

**STEPPING STONES**

**IMPACT**

**REPORT**

**2023-2024**

# Table of Contents

<b>Vice-Chair Persons Remarks Financial Snapshot</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Operations Directors Report</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Impacts in Numbers!</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>What the members say....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Future Plans</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Acknowledgements and Thank You</b>	<b>8</b>



Funded by the following agencies with thanks.

West Dunbartonshire  
Health & Social Care Partnership



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COMMUNITY  
FUND

# Vice Chairpersons Comments

2024 has proved to be a busy year for Stepping Stones. As an organisation we continue to offer a variety of services to our members across West Dunbartonshire. Earlier this year, thanks to the hard work of our Operations Director, we secured three years funding from the National Lottery Community Fund. This new funding is being used to support our neurodiverse community and enhances the work we do that is funded by the West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership (WDHSCP).

I would like to thank the staff, volunteers and peers who make Stepping Stones the organisation that it is. Our reputation continues to flourish and this is down to the efforts of our staff team. Many thanks to WDHSCP and the National Lottery for their support, as well as the many small donors whose contributions fund the Shanks – Petrie Members Benefit Fund.

Lastly, my thanks to my fellow Directors for their continued commitment to the organisation.

**Alison Punton - Vice Chair**

## Financial Snapshot

This has been a year that we have seen a few challenges as we entered a post pandemic period and worked our way through the cost of living crisis. It meant that our fundraising efforts diminished somewhat from the previous year as many funding bodies directed their funds to services which mitigated the cost of living for vulnerable groups.

Also, we achieved a long term goal of moving our main office to premises that were more accessible and central in Clydebank. Consequently, we built a new reception area, at a cost of almost £20k.

This led to the accounts showing a deficit for the first time since 2020. This was offset in part by our small grants fundraising and investment returns.

	<b>Income</b>	<b>&amp; Expenditure</b>
<b>2019</b>	<b>255770</b>	<b>262616</b>
<b>2020</b>	<b>300158</b>	<b>302980</b>
<b>2021</b>	<b>341519</b>	<b>303168</b>
<b>2022</b>	<b>336863</b>	<b>318691</b>
<b>2023</b>	<b>399982</b>	<b>381554</b>
<b>2024</b>	<b>357657</b>	<b>385112</b>

## I know it's hard to believe but.....

This is my 15th year and AGM as the lead officer of Stepping Stones. In total I have worked in Social Care for 36 years, which is more than half my life.

Things have changed a wee bit since I started in Stepping Stones. For example, it doesn't matter anymore whether I have good handwriting, or not, or whether I can spell a word correctly. I do wish that I knew that when I was at school - it may have changed the relationship I had with my teachers!

In social care change is constant. You are working with people whose needs can change frequently, support staff come and go, policy can be redefined by a changing government and, inevitably, we change as we get older.

You may have noticed, but in the last year Stepping Stones has changed some things. We have moved to a new address in Kilbowie Road, there are a few new directors at the AGM and some of the staff and trainees have left and some have joined us.

However, what has remained unchanged is that Stepping Stones is a user led organisation and I believe that is a good thing.

We continue to deliver our services that are well respected and valued in West Dunbartonshire.

At our latest Care Inspectorate evaluation we achieved grades of 5 in the areas that were inspected. We were pleased with the grades and the lack of any recommendations for improvement.

## the service is very good and has major strengths....

The grades indicate that the service is very good and has major strengths. It was our third inspection since 2017 and we have not had grades lower than 5. I am glad this hasn't changed.

Therefore, as per usual I commend this Impact Report to the AGM. I am pleased with the achievements of the staff team, and continuing support offered by the West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership.

I am grateful for the support offered by the board of directors and what we have achieved in the year and the inroads we have made towards achieving our objectives.

**John White**  
**Operations Director**

# Impacts in Numbers!

## Referral Reasons

496: Anxiety

218: Bereavement

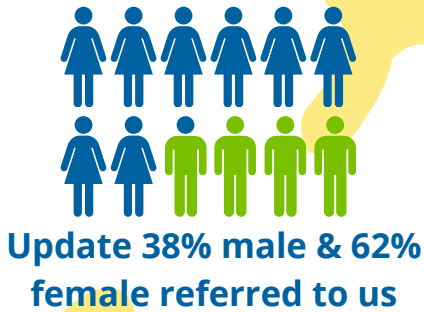
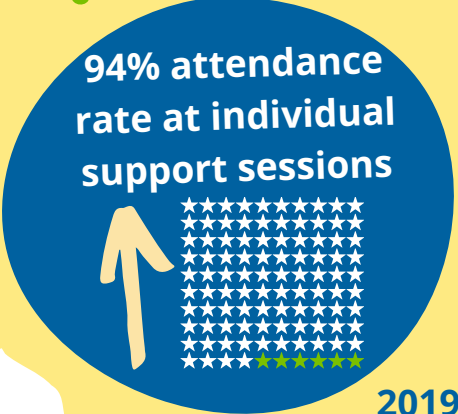
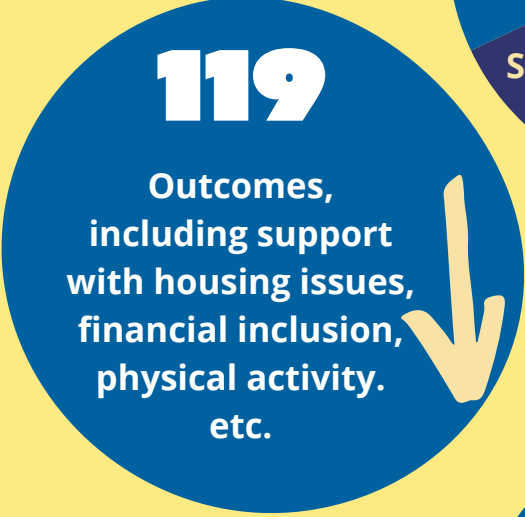
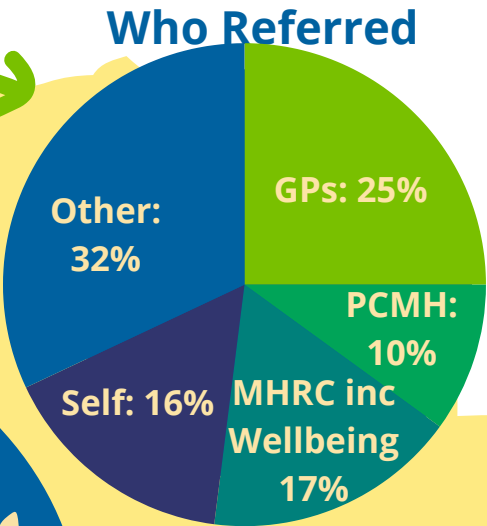
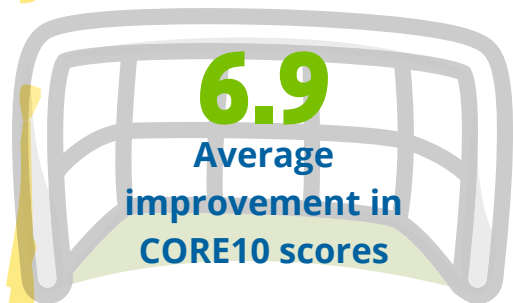
352: Depression

267: Low Confidence

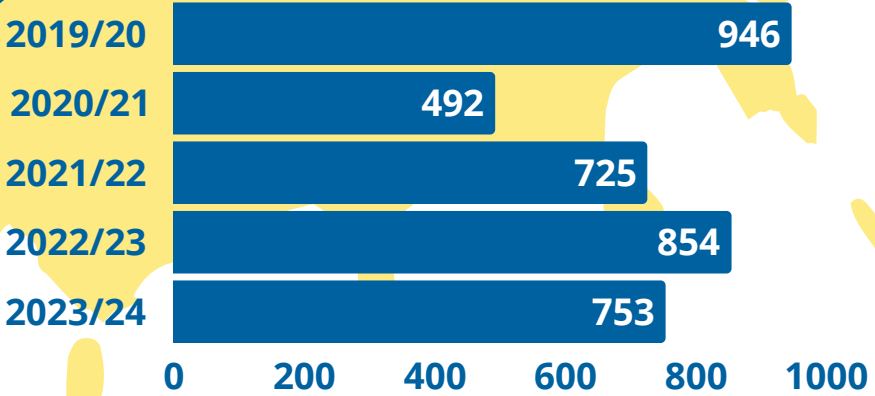
413: Poor Sleep

438: Stress

267: Worries



## Number of Referrals



# What the members say...

This section offers a selection of comments made by the members about the one to one and group supports received in the past year.

## ONE TO ONE COUNSELLING

"I feel that the main benefit of the support I received from Danai was having her there to actively listen to me talk about the past, difficulties, and worries and challenges I have been facing in my life for last seven years. I feel that the professional support I have received has helped me to move a step forward with dealing with my current life situation since I started my therapy."

"I felt very well supported by Ali. She always listened so carefully and empathised and because of this was able to get to the root of my worries. I always left counselling feeling the benefit of Ali's knowledge and gentle understanding."

"I feel more confident going forward. I feel I can cope better after the sessions I have had."

"I benefitted through being able to chat with someone in confidence without them being judgemental."

"It has been great to be able to talk about how I feel, and be more comfortable and relaxed."

## ONE TO ONE INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT AND GUIDED SELF HELP

"Having someone listen to me and explain why I was feeling that way. Jackie gave me confidence to open up and speak about my problems. Totally trust my Support Worker"

"Having someone understand how I feel and helping to identify the things I tend to do i.e negative thinking."

"Help me overcome my anxiety and to meet new people and also help me with stress and depression. Helped me to sort out my debt, support to access benefits through CAB, has increased my income and not in debt any more, managing money better, PIP, UC - debt paid."

"Helped with building my confidence and self-esteem, otherwise I would not be here without your support."

"I would like to thank Pauline for her support and I am now in a very good place. I have been given the tools to manage any issue that I may be faced with."

## GROUP SUPPORT INCLUDING SOCIAL, EDUCATIONAL AND PEER SUPPORT COURSES

"I can make decisions on my own better and feel better most of the time. Talking to like minded people who have similar problems and not feeling that I cant take care of my life." **Social Group**

"It's good to have somewhere to go each week. do activities, have a chat and bit of a blether. I'm enjoying the walks too and a chat at the café afterwards." **Social and Walking Groups**

"The group gets me out the house and can socialise with people and meet people who have also had mental health issues." **Social Group**

"All aspects of the training were valuable. I thought the areas looked at were well explained and each person was able to contribute in a friendly and safe environment. I especially liked the way Ash and Sarah Ann put the training together....". **Peer2Peer Course**

"I appreciated the whole course really, I learned a lot of practise to put into my own life that I haven't learned anywhere else." **Peer2Peer Course**

"All the attendees felt the group facilitators were great!" **Positive Futures CBT Course**

"Everyone has been great and welcoming. The facilitators made it clear that there is nothing to be ashamed of or judged for." **Positive Futures CBT Course**

"I feel very comfortable in this group and feel I can get better in time. It is very rewarding to know that no one is judging me. I feel comfortable chatting. First time I have laughed for a very long time." **Women's Support Group.**

# Future Plans

The Board of Directors and staff are working towards developing new ideas that will support the organisation to continue to develop new ways in which to support the development of Stepping Stones services.

## **Managing Service Demand**

We will continue to work towards our long term goal of driving down waiting times for people who have common mental health challenges. We will continue to use our experience and knowledge to seek solutions to enable better outcomes for those who refer to Stepping Stones.

## **Resilient Communities**

We will continue to discuss how we can make best use of our group resources to support those people who want to use our group programme. This will include reviewing the existing groups that we facilitate and hold ongoing conversations with existing, service members, directors, staff and commissioners about our priorities.

## **Stepping up for Neurodiversity!**

Following the award of almost £180000 over three years from the

National Lottery Community Fund, we will work with service members and local agencies to develop new services that will offer people who are neurodiverse, but experience common mental health problems, services that are more likely to meet their support needs.

## **Trauma in Stepping Stones**

We will continue to look at ways to develop our services so that they will be able to support the many people who continue to use our services that have experienced traumatic events. We will equip our staff with the skills required to enable those who refer to get the support they need when they present with mental health challenges that are within scope of the service.

## **Service Member Involvement**

We will involve our service members in the design and delivery of our services utilising our peer led approaches. Service members will be invited to contribute to the design of the services through lived experience panels, conversation cafes and through service evaluations.

# Acknowledgements and Thank You

## Stepping Stones is a registered charity SC019270.

We are grateful for the funding we receive from West Dunbartonshire Health and Social Care Partnership which allows us to continue to provide valuable services to the local community. We are also grateful to the funding we receive from various small grant programmes, including the National Lottery Awards for All and West Dunbartonshire Community Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund. Also, we like to extend our thanks to the people fundraise on our behalf.

Our thanks go to the Board Members, Staff, Volunteers and Facilitators as listed below who have helped us deliver our services throughout the year.

### Board of Directors

John Mooney - Chairperson

Alison Punton - Vice Chair

Janette Tran - Board Member

Betty Edmonds - Board Member

Louise Nisbet - Treasurer

Iain Anderson - Board Member (appointed 9/6/23)

Maureen Duffy (co-opted 8/12/23)

### Staff

John White - Operations Director

Elaine McWilliams - Group Worker

Jackie Sroka - Support Team Leader

Cathie McGrory - Admin Team Leader

Steven Curran - Admin Assistant

Sarah Dillon, Peer Group Worker

Danai Batziou - Counselling Supervisor

Coliosa Boyle - Support Team Leader

Ashley Dougan - Peer Support Worker

Pauline Sweeney - Support Worker

Ali Brown - Person Centred Counsellor P/T

Candice Matheson, GSH Worker (to 24/1/24)

Ayesha Drury - Person Centred Counsellor (to 4/10/23)

### Volunteers

Chriss McKeown - Relaxation

Fiona White - Guided Self Help Worker

### Facilitators / Freelance Workers

Chris Godwin - T'ai Chi

## Enhanced Guided Self Help and Person Centred Counselling Trainees who have contributed to the services in the past year

Cheyenne Luckemeier - PCT

Ellie Scott - PCT

Hannah Bottle - PCT

Hannah Jackson - EGS

Hannah Mains - EGS

Holly Stafford - PCT

Jess Kandulu - EGS

Jill Malcolm - PCT

Laura Connelly - PCT

Lauren Chase - EGS

Matthew Costello - PCT

Monika Blonka - PCT

Morag Hutchison - PCT

Natalya Fineron - PCT

Nicola Granger - PCT

Robert Honeychurch - PCT

Ross Caldwell - PCT

Sumbul Shafiq - PCT

Tatiana Heise - PCT

Wendy Kirkup - PCT

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