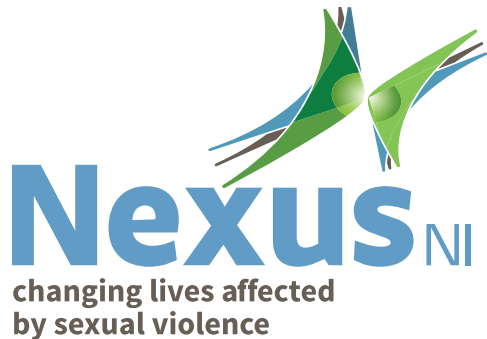


**We stand with
victims of sexual
violence and
we want to
break the silence**



A word from our chair



This year provided some interesting challenges for Nexus NI including changes to the internal structures of the organisation which culminated in four new additions to our board and a new CEO at the helm. We also had two longstanding board members stand down who made such a committed and valuable contribution to the workings of Nexus NI. Each of those who have left the organisation over the last twelve months has made a valuable contribution and we were sad to lose them. We thank them for their service. Boards must, however, regenerate and we were able to welcome new members all of whom have brought renewed energy and vigour to the organisation.

Our CEO, Cara Cash Marley left us in August 2018. Karen Gallagher joined us on a temporary basis in November 2018 as our interim CEO. We appreciate their commitment and all their work on behalf of the organisation.

We continued to provide our core service of counselling those who have survived sexual violence and rape. In January 2019 Nexus NI was successful in our re-application for funding from the Health and Social Care Board for a further three years. This funding will ensure much needed support and advice is provided to those who need it.

The issue of sexual violence has been catapulted into the public sphere over the last eighteen months in a way that we could not have expected and as a result demand for services has increased. With this increase in demand comes a need for further funding – not just for Nexus NI but for service providers across Northern Ireland. Waiting lists continue to rise and we need to work together to address this – statutory, voluntary and community and government agencies working together, something Nexus NI has worked alongside our funders to set a foundation for.

Everything we do is as a result of the efforts of our staff who contribute their hearts and souls to making our service so caring and so successful. Our volunteers, who freely contribute their time and skills, are also an extremely valuable resource supporting the organisation and its users.

We also owe a debt of gratitude to our many funders whose generosity enhances so many lives. To our users, your courage is inspirational and a daily motivation.

Judith Blair

Our work

This annual report is an opportunity for the organisation to look back on the reporting year, reflect on the work that has been done and plan for the future of the organisation.

As a leading charity in Northern Ireland for the last 35 years, Nexus NI focuses on breaking the silence of sexual violence, working collaboratively with external agencies to give victims a voice.

During the course of the year Sir John Gillen lead a review into the criminal justice system as it operates in relation to rape and sexual assault. Nexus NI engaged in the consultation process responding to each of the review's proposals and thereby provided input on behalf of survivors of rape and sexual assault. The Gillen Review was a long overdue examination of how those who are the victims of rape and sexual assault and also those who are accused of such crimes are treated by the criminal justice system and whether the system is able to strike the correct balance in protecting the rights of all involved.

We have also seen, in recent years, how social media can play a negative role in sexual violence trials, particularly when high profile and viewed by many as a 'public interest' issue. We were pleased to contribute to the Gillen Review and concurred with its recommendations, many of which were far reaching. We look forward to their implementation and will continue to work with all agencies to better the services victims and survivors receive, both within our own organisation and within the wider criminal justice system.

In total over the last year we have provided

16,000 counselling sessions to **751** clients



Our annual conference, held in February of this year was on the theme of “Enough is enough: The future of prevention, protection and prosecution for survivors of sexual violence and abuse”. We were fortunate to have as our keynote speakers Nazir Afzal OBE, former Chief Prosecutor with the Crown Prosecution Service in North West England and former Chief Executive of the Association of Police and Crime Commissioners, Dr Elaine Storkey, philosopher, writer, broadcaster, sociologist and theologian whose work has examined the impact of sexual violence against women. They were joined by our own Board member, Dr. Helen Beckett, Director of The

International Centre: Researching Child Sexual Exploitation, Violence and Trafficking at the University of Bedfordshire. All spoke engagingly and informatively and feedback from attendees was excellent.

In late 2018, Nexus NI bid successfully to provide the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline collaboratively funded through the Department of Health, Department of Justice and Department for Communities. We launched the helpline in 2019 and look forward to further demonstrating the support Nexus NI can provide to those most in need through this important helpline.

In the last year

19,384

counselling sessions were offered

At the end of March 2019 the waiting list figure stands at

845

751

clients completed counselling

80%

of clients have shown a reliable improvement since attending counselling



Our highly trained counsellors, on a daily basis, continue to offer face to face counselling in support of these survivors, for them to be able to move forward with their lives.

Clinical Manager at Nexus NI

Counselling

Counselling is a form of therapy. It offers a safe, confidential place to talk about life and anything that may be confusing, painful or uncomfortable. It allows people to talk with someone who is trained to listen attentively and to help improve how people feel about themselves. Nexus NI offer counselling to people who have been affected by sexual violence across Northern Ireland. It is a very personal process and all of our counsellors will adapt their styles to meet individual needs. Just as all clients are individuals, all counsellors are too, they can use different techniques and have different specialisms but all are committed to helping those affected by sexual violence.

covers all areas of Northern Ireland, where previously it covered Derry-Londonderry, Enniskillen, Portadown Area and Belfast.

Some of the aftercare activities signposted to clients have included:



classes e.g. yoga, drawing, dance classes, horse riding, women's' group courses.



Creative self-care activities e.g. holistic therapy, mindfulness



external training e.g. Recovery College, stress management, befriending



access to other services & support groups e.g. PIPS, chronic pain support group, friendship group, anxiety/depression support group



other services and activities e.g. volunteering, weight watchers, PIPS, hypnotherapy, dog training, choir, gym membership

During 2018 / 2019, we delivered the following:



Steps (personal development programme)



Anxiety workshops



Self Esteem workshops



Mindfulness introduction workshops

CO-NEX-ION PROJECT

The Co-NEX-ion project offers follow-up support to clients, post counselling, to reintegrate into their local communities and make use of existing resources and services in order to extend and expand their social support networks. It is vital that clients know there is aftercare following their counselling, that resources will be made available whenever they need them and not just for a specific timeframe.

The Co-NEX-ion project is funded by the Big Lottery Fund/National Lottery Community Fund for five years with year three beginning in August 2019. As a demonstration of our commitment with no additional funding being made available, the Co-NEX-ion project now

Number of Co-NEX-ion Clients

Since the inception of the Co-NEX-ion project, there has been a significant contribution made to the lives of clients and uptake across trust areas, demonstrating the continued need for these type of projects to be funded:



Western Health and Social Care Trust **50**

Northern Health and Social Care Trust **25**

Belfast Health and Social Care Trust **45**

South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust **15**

Southern Health and Social Care Trust **25**

TOTAL **160**



The Harm To Healing Project

The Harm to Healing project is funded by Children in Need and is for children and young people affected by sexual violence across Northern, Belfast & Southern Eastern Trust areas to provide up to 18 sessions of counselling and 6 sessions of family support to a main caregiver.

From April 2018 to March 2019, 89 children and young people have been referred to our service with 72 of these going onto assessment and ongoing sessions.

From our latest funder's evaluation this project demonstrated improved outcomes for service users in all 3 target areas; day to day coping 84%, positive outlook 86% and improved family communication/relationship 65%.

IMPACT OF THIS PROJECT FOR CLIENTS

"I feel so much better about myself after coming to counselling"

"She drew a caterpillar changing to a butterfly to describe her counselling journey" (mum of 9 year old)



Education



The Northern Area Mental Health Initiative was a project funded by the Social Investment Fund from April 2017 until March 2019. The Initiative was led by Cookstown and Western Shores Area Network in partnership with Action Mental Health and Nexus NI. The initiative existed to build the emotional resilience of children and young people aged 8-25, and their key contacts i.e. teachers, youth workers, parents and carers, in the Northern Zone communities. Through the Initiative's interactive mental health & resilience workshops, the project enabled communities to develop resilient cultures within the home, schools and communities.

Nexus NI delivered on the key areas of Internet Safety, Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Education and delivered 214 education sessions during the length of the project.

The sessions raised awareness of the risks of sexual exploitation, abuse and grooming as well as potential dangers when online or using social media and how to keep safe in person and online.



214 Education Sessions Delivered



Training

Nexus NI offers a range of training courses to external organisations and health care professionals who work with survivors of childhood sexual abuse and sexual violence.

Through the support of our funder Esmee Fairburn, we developed a range of training courses for organisations, including both accredited and non-accredited training courses for professionals and volunteers.

Courses offered: Bystander Intervention, CSA Awareness, Handling Disclosure of Sexual Abuse

Total participants 2018/19:

105

Since April 2016 we have been contracted by the Health and Social Care Board to provide Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Level 1 and 2 training to a range of Health Care Professionals who work with young people throughout Northern Ireland.

The training helps participants cultivate a deeper understanding of the nature and scope of child sexual exploitation across Northern Ireland. The Level One qualification helps raise awareness of the signs and impact of Child Sexual Exploitation.

The training examines the links between abuse, behaviours and vulnerability to Child Sexual Exploitation and gives an overview of relevant key legislation and policies.

The Level Two qualification delves more deeply into the effects of sexual exploitation on young people and helps equip participants with skills and resources to work effectively in support of individuals who have been or are at risk of being sexually exploited.

FEEDBACK ON TRAINING SESSIONS:



- "I had a limited knowledge of all of these, but now feel confident I would be able to facilitate a disclosure."
- "Better understanding of the number of possibilities for online abuse."
- "Gained more insight into how Childhood Sexual Abuse come out in adults and ways they cope with it."
- "Greater understanding of possible signs of CSA; personally better equipped to handle a disclosure."

STATS FOR APRIL 2018 - MARCH 2019:



Sessions Delivered:
26 Level 1 & 13 Level 2
(39 overall)

545

Total number of Participants: 545



We were delighted to have been awarded further two year funding until 31st March 2021.

Our Volunteers

Nexus NI could not function without our dedicated volunteers who give up their time to support the organisation across a range of our services. This is an invaluable support to the organisation and it is important to recognise how valuable these people are to our organisation.

“I volunteer with Nexus NI at least once a week and I’m always looking forward to it.”

In Your Local Community

Friends of Nexus NI are a group of people who are committed to breaking the silence around sexual violence and who can provide us with a voice in their local community.

HOW DO THEY SUPPORT US?

By becoming a Friend, they use their skills, interests and time to support our work by:

- **Raising awareness** of our services and being a voice for Nexus NI in their community
- **Volunteering** their time e.g at events, with awareness activities etc

FACILITATING FUNDRAISING BY:

- Participating in Nexus NI events
- Organising their own events or activities
- Helping to promote Nexus NI events and campaigns to friends/family/colleagues
- Joining or setting-up a Nexus NI Community Fundraising Group in their area



The Challenges

2018 / 2019 has been a challenging year not only for Nexus NI but also the sector as a whole with ongoing uncertainty around funding and decision making in Northern Ireland. This background has made it increasingly challenging for organisations to forward plan. Nexus NI is committed to collaborating with partners to support those impacted by sexual violence.

As we look ahead to 2019 / 2020, it will be a year of change and evolution as Nexus NI begin the management of the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline. We also plan to further raise awareness of sexual violence through our much anticipated conference which will again be held during Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week 2020.

We hope that going forward we will also see some movement in a new Executive which will allow organisations like Nexus NI to plan long term through key policy and legislative decisions that will make a positive difference to service users alongside more sustainable long term funding streams.

We will continue to engage with all stakeholders to raise awareness

of the issue of sexual violence and where we can work to influence important policy and legislative changes that will impact the sector as a whole.

Key partner agencies & organisations include, Department of Justice, Department of Health, Department for Communities, Police Service Northern Ireland, Relate, Women’s Aid Foundation, Probation Board Northern Ireland, Victim Support NI and the Rowan Centre.

Nexus NI is committed to displaying best practice in all areas of our services and governance and as an organisation we will work to ensure our support services are of the highest quality.

Engaging partners, funders, volunteers, elected representatives and the media will ensure our message reaches the broadest audience possible – with the ultimate aim of breaking the silence once and for all.



The Difference We're Making

It is important that we are able to demonstrate the wider impact our services are making, not just to people's lives but also to the wider society.

Understanding and demonstrating how services and programmes impact upon clients and other stakeholder groups and finding ways of valuing this change and expressing this value in tangible ways is now essential for voluntary sector organisations.

Nexus NI was one of the first organisations to use the Social Return on Investment (SROI) model which measures the impact of our work across stakeholder groups and funders. Initial conclusions from our analysis which were extrapolated over a five-year period (in line with SROI standard methodology) produced a ratio of £20 returned for every £1 invested in the service.

Clients
£18,388,749

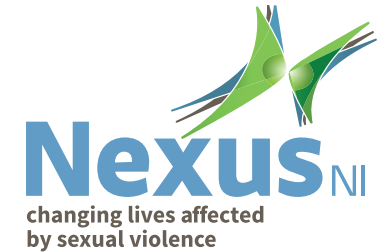
total social value
£20,327,191

Counsellors
£128,517

Family Members
& Close Friends
£1,809,926

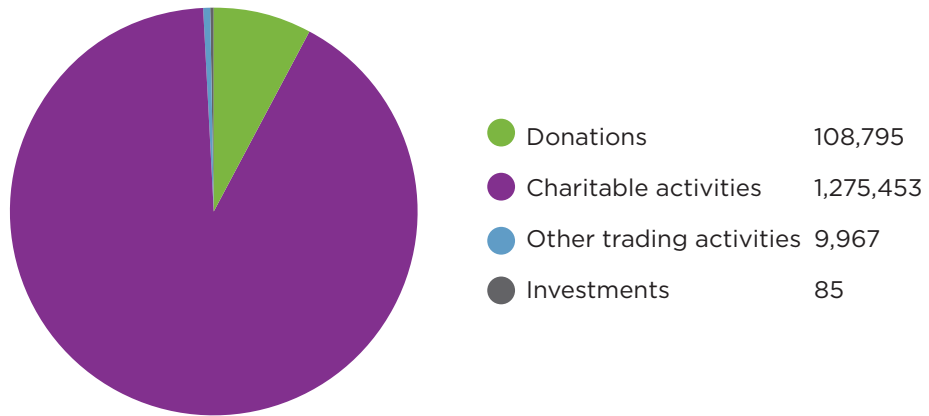
Nexus NI are delivering counselling services to a client base that is increasing annually by 20% with the same level of resources that were available to the organisation ten years ago and continue to deliver life changing outcomes to clients.

Nexus NI has representation on all of the key strategic policy forums in the sector, these include All Party Groups: Domestic and Sexual Violence Partnerships; the Stakeholder Advisory Group for the government strategy for tackling domestic and sexual violence. We were also a member of the advisory panel for the independent review of criminal justice led by Sir John Gillen.

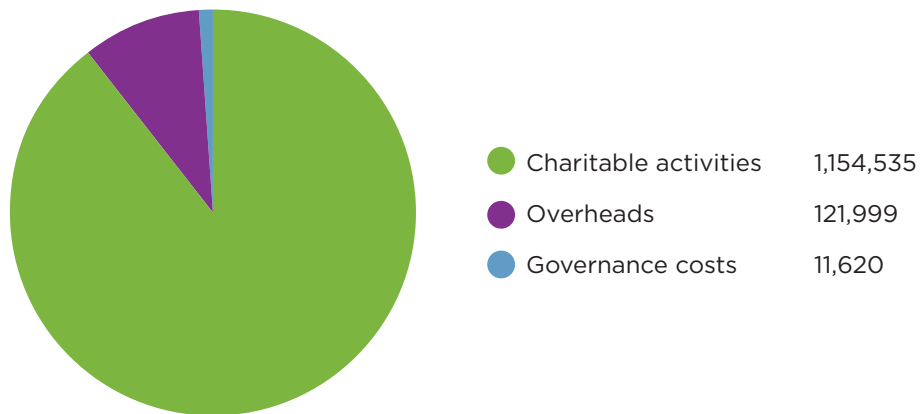


Our Finances

INCOME £1,394,300



EXPENDITURE £1,288,154



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