



Beacon

Activity Report 2011

Registered Charity No. 1109545



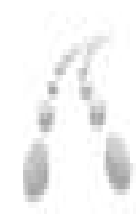
unsung heroes

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service
2008



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Did you know that

**Beacon Counselling
helped over 1500 people
during 2011**

The year that was

January



Funding received for domestic abuse project in Wythenshawe from the Lloyds TSB Foundation.

April



Beacon's first contract for working with adults started, funded by Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust; taking over 80 people off the waiting list for NHS counselling in Stockport.

May



Beacon took part in the BUPA Great Manchester 10K run, with 23 runners, raising £6000 for the charity.

October

Beacon Purpose Quest weekend. 8 people take part in the final stage in the process of discovering Beacon's purpose:-



empowering connection.

November



Beacon is shortlisted for the Glaxo-SmithKline IMPACT Award. The award is for charities making a significant contribution to health in their area.

Chairman's Report

Writing my third report I can tell you that Beacon in these challenging times has done very well in 2011, helping many people who are struggling with difficult issues.

Our thanks must first of all go to our Manager James Harper, our Accountant Sam Smith and our dedicated office staff. During 2011 we helped 900 adults, 530 school children and 100 young people via Beacon 2.

In addition to our core services in Bramhall and in Stockport schools, we work in Wythenshawe, Adswold & Bridgehall, Trafford, and Macclesfield. During 2011 we also worked with Pennine Care and continued our partnership with Disability Stockport, targeting adults in Stockport who are out of work.

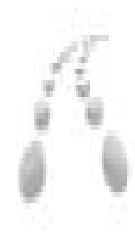
Beacon Counselling do rely on generous support from individuals, charitable funders and those people who turn out each year in the BUPA Great Manchester 10K run. Thank you to everyone involved for raising a fantastic £6000.

2012 and beyond will see the challenging times continue and the Board of Trustees are prepared for this with the 3 year Business and Operational plans and a prudent Financial Plan. This will help to ensure a secure future for Beacon Counselling.

As always I would like to say thank you to the Board of Trustees for their unselfish support and to the many volunteers for their part in making 2011 a successful year.

ALAN HEWITSON

Chair of the Board of Trustees



**Did you know that
Beacon was established
28 years ago**

Manager's Report



Well, it's been another incredible year in the life of Beacon, with many highlights, and a year that Beacon can look back on with pride.

During 2011, Beacon provided counselling and group programmes to over 1500 adults, young people and children. This is a substantial number and reflects the commitment and effort of the 115 volunteers and staff that are part of Beacon today. Though this is a large number of people, the most important thing is we make a difference in people's lives, and that is something we can now say for sure. Beacon's range of monitoring and evaluation tools, introduced across all services over the last 3 years, means we can prove that our services are effective, and the work put in by so many volunteers and staff is worth it. What these tools tell us is that people - be they adults, young people, or children - benefit from Beacon's services through increased confidence and self-esteem, through better relationships with friends, family, and colleagues, and through better coping skills for hard times in the future. This means that people feel better now *and* have greater resilience, reducing their need to return to counselling or other support again.

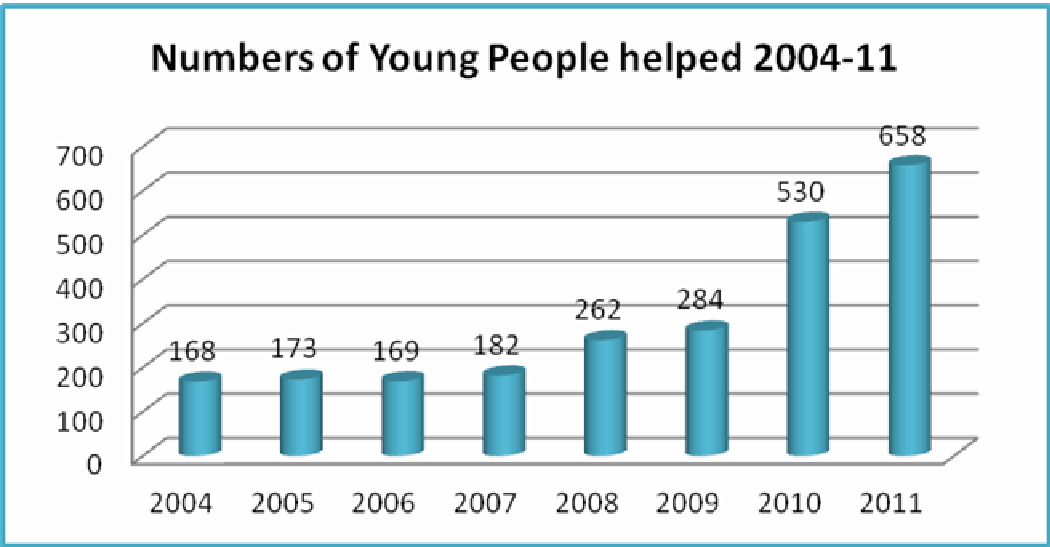
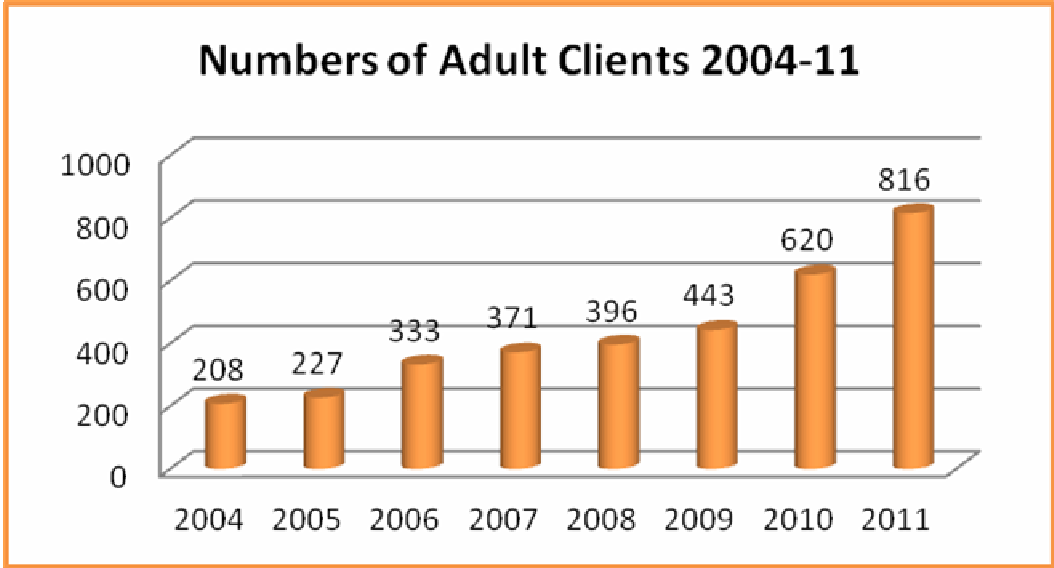
The largest increase during the year is in the number of young people we have supported, with some 600 across the 12 schools and B2 (the community-based service for young people). This work has had a new focus, through a council project called ITASC, that supports young people from Brinnington. A new area for Beacon is group work, and delivering the new Stressbusters stress management programme in three Stockport Children's Centres was a delight. This provided support to parents in areas of disadvantage who were more isolated than most, and enabled them not only to better manage stress, but to raise their levels of wellbeing and form a support network that can last well beyond the end of the programme. This is something we are doing more of in 2012. Beacon's contract with Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust provided vital support to people in Stockport with depression, removing them from the waiting list, and enabling them to begin moving on in their lives. The contract also developed new opportunities for our existing counsellors; something we plan much more of in the next 2 years. Finally, Beacon is currently working with Relate Greater Manchester South, Central Youth and the council to develop a new service for sexually exploited young people. This service will start in 2013, and we are investing time now to ensure the design of the service is the best it can be.

What the above begins to show you is how Beacon is targeting the areas where it is needed most; something we started doing a few years ago, and we are now finding areas where there is little or no support around mental health and wellbeing, and the skills, experience, and effectiveness of our services are becoming invaluable.

Best wishes to you for 2012.
James Harper
Manager

Overview of Counselling Services 2011

Number of adults helped
The last 3 years has seen a large increase in the adults helped by Beacon, reflecting to an extent the impact of the recession and the cuts on people's lives and the support available.



Number of young people helped
This has risen massively in the last 2 years, with 658 young people helped during 2011. This reflects the increased targeting by Beacon of the young people most in need.

Adult Service

The main adult service in Stockport is the core of Beacon's work with adults and is the first service set up by Beacon in 1984. The service provides counselling to any adult in Stockport or beyond who can attend our premises. Most of the counselling is provided from the office in Bramhall and over the years we have offered more and more so that now counselling appointments are available and filled from morning to night every Monday to Friday.

This service is the most difficult to fund because it is not targeted at a specific population, but for Beacon this is a critical service because it offers effective and accessible counselling to any adult, irrespective of their financial circumstances. The growing demand for this service every year shows it is increasingly needed in these difficult economic times.



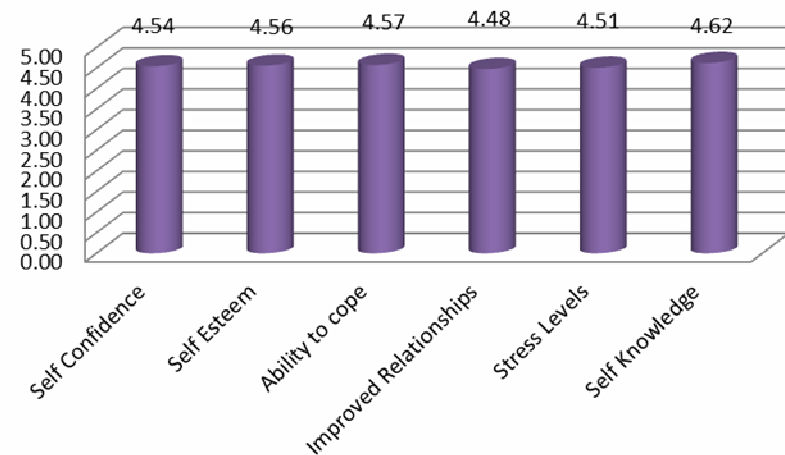
FUNDING SPENT ON

Client donations, fundraising events, gift aid, donations, Friends of Beacon, NHS Stockport
Counsellor supervision, travel, counsellor training, appointments service

Benefits & Outcomes

Using Beacon Evaluation Forms (100 completed) adult clients rated the improvement in their wellbeing (using the indicators shown in the chart on the right) out of 5; after an average of 6 counselling sessions, they reported near maximum scores in each area.

Outcomes of Adult Counselling 2011



Client feedback

"Made me be able to speak to people and not just dismiss my feelings and help me deal with difficult situations". May 2011

"It has helped me to put worries and concerns I had in perspective and enable me to move on with confidence". August 2011

A Counsellor's View

VOLUNTEER COUNSELLOR, ADULT SERVICE — Jo Read



When I look back over my journey at Beacon, I remember my first night of counselling back in October 2009. I was a nervous trainee. I was also excited as I had been attracted to Beacon because of its great reputation and for general experience, not specialist work. I have always received support from the beginning and am still receiving it now, including the nurturing encouragement from James and my Supervisors. I work at the Bramhall office and have experienced working evenings and daytime. There is calmness when I enter the building and I am sure this transcends my work with clients. When I worked evenings and finished quite late, the presence of the volunteer Admin Team provided a sense of security.

I consider myself fortunate to have had a strong backbone whilst training and since qualifying. I have felt supported when faced with difficult dilemmas and James or Debby have been there to help. Where would I have been without the reassurance and safe place to discuss anxieties with Beacon Supervisors? I am lucky to have individual and group supervision, all that feedback and wisdom for an affordable price. The appointments team are patient, helpful and friendly when diary booking, taking donations or sharing paperwork. Their work allows me the time to give full attention to my clients. I feel spoilt when I compare my situation to Counsellors elsewhere. My previous working environments have been very different and certainly not so warm and accepting.

As a counsellor at Beacon, the high points for me have been the reliable, steady flow of clients and broad range of cases. I am privileged to work with clients and support them on their journey. Over the 2 years I have grown in confidence and the belief that the process of counselling really works, as clients leave more resourceful and empowered. The lows have been my own self-doubt, learning to let go and trust clients will be ok. I develop resilience but the nature of the relationship means I care and it is not always easy. Practising self-care is crucial in this process.

I cannot underestimate the training provided, I am proud of my growing portfolio of certificates of attendance! The quality of outside speakers, material and choice is outstanding, and affordable. Examples include specialist knowledge on Addictions, Mindfulness and Safeguarding. It is a great way to meet colleagues, share experiences and feel part of a wider team. The counsellor forums are a vehicle to express ideas freely, positive or negative.

Volunteering at Beacon provides me with rewards like access to clients so I could complete my Diploma training and since qualifying, continue on my road towards accreditation. At a deeper level, my esteem has steadily grown as I feel I am making a positive contribution to improve the lives of others. I don't forget my past experiences as a client myself and this further encourages me of the need for counsellors. I have been given the opportunity for much personal change and growth at Beacon.

A view from the office...

ADMINISTRATOR—Margaret Smith

My Reflections since I started with Beacon during 2006

I first started with Beacon when there was a staff shortage crisis within the office team due to illness. Margaret Parker (Supervisor) who has known me for many years as we worship at the same Church, suggested I might be someone who could help out. I came along and chatted to Hilary and got started. The position was temporary!! After a few months, it was suggested I might like a permanent post.

When I came for my interview the idea had developed and I was to work in the evening and welcome in the evening Volunteer Receptionist and make appointments, often working alone from 4.15 four evenings each week. At that stage there was just morning counselling and evening counselling from 7.30 – 9.30. But one of the problems would be that I would be on my own – was this a problem? No, I replied as I would enjoy the quiet and the opportunity to get on with the job. For me with my hectic lifestyle, this would be a blissful aspect to the job!! Now several years later – I am NEVER on my own, there is always a hive of activity from when I arrive until when I finish. The opportunity to 'get on' with the job is rare as there are constant interruptions, e.g. the phones, clients arriving, counsellors arriving, questions, answers, advice. This is not a complaint as I thrive on being busy. It is just the change has been phenomenal, given the speed with which Beacon has expanded its counselling activities in so many ways.



ADMIN VOLUNTEER—Fran Forrester

Having always worked full time except for the few years I took off to raise our two daughters, it felt great to reach a stage in my life where I could change to part time work and have a bit more leisure time. I went from often working 48 hour weeks to 5 hours a day – bliss! I did all the things I had dreamt about while at work, catching up with friends, long walks, reading all the books I had never got round to before. However, after a few weeks I began to feel I had more time on my hands than I had expected. I have always given donations to charities but had never really had the opportunity to volunteer so I decided to see if I could be of help somewhere.

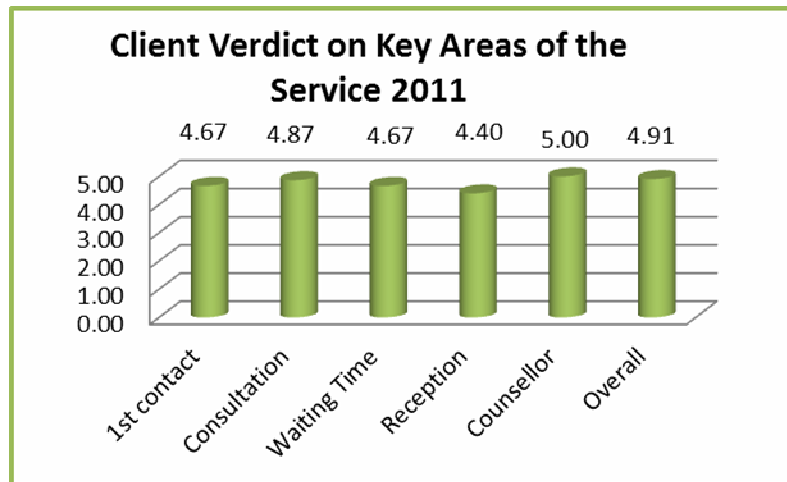
I applied to Beacon as I had studied psychology a long time ago and am really aware of how our lives have become more stressful over recent years – often living away from close family who would normally be there for us to confide in and the world now too busy to stop and listen. I began as an evening receptionist which I enjoyed but after about 18 months I asked if I could help in the office as my working life has always been in office admin and I thought I could probably be more help there.

I work a couple of hours every week and I look forward to it. Everyone is so friendly and helpful that you can't help but enjoy being there. Every week is different but there is plenty to keep me busy! I always feel a bit guilty when someone at Beacon says thanks for your help as I really think I get more from this than Beacon does!

Pennine Care NHS Contract

This contract ran from April to December 2011. The initial aim was to provide counselling for 50 adults with depression and contribute to reducing the waiting times for counselling in Stockport. The contract with Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust was a success with Beacon counsellors seeing 66 people for a total of 352 sessions.

This was Beacon's first experience of delivering an NHS contract and it was a good one, with the admin team working well together to make the project run smoothly. In particular Sue Bright and Debby Bridge worked to organise people, places and paperwork so that the counsellors knew what to expect and the monitoring data was collected and collated in a timely manner. The contract also provided paid opportunities for some of Beacon's more experienced counsellors, which was reflected in the excellent outcomes for the people who used the service. I would also like to thank Disability Stockport for providing their premises and reception for Beacon.



Benefits & Outcomes

The table to the left shows how highly people rated the service provided by Beacon. Scores are marked out of 5, and you can see that the counsellors were given by all people 5 out of 5.

Client feedback

"When I walked into Beacon, I was not in a good place, through work with my counsellor I have been able to open up some locked boxes, look at myself differently, look at other people who are closer to me differently, I have changed so much, I am now going through such a change and in a better place. Thank you". May 2011

"Has really helped set me free, I can let the past go, accept some things are not my fault, move forward and believe in my abilities and future". June 2011

A Counsellor's View

COUNSELLOR, PENNINE CARE CONTRACT – Sally Kirk

When I found out that I had been given the opportunity to work for the Pennine Care Contract I was both delighted and slightly anxious. The reason for the anxiety was because I had never experienced counselling clients in such a limited timeframe – a maximum of only seven sessions, which contrasted greatly with the luxury of Beacon where we can be fairly flexible with the number of sessions we can offer clients. In fact in reality we actually had less counselling time than seven full sessions as monitoring forms were completed during the first and sixth sessions along with feedback forms.

What I soon grew to appreciate was the sense of focus these constraints brought to the counselling room. I found it brought a whole new dimension for me as a counsellor as I really had to work in the moment. It highlighted for me the importance of enabling a client to prioritise the issues they wanted to work on, which often turned out to be the ones that had the most impact on the client's life. I also realised that any anxiety around the low number of sessions on offer was just mine as the majority of clients had no previous experience of counselling and were not concerned.

I felt satisfaction working in a time limited way and was pleasantly surprised at the progress clients made during a short time. I feel that the whole experience has enriched my practice by giving me a more focused approach with clients. It has also highlighted that I feel comfortable with leaving certain issues that a client has alluded to but not prioritised. These of course can be looked at in the future if a client wishes to access further counselling. What was interesting was that some clients did express some concern as to whether we would have enough time to explore their issues but by the end of session 7 the majority felt that the work had been completed, and those who didn't were referred to Beacon's normal service.

I would also like to add that I really appreciate the varied opportunities that Beacon endeavours to offer their counsellors which I feel can only benefit a counsellor's experience and also the service we provide to our clients.



Adswood Project

The Adswood Project was set up in June 2009 and targets adults living in Adswood & Bridgehall. Beacon recognised in 2008 that no-one from Adswood & Bridgehall was accessing its service in Bramhall, despite it being very nearby and people were accessing the service from all over the borough. On looking into it further, it was discovered that there was a clear need because the area had the worst statistics for mental health in Stockport, yet there was no service provided locally. The result was Beacon offering a completely free service from 2 venues in the area. Nearly 3 years on this project has helped around 200 local residents.



FUNDING SPENT ON

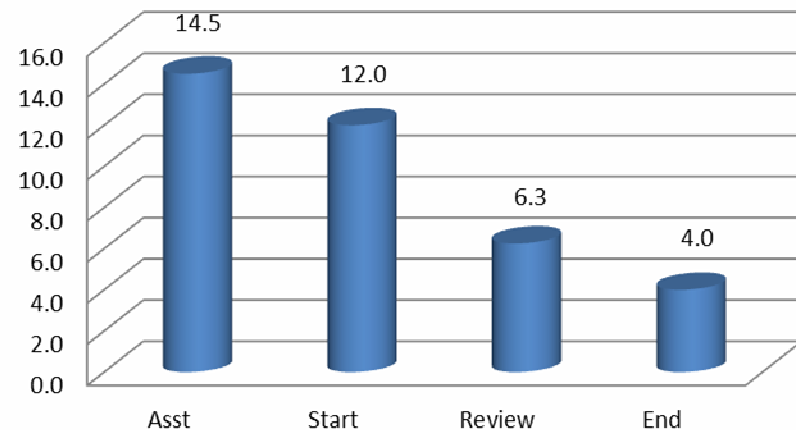
Stockport MBC's Main Grants Scheme

Counsellor supervision, travel, counsellor training, appointments service

Benefits & Outcomes

A key outcome has been the benefit to people who experienced mental health problems for many years. A number of people moved on from severe depression, anxiety, and rock-bottom self-esteem. These results have meant joining in with life again by getting out more, socialising, and even gaining employment. The chart to the right shows the reduction in levels of depression.

Adswood Average PHQ-9 Scores 2011



Client feedback

"It gave me a safe supported place and enabled me to take a step back, accept that it is ok not to be ok and to move forward at my own pace. There was no pressure at any point which I am thankful for". December 2011



Disability Stockport

Late in 2009, a series of conversations between Beacon and another local charity, Disability Stockport, led to the idea of a counselling service to improve the mental health of people who are out of work. The aim is to remove the block to employment that poor mental health brings. Funding was sought initially by Disability Stockport and a 6 month pilot was set up in May 2010. The pilot has been a great success, and another year's funding has been obtained from Awards for All which means more unemployed Stockport residents can benefit.



FUNDING SPENT ON

The Lottery Award 4 All
Counsellor supervision, travel, counsellor training, appointments service



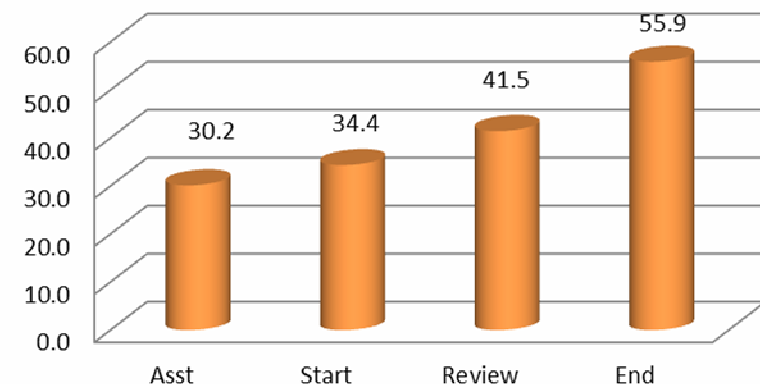
LOTTERY FUNDED

Benefits & Outcomes

Our monitoring and evaluation tells us people benefit from reduced levels of depression and anxiety, and increased resilience, which is crucial when looking for work and at the interview stage. The chart to the right shows the increases in feelings of wellbeing, which indicates increased levels of resilience.

WEMWEBS—*Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale*

Average WEMWEBS Scores 2011



Client feedback



*"It has helped me to look at ways of accepting my situation and deal with issues in a positive way".
December 2011*

"Given more confidence, more self esteem, a voice to be heard, able to speak up for myself, confidence in travelling without panic, confidence in counsellor". March 2011



"Being able to talk about the loss of my partner and allow the grieving process to become healthy and positive has enabled me to begin moving on and become the person I used to be". April 2011

A Counsellor's View



VOLUNTEER COUNSELLOR, DISABILITY STOCKPORT — Janice Kost

I have been a volunteer counsellor with Beacon for four years. I moved to Disability Stockport from the Bramhall venue just over a year ago; it was time for a change and a chance to broaden my experience by working with a new client group. The service provides free counselling to the unemployed and the disabled. The issues people bring are varied such as relationship difficulties, anxiety, bereavement issues or sometimes just feeling overwhelmed by their present situation. I'm proud to be part of this much needed service which is in a very accessible and central location in Stockport. I carry out both ongoing counselling and initial assessments. It is good to know that we have relatively short waiting times before clients start ongoing counselling, and clients are usually relieved that they don't have to wait too long.

There's always a warm and welcoming atmosphere as I step through the doors of Disability Stockport, which I feel is reassuring for clients using our service. The staff are always very helpful in the centre and I remember in my first week asking the Manager, Kieran, if blinds could be provided for the counselling room as I was finding the glare of the sun quite uncomfortable. I couldn't imagine putting the client at ease wearing a pair of sunglasses, not to mention the client feeling as though they were under interrogation! Sure enough, some blinds appeared soon afterwards, so I was very impressed from the start. There have been a few changes to Beacon's administrative support since I started and due to cutbacks we have now lost Sue, the part-time administrator. However, this does not detract from the support Beacon gives to counsellors, where help and advice is only a phone call away and the mutual support gained from group supervision at Disability Stockport, not to mention the excellent training workshops that Beacon provides.

I have not regretted making the move to Disability Stockport. It has broadened my experience and given me the confidence to apply for other projects within Beacon, such as recently completing a short term counselling contract with Beacon for Pennine Care, also based at Disability Stockport. Mostly, I have enjoyed being part of a new counselling team who are very committed to the Disability Stockport project. Beacon is such a positive organisation to volunteer for, it is always striving to develop and improve its service and I hope that it goes from strength to strength.

HR Survey 2011

Beacon HR Survey 2011

The Board of Trustees carried out the first Beacon HR Survey in 2011. The HR subcommittee designed the survey and aimed to capture the thoughts and opinions of all volunteers and staff on a range of areas related to the quality of their experience in Beacon. It was thought that the anonymous survey would also encourage a full range of feedback, which a face-to-face process would not.

90 surveys were sent out and 56 completed surveys were returned. The HR subcommittee were pleased with the return rate and want to thank everyone who took part for their time and commitment to Beacon.

The replies produced a very positive picture of the experience that people have in working for Beacon (be it as a volunteer or member of staff), and in particular people highlighted the openness of the organisation as a strength. There were also areas where some responders were not as satisfied as they could be, or commented on things that they felt needed improving. The board and HR subcommittee have taken the comments on board and will address each in turn during 2012.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who contributed to the HR survey, and would encourage anyone in Beacon who has further suggestions for improvements to let us know.

Alan Hewitson



**Did you know that
6835 voluntary hours
were given to Beacon
during 2011**

Wythenshawe Project

This project was first set up in September 2007 and provided counselling to residents of Wythenshawe. The project is in partnership with Barnardo's teams based in the area. During 2010 it became clear that there were growing concerns around domestic abuse in the Benchill and Woodhouse Park areas of Wythenshawe. Further discussions with the local Barnardo's teams and other services confirmed this, and it was decided that a more focused service was needed, and one that targeted people who were, or had, experienced domestic violence and abuse. The result is that a year on, over 70 people have been helped by the project.



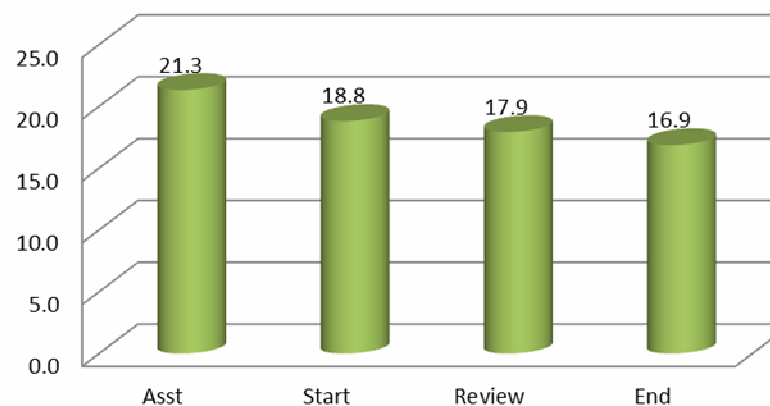
**FUNDING
SPENT ON**

The Lloyds TSB Foundation for England and Wales; Zochonis Charitable Trust
Counsellor training, supervision, travel, administration

Benefits & Outcomes

The project enables people to recover from the affects of domestic abuse by building confidence and self-esteem, improving relationships with others, and teaching coping skills. The chart to the right shows how levels of psychological distress have dropped significantly by the end of counselling.

Average CORE-10 Scores 2011



Client feedback



"It has helped me be a stronger person". April 2011

*"I have a lot more understanding about myself and why and how we deal with issues in our lives".
December 2011*



A Counsellor's View

10 Questions for Fiona Douglas

What do you do for a living?

I work voluntarily as a counsellor for Beacon Counselling in Wythenshawe – a joint project between Beacon and the Barnardos SureStart Centre. The project focuses on clients who have experienced domestic violence (I also get paid to be an Information Worker at Disability Stockport, an adult education lecturer at Sir John Deanes College and I have a (very) small private practice as a counsellor, supervisor, hypnotherapist and reflexologist.)

How did you get into your line of work.

I went along with a friend who signed up for a 10 week counselling course. It sounded interesting so I also signed up and was hooked from the very beginning.

Many years and much training later I found myself working as a volunteer counsellor at Beacon's main centre in Bramhall. When Beacon asked their counsellors if anyone would like to join Kirsty Hill at the Wythenshawe project, I jumped at the chance and can honestly say I haven't looked back since.

Do you like your job?

Yes – no surprise in that answer. I love the breadth and depth of experience I get from working in Wythenshawe. For me it is a place where I know my work can (but not always) make a huge difference in a person's life.

What did you want to be when you grew up?

I had no real ambitions to have a career but I always knew I wanted to have lots of children and remember very clearly arguing with my Economics A level teacher that being a mother was a legitimate career choice.

What lessons has your work life taught you?

I actually work for me and what I gain from my clients rather than from any true sense of altruism. My work has taught me unless I am true to myself I am unable to make any meaningful connections with friends, family, work colleagues, my horses, my dogs – the list is pretty endless...

Best of times?

When a client realised and explained to me (after a number of sessions) that she was the reason her children were in care, that she had been given a number of opportunities for them not to be taken into care and that she was responsible for getting them back from being in care. This client went on to take responsibility for herself, her actions and made enough difference in her life that her children were returned to her.

Worst of times

Realising that for most of my clients domestic violence, neglect, alcohol and drug abuse is a normal and accepted way of life – not just for them but for their grandparents, their parents, their neighbours...

Are you doing what you believe in, or are you settling for what you are doing?

I am 100% doing what I believe in.

Has your greatest fear ever come true?

Yes - but I'm not going to bore you with the details (well that's my get out excuse)...

If you just won a million pounds, would you quit your job?

No, however I would expect my donation to Beacon to fund the Wythenshawe Project for years to come!!

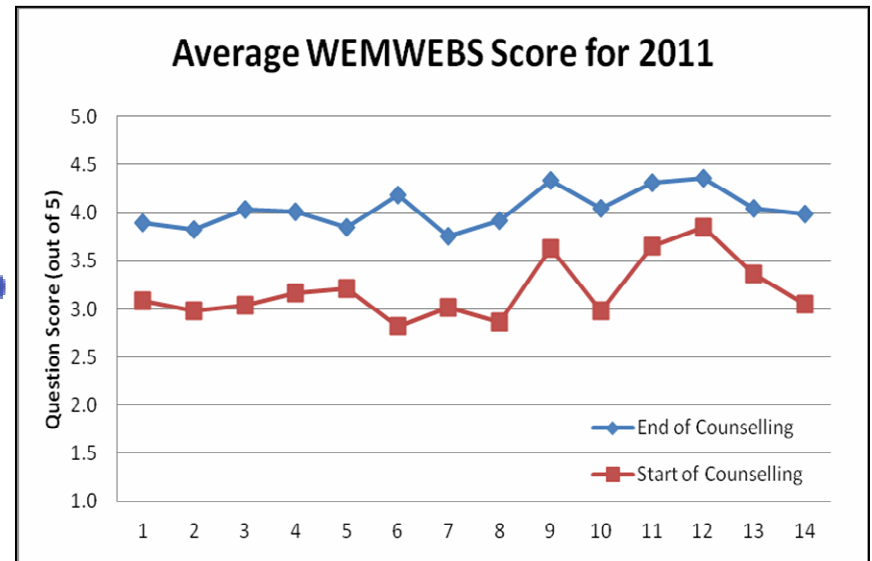
Schools Service

Beacon pioneered schools counselling in Stockport in 1996, which was a time that the need to support young people’s mental health through counselling was hardly recognised. Today, Beacon works in a mix of mainstream secondary schools, special schools, and pupil referral units. The last two are educational establishments for young people who have more severe behavioural or emotional problems and are amongst the most vulnerable of young people. This service is a core part of Beacon and is vital because we have the opportunity to make a lifelong difference to the life of a young person, helping them change their direction for the better.

Benefits & Outcomes

Counselling for young people has several immediate and long term benefits such as improving attendance and behaviour at school, and improving self-esteem. The chart to the right shows changes in the levels of wellbeing. The blue line shows how wellbeing is higher at the end of counselling than the start, bringing happiness and greater resilience.

WEMWEBS—*Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale*



Client feedback

"Mum has said I have perked up and some teachers say I am livelier".



"It's a place where you can talk about anything".

"I feel calmer and my fears are more rational".

"I'm coping better when being upset and having arguments. I'm thinking more about decisions before I chose to do something".

A Counsellor's View

SCHOOLS COUNSELLOR— Kirsty Hill

I have been counselling in Beacon for nearly seven years now and began counselling in schools about three years ago. I currently work in two pupil referral units, one in Sale and one in Stockport. The units provide specialised support for young people who are not in mainstream education, and the work is really interesting and challenging. I have also worked in mainstream schools, and volunteer at Woodhouse Park in Wythenshawe for Beacon's domestic abuse project.



The biggest issue I come across working with young people is anger, though ultimately this is the symptom rather than the root cause. Working in referral units where students are usually quite damaged even though they don't recognise it, trust can be the hardest thing to build up as their level of resistance is usually very high. They have, as they see it, enough "interfering adults" in their lives all the time and to them I'm just another one. Some students I can never reach but others, over time, do begin to open up, albeit one sentence in a session and then they clam up again. I find this is where working at a client's own pace is really important, because if they are pressured they just stop coming. In mainstream schools I've found that it is an easier process to build that relationship, students are more willing to open up, trust and attend regularly.

I plan to build up my use of expressive therapies as students respond in the main really positively to these. My knowledge is currently limited and I tend to stick to the few things I am confident about. The thing I enjoy most is feeling that I have made a difference in that student's life and empowered them to change whatever it is they felt needed it. The most frustrating part is being unable to change issues at home that are beyond the young person's control, and knowing that however much they are hurting inside and talking to me about it, they still, at the end of each day, have to go back there. Working in schools is challenging but the rewards can be great, I really enjoy it.



**Did you know that
1 in 10 young people have
a recognised mental
health problem**

Beacon 2 Service—B2

B2 was set up in 2006 when Beacon realised that a number of young people who needed counselling in school could not access it because they had not been referred in time and had been excluded for behaviour or other matters. B2 targets young people who are out of school, not attending well, do not have counselling in their school or want to access a service outside school hours. This means the service targets many of the more vulnerable young people in Stockport and it has helped over 350 young people at one of the most difficult times in their lives. For some, the service has literally turned their lives around, enabling them to return to education, take up further education, or gain employment. Now is the time this service is needed more than ever because young people are facing much higher levels of unemployment and greater pressure to adhere to a particular lifestyle and image.



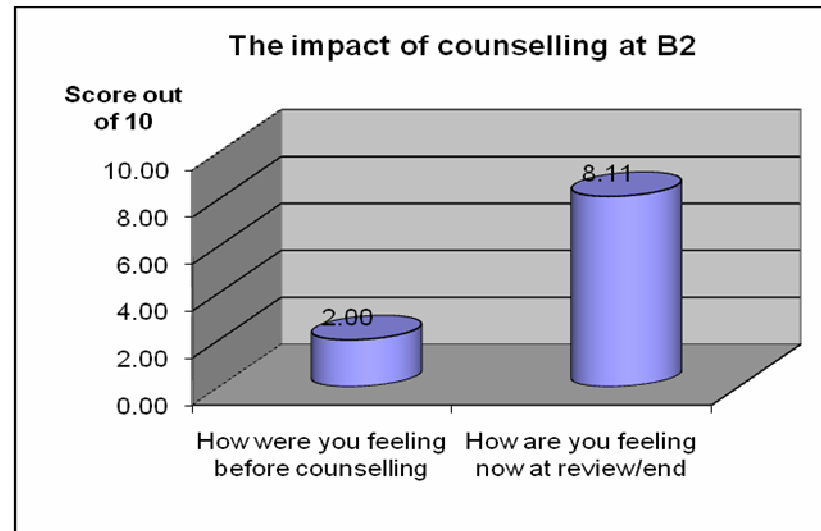
FUNDING
SPENT ON

Was funded for 3 years by BBC Children in Need - now looking for further funding
Lead Counsellor, supervision, counsellor training, travel and management



Benefits & Outcomes

The service improved mental health and wellbeing of young people in a range of areas. The chart to the right shows how the young people themselves rated the change that counselling made in their lives.



Client feedback

"My perspective on myself has changed dramatically over the course of the sessions - I'm much more confident with myself and accepting of others".

"Other people have a different attitude towards me and how they speak to me - they include me more".



A Counsellor's View

SCHOOLS & BEACON 2 COUNSELLING CO-ORDINATOR – Yvonne Shelmerdine

During the past few years I have previously described B2 as a 'Roller-coaster', or used the term 'being rescued by a knight in shining armour'. This year my experience of B2 is that of a 'bridge', a route to opening new avenues in working with young people.

James contemplated several ideas to utilise some of the B2 time effectively which enabled us to offer counselling in three new schools. Maria Kefalogianni joined the team to establish and maintain the service at Harrytown. I am based at Werneth and Offerton. Although much of the work centred in counselling hours we were also involved in attending meetings and submitting reports. Our dedication paid off as the evaluation forms and consensus of opinion at staff forums confirmed that we appear to be one of the best services to make a difference with young people in the schools environment. The project has since transferred under the umbrella of ITASC and counselling in two of the schools is now secured to April 2013.

A further initiative included offering extra hours to an existing school to reduce the waiting list. Not only did this serve the young people well to be seen earlier but the school have now agreed for the moment to pay for the additional time.

Last July Liz Bunting gained her qualification as a Child Psychotherapist. She has been a great asset to B2 and will be missed. I am relieved to see that she is now available as part of the schools-group. Polly Chillingworth expressed an interest in working with young people and has just seen her first B2 client. We all wish her well.

As for me, my interest in B2 never flounders. I believe this free service is extremely worthwhile especially in this current economic climate. I am all too aware that funding may be an issue for Beacon and am extremely grateful to James and the team at Bramhall for their investment in trying to keep this service going.



**Did you know that
One of the most common benefits of
Beacon's counselling for young people
is that they remain in education**

Beacon Purpose Quest

The questing process has been developed to help young people find their purpose in life and more recently, organisations. Given the rapid and successful expansion of Beacon Counselling, it seemed an appropriate time to ask the question - going forward, what is the unique purpose of Beacon?

A team of seven representatives of the organisation spent a weekend in the Peak District holding this question. I found their commitment, sincerity and intensity inspiring, and shared their palpable excitement when the purpose finally emerged.

Looking forward, the purpose **Empowering Connection** will be used to inform the vision, strategy and values of Beacon. Although only two words, deepening the understanding and meaning of the purpose will guide all members as well as the organisation itself over the coming years: it will become its mantra.

Bruce Bissell

I nervously approached the weekend, not really understanding what would be expected of me and the group. As the first few hours unfolded, that became clear. We were to answer the question "What is the unique purpose of Beacon Counselling?" This question was held within us as our main thought during our quest. The quest itself took us individually into the Pilsbury Valley, Derbyshire to experience the time as representatives of Beacon. The previous evening had allowed us to further absorb all the collated data about Beacon and Mental Health through times past, present and future.

I felt a great sense of responsibility as I started the quest, I was completing this task for Beacon as a representative of Beacon. Following six hours of solitude on a gloriously sunny day, armed with nothing more than a notebook, we headed back to base and started the facilitated stages of finding the answer to the question. It wasn't until early the following morning did the answer become evident. We experienced a stomach churning eureka moment that will never be forgotten ... the answer to the question ... "What is the unique purpose of Beacon Counselling?"

- Empowering Connection.

Julia Larmer
Quest Team Member



Did you know that

The value of the voluntary time given to Beacon in 2011 was £384,775

Stressbusters



Stressbusters is a stress management programme for adults aged 18 and over. The programme consists of raising awareness of stress and what the personal causes of stress are. It builds an understanding of how some coping methods are not helpful and helps create new and healthy coping skills. The programme is delivered over 8 weeks and a pilot in 2010 showed it to be very effective at reducing stress levels and improving coping skills.

2011 saw Stressbusters evolve into one of the services Beacon offers. The service was delivered in three Children's Centres in Stockport, providing support to parents attending the centre. Through delivery in these three centres the programme has been refined so that it offers the greatest benefit to those who take part.

Results from 2011 show that parents really valued the programme and benefit from a range of improvements to their mental health and wellbeing. One of the key changes that brings a longer term impact is the building of a support network that continues beyond the end of the programme.



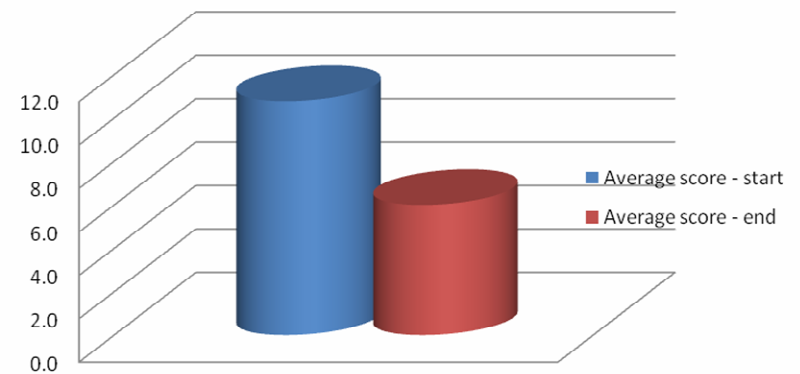
**FUNDING
SPENT ON**

NHS Stockport Public Health Department
Counsellor pay, supervision, training, management

Benefits & Outcomes

The service increased wellbeing, improved relationships and coping skills, and gave a support network for the future. It also reduced isolation, levels of stress, depression, anxiety and distress. The chart to the right shows the reduction in psychological distress from the start to the end of the programme.

Average CORE-10 scores at start & end



Client feedback

"It's helped me realise that I'm not alone or mad and that there is help available for me".

"As a result of the programme I now have a more positive relationship with my daughter".

"It gave me an arena to talk openly in confidence, and helped me improve confidence in myself and my feelings".

"I am not as stressed and I am able to enjoy being with my children more".

Looking ahead

A cloudy forecast?

Looking ahead may be quite difficult at the moment because so much is uncertain in our society apart from the fact that there is less of everything, particularly support. However, Beacon spends time looking ahead every year and has a policy of taking a positive view of what can be done. Funding may be more difficult to obtain and there may be more competition for that funding but what we do know is that the services that Beacon provides are needed now more than ever, and it is much clearer now just how effective those services are.



A clear plan for response

Beacon has a plan for the next 5 years which involves us in doing more of the services it currently offers in order to respond to the growing need and to develop new responses to emerging needs. A current example of this is the Stressbusters programme mentioned earlier in the report which is a very effective response to a need identified by Stockport Council and the NHS to reduce the stress and isolation and improve the mental wellbeing of parents attending SureStart Children's Centres. This programme will be delivered to more parents in Children's Centres and to other groups identified as vulnerable. A future example that is being developed is the need for a service for sexually exploited young people. The problem has come to light locally and nationally during 2011 and Beacon is at the vanguard of providing a response that will help prevent this occurring and will support those who have been through such traumatic experiences. These are just two examples of around a dozen areas where Beacon is developing its services in a more thoughtful way; one that responds quickly to where there is the greatest need.

Lighting the path ahead

This approach is not just a statement, it is written into Beacon's strategic, business and operational plans and forms a part of the purpose of the charity. These documents provide a clear path for Beacon's own future and how it will get there, meaning greater stability and resilience in these turbulent times.



Thank you—Volunteers 2011



Firstly to all our 2011 team of volunteer counsellors working at Bramhall, Disability Stockport, Heaton Moor and Heaton Mersey Medical Centres, in Adswood & Bridgehall at the Beechwood Centre and the Abacus Children's centre and with SureStart in Wythenshawe: -

Chris Ackers, Andrew Bainbridge, Assia Bandukda, Helen Bardsley, Gill Becque, Jeanette Boyd, Polly Chillingworth, Jim Coleman, Susan Cooper, Laura Cutts, Ruth Davies, Eleni Dimitrellou, Joanne Doherty, Fiona Douglas, Tom Elliot, Margaret Etchells, Judith Franklin, Alison Gosling, James Hall, Nafeesa Javed, Andrew Kearins, Michelle Keifer, Sally Kirk, Janice Kost, Joanne Kozakowska, Aditi Kulkarni, Julia Larmer, Penny Lawson, Julie Lawton, Catherine Lister, Zoe Lister, Briony Martin, Olwyn McEwen, Clodhna McPhillips, Teresa Nestor, Sophie O'Donnell, Nicola Oldham, Rose Pavey, Gabriela Raica, Joanne Read, Irena Reynolds, Fleur Richardson, Adrian Rodgers, Pamela Smith, Diana Stockford, Rob Taylor, Diana Taylor-Dawson, Julie Virgin, Katharine Walker, Mary Wallace, Victoria Wilshaw, Alex Williams and Sue Wycherley.

Thank you to our daytime office volunteers and evening receptionists:-

Charlotte Baker, Stuart Burnet, Alex Chattington, Barbara Eckersley, Fran Forrester, Carol Ellis, Jane Gould, Gwyneth Hill, Hilary Kelly, Jeff Levine, Rebecca Lockett, Veronica Loynes, Rachel O'Hare, Wendy Luxon, Kath McKie, Elaine Michael, Sarah Middleton, Wendy Morris, Helen Richards and Mary Riding.

And thanks to :-

Karen Hoppood at Disability Stockport for working on evening reception for the Pennine Care contract; Michael Lacey for looking after the website; Gordon Jackson for various activities including evening receptionist work; Julia Larmer, not only a counsellor and the newsletter editor but she also compiles this report!

A special thanks to the trustees:-

Alan Hewitson (Chair) Janice Cahill (Vice Chair), Pauline Hobin (Treasurer), Elaine Bates, Bruce Bissell, Margaret Lewis, Brian McCluggage, Kathryn McGuire, Jo Tipa, Joan Tsalikis and Linda Tunnard.

Thank you to Figen Murray for finding trainers for our training courses. And finally to all those involved in the Beacon Purpose Quest.

And thanks to our Schools and Young People Counsellors for their contribution:-

Elizabeth Bunting, Emily Ellarby, Kirsty Hill, Charlotte Horton, Maria Kefalogianni, Claire Pickering and Yvonne Shelmerdine.

And finally our team of Supervisors, who are always there to support the counsellors:-

Steve Boettcher, Jed Bridge, Penny Bullock, Jenny Dunlop, Ashley Fletcher, Theresa Law, Jean McLaren, Greta Mikaelson, Margaret Parker, Dianne Radford, Sue Rodrigues and John Vanston.



Thank you to our supporters

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

- Friends of Beacon
- The CRH Charitable Trust
- NHS Stockport Public Health
- Stockport MBC Main Grants Scheme
- Stockport MBC Integrated Prevention Services
- BBC Children in Need
- "Nowhere Group Ltd", especially Nic and Susie
- St. Michael and All Angels Church
- Mellor Church
- Bramhall Methodist Church
- Bramhall United Reformed Church
- Cheadle Hulme Methodist Church
- ABACUS Children's Centre
- Beechwood Cancer Care
- Anchorpoint Stockport
- All the staff and volunteers at Disability Stockport
- University of Manchester
- Stockport College
- Salford University
- Keele University
- Brian Hill
- Elysabeth Williams & Eleanor Hill at NHS Stockport
- Sue Parkes of Relate Greater Manchester South
- Jo Wood of Counselling Centre Altrincham
- Debbie Koroma at Barnardo's in Wythenshawe
- The Right Honourable Mark Hunter MP
- Mr and Mrs John Boardman
- Mike Bailey
- Alan Smith
- Gina Evans of NHS Stockport
- Janis Mann
- Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Services (GMCVO)
- The staff at Heaton Mersey Medical Centre, Heaton Moor Medical Centre and Reddish Vale Children's Centre
- Staff at the following schools: Bramhall High School, Cherry Manor, Egerton High, Harrytown Catholic High School, Hazel Grove High, The King's School in Macclesfield, Marple Hall School, Offerton School, The Pendlebury Centre, Reddish Vale Technology College, Stockport Academy, The Stockport School, Windlehurst School
- Janet Bowden of Woodbank Office Supplies
- Anthony Wellborn of Totally T-Shirts Stockport
- The Beacon Team for the 2011 Great Manchester Run, who raised over £6,000.

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

- Become a Friend of Beacon - call 0161 440 0055 for details
- Volunteer - as a counsellor, receptionist, administrator, events organiser or trustee
- Spread the word - help raise our profile, call 0161 440 0055 for details
- Donate - we always welcome donations!
- Join the Beacon team for the 2012 Great Manchester Run
- Joint working - Beacon is interested in collaborating with a wide range of charities to meet its aims

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