



THE HARBOUR

Someone to talk to when you need it most

IMPACT REPORT 2025

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Thank you for your support

The Harbour is a small charity with a huge vision - that everyone has access to the crucial emotional support needed when they are facing death and navigating grief. We help people affected by life-threatening illness to live well with grief when facing their own death or the death of a loved one, or when they have been bereaved. We have been offering this specialist counselling to help thousands of people, in and around Bristol, to live well with grief since 1992.

Grief is a public health issue. It significantly impacts mental and physical health, has a knock-on impact on economic productivity and health and social care spending.¹ Despite this, in the UK, there is inadequate access to grief support, with a lack of service provision. This is compounded by our social attitudes – because, when it comes to bereavement we struggle to talk.²

Thanks to the generosity of many donors we have been able to provide in-depth emotional support to individuals, couples and groups.

The Harbour is the only organisation in Bristol providing professional grief and bereavement counselling to adults (bar those under hospice care). Subsequently our service is in high demand.

Despite this we receive less than 25% of our funding from the NHS and continue to rely on Trusts and Foundations as our primary source of income. This has enabled us to provide our specialist support to those who need it most.

“The Harbour was set up to work with people diagnosed with HIV and Aids in 1992, at a time when this was likely to be life limiting. We therefore have a long history of working with communities who face discrimination and are disadvantaged and excluded.”

¹Bereavement Commission 2021 ²Marie Curie 2022

Our Key Successes

With limited resources, it is challenging to respond to the high demand on our waiting list while continuing to ensure our services are accessible. Over the last year, we are pleased to report on a number of key developments. We have achieved this with a small team of part-time staff and our fantastic trainee therapists, who work in a voluntary capacity, and we could not have done this without the support of our funders



During 2025 we supported 244 clients

We are proud that year on year we achieve significant impact for our clients through the commitment of our qualified and trainee therapists. In the last year, 81% of clients reported an improvement in their mental health, a significant outcome given the nature of our work with death and dying. For every person we help, there is also a wider, unquantifiable ripple effect on their family and friends.

Our group bereavement therapy

Our Bereavement Group grew to full capacity, with a committed group of members facilitated by our experienced Group Analyst. The group offers a strong sense of community and belonging, helping to counter loneliness. Meeting others facing similar challenges allows members to see their own experiences from different perspectives and to recognise that feelings of isolation, sadness, or confusion are common. This can help reduce shame and embarrassment about their emotions. The group also provides opportunities to witness and learn from how others manage grief, supporting the development of coping strategies and emotional resilience. This is a long-term form of therapy, and members are welcome to participate for up to two years.

Our Key Successes

We expanded our services to better reach and support underserved communities.

Following a programme of community outreach to raise awareness of our service, one of our therapists began providing sessions from the Southmead Development Trust's Greenway Centre. We also continued our successful partnership with Knowle West Health Park. These partner organisations serve communities in the top 10–15% of multiple deprivation in England, which have historically been underserved by accessible therapeutic services.

In many cases, beneficiaries presented with increased complexity in their reasons for accessing counselling. Grief and bereavement were often entwined with wider social and economic pressures, which had a direct impact on engagement and clinical outcomes. Feedback at the engagement stage highlighted that there can be significant barriers to accessing counselling, and that longer-term therapy is not always appropriate or achievable. In response, we adapted our delivery to be more flexible and responsive, recognising that fewer than the standard sixteen sessions can still represent a complete and meaningful therapeutic journey.

In 2026, we will be working in two further areas of multiple deprivation in East Bristol, partnering with grassroots organisations that support racially minoritised communities. Strengthening the inclusivity of the support we offer is a key objective for the coming year, and we are grateful for the advice and guidance provided by our community partners.



Knowle West HEALTHY LIVING CENTRE



We provided loss and bereavement training within the community

Recognising the skilled work already taking place within the community, we have developed and delivered community-based training for adult and youth workers, including staff at The Park in Knowle West who support young adults in an alternative learning provision, and two teams at Southmead Development Trust working with both young people and adults.

100% of attendees found the workshops 'useful' and provided positive feedback: "I had great feedback from the team, they found the morning really valuable. They certainly hold a lot in their work and in the community and they really appreciate some space to discuss that."

Our Key Successes

Diversifying our fundraising sources

Year-on-year the fundraising environment for charities becomes more competitive, whilst demand for charitable services increases. With our priority on providing our vital counselling services to underserved communities we know that client contributions will not form a significant part of our income. In 2025 we took steps to develop our community and corporate fundraising platforms.

We had a hugely successful 'Charity of the Year' partnership with Barratt Homes Bristol, which raised over £24,000. Our Fundraising Team are hard at work prospecting for corporate partnerships for the coming year.

We are honoured to be supported by friends of The Harbour who chose to fundraise for us. From running half marathons and donating the proceeds of community social events, to attending our first-ever Spring Ceilidh; we are so grateful to everyone that donated to our small charity in 2025.



**BRISTOL
CHOIR
BRIGADE**

Do you have a burning desire to sing?



**BARRATT
HOMES**

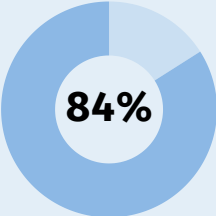
Our Impact in 2025

We work hard to make our services accessible and reflective of Bristol's diverse communities. In 2024/25 15% of clients were from minority ethnic communities; 10% identified as LGBTQ+; and 17% had a disability.

We helped our clients when they needed us most: 6% were facing their own death; 22% were close to someone facing death/dying; and 67% had been bereaved in the past 2 years.



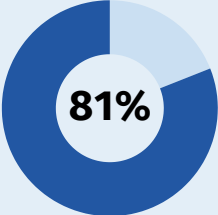
244 CLIENTS



84% sessions provided heavily subsidised or free of charge



1684 COUNSELLING & 'HEAR ME' SESSIONS



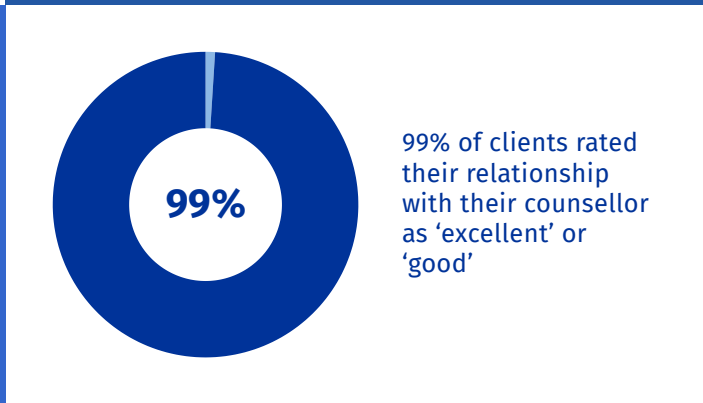
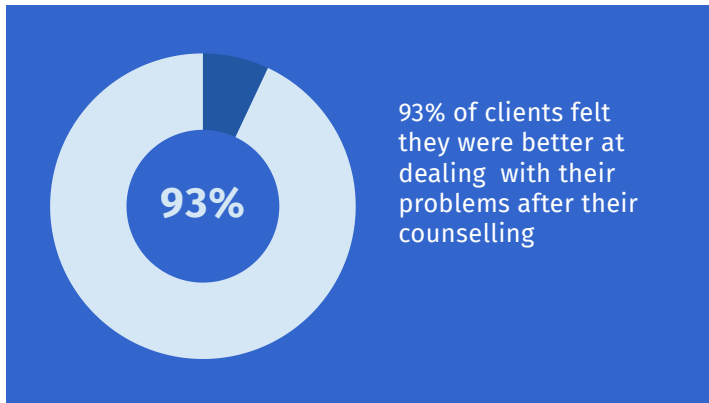
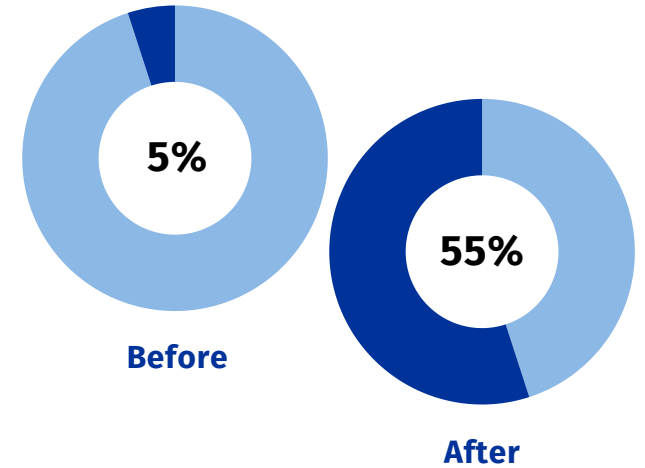
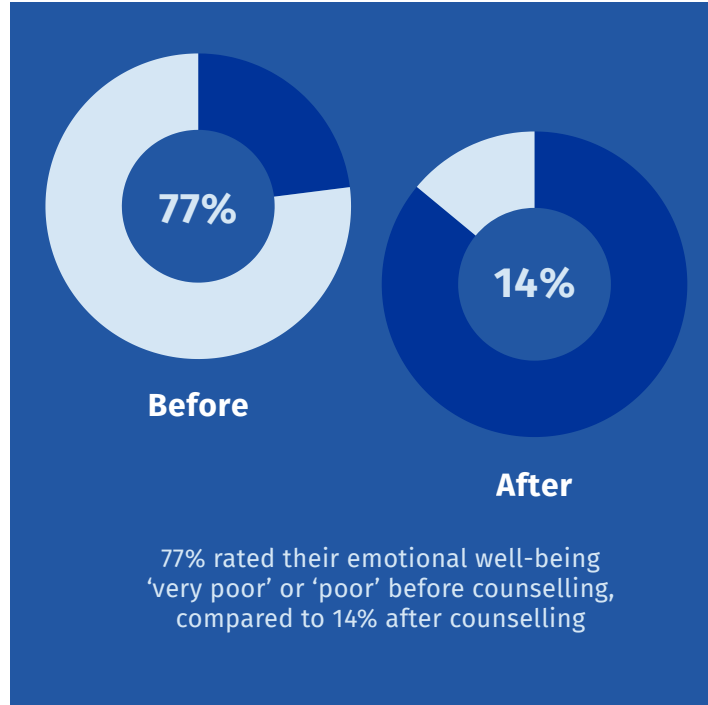
81% of clients recorded reduced levels of anxiety and depression following their time with us

PHQ and GAD

We use standard measures of anxiety (GAD7) and depression (PHQ9) at the beginning, middle and end of counselling. These include questions about sleeping and eating issues, concentration, feeling depressed or bad about yourself, not being able to stop worrying, feeling anxious and having suicidal thoughts. During the year the average PHQ for clients reduced from 12 to 7 - this equates to a shift from moderate to mild depression. The average GAD scores reduced from 11 to 7 - this equates to a shift from moderate to mild anxiety.

Qualitative feedback adds value to the GAD and PHQ data we gather

Our work prevents complex and severe health problems, reduces health inequalities, and creates less demand on the NHS/statutory services. It reduces anxiety and depression, enabling people to better cope day-to-day e.g. being better parents, being able to get back to work; and more able to contribute positively to their communities.



In Their Own Words

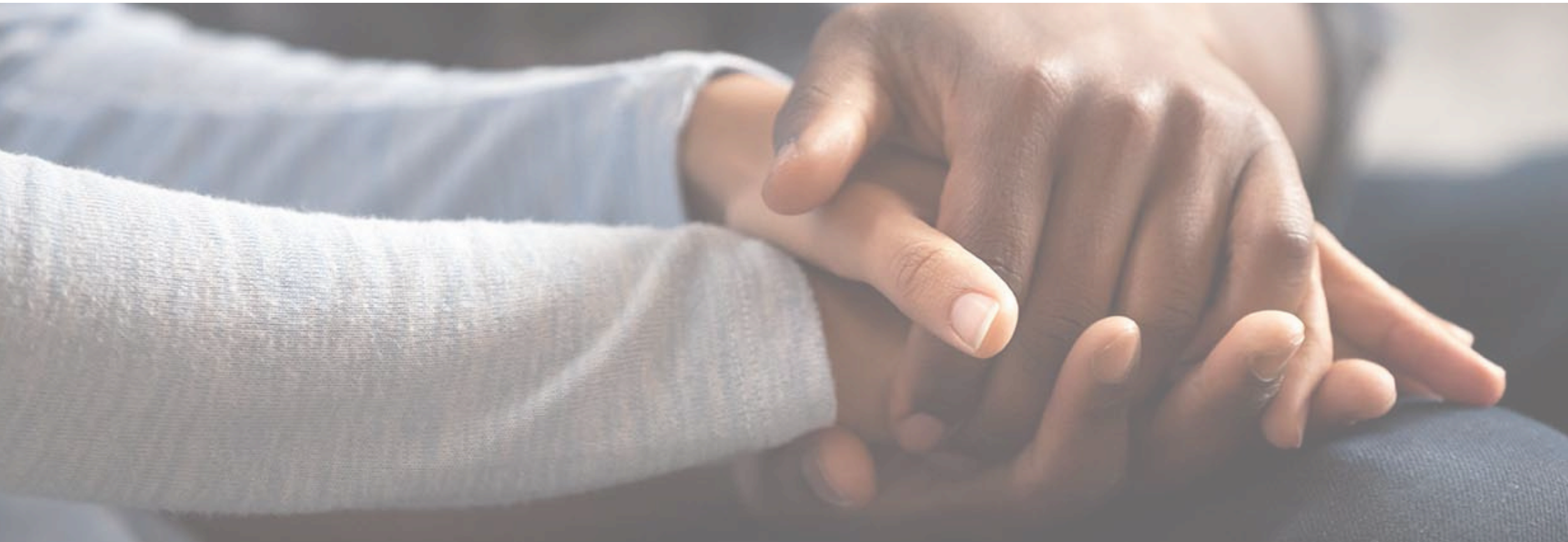
Our therapists provide a safe space for people to talk and be listened to. For many people, support from family and friends will be enough to help them through their grief. But for others it is not. Through counselling, our clients confront their most uncomfortable emotions about death, dying and bereavement...feelings that can be difficult to share with family and friends.



"I benefited from The Harbour in many ways. I learnt that I am not alone. I learnt that what I felt was justified and 'normal'. I learnt that when I needed someone to talk to, The Harbour provided me with that space and with someone who in my opinion is a definite Angel without wings."

"Bravo, The Harbour, what a truly amazing and privilege it has been, that you gave me 16 weeks to learn how to deal with the most painful and totally devastating loss in my life. I will eternally be grateful and thankful that I was pointed in the right direction by my GP. I'd never heard of The Harbour before this, but I shall never forget all that you did to help me and by sending my therapist to gently guide me through the complete devastation and catastrophic distress I felt before I came to your care. Thank you so much from the bottom of my broken heart."

"It has saved me, I was in the depths of depression with no way out and now I can understand and deal with my dad's death and the events leading up to it. I have gained self worth and I now enjoy life again. I don't feel hopeless and I have learnt how to understand my emotions better and to reflect first rather than being reactionary."



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