

Inside this issue...

- Welcome from Paul Finnegan
- Meet Alyson, one of our counsellors
- Recap on our anniversary Gala Ball
- How you can support us and more...

A large arrangement of gold and white balloons is positioned on the left side of the image. To the right, a sign on an easel features a light blue background with white clouds and gold stars. The sign contains the text 'Welcome to Lighthouse's 20th Anniversary Gala Ball' in a black script font.

Welcome to
Lighthouse's 20th
Anniversary
Gala Ball

Hello!

Welcome to the fourth edition of our newsletter. As we begin 2024, it allows us to reflect on our 20th Anniversary year and our achievements during 2023 as well as looking forward to the year ahead.

To say 2023 was a busy year would be an understatement. We started the year by changing our branding and website which now makes it so much easier for people to refer into our services – check us out at [lighthousecharity.com](https://www.lighthousecharity.com). We've also incorporated the changes into our new look newsletter, so we hope you like it!



In May and June, we were a delivery partner supporting the Baton of Hope, which took place in June and helped to raise awareness of mental health charities across Northern Ireland and the UK.

In September, we held our 'Twenty Years of Learning' conference, bringing together staff, supporters, professionals, organisations and service users. Over 300 people attended the free event which was a huge success, and feedback has been incredible.

Throughout 2022 and 2023, we vigorously started the process of becoming an accredited member of the British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP). In September, we received notification of our success and our accreditation. Becoming BACP accredited is a quality status for experienced practitioners who demonstrate high standards of competent and ethical practice.

As a charity dealing with mental health, we recognize the importance of understanding diversity in today's world and to this end, we pursued the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Award. We received the bronze award in September and aim to continue our training towards the Gold Standard award.

To end the anniversary year, we held our Gala Ball on Saturday, 11th November at the Europa Hotel, Belfast. The night was a huge success with 400 people enjoying dinner, drinks, and dancing whilst raising £60,000 for the charity. However, the night was not just about enjoyment and raising funds. It was also a fantastic opportunity to build relationships and educate local businesses in the work of the charity and how they may wish to get involved in supporting us in the future.

2023 was an amazing year for the charity but we couldn't have done any of it without the support of every one of you. We look forward to making 2024 bigger and better with your help.

Thank you!

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

Paul Finnegan,
Executive Director, Lighthouse

www.lighthousecharity.com

A Beacon of Hope...



Alyson Dixon is one of our counsellors, below she gives an insight into her role within the charity. We put the following questions to her:

Q. How long have you been with Lighthouse?

I started as a counsellor in December 2021, so just over two years.

Q. Tell us about your role and a typical day?

A typical day starts with me leaving home around 8am to drop my daughter off to school and then maybe a quick coffee from Starbucks to start my 40-minute journey to work.

I see most of my clients face-to-face in one of our private counselling rooms and see between three to six clients a day. When meeting a client for the first time, I go through a contract and explain confidentiality and the exceptions of it. I explain a little bit about counselling especially if this is their first experience and assess for any risk. I see a diverse range of clients from young people to the older generation, different cultures etc.

The most important part of my role as a counsellor is to listen in a non-judgemental way to show empathy to clients' issues, which can range from anxiety to low mood, relationship issues, trauma, abuse, suicide ideation, people bereaved by suicide, low self-esteem/confidence etc. During therapy I am constantly assessing for risk as issues can change from week to week. I may also refer clients or suggest other types of support within Lighthouse, or potentially other organisations, if I feel this is necessary. People coming to Lighthouse need support and often struggle to cope with what life presents them. If I can help a person in any way that means everything as the hardest part can sometimes be taking that first step to reach out for support.

Q. What have you learned whilst working at Lighthouse?

I have seen lots of changes since I started with the charity from additional counsellors joining the team to exciting events to celebrate our twentieth anniversary. The Suicide Prevention Conference which was held in September 2023 was a fabulous success with amazing speakers and inspirational stories. At the conference I was one of the presenters at a trauma workshop along with two other colleagues which was a great achievement for me. Our Anniversary Gala Ball was an incredible night and an amazing fundraiser. After months of hard work we achieved BACP accreditation which is also an incredible accomplishment.

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

I feel over the past two years I have learnt how important good teamwork is. I am passionate about the work I do, and I love to help others and when you are surrounded by likeminded people, who are not only there to do their job but to genuinely support you, this is what makes Lighthouse so special. It is clear to see why this organisation is going from strength to strength.

I have a very busy lifestyle outside of work supporting my two daughters who compete at horse competitions across Ireland. I know how important it is to take time out just for me. Forget the cleaning and the ironing as it will always be there. I love meeting up with friends, I love to get out walking, cooking, knitting, going on holiday especially to Malaga (my favourite city) and sometimes just doing nothing, no interruptions and space to recharge. Self-care is paramount when working professionally as a counsellor.

Oh, What a Night!

Our 20th Anniversary Gala Ball was an incredible night! We were overwhelmed by the support of local businesses and people who bought tables and tickets, donated prizes for the raffle and auction and gave of their time to help organise such a magnificent night.

Below are some of the photos from the night. There's just not enough room to add all of them but please know that we sincerely thank you for everything you have done for the charity, before, during, and after this event.





Client Journey Evaluation...

From July to November 2023, we engaged in a quantitative and qualitative service evaluation with the Psychology Department of QUB contacting clients six to nine months after service. (80 in total).

The students, Johnny Morrow and Caitlin Harmon were tasked with gathering and collating feedback on service user experiences.

Some headline findings from the evaluation included 92% of those who had attended the counselling service had reported positive benefits whilst the other 8% felt that counselling did not suit them personally.

79% suggested that the support had made an ongoing positive difference in their lives whilst many others felt that the service had helped at the time and allowed them to move on with their lives.

98% suggested that they would recommend the service to others.

100% reported that they were happy with the response times to enter the service.

96% of those surveyed agreed that, if they needed support again, they would contact Lighthouse.

We were overwhelmed with the results and would like to thank Johnny and Caitlin for their dedication and commitment to this project.

New Patron...



We are delighted to welcome our first Lifetime patron to the charity... Dr Des Rice.

Des has been instrumental in supporting the charity over the years, primarily involved with the fundraising campaign in 2007 to raise almost £500,000 which was used to renovate the offices we are still in today.

Des, once again, made a huge contribution to the success of our 20th Anniversary Gala Ball, by encouraging so many of his friends, family, and business colleagues to attend, and contribute financially and in-kind.

Des has been a huge ambassador for the charity over the years and we thank him for everything he has done for us and look forward to working with him in the future.

Des commented saying: "It was a pleasure to return to Lighthouse after an absence of several years, to see that the premises is still pristine and, more importantly, that the number of staff and amazing services have increased dramatically. As Lighthouse provides such an important service to those in need, it is an honour for me to receive this award from such a prestigious organisation"

Support Us...

Lighthouse relies on the support of the business community in Northern Ireland. Fundraising at work has lots of advantages for all staff to get together and raise funds to support people struggling with their mental well-being or those who have been bereaved by suicide.

Whether you're taking part in one of our events or want to support us by becoming our charity partner, we can help you reach your Corporate Social Responsibility goals.

Ways your company can support us...



- **Charity partner:** Choosing Lighthouse as your charity partner will help to raise the profile of the charity along with vital funds. We can also offer your company a range of support services through our Lunch and Learn and Training opportunities.
- **Event sponsorship and gifts in kind:** Sponsoring an event such as an Abseil, walk, or golf day or by donating a prize for our raffle enables us to put more money straight into funding life-saving and life-changing treatments for our clients.
- **In-house staff fundraising:** Organise a big breakfast, coffee morning, or bake sale where your staff can come together to catch up, raise money and have fun.
- **External fundraising:** Promote and recruit staff to take part in our abseil, Belfast City Marathon, sponsored walk, or Skydive.
- **Bespoke events:** Organise a Golf Day or sponsored walk for your staff and promote it to your clients, suppliers, friends and family.
- **Payroll Giving:** If you or an employee pledges just £5 from their salary each month, the amount taken from your gross salary is only £3.90 (the cost of a cup of coffee) and Lighthouse will receive £5.50. Regular giving is invaluable to us as it means we can plan, improve and expand our services in the future.
- **Your company's expertise:** Offer IT, HR, Marketing or Communications expert support to Lighthouse.
- **Volunteering:** Team building and opportunities for staff at Lighthouse events and store and street collections.

If your company would be interested in supporting Lighthouse, please email our Fundraising Lead, Claire at claire@lighthousecharity.com

www.lighthousecharity.com

Ways to Get Involved:



Belfast City Marathon

Sunday, 5th May 2024.

Take on the 26.2 mile challenge, the 8 mile walk or get your friends, family or work colleagues together and enter a relay team and raise funds for the charity. The marathon starts at Stormont Estate and finishes at Ormeau Park, crossing the north, south, east and west of the city. For your fundraising pack and complimentary tee shirt, email claire@lighthousecharity.com

Organise Your Own Fundraising Event

Whether it's a coffee morning, pub quiz, BBQ or a football match, planning a fundraising event is a great way to get your local community involved and raise the profile of and funds for the charity.



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.



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**