aware that our next financial year would be more challenging as we have now lost funding from both Walsall Council and NHS Walsall CCG. This cessation of funding is by no means a reflection of the quality of our services or the need for them; it is solely due to severe budget cuts across the borough.

Fortunately WBSS had the foresight to diversify its funding base several years ago and so we already raise in the region of £60,000 annually from a range of sources. We have now revised our fundraising strategy again to focus on raising the additional funds that we need to fund all of our activities, including a plan to help generate our own income through training and by developing a community fundraising programme. As such we were delighted to learn that we have been chosen by Marks & Spencer's Walsall to be their 'Charity of the Year' during 2017-18. We are extremely appreciative of their support and very much looking forward to working with them this year.

Highlights from 2016-17

- WBSS received **347** referrals to its adults support service and **240** referrals to *THE SWING* and delivered **3215** hours of support in total to the bereaved.
- 26 volunteer counsellors donated **1696** hours of their time to help the bereaved.
- WBSS received a further grant from Children in Need to fund the 'Out of Hours' and 'Special Support Service' delivered by *THE SWING*.

WBSS is the only specialist bereavement support service in Walsall providing free counselling support irrespective of their relationship to the deceased, how the person has died, or the length of time that has elapsed since their death.

Head of Service - Elaine Bullen

Grieving is a very personal and difficult process but one which in time and with appropriate support, helps us to work through the feelings of separation we have for the person who has died. Every year we work with hundreds of people of all ages who are struggling to cope with the negative effects of bereavement and feel in desperate need of someone to talk to.



Over recent months the need for a service such as ours has been very clearly evidenced through courageous disclosures from both HRH Prince Harry and footballer Rio Ferdinand about how their grief has affected them. In an interview with The Telegraph Prince Harry talked about 'shutting down all of my emotions for nearly 20 years' and how he finally sought bereavement counselling after enduring 'two years of total chaos' whilst in his late twenties. During his documentary 'Being Mom and Dad', a tearful Rio Ferdinand spoke about the pain of losing his wife and his realisation about how he was dealing with his grief....'Up until now I've kinda just put it in a box...and kinda left it over there'.

At WBSS our aim is to help the bereaved to acknowledge and understand their feelings and manage the issues they are facing. In so doing we are helping to prevent the potential long term negative impact that bereavement can have on their physical, mental and emotional health and well-being.

- **£73,175** was raised to fully fund the costs of continuing to deliver *THE SWING*.
- **96%** of referrals to the adult service rated their support as **Excellent** or **Very Good**.
- **100%** of parents felt that the support their child had received had helped them to cope with their grief and **100%** stated that they would recommend our service to others.



Adult Service Report 2016-17

The impact of bereavement on the people we support

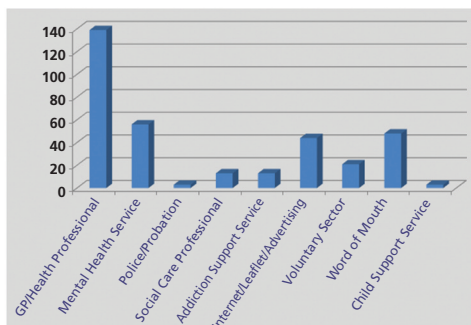
Bereavement will happen to everyone at some stage in their lives. Fortunately, the majority of people are able to cope with their loss with the help of family and friends, but for some and for a whole host of reasons this is not always the case. Feelings of isolation and loss can be overwhelming and may lead to an inability to cope with day to day life, depression, anxiety, alcohol and drug misuse, self-neglect, and the inability to work. Without timely and appropriate intervention a person's physical and mental health can be negatively affected by any of the above and result in long-term harm to their happiness and welfare.

Out of the adult referrals received in 2016-17:

- **56%** of referrals were struggling with emotional issues.
- **19%** of referrals had physical wellbeing issues.
- **16%** of referrals had issues with support and social networks.
- **9%** of referrals had issues with coping with day to day living.



How bereaved people were referred to our services

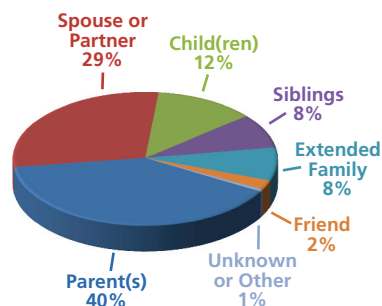


In 2016-17, WBSS received **347** referrals to its adult bereavement support service. Whilst the majority of these referrals came from GP's and health professionals, the diagram opposite illustrates that we also receive referrals from many other sources too.



Relationship to the person who died

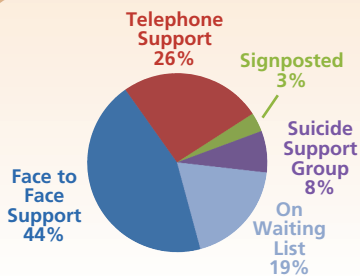
89% of the people we supported in 2016-17 were bereaved of an immediate family member. We supported those who had lost life-long partners, young widows left struggling to cope with raising their children alone, bereaved parents, and those bereaved suddenly and traumatically through circumstances which included road traffic accident, suicide or murder.



WBSS provided **1696** hours of support to bereaved adults during 2016-17

Feedback from Service Users

- **92%** of referrals struggling to cope with **emotional issues** at the onset of their support said that by the end of their counselling this issue had **improved** or was **no longer a problem** for them.
- **86%** of referrals whose bereavement had affected their **physical health**, said that by the end of their counselling their health had **improved** or it was **no longer a problem** for them.
- **100%** of referrals who were **struggling with day to day living** activities as a result of their bereavement, said that by the end of their counselling this issue had **improved** or they were **now able to cope**.
- **90%** of referrals who **felt unsupported and unable to socialise with friends and family**, said that by the end of their counselling this issue had **improved** or was **no longer a problem** for them.

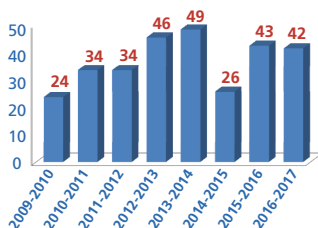


"I found the service amazingly supportive. Elaine was professional throughout and I honestly don't know where I would have been without the support that I received."

"Thank you so much for all the help and support of this service. I found it a lot better talking to someone outside of family where I was not judged. I can now deal with life and look forward not backwards and don't feel like I am cracking up. Zaheda was wonderful and I can't thank her enough. "

Supporting people bereaved as a result of suicide

Since 1999, WBSS has worked in partnership with the national charity "Survivors of Bereavement by Suicide" and has provided local support to **541** people bereaved in this way. There is no other specialist support available for people in Walsall who have been affected by this type of bereavement. The group which meets monthly provides an opportunity for people to share their experiences and offer support each other.



Number of referrals received for those bereaved by suicide.



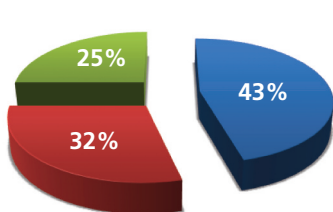
THE SWING Service Report 2016-17

The impact of bereavement on the life of a child or young person

Bereaved children and young people can experience psychological and physiological difficulties because they are unable to understand or cope with their grief. This can result in them becoming anxious, feeling depressed, becoming withdrawn, refusing to attend school/social activities, self-harming, experiencing suicidal thoughts, and drug/alcohol misuse. Grief can render young people more vulnerable to sexual exploitation and some of our clients have been sexually exploited over the internet or engaged in risky behaviours. We see direct evidence that bereavement impacts on children and young people's physical and emotional well-being, their relationships, and self-confidence, and can affect their schooling, social life and life chances.



Impact of bereavement on the children and young people we supported



- Emotional issues:** worrying, feeling sad, anxiety, depression, low self-esteem.
- Behavioural issues:** underachieving at school, truanting, self-harming, bullying/being bullied, substance or alcohol misuse.
- Physical issues:** mental/physical health issues, nightmares, eating problems, low concentration.

The children and young people we helped

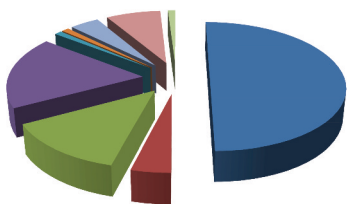
THE SWING works with bereaved children and young people aged from 3 years upwards and also with their families if appropriate. The project was established in 2003 and has received **2,220** referrals to date. This gives an average of 180-220 referrals annually.

In 2016/17, THE SWING had an exceptional year and received 240 referrals of which:

- **79%** lived in areas ranked within the top 10% most deprived wards in England and a further 3% within the top 11-25% most deprived wards. For the 7th year running we have experienced an increase in referrals from deprived areas.
- **83%** were bereaved of a significant family member (parent/grandparent/sibling).
- **50%** came from one parent/adult households (the highest level recorded), and a further **6%** were living in Local Authority Care or with another family member.

Many of the children and young people we support live in lone parent households or with carers. They may be looked after children either by social care or by private fostering arrangements, care orders, or special guardianships. Some of them have already experienced complex and traumatic events in their lives prior to the bereavement.

Where our referrals came from...



| | |
|-----|--|
| 50% | Education |
| 18% | Social Services |
| 13% | Health Professionals/PCT/SHA/CAMHA |
| 8% | Self-referral or via WBSS adult service |
| 4% | Parent/Carer/Friend/Family |
| 4% | Police/Probation/Youth Offending/Youth Service |
| 1% | Children's Services |
| 1% | Voluntary sector |
| 1% | Other |

How we have helped...

Delivered 686 1-1 counselling sessions – the highest level over the past 7 years:

Through 1-1 talking therapy we help children/young people to explore difficult emotions and recognise how their behaviour could be linked to how they feel. We help them to identify coping strategies and experiment with channelling negative feelings safely and appropriately.

Delivered 94 Family/Sibling counselling sessions: Some families experience family breakdown and conflict as a result of their bereavement. Family counselling can help them to find ways of understanding why and how their problems have arisen, identify what they need to change and then explore ways to make those changes.

Delivered 173 support hours through our 'Out of Hour's Service': We provide an 'Out of Hours Service' on 3 evenings a week and on a Saturday morning, to enable access to our support for those children and young people unable to attend week day appointments.

Delivered 378 sessions in schools through our 'Special Support Service': This service has a strong presence within those local schools whose students experience a high level of social, domestic, and behavioural difficulties. We work with children and families with communication difficulties such as speech/language impediments, language barriers, and social and behavioural problems including diagnoses of ASD and ADHD.

The impact of our support during 2016-17

- **87%** of children/young people felt their support had helped them to understand and manage their feelings/ emotions.
- **84%** of children/young people felt that their support had helped them to manage their behaviour.
- **100%** of parents felt that the support their child/children had received had helped them to manage their grief.
- **92%** of parents said that they found our support helpful to them as a parent.
- **96%** of parents' rated *THE SWING* service as Excellent or Very good.
- **100%** of parents stated that they would recommend our service to others.



Remembering Morgan

"We first came into contact with Walsall Bereavement Support Service in 2007 when we tragically lost our 6 year old daughter Morgan. Morgan had 3 older sisters, one younger sister and a baby brother. The service was there to support all our girls who were all at different schools. This was a huge help at the time, with us as parents struggling with our grief as well.



I firmly believe that the extra support that was there at the time has contributed to them growing up into wonderful young adults with very respectable careers, two of which are in Health and Care. Also the support for Saskia was crucial, because she was only 4yrs old at the time and Morgan and Saskia were like twins, as Morgan's health problems meant they were both at the same development stage. As with the older sisters, Saskia is now a delightful teenager who is doing us proud at school.



My wife and I had kept struggling along with our grief but for Becki it had become too much. She could no longer cope day to day and in 2015 her mental health reached a crisis point. It was suggested we try bereavement counselling. As a bereaved parent you believe that it's something you have to carry with you for the rest of your life and you are very conscious of how other people perceive your conduct and behaviour.

However we had reached a point where we had nothing to lose. The bereavement service surpassed itself again, as because my wife was too fragile to attempt counselling on her own, they tried something which was new for them at that time and counselled us a couple. We had 12 sessions of support with Ian at Globe House and after the first session, we walked out together and said to each other that we wished we had come for counselling years ago.



Morgan's sister Saskia

By the end of our sessions we had come so far that we desperately wanted to do something to thank Walsall Bereavement Support Service for the years of support we had received. So we arranged a year of fundraising along with Morgan's school federation since they had always supported us and our children and two of our children are still in the federation. We called our fundraising 'Remember Morgan' and it was a huge success. We had bake sales on sports day, 'Sandwich with Santa' at Christmas, little pink ribbons on sale in the offices and remembrance areas in the foyers each of the schools. Morgan's Nan did a 'Remember Morgan' evening at the Royal Oak Pub in Portobello and then for our final event we held a 'Remember Morgan' Summer Fayre at Rosedale Infants School.



*Morgan's younger sister Freya
helping at the fundraising fayre*

In total we raised over £6000 which came at an especially difficult time with regard to funding for the Walsall Bereavement. But the most impressive thing of all and what we will always be grateful for is, that we went from a situation where no one would say Morgan's name around us for fear of the reaction, to a point where we could celebrate the 6 years we had with her in the company of hundreds of other people who were celebrating with us."

Craig and Becki – Morgan's parents

"Thank you so much for all the help you have given to Craig & Becki, and their children. You have given them their lives back and put smiles back on their faces. They have been through such a hard time. I felt helpless at times because I couldn't help them, but they are coping a lot better now thanks to all of you. There still will be hard times but I feel we will get through those times together. I hope you will be able to carry on doing the good work that you do."

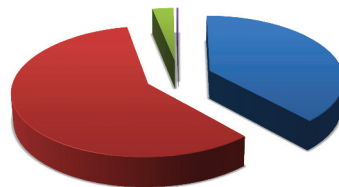
Ann - Morgan's Nan



WBSS Income and Expenditure 2016-17

How we were funded

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Contracts, grants, training | £84,904 |
| Donations & legacies | £55,650 |
| Trading | £4,242 |
| Investments | £351 |
| TOTAL | £145,147 |



We value every donation that is made to WBSS, because without this support our services could not exist. In addition to the generous donations that we received from individuals this year we would like to thank the following funders:

Charitable activities

BBC Children in Need
Walsall MBC – Social Care and Inclusion
NHS Walsall CCG

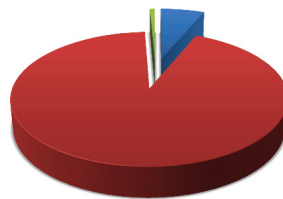
Donations

| | |
|---|---|
| The Aylesford Family Charitable Trust | Masonic Charitable Foundation |
| Baron Davenport's Charity | Methodist Church Walsall |
| The Bewley Charitable Trust | The New Testament Church of God |
| The Edward and Dorothy Cadbury Trust | The Roger and Douglas Turner Charitable Trust |
| The Eveson Charitable Trust | St Marks Church Shelfield |
| Furzebank Worship Centre | ShareGift |
| The George Henry Collins Charitable Trust | The WED Charitable Trust |
| The Grantham Yorke Trust | W O Street Charitable Foundation |
| The Grimmitt Trust | The Woodland Trust |
| The Hedley Foundation | Zurich Community Trust |
| Henry Smith Charity | |
| Jarman Charitable Trust | |

Up until 2017 Walsall MBC and NHS Walsall CCG have been the main funders of WBSS adult bereavement service. Whilst NHS Walsall CCG has also made a significant contribution towards the costs of running *THE SWING*, the majority of the funding needed for this project has come from generous Trusts and Foundations. Local charitable trusts have also funded our support group for people bereaved as a result of suicide.

How we spent our income

| | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| Charitable activities | £133,389 |
| Fundraising | £8,975 |
| Governance | £980 |
| TOTAL | £143,344 |



Staffing costs remain the highest expenditure at 67% but these are essential costs related to running the service and delivering the support activities to help the bereaved. Without its volunteers (the majority of whom are fully qualified counsellors), WBSS would either have to employ many more staff to deliver counselling sessions or reduce the number of bereaved people it supports. We are very proud to be an organisation that offers quality services whilst still maintaining cost effectiveness.

Approximately 56% of our expenditure relates to the running of *THE SWING*.

Reserves

At the end of this financial year WBSS held £81,212 in unrestricted reserves, equivalent to just under 7 months expenditure. We have worked very hard to build our reserves to this level to ensure that in the event of no further funding being available; WBSS would be able to meet its counselling commitments to those already in receipt of support along with its employer responsibilities to staff members.

Fundraising

At the end of this financial year we were aware that both Walsall Council and NHS Walsall CCG were ending their grants to WBSS due to local severe funding cuts. In preparation for this, we have revised our fundraising strategy and plan to work more closely with local companies to gain their support for our services, develop a new training arm to generate income for the Charity, and establish a community fundraising programme. Charitable Trusts and Foundations will always play a strong part in our income generation; however we recognise to be sustainable WBSS must broaden its income through a wider range of sources.

Supporting WBSS



*Masonic Charitable
Foundation*



*Co-operative food stores -
Aldridge and Streetly*





Walsall Bereavement Support Service

Walsall Bereavement Support Service

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Children, Young People & Family Service

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Email: children@wbss.org.uk

Web: www.wbss.org.uk

WBSS is a Charitable Incorporated
Organisation (CIO)
Registration number: 1152724



Head of Service

Elaine Bullen
Dip.Couns.MBACP

Charity Administrator

Helen Fellows

Children's Service Co-ordinator & Counsellor

Lindsay Murcott
*Dip.Couns. MBACP,(Accred) Post
Qual. Cert.Couns. Children & Young People,
Family & Systemic Practitioner*

Counsellor

Bev Richardson
*Dip.Couns.MBACP, Post Qual. Dip.
Couns.Children & Young People*

Finance Manager

Bev Richardson
MAAT

WBSS has attained PQASSO Quality Standard
Level 2 and we work to the professional and
ethical guidelines of the British Association for
Counselling & Psychotherapy

