



Beacon

Annual Report 2009

Registered Charity No. 1109545



unsung heroes

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service
2008



Contents

The Year That Was	Page 4
Chairman's Report	Page 5
Manager's Report	Page 6
Looking Ahead	Page 7
What Our People Have to Say	Page 8–10
Beacon Training Programme	Page 11
Adult Service Overview	Page 12–14
Schools Service Overview	Page 15
The Impact of Beacon's Work	Page 16–17
B2 Report	Page 18
Wythenshawe Project	Page 19
Adswood Project	Page 20
Finances—an easy summary!	Page 21
A thank you to Beacon's Supporters	Page 22



Did you know that

**Beacon Counselling
helped 800 people during
2009**

The year that was


Jan — 5 new trustees join the team

Mar - Beacon awarded £27,000 over 3 years to fund Adswold counselling service

June - Adswold service launches

August - 25th Anniversary celebrations

25th
Anniversary
1984 - 2009

September — Worked with Barnardo's to develop the Wythenshawe project further, with a 3rd counsellor  Barnardo's joining the team.

October - Office Administrator joins the team. Fundraising success 3 years salary secured.

November - Obtained funding to trial the Beacon developed Confidence Programme in primary schools (starting Feb 10)

December— Adult service in Stockport has had a record year, with nearly 492 people contacting the office

Trustee Report

CHAIR OF TRUSTEE'S

Welcome to the 2009 annual report of Beacon Counselling.

First of all, I would like to thank Janice Cahill who did so much to stabilise the Board of Trustees when she set up sub-committees to look at specific areas of our governance.

In the past year we have gone from strength to strength and for the first time we appointed a full time Office Administrator who is now responsible for the internal office work. This will release some of the Manager's time to further develop and maintain good relationships with partner organisations, fundraisers and stakeholders.

Beacon Counselling is pleased with the creation of the new counsellor training and professional development programme set up by Figen Murray this year for our counsellors. Thank you for this Figen.

As you are aware we are a charity based on volunteers so thank you to all who give so freely of their time and thank you to our friends and supporters. Without the hard working Board of Trustees and volunteers, Beacon Counselling could not provide the help and guidance to so many people in the area. May we continue to develop and serve the community.

ALAN HEWITSON

Chair of the Board of Trustees



Did you know that

**Beacon's volunteers gave
4470 hours of their time
throughout 2009**

Manager's Report

2009 has been a fantastic year for Beacon Counselling. Following 2008's year of achievement, with the Queen's Award as well, it was going to be a difficult year to beat. However, the volunteers and staff of Beacon did the charity proud, with Beacon seeing over 500 adults and over 300 young people across the range of projects.

A lot of new initiatives were worked on during 2009: the Wythenshawe project saw more clients than before with a third counsellor joining the small and dedicated team there, Beacon 2 saw a second counsellor joining Yvonne, meaning that the increased demand could be met whilst keeping waiting times down to a minimum, more counsellors joined the adult service in Stockport, and there was an increase in the amount of people seen at schools.

While existing projects were developing, new projects were being planned and started up. The most important was Beacon targeting the area of Adswold (the area with the highest prevalence of poor mental health in Stockport), and through funding for the first time from Stockport MBC, we started a small but growing project there.

Perhaps the biggest change for Beacon during the year was the funding from CRH Charitable Trust, to employ a full time Office Administrator. This brand new post was created and we welcomed Debby Bridge to the team in October, and Debby is already making a difference to the office.

Finally, the work of the trustees and manager on the new subcommittees began to kick in. As a result, the year saw many changes to areas such as policies and procedures, financial protocols and management, fundraising events, and young people's services. The work of the trustees is growing as the charity does, and the board has responded well by using the sub-committees to raise the standards and make Beacon fit for the future.



I would like to end by saying a heartfelt thank you to all the volunteers and staff that work for Beacon; you have all contributed to the success of 2009 and enabling Beacon to help 800 people in need of support. Not only this, the time you all give is helping Beacon to utilise its skills and resources in ever more effective ways, thus making the charity more relevant and beneficial than ever before.

Thank you all again.
James Harper
Manager

Looking Ahead

A lot has happened during 2009, but even more is on the cards for 2010. At the time of writing the following new pilot projects are being implemented:

- Group programme to help adults manage stress
- 1-1 counselling service for children in primary schools
- Confidence building programme for children in primary schools

The Primary school work marks a new area for Beacon in working with children from the age of 5, and is a result of the Open Forum in 2008 where a number of counsellors and supervisors stated the need and expressed the desire to create a service for young children.

These 3 projects are all part of the growing future of Beacon, and mark the start of an exciting phase in the charity's life, and one that I hope everyone agrees is a good phase.

Further ahead, there are many more plans for developing the charity, and they are all focused on making its services ones that are needed, effective, and of a high quality. Hopefully in next year's annual report you will be reading about the successes of these new initiatives.

James Harper



What our people have to say

OFFICE ADMINISTRATOR - Debby Bridge

It is only just over 3 months since I started at Beacon, but it already seems like I have been here for years. Everyone has been really welcoming, and above all patient and forgiving, as I learn the ropes. There have also been plenty of challenges, not least of all the weather; I learnt every possible route from home to Bramhall by public transport.

I remember on my first visit the impression of nicely decorated, clean rooms and a tidy office, albeit a little small; it was definitely not the shabby, stereotypical charity environment I had expected.

Added to all that, I now know how passionate everyone is about the actual work: no-one is in it for the money! It still humbles me how much people will give of their time and effort. What a contrast from my previous life – working for an IT department in Financial Services (yes, one of those big banks), where almost everyone, even my immediate colleagues and friends, were very materialistic with little social awareness, and the main purpose behind everything we did was to make money. I left determined to work for a “not-for-profit” organisation, and really feel I have now found my niche.

As we start 2010, we are settling back into a “normal” routine, and I am now getting to grips with tackling my list of things to do before it gets too long. There is so much to learn – but when I start to think it is all too much, I just remind myself of life before Beacon, when I was temping and very bored, and my enthusiasm soon returns.



APPOINTMENT ADMINISTRATOR—Barbara Polanska

Although I have been the Friday Appointments Administrator since January 2008 I actually first joined Beacon in 2005. Having taken early retirement from my previous job I had just returned to England after 6 months in Spain enjoying the weather, food and laidback lifestyle. Despite having plenty of interests to keep me occupied, I had decided that I wasn't ready to give up work completely and began looking for a congenial part-time job which would keep my brain ticking over. By chance I came across an advert for an opening with a counselling organisation. It was exactly what I was looking for so I applied and the rest, as they say, is history. At that time Beacon was based in a small office on the top floor of a local surgery. Sandra was the only Appointments Administrator and worked 4 mornings a week. However, client numbers were increasing and, since Sandra was waiting for knee surgery, it had been decided to take on another staff member to initially work afternoons and then provide cover for her eventual absence.

Sandra patiently tried to teach me everything I needed to know but, all too soon, her appointment came up and I suddenly found myself back in full time work.

The months that followed were both challenging and hectic but thoroughly enjoyable. Unfortunately, soon after the move to new premises I had to, reluctantly, leave Beacon because of health problems.

Then, late in 2007, I was asked if I would consider coming back for a few hours a week on a temporary basis. It had been decided to open Beacon for counselling on a Friday afternoon for a trial period of a few months. I returned in January 2008 and obviously the trial went well since, 2 years on, I am still here. I really enjoy working at Beacon and find it satisfying to be doing something genuinely useful although it saddens me to see our client list growing. In any other organisation an increase in clients would be a cause for celebration but here it just means that more and more people are having problems in their lives. However, it is wonderful to see how many people are willing to give their time to Beacon, without pay, to help others.



What our people have to say

COUNSELLOR — Teresa Nestor

Six words which would aptly describe the experience of working as a volunteer counsellor at Beacon? Rewarding, inspirational, interesting, valued, respect and energised, immediately come to mind.

As I look back over this year I have become aware of how much I have appreciated the opportunity to work with such a diverse range of clients. The experience has been rewarding and inspirational both personally and professionally. I have been privileged to help clients make the often difficult but always worthwhile journey to recovery. It has been an emotional ride with much learning taking place on both sides on the way.

Beacon respects and values its volunteers in many ways: from the warm, friendly yet tactful atmosphere of the counselling office to the provision of CPD courses and training and development opportunities. Participation in CBT training has inspired and informed my counselling practice. Other courses have opened up creative approaches to working with clients which sit comfortably within my integrative orientation.

Looking forward to the New Year I feel excited and energised by the prospect of working with groups as part of the Stressbusters' pilot programme. It is good to be part of an organisation which is so forward thinking in the ways that it provides counselling help, support and hope for people in the local community.

SCHOOLS COUNSELLOR — Ann Curley

I have worked for Beacon as a Schools' Counsellor for approximately five years and continue to find the experience both extremely rewarding and stimulating. This may be due to the fact that the work is so varied and with the age of the children/adolescents ranging between 11 – 18 years, I am required to draw upon a range of counselling skills. Creative play, for example, soft toys, stones and shells may help children to understand and unravel a particular problem whereby CBT techniques may help a teenager manage anxiety linked to exam stress.

The issues that children bring to the School Counsellor are equally broad ranging, for example; bullying, eating disorders, self esteem, bereavement, relationship difficulties, sexual identity and many more. Maintaining close links with the school's pastoral care can be extremely beneficial.

Whilst I also have the privilege of working with adults, I feel that the rewards of working with children and trying to make some difference to their lives, however small, are insurmountable.



What our people have to say

ADMIN VOLUNTEER – Sue Bright

For as long as I can remember I have always tried to be involved with a charity, usually in the form of making a small donation. Several years ago I also attempted to donate some hours to a local charity but sadly with a 40 plus hour work week it was a short lived experience. However, having recently returned from 8 exciting but stressful years living and working in Washington, D.C., I am now in the fortunate position of not having to work full time (thanks to my husband!) and am therefore able to do some volunteer work.

So why Beacon? Foremost I wanted to volunteer for a charity I believed in. I've always been a huge advocate of counselling and with the ever more stressful lives we lead I believe the demand for counselling is becoming greater. Sadly you only have to look at Beacon's already large and increasing waiting list to see proof in that statement. I think Beacon's work is invaluable. I also wanted to volunteer for a smaller charity having always helped the 'big' charities in the past so Beacon ticked that box too. Finally I can't deny that Beacon's location was also a draw, as a Bramhall residence I was after somewhere local; gone are my days of the two hour commute!

I've only been at Beacon for a month and there is still a lot to learn but I'm enjoying every minute of it. I know this sounds so clichéd but everyone I have met has been wonderful. I hope to continue to be involved with Beacon long into the future.....



VOLUNTEER RECEPTIONIST – Jane Gould

Following a health scare in 2006 I decided that after the support and kindness shown to me whilst I was ill that I needed to give something back to the community.

When looking at volunteer opportunities in the local area I discovered Beacon Counselling were looking for a volunteer receptionist and as my work background is office administration I thought I would investigate further. I initially had a chat with James who gave me an insight into the work carried out by the counselling service at Beacon.

Luckily I liked the idea of what Beacon did and Beacon liked me (!) so I decided to take up this opportunity and as well as carrying out receptionist duties, I have also assisted in various administration tasks to assist in the smooth operation of the office.

I have over the past couple of years met a variety of people including clients, counsellors, and the team in the office at Bramhall, all of whom only have good words to say about the service provided.

One aspect that I find extremely encouraging is the amount of time given to Beacon by a variety of people to provide a much needed service to the local community.

Training

Since 2007 Beacon has provided training to its counsellors, but in 2009 an ambitious programme of training was planned and delivered. The idea was to measure the training needs of each counsellor at Beacon, then identify which needs were most common and important, then deliver a training programme that fulfilled those needs.

Figen Murray joined as a trustee at the start of 2009, and with her expertise in the fields of counselling and supervision, coupled with her extensive contacts, she was the ideal person to take the training programme forward. The result has been a series of 9 training events, with 1 taking place nearly every month, attended by a mixture of internal and external counsellors and supervisors. This allowed counsellors within Beacon to improve their skills further and continue their professional development, whilst also gaining a new forum for networking with fellow professionals in other agencies and settings.

The feedback from each of the courses has been excellent, and we are looking forwards to the next year with relish!
James Harper



ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT—Figen Murray

As some of you may know Beacon has started organising ongoing professional development events for their counsellors. The supervisors found out the training needs of each counsellor, and James Harper collated the results to identify the most important training needs for Beacon's counsellors. As a result, the training programme was created and has been a great success.

It was felt that these training events should be made accessible to external counsellors as well. This has helped Beacon to raise its profile in the local counselling arena. The events are offered at a very competitive price in order to enable as many people as possible to participate. External counsellors are now contacting Beacon to find out when the next events are taking place.

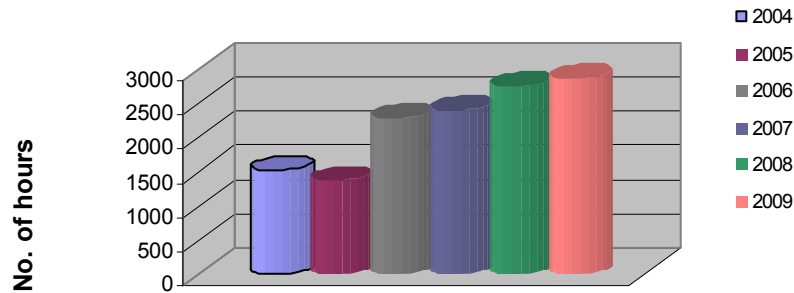
So far we have run workshops on Creative Therapy, Loss & Endings, Time Limited & Brief Therapy, Alcohol & Addictions and a two hour seminar on Domestic Abuse.

The new programme for Spring and Summer will soon be circulated and hopefully will again prove to be popular amongst the counselling fraternity in Stockport and surrounding areas.

Ongoing professional training is not only an ethical requirement as set out by the Ethical Framework of the BACP, but it is also important for any counsellor to keep their therapeutic tool kit up to date and as comprehensive as possible. The variety of topics on offer will hopefully provide an opportunity for learning new skills and even refresh some of the already existing skills of individual counsellors.

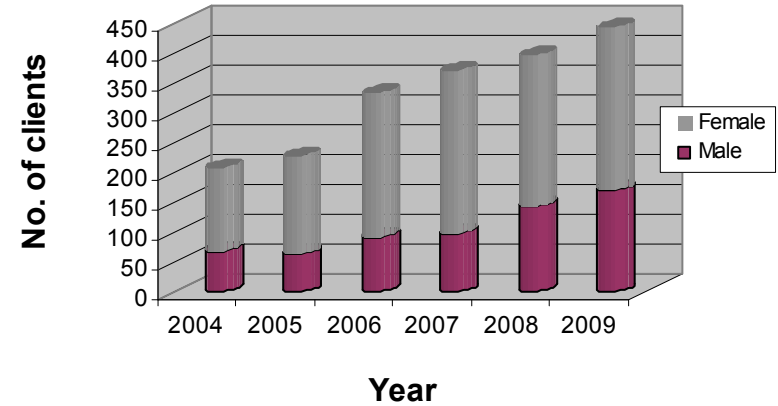
Statistics – about our Clients

Number of counselling hours offered



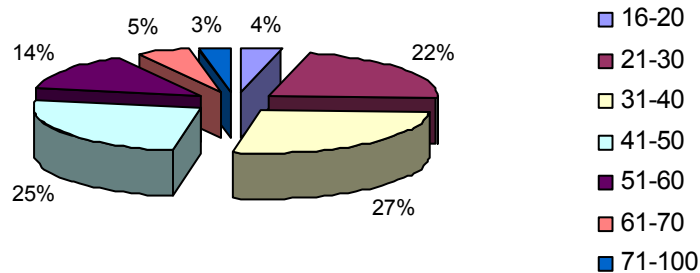
This table shows the steady growth in the number of sessions offered to people needing counselling, with 2009 being the highest number yet.

Number of Male and Female Clients



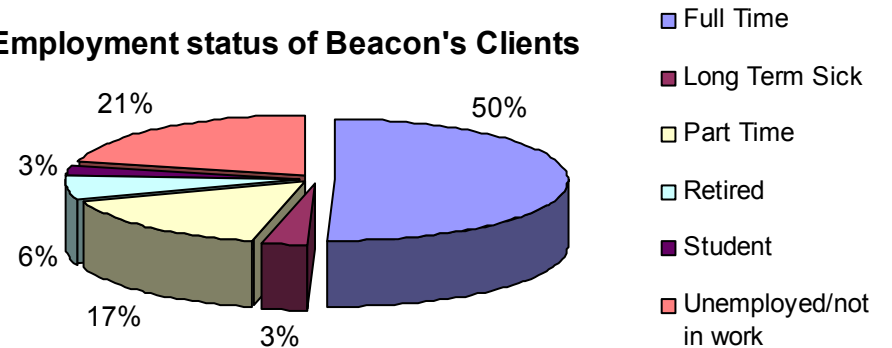
This table shows that Beacon has helped more adults than ever through its services in Stockport, and combined with the service in Wythenshawe means that over 500 adults were helped in 2009

Age range of adults using Beacon



Similarly to last year, there is a wide range of people accessing counselling at Beacon, though there has been growth in the 51-60 age range.

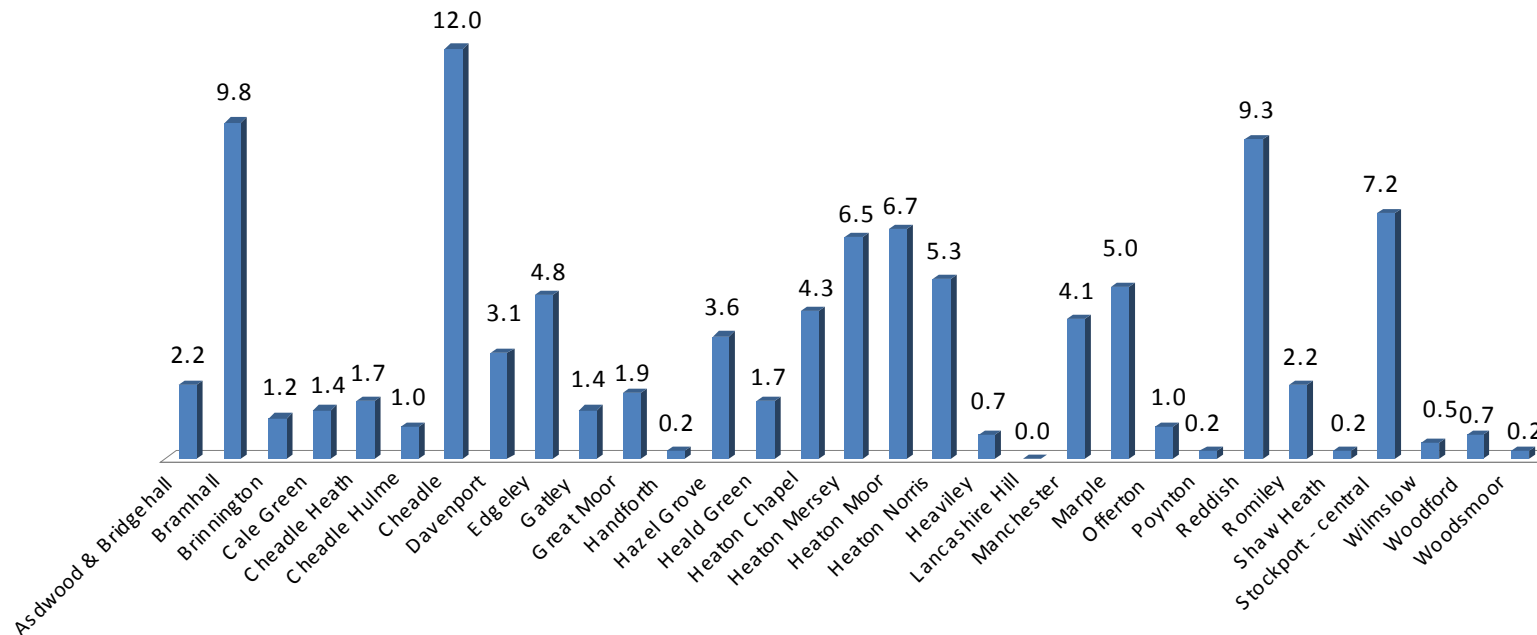
Employment status of Beacon's Clients



Nearly half of all clients are not in full time employment and there has been a significant increase in the number of people who are in part-time jobs. This may be due to the extra day time counselling Beacon now offers.

Statistics – Counselling

Where our clients come from:



As can be seen from this table Beacon's service to adults in Stockport takes clients who live in a wide range of places throughout the borough and beyond. The main peaks for Bramhall, Cheadle, and Reddish are not surprising, as these are near to our main centres of operation and where we have been established the longest. However, it is good to see the wide range of areas, and in particular this year the increase in the percentage of clients from Asdwood & Bridgehall, where Beacon set up a new project in June.

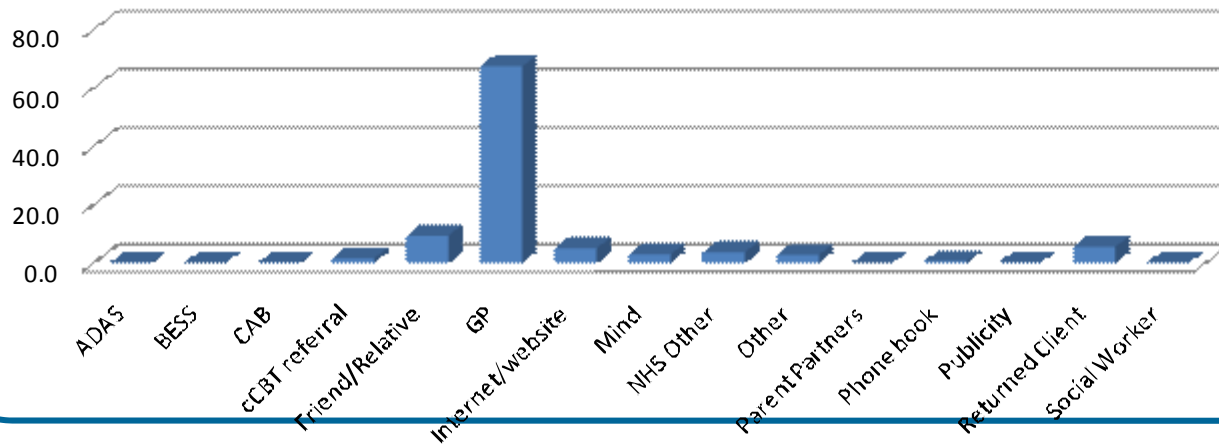
Did you know that



Stress was the biggest growing issue during 2009, with more than double the number in 2008

Statistics – Counselling

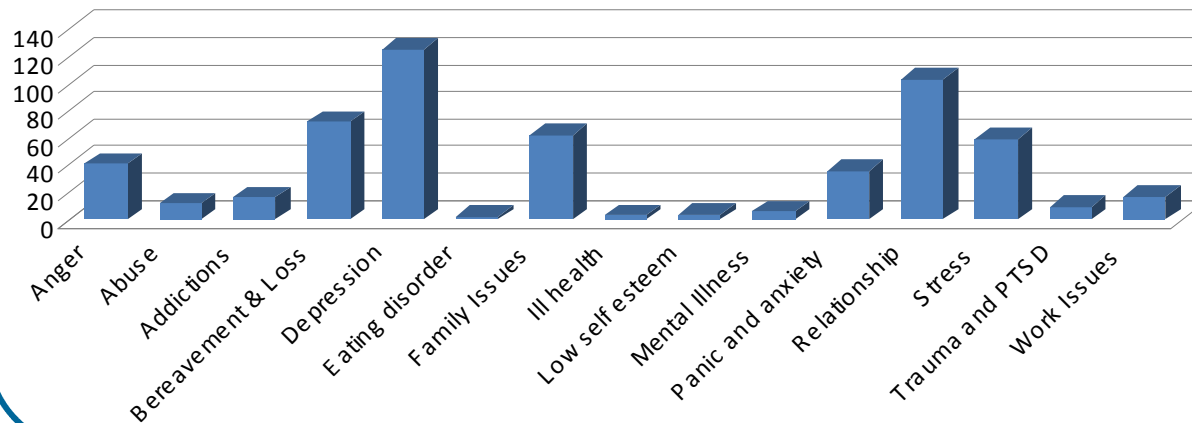
Who referred Clients in 2009



This table shows that GPs dominate the referrers to Beacon for last year. However, there is a growing proportion of friends and relatives that are letting people know about our services.

This is encouraging as it suggests that people have had a good experience at Beacon and are happy to recommend it to others. This also matches the feedback received from the client evaluation forms, and can give Beacon more confidence in the quality of its services.

Issues brought to counselling 2009



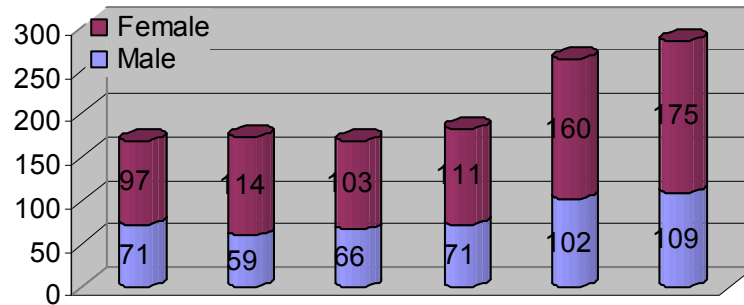
This table shows the variety of issues that adults bring to counselling at Beacon. They cover the whole range of mental and emotional distress, but the most common are depression, bereavement & loss, relationships, anxiety, family issues, and stress.

We saw during 2009 a large increase in the amount of people coming to Beacon with stress, and this appears to be because of the recession. Beacon has responded to this by setting up a stress management programme which starts early in 2010.

Statistics – Schools Counselling

Our schools counselling service was first set up in 1996 with a pilot in one school. Since then, this service has expanded steadily, and Beacon now works in 10 schools throughout Stockport and beyond.

Number of young people helped: 2004 - 9



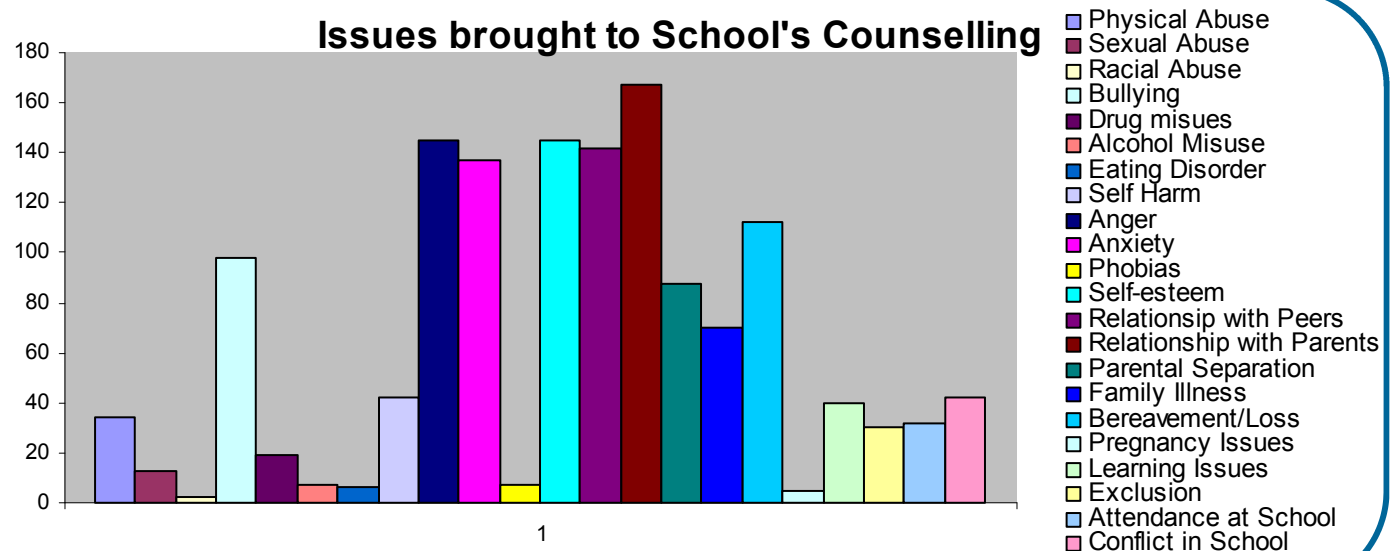
The chart on the left shows how Beacon has increased the number of young people helped in the last 2 years, with nearly 300 young people helped during 2009.

Whilst it is good that we are reaching more young people, it also highlights the growing need for counselling in this age range, and that more professionals are recognising the need for, and effectiveness of, counselling for young people.

It might surprise some people to see the wide range of serious issues (table: right), but Beacon's schools counsellors are all too familiar with the problems that young people are facing.

What is different from adults is that young people are often powerless to change their circumstances because they are not an adult, so a lot of the work can be around better coping strategies and plans for the future.

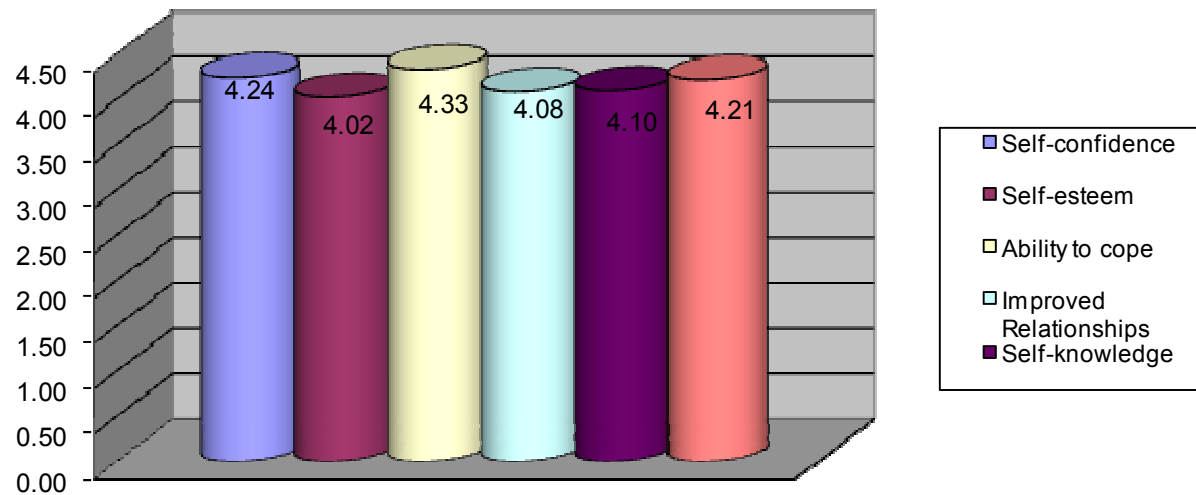
Issues brought to School's Counselling



The Impact Beacon makes

Impact of Counselling on key Mental Health Indicators 2009

Impact of Counselling 2009



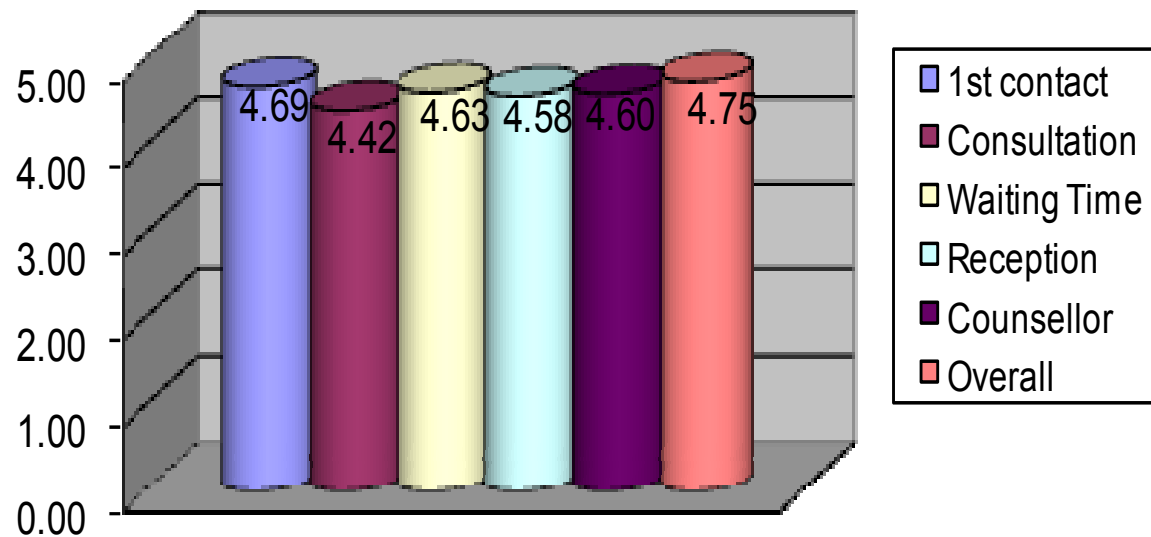
You can see from the chart that Beacon is having a very positive impact on each of the 6 mental health indicators.

The fact that clients report improvements in each of these areas shows that Beacon is making the difference in people's lives that it wants to. That is, Beacon is improving the mental health and well-being of people.

Another important fact from this table is that people feel much more able to cope in the future. This is encouraging as all counselling aims to foster autonomy and resilience in the hope that counselling will never be needed again.

The Impact Beacon makes—service ratings

Client Verdict on Service 2009



This table shows how Beacon's clients rated the overall service in a number of key areas.

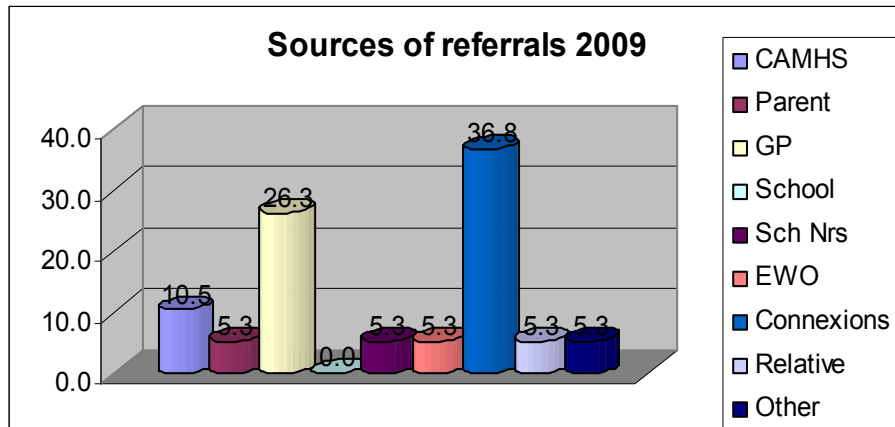
It is good to see that counsellor section is rated very highly, and that the first contact and reception also score well. This is a credit to all our volunteers and the admin staff in the office.

The lowest score belongs to the consultation, and this is a reflection of the growing waiting list that Beacon experienced during 2009. Beacon has already responded to this by recruiting more counsellors and training up more of the qualified counsellors in carrying out assessments. However, there is still room for improvement and there are plans for 2010 to reduce the waiting times further.

Beacon 2 (B2)

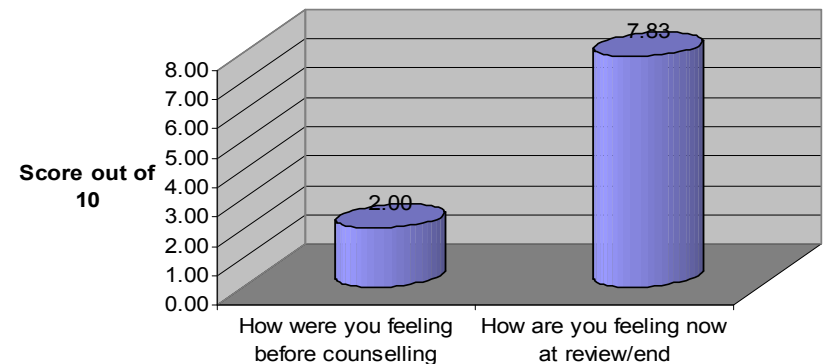
The Beacon 2 (B2) project provides counselling for young people outside of school. It targets pupils who either do not want to access counselling within their own school, have been suspended or excluded from school, or are in danger of this happening.

Sources of Referrals



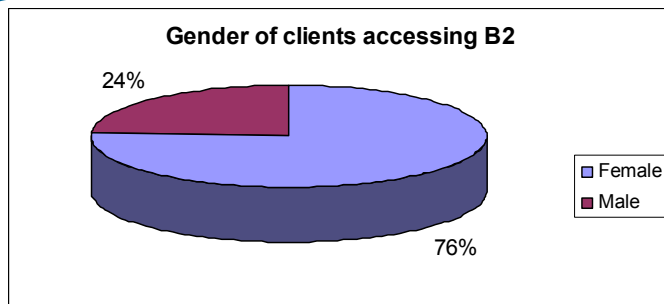
B2 received referrals from a wider range of sources during 2009, with more referrals coming from GPs and Connexions than before, and referrals starting to come from CAMHS, Education Welfare Officers, and School Nurses. This shows that word of this small project is spreading and also that it is useful to a wide range of professionals who support young people.

The impact of counselling at B2



This table, where young people rated the amount of change that counselling had in their lives, shows that clients felt the service had a big impact for them. This is very encouraging as Beacon always hopes it will have a big impact!

Gender of clients accessing B2

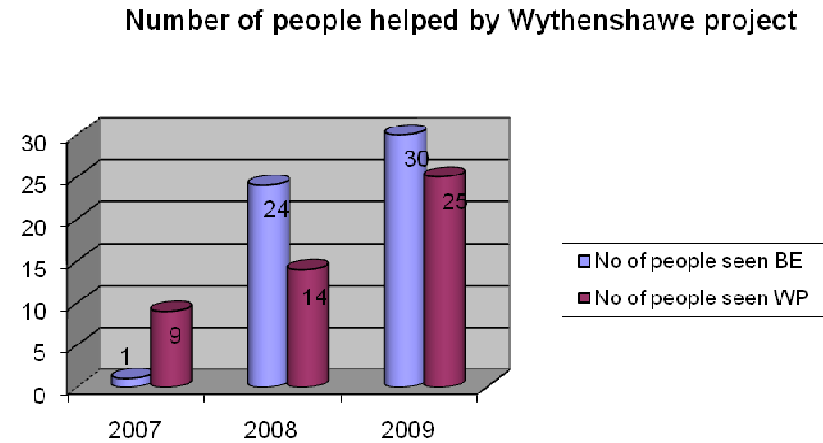
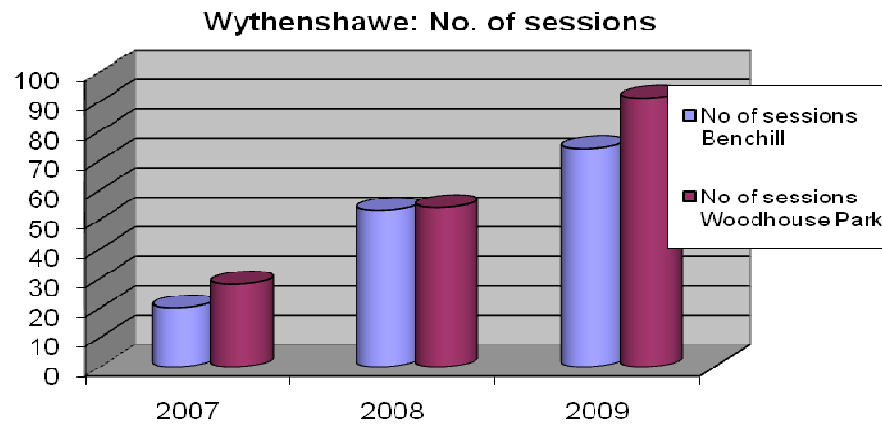


As in previous years, there is a much higher proportion of female clients. However, when compared with our work in secondary schools, 24% of males is a higher percentage, which suggests male clients are more likely to need counselling outside of schools, and perhaps that young males are more likely to be suspended or excluded from school.

Wythenshawe Project

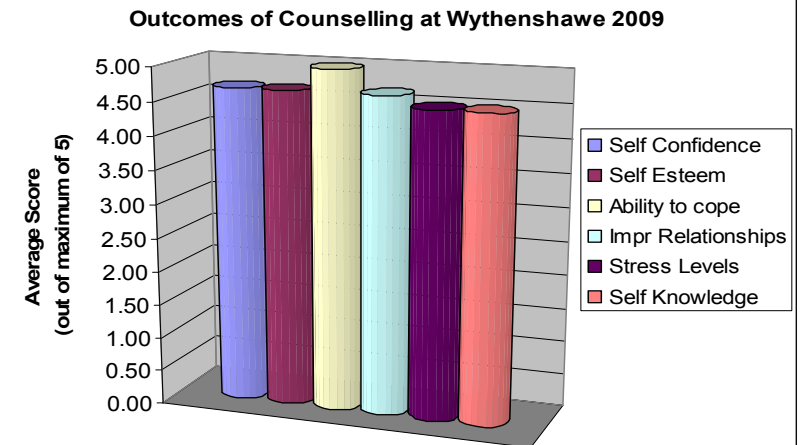
The Wythenshawe project is a targeted service that works with parents in the Benchill and Woodhouse park areas of Wythenshawe. Both areas are amongst the most deprived in the UK, and Beacon is working in partnership with local Barnardo's services to provide counselling to parents in these areas.

Started towards the end of 2007, the project has gradually increased the number of sessions offered and the number of people seen. The tables below show that a lot more sessions have been offered during 2009 and more people have been worked with. This is down to the hard work of the volunteer counsellors involved in delivering the service.



Whilst it is encouraging that more people are receiving the service, this is no use if the service is not benefiting the service users. The table below has been created from the results of client evaluation forms that are given to each client at the end of counselling. As can be seen, there is a marked improvement that people report in each of the mental health indicators used. In particular clients' ability to cope in the future has improved significantly, and this is great news for the longer term impact of the project, as it means they will be less likely to need support again in the future.

As I mentioned last year, I would like to thank 2 volunteers in particular; Fiona Douglas and Kirsty Hill. Their skills as counsellors and commitment to this project are admirable. Another counsellor, Catherine Lister, has joined the team and will be playing a bigger part in 2010.



Adswood Project

This project marks a continuation in Beacon's policy of targeting areas where the need for counselling is greatest. Beacon decided at its Open Forum in 2008 to provide counselling from the most deprived areas of Stockport. A successful funding bid was submitted to Stockport MBC's Main Grants Scheme, and as a result counselling started in the area during June 2009.



The premise behind it is that, on looking at the statistics, Adswood has the highest incidence of poor mental health in Stockport, and yet Beacon noticed that there was the lowest percentage of clients accessing the service, despite being a short trip to 2 of our locations. On looking into the area, there was no other general counselling service so it was decided to respond to the need by taking Beacon's adult counselling to the area, and to offer counselling for free.

This is being provided by 3 volunteer counsellors working from both Adswood and Bridgehall in 2 excellent community buildings (Beechwood Centre and ABACUS centre). Early indications are that people are increasingly taking up the opportunity of counselling there, and that more professionals are becoming aware of the service and the short waiting time. As a result, more referrals are coming in.

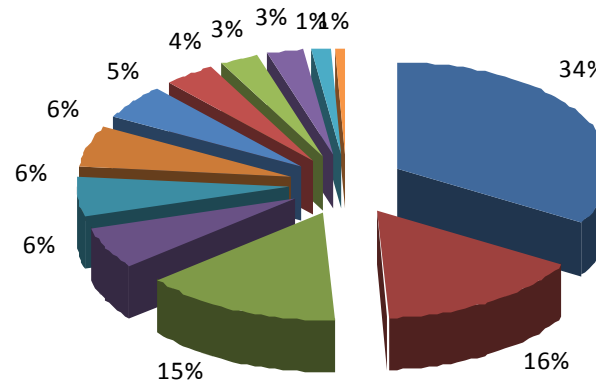
The funding lasts for 3 years overall, and we plan to make a big difference in the area. However, at this early stage I would just like to thank Chris Ackers and Sophie O'Donnell for their participation and dedication from the start, to Sue Wycherley who has joined recently, and to Beechwood Cancer Care and ABACUS Children's Centre for the generous use of their rooms.

Finances – an easy summary!

Beacon finances for 2009 show that the income exceeded expenditure by £44,860. This is a considerable improvement on recent years and Beacon goes forward in 2010 with a much stronger cash flow position than ever before. However, the majority of this surplus is restricted to specific projects and pilot schemes rather than general counselling services. It is therefore crucial that Beacon continues to receive non-specific funding and donations, along with client contributions in order that it may continue to provide its core counselling services.

Sources of Income 2009

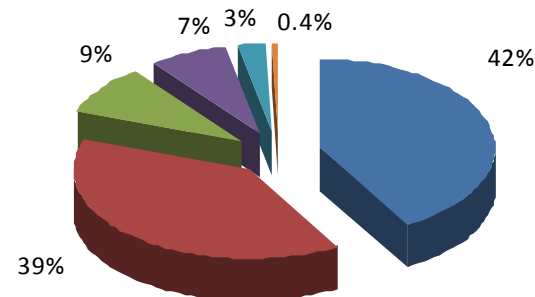
Contract Fee	33%
Client Contributions	16%
CRH (Office Administrator	15%
GiftAid/Donations/ Friends	6%
Beacon 2	6%
Stockport PCT	6%
SMBC - Adswood	5%
Supervisee contributions	3%
SPCT (Stress Busters	3%
Training Courses	1%
Fundraising / Other	1%
Total	£167,242



Sources of Expenditure 2009

Office Staff	42%
Counsellors / Supervision	39%
Office Running Costs	9%
Premises	7%
Travel	3%
Fundraising Costs	0.4%

Total **£122,382**



Supporting Beacon

- All Beacon's volunteers: Counsellors, receptionists, admin, publicity, grants, website
- Beacon Counselling Supervisors Team
- Friends of Beacon
- Stockport Primary Care Trust
- Stockport MBC
- BBC Children in Need
- An anonymous local businessman
- Mellor Church
- St. Michael and All Angels Church
- Bramhall Methodist Church
- ABACUS Children's Centre
- Beechwood Cancer Care
- Bramhall United Reform Church
- Stockport Council for Voluntary Services (CVS)
- Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Services (GMCVO)
- Julie Farley of Stockport MBC
- Barbara Swann and Pat Megram at Stockport Women's Centre
- Caroline Vermes at the North West Centre for Eating Disorders
- University of Manchester
- Stockport College
- Salford University
- Keele University
- Brian Hill
- Gina Evans of Stockport PCT
- Janis Mann
- Sue Parkes of RELATE Greater Manchester South
- Jo Wood of Counselling and Family Centre Altrincham
- Stockport Christian Counselling
- Debbie Koroma at Barnardo's in Wythenshawe
- The Right Honourable Mark Hunter MP

Beacon relies on the support of many people and organisations and what follows gives an idea of how many play a part in making Beacon work.

- Mr and Mrs John Boardman
- Mike Bailey
- David Ackroyd
- Hiron Miah
- Alan Smith
- The staff at Heaton Mersey Medical Centre, Reddish Vale Children's Centre, Heaton Moor Medical Centre, Cheadle Hulme Health Centre, and Stockport Well Being Centre
- The link staff at the following schools: Bramhall High School, Failsworth School, Kingsway School, The Kings School in Macclesfield, Marple Hall School, The Pendlebury Centre, Reddish Vale Technology College, The Stockport Academy, Stockport School, Windlehurst School

If you are interested in supporting Beacon, then there are many ways to help:

- Friend of Beacon—call 0161 440 0055 for more details
- Volunteer— counsellor, receptionist, admin, events, trustee and many more
- Spread the word—help raise our profile, call 0161 4400055 for details
- Donate - we always welcome donations!