

ANNUAL REPORT

“ A beacon of hope for people
affected by suicide and self-harm ”

2011/2012

A BEACON OF HOPE FOR PEOPLE AFFECTED BY SUICIDE AND SELF HARM

Welcome to the 2012 Annual Report of Lighthouse, a suicide awareness and prevention organisation, established in 2003 as a community response to a community problem. Since this time we have strived to combat the levels of suicide within our communities and to help and support those families bereaved through suicide. Over the course of the year Lighthouse has continued to provide these much needed services and save lives.



MISSION STATEMENT

Lighthouse is a community based organisation that promotes and supports positive mental health for those affected by suicide and self-harm.



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VISION STATEMENT

A beacon of hope, saving lives and creating a brighter future.

STRATEGIC AIMS

1. To provide accessible support services to people who are directly affected by suicide and self harm.
2. To deliver educational and awareness raising activities to promote positive mental health, preventing suicide and self harm.
3. To develop collaborative working relationships and partnerships with other organisations and agencies concerned with suicide and self harm.
4. To continue to improve and develop as a healthy and sustainable organisation.

ANNUAL REPORT

CHAIR'S REPORT

The last year has been an eventful one for Lighthouse. As an organisation we have continued to serve the needs of our community by providing support, advice and information regarding suicide, self harm and mental health to our client group. This is done via a combination of volunteers, professionals and counsellors. All of the above allow us to provide a range of services including advocacy, sign posting, crisis intervention, bereavement support groups, complementary therapy, counselling, support for young people in crisis and with mental health issues/suicidal thoughts and behaviour. The range of these services has expanded over the year with the following therapeutic endeavours being offered in terms of clinical hours:

Service	Hours
☒ Counselling	981
☒ Crisis Referrals	710
☒ Complementary Therapies	591
☒ Family Support	528
☒ Group Work	326
☒ Youth Work	534
☒ Art Therapy	341
☒ Awareness	147

This highlights the expanding nature of our service which responds flexibly and creatively to the needs of the community it serves.

One of the strengths of Lighthouse as an Organisation is its capacity to respond flexibly to changing need within the

The support offered by the range of public and private organisations has been greatly appreciated in ensuring that Lighthouse can carry out this work.

community. An example of this is the work initially started within the last year and currently being followed through known as the "Church Initiative". This is a group formed with Lighthouse and the local Churches to work in partnership to provide immediate services for those bereaved/affected by suicide. This highlights the importance of Lighthouse being embedded in the community and connected with all the constituent organisations that service the community to provide a comprehensive support service. This is one of Lighthouse strengths which will continue to be built on over the coming years.

The support offered by the range of public and private organisations has been greatly appreciated in ensuring that Lighthouse can carry out this work.

We have begun to put in place new policies and procedures to ensure services are professionally managed and work within a quality clinical governance framework.

In this period of economic austerity, Northern Ireland in particular suffers when there is an economic downturn. This will put severe pressure on statutory organisations as well as voluntary organisations. It will also put severe pressure on individuals capacity to function and as we know from research deprivation, economic and social, are major setting events for mental health difficulties. This when combined with the higher prevalence of mental health difficulties in Northern Ireland (by a factor of 25%) makes it even more vital that organisations like Lighthouse continue to survive and provide locally based services responsive to peoples needs at the time in which they need it. This is one of Lighthouse's great strengths.

I have been privileged to be part of this organisation and to work with such a committed group of clinicians, counsellors, managers, and Board colleagues. Our hopes in the new year is that we continue the good work that is being carried out in the last year sustaining and hopefully enhancing our funding stream from both the statutory and voluntary organisations.

Peter Gallagher
Chairperson

COORDINATOR'S REPORT

Lighthouse has now been in existence for 10 years. If I could sum up these amazing years in 3 words they would be:



Hope: We continue to instill a beacon of hope by offering support services

Change: Things need to move, grow & continue to change in order to instill hope in people's lives

Passion: The heart of our core business model delivers hope & change through a real belief in what we do. "Lighthouse is a beacon of hope"

This journey has also touched on other pieces of excellent work. I remember sitting on the protect life strategy steering group. Sometimes it is easy to lose sight of the work that was published in 2006. Lighthouse continues to deliver on the strategy by working in partnership with other local & regional organisations. I believe that interagency working is the key to Lighthouse's aim of saving lives by developing hope, shining the light of change & growing our team's passion.

In Recent years lighthouse has achieved many great things. We are still growing by developing a vision for the future. I have had the privilege of bumping into past service users who have had Lighthouse's light in their lives. With our support people changed & continued to grow hope in their lives. I am personally very appreciative of our board of directors because of the skills they have brought to a new part of Lighthouse's journey; of course our board of directors have also enhanced our community approach to the life-saving work we do.

This is the same community who did not have a lot of support or help ten years ago. We are a safe haven for hope, change & passion. I would like to thank all our staff & volunteers who also continue to do excellent work. I look forward to shining light to new areas of work; to save lives; and to continue to offer support to those in crisis or affected by suicide. The year ahead is going to be challenging but I welcome the new opportunities that lie ahead.

Jo Murphy
Coordinator

SERVICES



Lighthouse provides support, advice and information regarding suicide, self-harm and mental health at a community level. We try to ensure that people in the local community have access to appropriate services and are receiving the best possible service with the most efficient use of resources. A wide range of services are co-ordinated from our base in Duncairn Gardens. We work with a range of facilitators, holding weekly support groups for bereaved families, and respond to those in crisis, both by phone and drop-in at these offices, which have become the hub of the organisation.

COUNSELLING

Lighthouse continues to offer counselling to enable clients to benefit from a therapeutic process where they can work through issues impacting on their mental wellbeing, in a safe and secure environment. We offer a welcoming, confidential, non-judgemental environment, where clients can acknowledge and explore their thoughts and feelings; gain personal strength, emotional resilience and knowledge to enable them to manage and cope with the varied difficulties / issues which they present with.

We aim to equip individuals with increased self awareness and coping skills in order to support and facilitate positive change. Our Counsellors are qualified to Diploma Level with a minimum of 200 post qualifying hours experience and are members of BACP / IACP, and either have, or are working towards, accreditation with BACP professional body.

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPIES

Facilitated by Ashton Stress Clinic and providing a safe place and holistic approach to enable users to let go of physical aches and pains, promote relaxation and also a space to clear and relax the mind.

FAMILY SUPPORT



Lighthouse continues to offer one to one family support through the services of our Family Support Worker and extended team. This service is vital in maintaining a connection with families; even if just to check how people are coping or if there are additional services we can offer or signpost to.

2012 has seen a large number of families and individual availing off the family support service, offering practical and emotional support in the aftermath of their loss. They find it helpful to connect with someone outside of family to off load their thoughts, feelings and concerns in confidence. In addition to one to one support, we ran the HOPE bereavement group on a weekly basis which allows families to begin to process painful emotions and to connect and develop friendships which evolve outside of Lighthouse in addition to decreasing feelings of isolation. Families were involved in the annual 'Walk of Life event' on World Suicide Prevention Day which sees groups form across Belfast converge at the City Hall and mark the day with a beautiful and inspiring service.



“ We envisage this coming year to be filled with additional groups and workshops in order to help bereaved families... ”

Our annual Christmas event, which allows families to remember their loved ones with the releasing of balloons, singing of hymns and reading poems, is always well attended and although it can be emotional, families are always glad to come together to remember their loved ones. For the first time this year, a group of family members linked up with a suicide bereavement group in Derry, which resulted in them attending a very informative and useful three day trip to Donegal. Lighthouse Women and Men's groups have continued to develop with the women's group spending the weeks leading up to Christmas making wreaths and plant pots which they sold to generate funds back into Lighthouse. We envisage this coming year to be filled with additional groups and workshops in order to help bereaved families and will continue to rely on the generosity of funders and fundraisers in order to make this possible.

BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT GROUP

Support groups at Lighthouse provide a safe, professionally-facilitated environment, where you can meet others who have been bereaved by suicide, hear their stories and share your experience. Your recovery from the loss of your loved one may well be a long and painful journey, but at Lighthouse you do not have to travel alone.

ADVOCACY

Lighthouse has been instrumental in highlighting the need to address the problems of suicide and self-harm in a more strategic way and has been a key contributor to the development of Protect Life – the NI Suicide Prevention Strategy.

SIGNPOSTING

Lighthouse provides a valuable link with statutory services, signposting families and carers to appropriate services and working to fast track into other services as required.

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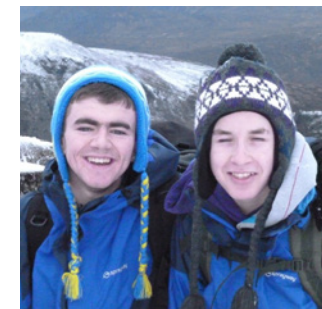
YOUTH INTERVENTION



The Youth Intervention Service was extremely busy during 2012. Many awareness sessions were delivered in secondary and grammar schools, alternative education providers, colleges, and employment

programmes, throughout the greater Belfast area. A variety of 4-6 week courses of 2 hour duration per session have been completed. Each programme has been responsive to the needs of the groups in promoting positive mental health.

These programmes are engaging and are designed to maximize input from the young people themselves. Due to the nature of the topic; mental health, session discussions address other concerning topics for the youth including family breakdown, separation & divorce, weight and image, relationships, drugs and alcohol, as well as looking to the creation of a positive future.



It is important that these sessions are discussion based, providing a safe space for young people to explore the topic of mental health, gain an awareness of local services and are informed of what practical steps they can take to look after their mental health.



For those young people presenting in crisis, we have created a support plan, signposting into other Lighthouse services for therapeutic interventions or referred where appropriate to other organisations. Some examples of youth work throughout 2012:

- Terry Enright Mountaineering Challenge (3 day residential): 45 young people
- Adventure Challenge (3 day residential) 91 young people

- Hope 4 Youth Stormont event (Sept 10th): 250 young people. (The young people who organised the event did interviews for the local BBC News, UTV, BBC Radio, Radio Ulster & a DVD produced by WIMPS (Public Achievement)
- Worked in partnership to coordinate COOL FM's Positive Mental Health Week between 10pm -12 midnight on the radio for 5 nights
- 30 young people now seeking OCN Training to become mental health peer educators
- Facilitated workshops at 3 conferences
- Supervised 2 university youth work student placements throughout the year and a 2 week placement for a Princes Trust participant



CRISIS INTERVENTIONS & SUPPORT

We continue to provide responsive care to those in need as well as providing advice and support for carers of those suffering suicidal ideation. A crisis can mean different things to different people. For some it can be a traumatic event of experience, for others it can be feelings of low self-worth or depression.

At Lighthouse every new client who presents is seen by a member of the crisis team. The purpose of the crisis team is to assess how an individual is responding to their crisis situation and the events which may have triggered it. In the previous year Lighthouse provided crisis support to 710 individuals.

Crisis intervention and assessment is brief and is not counseling or psychotherapy – it's purpose is to minimize the stress of the event, providing emotional support and improving the individual's coping strategies in the here and now. It also involves a full assessment of the individuals safety and immediate needs. In addition to providing support, the crisis intervention team also helps clients identify existing coping skills to deal with their immediate crisis. This might involve helping the client explore different solutions to the problem, practicing stress reduction techniques.

For some individuals, spending one session with a crisis worker allows them to contain their experience, giving them the opportunity to explore, examine and become active in ways which can help ensure the crisis is not prolonged. For others, additional support might be useful. At this point the crisis worker will refer the individual for services internally at Lighthouse (for example: Counseling, Youth Work, Family Support or Complementary Therapies) or externally to other organizations that can help.

ANNUAL REPORT



TOTAL SERVICE PROVISION FIGURES 2012

SERVICE USER TESTIMONIALS

'Lighthouse saved my life, countless times. Sometimes they didn't need to say much, they just had to be there. They listened, when nobody else would, and sat with me when I couldn't find the words. Lighthouse shone their beacon of hope for me, they helped me find hope when I was lost. Lost in a state of despair, but they found me. They walked my darkest journey with me, and never let me fall. Lighthouse is an organisation that invests in time and compassion. Forever grateful.'
Sami

All aspects of this course have been very informative and useful. It is a great learning experience. This course has been very helpful and made me more aware of what I can achieve in life.
Service User

I learned how to be very positive and how to deal with negative thoughts and problem situations. I moved from sheltered dwelling to my own fold and independent living.
Service User

I really would like to carry on with lighthouse as I have been offered more help and different help on my first visit than I have been offered anywhere else up to now
Service User

After losing my mum to suicide last year, I felt that my life was over. Lighthouse approached me offering me help, support and advice which I found invaluable in the days to follow. I became a member of the Lighthouse support group where I learned how to lean on and be helped by others as well as how to become a support to others in the same situation. I can honestly say they saved my sanity and possibly my life.
Service User

After the death of my son through suicide, I felt totally alone and isolated. Lighthouse gave me a place of safety where I could speak to others who understood my feelings and I was able to realize that my thoughts were not wrong, but normal. When something like this happens, you can feel like you're losing your mind and getting to meet others through Lighthouse saved my life, by allowing me to realize that I was going through the normal grieving process and that I wasn't insane.
Service User

ART THERAPY

Lighthouse has continued to offer one to one Art Therapy sessions throughout the past year. Over 20 individuals, aged from 5-70, have used the service for periods ranging from 6 weeks to over a year. Art therapy allows individuals to have a safe space where they can use the art to contain overwhelming feelings and de-stress, to play and imagine, or to engage in a journey of deepening self-discovery and move towards better mental health. The sessions are as individual as those engaging in them.

ART WORKSHOPS

We have been delighted to be given an Arts Council (ACNI) small grant to run a series of Art Workshops over the past year. We have had 15-20 different people engage with these over the year. Participants learnt to weave baskets and planters in the Willow Weaving workshops in additions to learning other skills within workshops in Ceramics, Textiles and Printmaking.

Participants have given overwhelmingly positive feedback on the

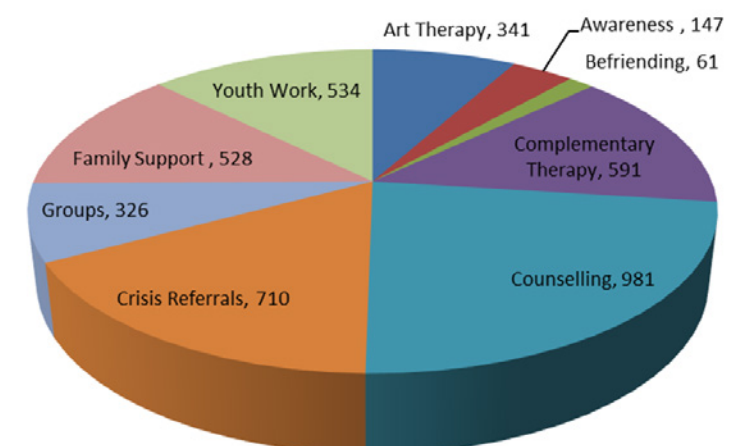
"Just love to go. More classes please"

"Felt better about myself. More confidence".

"Excellent. Very therapeutic, rewarding and beneficial".

"I enjoyed meeting new people and working with the group. Also learning a new craft and being able to focus my mind elsewhere".

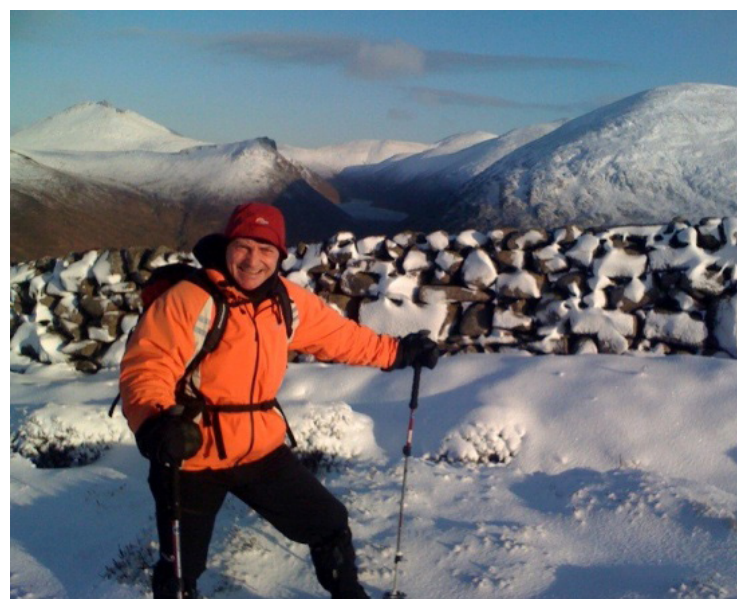
TOTAL NUMBER OF HOURS



ANNUAL REPORT

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising is a huge part of Lighthouse being able to continue to provide the current high standards of service. Throughout the year we have had very generous donations and fundraising events organised by families, volunteers, previous service users and other community members. For this we are extremely grateful and would like to thank those who participated in the range of fundraising events from bag-packing and Stars in your eyes to zip-lining and climbing the Mourne Mountains. Our thanks will hopefully be apparent as we strive to continue to provide an outstanding service to those within our communities who require our help.



Lighthouse would also like to give heartfelt thanks to all those who participated in the various fundraising events and for the very kind donations throughout the year. This generosity is very much appreciated and goes a long way in helping us to provide support for those affected by suicide and self-harm.

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VOLUNTEERING

Throughout 2012 we have been pro-active in the recruitment of volunteers, using means such as recruitment days at Queens to promote our volunteering opportunities. This has resulted in a number of new volunteers registering to work in Lighthouse. Throughout the year volunteers have participated in various events such as health fairs and information days, which are vital in raising awareness of suicide.

Lighthouse has been fortunate this year in obtaining two placements from University of Ulster, Mary and Ursula, who are working within the remits of volunteer coordination and fundraising. Part of their role was to initiate new volunteer recruitment strategies and the organising of relevant training for volunteers. Such training is vital in that it enables volunteers to fulfill their role effectively in addition to safeguarding both the volunteer and our service users. Many of the volunteers have availed of ASIST training, which enables the trainees to be more comfortable, confident and competent in helping to prevent the immediate risk of suicide.



Jim Pierce, volunteer and family member, was chosen as a finalist in the Diamond Champion Volunteer awards and attended an acknowledgement event at St James Palace in London.

ANNUAL REPORT



ACHIEVEMENTS AND EVENTS 2012

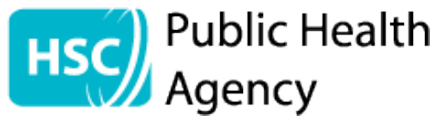
Some headline events

- Diamond Champion Awards
- Walk of Life
- Celebrating Life Awards via Lord Mayor and Public Health Agency
- Youth Conference in partnership with Youth Justice Agency
- Tucker Titch annual fundraiser
- Hope for youth
- Christmas Event
- Cool Fm partnership



ANNUAL REPORT

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT TO FUNDERS:



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Department of
**Health, Social Services
and Public Safety**

www.dhsspsni.gov.uk

AN ROINN
**Sláinte, Seirbhísí Sóisialta
agus Sábháilteachta Poiblí**
MÁNYSTRIE O
**Poustie, Resydënter Heisin
an Fowk Siccar**



Victoria Homes Trust



KELLY FAMILY CHARITABLE TRUST
strengthening family ties



LOTTERY FUNDED



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