

# 2025

# Annual Report

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ARC



April 2025



The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service

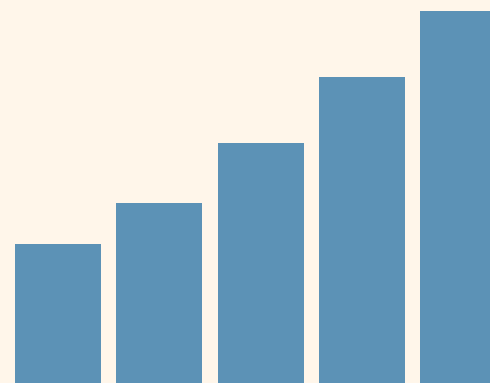
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Service



# Table Of Contents



<b>About Arc.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Chair's Report.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Something Special.....</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Management Committee 2024/2025.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>The Team 2024/25.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Coordinators Report.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Social Media Report.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Clinical Coordinators Report.....</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Making a Difference.....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Youth Access Report.....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Donor Thank You.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>The Year in Review.....</b>	<b>18</b>



# About

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ARC offers one-to-one counselling to Adults and Young People across Wokingham and the surrounding areas. We provide confidential counselling, at our main site in Wokingham, Oakwood in Woodley, GP surgeries and Schools across the area.

ARC provides an important role within the community, with referrals coming from other agencies as well as self-referrals.

In addition to counselling, we also offer important support for 16 – 25 year olds, through our Youth Access program, which provides information to young people on where and how to access support, from housing, to work and mental health.

Our counselling services are free to young people under the age of 21 years and low cost for adults. We believe that counselling should be accessible for all and that cost should never be a barrier to better mental health.

We are a charity with over 25 years offering support within the Wokingham area.





# The Chair's Report

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The Counsellors at ARC have been very busy this year, helping the people of Wokingham and beyond. The main concern again is anxiety, mainly around finance, which has an impact on family relationships. To help cope with these demands; we have had to recruit new Counsellors.

At ARC we are very concerned with providing as much help and support as we can. We have once again this year run a weekend of training; which was presented by Stefan Charidge, "Working Experimentally with Gestalt". The training was very well received by all who attended. We have also run a day's CBT Training on the subject of Addiction. As a gesture of goodwill; a dinner was organised at a well known restaurant in the centre of Wokingham, it was very appreciated by all who attended.

There has been a significant increase in the number of young people being referred to ARC, diagnosed with ADHD. Therefore our Youth Work needs constant investment in order to meet the ever increasing needs and challenges that Shaffrina, our Youth Access Worker, and her team cope with in Sixth Forms, Colleges and University. They provide advice on such matters as, housing, health issues, drugs and sexual health.

Our costs have increased, so a lot of pressure has been exerted on ARC to meet the increasing demands, such as the need to have a new conservatory roof to replace the old one that was in a poor state of disrepair.

We have to extend our warmest gratitude to Josh and Jack and their Australian adventures, which raised much needed funds. Also to Wokingham Borough Council, David Riddle Memorial Trust, St. James's Place, to name but a few, including a Brownie Pack, which raised £100, which touched my heart!

We must also say a very big thank you to all those who work for ARC, including Annelie in her new post in communications and we welcome Jane, who organises the office.

Finally, I must extend heartfelt gratitude to Paul, Vanessa, and all our hard working and committed Counsellors and our dedicated Management Team.

**Nancy Quinnell**  
**12th April 2025**





# Something Special

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*"I was referred to ARC by my GP surgery when I was around 15 years old. At the time, I was really struggling with my mental health. I was offered six initial sessions, and from the very first meeting, I felt an immediate connection with my therapist – it took no more than five minutes to build trust. She was brilliant: genuinely understanding and kind.*

*From the start, I felt welcomed and safe enough to talk openly about what was bothering me. Over the course of those six sessions, we worked together to develop coping strategies I could use on my own. At first, I found it hard to put them into practice, but with resilience and encouragement, I gradually began to use them – and they helped.*

*What sets ARC apart from other services is how open and welcoming they are. I never felt judged. You can talk about anything, knowing it stays confidential. The counsellors are genuinely caring – it's not just a job to them. It's clear they're there to help, not for personal gain, and that meant a lot to me.*

*The whole experience made me feel listened to, appreciated, and truly seen. I wasn't just another number being rushed through the system. I felt like I mattered – like they had time for me and genuinely wanted to help.*

*Looking back now, I honestly don't believe I'd be where I am today – studying Paramedic Science at university, pursuing my dream career – without the support I received from ARC. Their help was not only important; it was life-changing."*

**2025 Client via Youth Access**

# Management Committee



**NANCY QUINNELL**

CHAIR

RETIRED WOODLEY TOWN  
COUNCILLOR AND TEACHER



**ANN STANTON**

SECRETARY

ARC CO-FOUNDER AND  
INDEPENDENT DELEGATE



**DICK CROWTHER**

TREASURER

RETIRED BOARD MEMBER OF  
DIAGEO AND MARS



**ROSEMARY COOK**

EARLEY TOWN COUNCILLOR  
REPRESENTATIVE



**SHELAGH FLOWERS**

WOODLEY TOWN COUNCIL  
REPRESENTATIVE



**REV. JACKIE CASE**

CHURCHES TOGETHER  
REPRESENTATIVE



**RACHELLE  
SHEPHERD DUBEY**

EARLEY TOWN COUNCILLOR  
REPRESENTATIVE



**KAY GILDER**

WOODLEY TOWN COUNCIL  
REPRESENTATIVE



**DR. KATHERINE  
HADFIELD**

GENERAL PRACTITIONER  
PAEDIATRIC SPECIALIST



# The Team 2024/25

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## Office

Paul Cassidy (Coordinator)

Jane Buckland (Finance)

Vanessa Bunting-Palmer (Clinical Coordinator)

Annelie Ryan (Marketing Manager)

Jane Steadman (Office Manager)

Olivia Cassidy (Marketing Intern)

Shaffrina Rogers (OutReach & YIACS Manager)

## Counselling Supervisors

Vanessa Bunting-Palmer

Charlie Wall

Lilly Capuozzo

Jo Cooke

Sue Byrne

## Counsellors

Adam Blay, Amal Mohammed, Anna Brooks, Beatrice Mistretu, Becky Wilson, Kerry Findlay, Catherine Montague, Ceri Johnston, Claudia Gridelli, Danny Phillips, Debbie Rathge, Debbie Thorpe, Elena Bradley-Syrett, Emily King, Emily Whan, Grace Pattenden, Honesty Sumner, Jackie Robertson, Jane Ainslie, Jane Buckland, Jane Steadman, Julie Dawson, Julie Fowler, Kate Lawrence, Kate McDonnell, Kate Selleck, Katie Forrester, Kayleigh Birch, Ken Mendoza, Krissy Harryman, Kuldeep Kuner, Laura Crossley, Lindsey Robertson, Maddy Trotman, Maria Burger, Maria Schultz, Martin Watts, Martina Lukacova-Vaughan, Maya French, Michelle McLeish, Michelle Miles, Monica Dunne, Nadine Hartley, Neil Wheatley, Nina Cummings, Ote Abudioré, Peter Clements, Phaedra Ashford, Phil Armorgie, Richard Francis, Sarah Challis, Sarah Holmes, Sarah Kavanagh, Shaffrina Rogers, Sian Aitken, Sophie Harrison, Sue Eckert, Sylvana Bielec, Vicky Guthrie and Victoria Hanks

# Co-ordinator's report

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Another busy year for all of us here at ARC counselling and we are grateful for the support of all our funders. Our main new project was to continue providing 45 young person sessions per week.

This is to allow young people who cannot access counselling in their schools or some of those who are not attending school to get the support they need. This was an unfunded project and costs us over £30,000 a year to provide. Do see the list of our funders, but a special thanks to the David Riddle trust and St James Place for their generous support.

An amazing fundraising adventure was Josh and Jack who ran across Australia to raise funds for us a 12-week adventure, beset by problems but they persevered and raised over £4,000 for us, a huge well done to them.



The main increase in clients presenting issues is around neurodiversity, with more young people being diagnosed with ADHD and autism, and the issues around this. Young people with these issues can find it difficult to cope in our school system, with loud noises and other distractions making normal learning difficult and can affect their attendance and home life. We are also seeing an increase in adults that have been diagnosed with this, either through the NHS or privately.

The continued squeeze on public finances has also been a challenge to negotiate, with more demands on charitable givers, less money available from local authorities and increased cost of living for our residents. We also have seen our costs increase over the year but are extremely grateful for the continued support of Wokingham borough council, its officers and councillors, without whom we would be unable to meet the demands for our services.



All our staff are either part time or volunteers and without their efforts and time we would not be able to operate, a huge thanks to Jane who has taken over the office management, and Vanessa our clinical coordinator for her hard work ensuring our BACP accreditation continues as well as managing our client management system to record our work, and the benefits that counselling has. All our funders require detailed reports on numbers of people seen, ages, demographics as well as impact that counselling has on our clients' lives.

I would also like to thank our management committee for their time, expertise and support over the year, an integral part of the ARC family.

Reading University has been providing us with a social media intern, this year it's Olivia, for the past few years, which has been a great addition to our team, and we also welcome Annelie who has been appointed to a new post of marketing and communications, and produced this report.

**Youth counselling services offer numerous benefits that can significantly impact the lives of young people. Here are some key advantages:**

- **Emotional Support:** Counselling provides a safe and confidential space for young individuals to express their thoughts and feelings without fear of judgment. This can be especially important during the turbulent transition from childhood to adolescence.
- **Improved Coping Skills:** Counsellors help youth develop healthy ways to cope with stress, anxiety, and other challenges they face in their daily lives. This can lead to better mental health and overall well-being.
- **Enhanced Self-Esteem:** Through counselling, young people can improve their self-esteem and build stronger relationships. This can empower them to pursue their goals and navigate life's challenges with confidence.
- **Resilience and Confidence:** Counselling promotes resilience and boosts motivation, helping young individuals face future challenges with strength.
- **Better Relationships:** Counselling provides tools and insights needed to improve and maintain relationships with friends, family, and loved ones.
- **Personal Growth:** Counselling can help youth tap into their true potential, guiding them towards personal growth and self-discovery.

Overall, ARC youth counselling services play a vital role in supporting the mental health and well-being of young people, helping them navigate life's challenges and achieve their full potential.

**Paul Cassidy**  
**17<sup>th</sup> April 2025**



# Social Media report

This social media analysis compares ARC's performance over two four-month periods: September to December 2024 and January to April 2025. During the latter period, ARC benefited from the fantastic support of social media intern Olivia Cassidy and the addition of new Marketing Manager Annelie Ryan, both of whom contributed significantly to our growth. The data focuses on two key metrics: views, which refer to the number of times our content has been watched or seen, and reach, which indicates the number of unique users who have seen our posts. **So wherever you see views higher than the reach, this means that the same users have gone back more than once to refer to and digest our content - a very promising sign!**

## September 2024 - December 2024

### facebook

Views

5.1K

Reach

1.4K



### Instagram

Views

941

Reach

1.8K



### TikTok

Views

N/A

Likes

N/A

## January 2025 - April 2025

### facebook

Views

17.5K

+243%

Reach

2.2K

+57%



### Instagram

Views

13.5K

+1334%

Reach

1.3K

-27%



### TikTok

Views

135K

Likes

5.2K

The only exception to growth is Instagram reach, which Olivia and Annelie have identified as a result of our lacking video content. With exciting plans underway to boost video production, we hope to see growth in this area in Q3 & Q4 2025. **To support this, we encourage all counsellors - the “boots on the ground” - to keep seeking out opportunities for client testimonials and to begin gaining consent using the “Client Story Form”, available in the marketing folder on Coffee Break.**

## Top Performing Posts: What's Resonating with Our Audience

The most popular posts consistently include topics such as “secret signs” of various mental health conditions, simple step-by-step advice slides, the benefits of therapy, introductions to who we are at ARC, awareness dates, and content related to anxiety. These insights help us understand what matters most to our audience and guide future content planning.

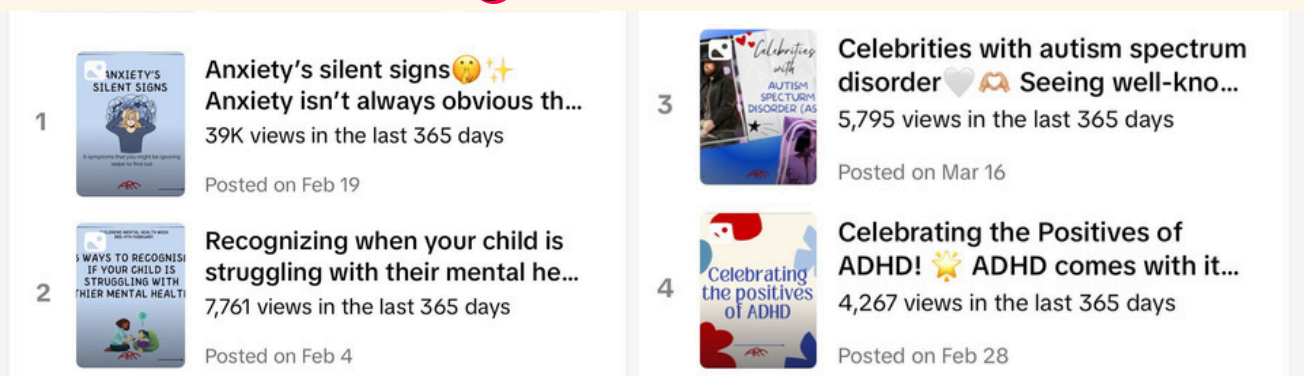
### facebook



### Instagram



### TikTok



# Clinical Co-ordinator

## Report

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Once again, it has been a busy year, with many challenges and changes. We continue to develop as an agency and I am proud of the service that we provide to the young people and adults of Wokingham.

**Counsellors** - Over the year we have recruited 20 new counsellors, which has enabled us to maintain a counselling team of just over 60 counsellors. Of this number, 23 work with Children and Young People (CYP), we have 13 qualified counsellors, and the remaining counsellors are either in their first or second year of their qualification.

I continue to be impressed with the level of skill that all our counsellors bring to their roles.

**Supervisors** - Our supervision team is unchanged from last year and bring a wealth of experience to their work. It remains a strength of ARC that our counsellors have in-house supervision for their work with colleagues who have extensive knowledge of the agency.

**Training** - Once again we had a successful training weekend at Bournemouth, which looked at Gestalt techniques that could be incorporated into our client work. It was, as always, a great opportunity to meet with our colleagues and celebrate ARC's achievements. We have presented our in-house Children and Young People training for the third time, with participants now moving on to working with clients. The course was enthusiastically received by the trainees.

April saw our 4th ARC Spring Conference, which has become an integral part of our training programme. This year we looked at addiction in the morning, and the afternoon was a choice of either Psychosocial Development or Current Issues in CYP Counselling. Feedback from the participants for all sessions has been very positive.

**BACP Accreditation** - Once again, we successfully passed our third year of the BACP Rolling Accreditation process. The feedback was again positive, with all criteria being met on first submission.

**Thank You** - It remains for me to express my personal thanks to all of you who work together to make ARC the successful agency it is, enabling it to provide help to so many clients. I have recently been reviewing our client feedback and it is heart-warming to hear the personal stories of how people's lives have been helped.

**Vanessa Bunting-Palmer**  
**24<sup>th</sup> April 2025**





# Making a Difference

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*"ARC helped me to feel more at ease in talking to new people and realise that opening up isn't as scary as it seems."*

*"It has helped me massively. I was bedridden with anxiety and now i feel like a totally different person, like I have a new life."*

*"Felt listen to, not judged, sound practical advice. I feel stronger, more positive with actionable tools. I will miss coming."*

*"From where I started in July, I am a different person mentally and physically. It was easy to get close too my counsellor which has made it easier to talk about things."*



*"I feel more proud of who I am."*

*"Without having someone to talk to, hear me and respond with care and understanding, I would have been lost."*

*"It's given me a voice."*

*"ARC helped me when I was in a very upset and closed off time and now I feel so much happier and able to talk to people close to me."*

*"I have learnt a lot, got lots of tools and have started using them. My counsellor is excellent!"*

*"It's helped me realise that I can overcome anxiety and that it won't rule my life."*

*"It has helped me process and move on from a really difficult period in my life. It has massively reduced my anxiety and I feel so much happier in myself."*



# Youth Access Report

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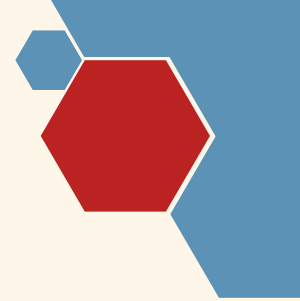
Schools and Outreach venues	Total No. sessions
Surgery	143
Oakwood Center	330
Addington	144
Bohunt	175
Bulmershe	324
Emmbrook	549
Finchampstead primary	113
Foundry	108
Highclose	368
Leighton P	27
Loddon primary	14
Oakbank	164
Piggott's	330
Polehampton Primary	7
Forest	169
Waingels	723

## Outreach and schools

- Outreach and schools counselling has remained steady.
- We are currently serving 11 schools and 2 outreach venues, with 13 counsellors.
- Some counsellors are counselling on multiple days and in multiple venues.
- Arc is currently running 20 days per week with our counsellors.



Total  
Outreach  
Sessions:  
3,115



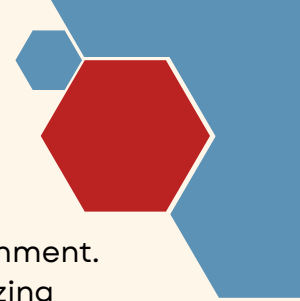
### **Feedback from the schools:**

Emmbrook School benefits from having ARC counsellors in school because it helps the pupils to feel more emotionally contained. They build a trusting relationship with the counsellor and know that there is a safe confidential space in school where they can share their worries. They know that unless the counsellor feels they are in danger they can share what is worrying them without it being discussed with teachers and parents. Students have felt better able to cope with issues which can often feel overwhelming. When the counselling has finished pupils feel able to come and seek support if they are struggling. Pupils have reported that they feel less anxious having shared their worries and been given strategies to help them

Bulmershe, we have so many students in need of counselling services for one reason and another, that we just simply cannot deal with them all in our pastoral centre. By having a trusted partner like ARC, it means our young people can benefit from their services and we have peace of mind that they are having their needs met

Waingels: I think that offer of sessions during the school day really supports students to access the service. I've had some students say that having it during the school day, allows them to commit to the sessions for longer periods as they don't have "put parents / carers out " by asking for lifts to and from the sessions





Our initial funding ran out July 2024, with the project being a great accomplishment. We successfully gained a 2nd round of National lottery funding. This was amazing news and really showed how invaluable this project is for local young people. This project continues to be instrumental in engaging young people within their community. It has begun connecting the 16–25-year-olds to organisations that support and serve them. The project has also supported external organisations to understand what young people need from their perspective. Youth Access has been the link between a young person's voice and community organisations.

Having reflected on 'what went well and what we needed to improve', we had evidence that offering drop-in sessions were not as beneficial then offering 1:1 appointments. Having already got the initial infrastructure in place, we have been able to amend and improve our delivery model to be able to offer more 1:1 sessions. Through these sessions we have supported clients with mental health and wellbeing, CV writing, advocacy, family support and guidance, job searching and applications, and signposting. Since September alone we have had 74 individual information advice and guidance sessions.

We have modified some of our deliveries to provide specialised information, advice and guidance to specific targeted and vulnerable groups. Bracknell and Wokingham College are now identifying targeted groups to attend specialised sessions of delivery. For example, we ran a session on the racial unrest that happened over the summer. The session went extremely well with young people having open discussions, facilitated by the youth worker. The young people felt empowered to voice their own opinions and there were differing views within the group.

This led to an open debate with views being explored and challenged to gain a broader understanding all round. This month we delivered sex and the law to 22 ESOL students (English for speaker of other languages). We have also modified our delivery to include morning sessions. This was to allow for more 6th forms to have access to the service. Bulmershe school now has a morning session fortnightly. So far, we have reached 1869 young people since September. We have now offered targeted sessions to identified young people at Waingels College, and this starts after the Easter break. Moving forward, Youth Access will be visible at all local community events, raising the profile for ARC as well as reaching out to everyone in the community.

*Feedback: "I did 3 or 4 different lots of counselling sessions with the same issue, it was helping while I was doing it and for a bit after but then I'd feel stuck because I'd done the steps they helped me to plan out, but I had no idea what I wanted or needed to do next. Whereas when I started meeting with Shaffrina she was able to show me the different options and helped me join things that I didn't even know were out there. Which in turn helped me to grow in confidence and I am now able to do them by myself without even really thinking about it."*





# Donor Thank You



Bringing people closer to Jesus Christ through His Church  
Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth



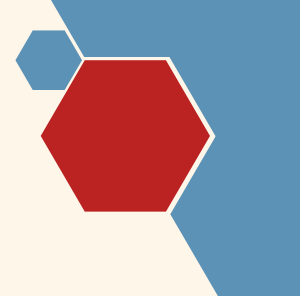
BERKSHIRE  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION



Twyford  
PARISH COUNCIL



# The Year in Review



- Number of young people who have received...
- New young people accessing Counselling
- Number of Counselling sessions delivered in...

