

A Beacon of hope
Spring/Summer 2025

Lighthouse

Inside this Issue...

- **Welcome from Paul Finnegan**
- **Read about our Volunteer, Florence**
- **Our latest statistics**
- **Ways you can support us and more...**

Ms Florence Maguire - Volunteer and Supporter of the Charity

Hello!



Welcome to the latest edition of our newsletter!

As we begin 2025, we must take time to reflect on the past year and the fantastic successes of the charity.

The Lighthouse Training Academy goes from strength to strength offering a range of training courses and we continue with our contracts delivering much needed services in the North, South and West of the city.

The Hope 24 conference was an amazing event featuring drama, panel discussions, lived experience and music. On behalf of everyone at Lighthouse, we would like to send our sincere thanks to our sponsors and everyone involved.

We held the annual Aaron Fox Memorial Cup Golf Day in September which was another success and a great opportunity to meet new supporters and raise vital funds for the charity. Watch this space for the date for this year's event.

As always, nothing would be possible without your support so whether you have purchased a pin badge, ran a leg of the Belfast City Marathon or donated, we thank you for your continued support.

Thank you!.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Finnegan'.

**Paul Finnegan,
Executive Director, Lighthouse**



Following the success of last year's conference, we are in the planning stages of the 2025 conference, and we'll have more details soon.

Keep an eye out on our website and social media platforms for more information.



Training



We have developed accredited and non-accredited training programmes which have been successful and delivered to Northern Ireland Water, Wrightbus, GLL, Balcas and Homeless Connect. These courses include:

- **Mental health First Aid: which is regarded as the gold standard**
 - **Mental health awareness in the workplace.**
 - **Mental health awareness in the workplace for supervisors.**
 - **Effectively managing mental health first aid in the workplace.**
- **Linking positive mental health and wellbeing for organisation success.**
- **Introduction to positive mental health and wellbeing for young people.**
 - **Introduction to suicide prevention and mental health and well being for young leaders/coaches.**

Having delivered MHFA training to the staff at NI Water, their feedback has been incredible. Alison Sweeney from NI Water states: "Lighthouse is truly a beacon of hope! The quality of training we received to become certified mental health first aiders at Northern Ireland Water was second to none! We are delighted that the MHFA is now integrated into our award-winning Health and Safety Strategy. #betterstrongertogether."

Our non-accredited programmes include suicide awareness which aims to improve the mental health and well-being of individuals and groups. These have been delivered to both corporate clients and voluntary and community groups. Recently we added new training programmes such as Staying Calm, Goal Setting and Do Just One Thing which is based on the work of Dr Michael Mosley. In the last year we have also developed a new programme called Managing in a Healthy Organisation and we have successfully delivered that in GLL, Wrightbus and Colloide.

Looking forward there's a lot more to do. Our recently launched Lighthouse Beacon Award will serve as an improvement framework and guide organisations who wish to improve their approach to mental health wellbeing in the workplace. We are also contributing to the British Standards Institute who are developing a guidance standard on mental health and suicide prevention, which is gaining interest, particularly in the UK.



If you would like more information on any of our training modules, please contact:
John@lighthousecharity.com



A Beacon of Hope...

Florence Maguire has been volunteering with the charity since 2022. Below she gives us an insight into what motivated her to get involved.

Q. Tell us why you chose to volunteer for the charity?

I have been with Lighthouse for about two and a half years. I started off in an administration role to support Claire, the Fundraising Coordinator. I found this to be a great way to learn how the charity operates and to meet people within the organisation.

I am currently studying for a counselling diploma at Belfast Met and am required to complete 100 hours working with clients in a counselling capacity, so when it came to finding my placement, I approached Peter, the Services Lead, to see if there was a possibility of doing my placement at Lighthouse. Peter ran weekly sessions for me and a few other placement students, preparing us over six months before we started seeing clients. I'm hugely grateful for that level of support, which ensured both our safety and the safety of our clients as we got started. I began with one client a week, and now, 82 hours in, I see up to three clients per week. I feel privileged to be doing my placement at Lighthouse.

I became aware of the charity even before I started volunteering. When I was at school, I attended art therapy sessions to help with anxiety around my A-Levels. The kindness and support I received left a lasting impression on me, and this experience, along with volunteering for a student listening service at university, encouraged me to train as a counsellor. I saw my first client in the art therapy room, which was a full circle moment for me!

I feel fortunate for the experience I have gained through my different volunteer roles at Lighthouse. Working with Claire, I saw firsthand how much hard work and planning goes into each event, how grateful Lighthouse is for every fundraiser and donation, and the care taken to personally thank each contributor. As a student counsellor, I could not ask for a more supportive place to begin my journey, learning not only about the profession but about myself as a counsellor. Peter is always there with sage advice to guide our student keenness (or worries!), while Rachel, the Services Coordinator, is endlessly patient in answering our many, many questions. Overall, my biggest takeaway has been the value of being part of such a kind and dedicated team.





Q. What are your plans for the future based on the counselling volunteering you have been doing over the past few years?

On completion of the 100 placement counselling hours, I will have finished my Level 4 Diploma in Therapeutic Counselling and will be a qualified counsellor! From there, I hope to stay on at Lighthouse to continue building my experience and working towards BACP accreditation. A charity like Lighthouse is an ideal environment for ongoing learning, offering the chance to collaborate with counsellors from a range of specialities and levels of experience.

Outside of Lighthouse, I have been studying counselling for four years now, so I am looking forward to a break from formal education and having more time for other forms of professional development.

Q. How do you look after your own mental health?

I love listening to music and seeing my favourite bands live, you can usually find me in a Depeche Mode t-shirt. I also try to keep my media consumption upbeat by watching light-hearted shows. At the moment my partner Audrey and I are watching *The Office* (US).

Meeting up with friends for coffee helps to lift my mood. I've also recently started journaling, which I'm really enjoying!

Our Year in Figures

2024 was an extremely busy year for the charity. As we continue to support those struggling with their mental health through our crisis intervention and counselling services, we take a look at the number of people who availed of our services.

• 946 people were referred into Lighthouse for crisis intervention support.

• An additional 648 crisis support sessions were given to people in need of short-term crisis support.

• 101 Art Therapy Sessions were delivered.

• 630 Support Sessions were given to people who have been bereaved by suicide.

• Our BACP accredited counsellors supported 3304 talking therapy sessions.

• Known as the 'non-talking' therapy, last year, 433 complementary therapy sessions were availed of.

• Our Youth team held 113 individual mentoring sessions alongside 41 group sessions with 179 attendances.

Last year, 100% of our clients strongly agreed that the environment we provide is safe and trusting. 97% of them found our staff supportive and helpful, and all were very satisfied with the service they received. Most importantly 99% of the clients we supported would recommend Lighthouse to others in need.

Will you become our beacon?

**Did you know that 1 in 5 of us will
face mental health issues at some
point in our lives?**

**In 2024, we supported almost 1,000 people
who were facing a mental health crisis, or
the loss of a loved one to suicide.**

**We need to be able to continue to support
people this year and well into the future
but we can't do it without your help.**

**By scanning the QR code you can set up
a monthly donation, make a one-off
payment or create your own fundraising
page and do something magnificent
for mental health.**



Ways to Get Involved:



Belfast City Marathon

If you have a place in this year's marathon which takes place on Sunday, 4th May, then join #TeamLighthouse and raise funds for the charity. Contact us for your fundraising pack and complimentary tee shirt by emailing claire@lighthousecharity.com

Celebrate with Us

Whether you're celebrating your big day, a milestone birthday or your 60th Wedding Anniversary, make us part of your special day. Celebrating couldn't be easier. Simply ask your friends and family to donate instead of buying you a gift. We can provide little donation envelopes for them or they can donate online at lighthousecharity.com

If your big day is round the corner, then why not celebrate with us instead of giving your guests wedding favours. We can provide personalised place cards for your guests along with our charity pin badges and/or wristbands.

For more information on ways you can make Lighthouse part of your celebration, email claire@lighthousecharity.com



Who you going to call?

For all finance queries, contact Cecilia at cecilia@lighthousecharity.com

For all fundraising queries, contact Claire at claire@lighthousecharity.com

For all operational queries, contact Sharon at sharon@lighthousecharity.com

For all other queries, email info@lighthousecharity.com

Where to find us...

Lighthouse
187 Duncairn Gardens
Belfast. BT15 2GF

Tel: 028 9075 5070

Lighthouse is a registered company, limited by guarantee in Northern Ireland. Company number NI065006.

Registered with the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. NIC102400.

If you or someone you know is struggling with their mental ill health, having suicidal thoughts, or grieving from a bereavement please call us today, we're here to help.

