



Talk  
Listen  
Change

# 2022-23

## Annual Report





Michelle Hill, CEO

The 2022-23 year was a transformational one for TLC. It's both inspiring and humbling to look back and reflect on all that we did together in pursuit of safe, healthy, and happy relationships.

As we started to navigate what life looked like in a post-pandemic world, our team grew significantly. We worked hard to create more ways to stay connected whilst embracing the flexibility of hybrid working.

We hosted our first all-staff conference in December and will now host one annually. We also launched an internal TLC podcast as a way of helping our team stay connected - wherever they're based.

As a charity with proud Northern roots, we utilised our stronghold in Greater Manchester as a springboard into neighbouring areas, opening our first project in Cheshire West and Chester. We expanded our development capacity and grew our marketing and communications team.

As we look towards what's to come in the 2023-24 year, I'm filled with pride and excitement.

*Michelle*



“A circle of safe, healthy and happy relationships is a safety net for when things start to go wrong. Having people to support you can make a world of difference.”

Hannah Taylor, Director of Services



# When life gets tough, good relationships help us through.

TLC: Talk, Listen, Change has supported people with their relationship issues for over 40 years. Our aim is to ensure everyone within our community benefits from personal resilience and good emotional wellbeing.

We began as a charity servicing the Greater Manchester area, but we now help people up and down the country. Our support is constantly evolving to best meet the needs of our people.

We deliver counselling services, separation support, domestic abuse support, and community projects.

## Our services


Our services are all designed to create, support and sustain safe, healthy and happy relationships. They can be grouped into four broad categories:

**Counselling** for children and young people, individual adults, couples and families, plus a specialist psycho-sexual therapy service.

**Separation Support** for couples who are separating via our family mediation service and a Separated Parents Information Programme (SPIP) which helps ex-partners understand the impact of separation on their children.

**Domestic Abuse Services** including behaviour change programmes for those causing harm in their relationships, integrated support services for victims and survivors and support for children affected by domestic abuse.

**Community projects** including volunteering initiatives and being a key partner in The Prevention Alliance, offering fully integrated holistic support to the people of Stockport.



Our Annual Report is interactive. Look for the cursor in the corner of pages with interactive links. Click underlined text to learn more.

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# Cost-free care during a crisis

The past year has been a particularly difficult one for people experiencing mental health problems. The cost-of-living crisis has dealt a double blow to our community.

For many, self-funded services are more out of reach than ever, and heightened financial hardship has in turn exacerbated negative mental health.

In response to the urgent need for support, we delivered more cost-free counselling sessions than ever before. 67% of our counselling sessions were delivered free of charge, while we maintained our policy of fair, income-based contributions for those that can afford to pay.

We expanded our work with housing associations and their customers, who represent some of the hardest hit by the cost-of-living crisis. We provided 1,500 free counselling sessions to social housing customers, generating an estimated £99,600 social value.

We also now provide clinical supervision to two more organisations. This means we can pass on our skills and knowledge to more social care workers so they can learn, reflect, and improve the care they deliver.



“Our staff are able to offer our customers extra support when they really need it. Customers have told us that their mental health has improved through talking with a counsellor.”

Income Officer, 54 North Homes

6.5k

adult sessions delivered

1000

people supported through counselling

81%

felt emotionally better



## Jo's Story

Jo is a customer of a housing association. They were overwhelmed by feelings of worthlessness and anxiety after becoming unemployed. Losing their job had a huge impact on Jo's self-esteem, and they lost contact with what had been a strong network of work-based friends.

Jo spent more and more time at home, watching TV and sleeping. They experienced a loss of energy and felt that they lacked a sense of purpose.

Jo didn't know how to process these feelings and became trapped in a cycle of feeling guilty about how unmotivated they were, but also feeling unable to do anything about it. Jo recognises now that this was the beginning of a major decline in their mental health.

Jo's landlord was contacted by their downstairs neighbour, who had realised they hadn't seen Jo out and about for several weeks. They noticed what looked like an increasing number of unopened bills overflowing from Jo's letterbox.

Jo's housing officer made contact with Jo, and after several weeks, they eventually agreed to speak to a TLC counsellor.

“We chatted about all sorts, building trust and common ground.”

TLC Counsellor

After about four sessions, Jo began to open up to their counsellor. Once they realised that they wouldn't be mocked or questioned for the way they were feeling, Jo began to make major progress. Jo said they learned lots of techniques to help them relax and live more in the moment. Jo now says they have more compassion for themselves, and they are able to celebrate their successes.

“My counselling sessions helped with my anxiety and gave me space to explore my thoughts and feelings. I can talk more kindly to myself now. I know I am good enough.”

Jo, Housing Association Customer and Counselling Client



# Positive and affordable separation

Understanding the legal process for separation and making practical arrangements can be complex and challenging. Through family mediation, we've provided a safe space for separating couples to discuss children and finances with a qualified and impartial third party.

We understand that parenting when separated can be difficult and that understanding the legalities around financial assets can be overwhelming. Our mediators are there to facilitate hard conversations, manage conflict, provide legal information, and help families move forward positively.

Over the past year, many other mediation providers reduced or cut their Legal Aid contracts entirely. We understand that those who qualify for Legal Aid rarely have other options when the ability to communicate and make arrangements with their ex-partner has broken down. We remained dedicated to helping couples on lower incomes make practical arrangements for their children and shared finances.

60% of the family mediation sessions we delivered were at least partially funded by Legal Aid. We also supported 80 families via our Separated Parents Information Programme (SPIP), for which 95% of sessions were funded. These services together generated a social value of over £1.8 million.

“The process of mediation has been amazing from the first phone call. The mediator made me feel comfortable having discussions with my ex-partner and maintained control of the situation.”

Programme participant, Mediation

“The course explains everything so that you can make the right choices and reduce conflict. It's helped me understand that it's about keeping your child happy, not point scoring.”

Programme participant, SPIP

66%

of mediation clients achieved resolution outside of court

472

people rang or emailed to enquire about mediation

60%

of mediation clients used Legal Aid to support costs





# Diversifying domestic abuse support

We made our domestic abuse support services more accessible than ever in 2022. Not only did we extend our reach outside of Greater Manchester for the first time, but we also launched a behaviour change programme exclusively for people who identify as LGBTQIA+.

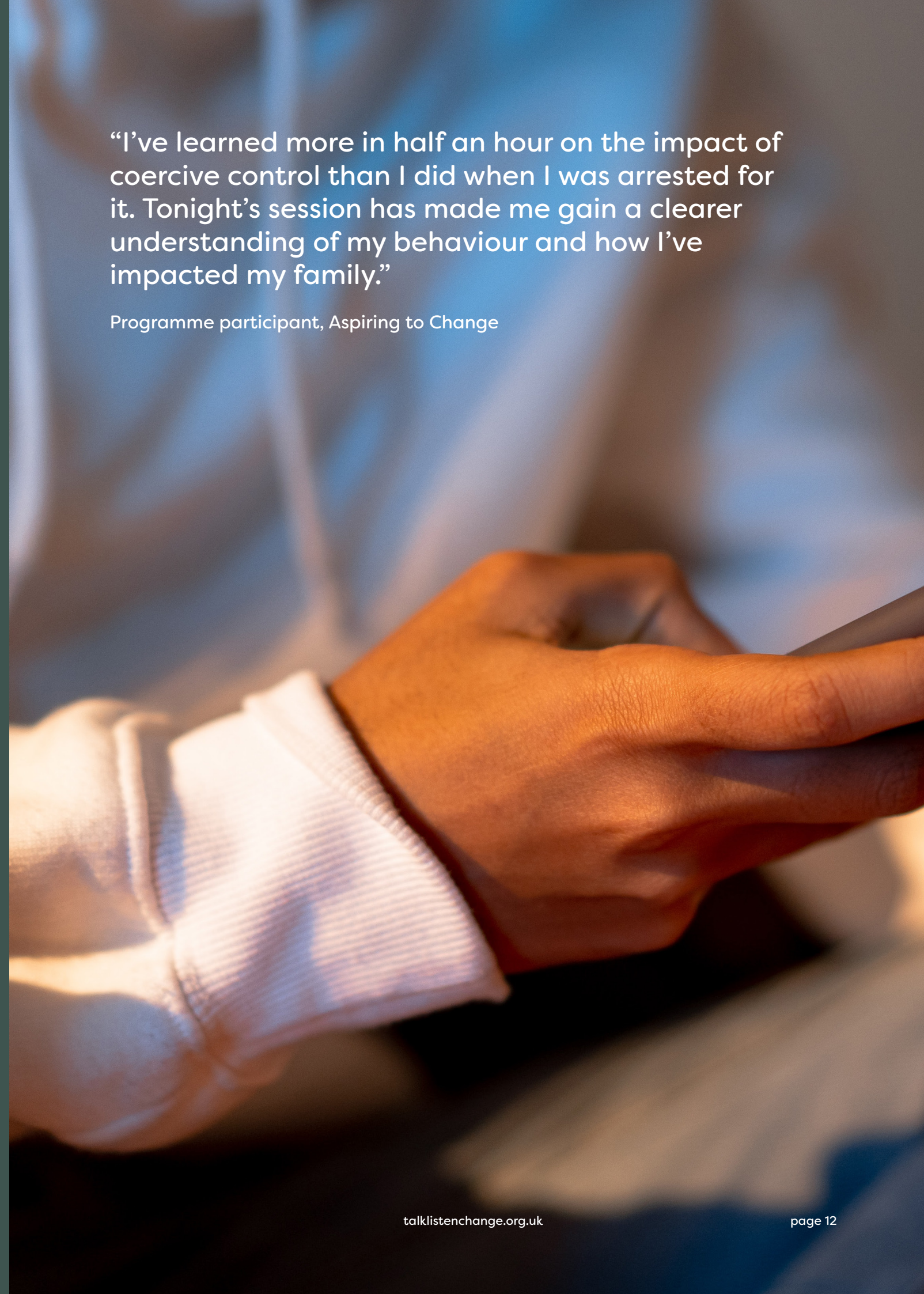
As with previous years, our focus has remained on helping people who harm address their unhealthy behaviours and commit to change, with integrated support for their partners and ex-partners.

We excitedly launched our new programme Aspiring to Change in partnership with Cheshire West and Chester Council. Participants in Cheshire stay with us for an average of 26 weeks.

In response to positive feedback on our service delivery during the pandemic, we maintained a flexible and hybrid approach to delivering sessions. We host groups both in person and online, making it easier for people unable to travel to access support.

“I’ve learned more in half an hour on the impact of coercive control than I did when I was arrested for it. Tonight’s session has made me gain a clearer understanding of my behaviour and how I’ve impacted my family.”

Programme participant, Aspiring to Change







# A focus on inclusivity

with Joni Fox, Service Manager

“

“While we have always offered support to the LGBTQIA+ community, this year we developed new course materials and assessment criteria to better help people with same-sex partners.

We’ve worked with individuals in same-sex relationships as part of our behaviour change work before but we noticed a lot of the material we used was very gendered and geared towards men in heterosexual relationships. There was a sense that it was more difficult taking on cases where same-sex abuse was present.

We felt like we needed to review the programme and the offer as a whole to make sure it was as inclusive as possible. We did that in our first LGBTQIA+ steering group.

Consultations with LGBTQIA+ charities helped us discover that the power and control wheel within diverse relationships looks slightly different. We needed to adjust our material and risk assessment processes.

We’ve now degendered a lot of our material and looked at specific themes that may come up when we work with LGBTQIA+ individuals. We never used a one-size-fits-all approach to understanding why people use harmful behaviours, but we now systematically categorise behaviours such as ‘outing’ and misusing pronouns as abusive.”

Joni Fox, Service Manager

“The programme has helped me find myself. I would recommend it to anyone.”

Programme participant



“We’re excited to present a new approach to our behaviour change work that is as safe and accessible as possible to everyone.”

Jordan Henry, Facilitator



## Sayid's Story



**make a  
change**



The Make a Change model was developed by Respect, in partnership with the Women's Aid Federation of England. We are a proud delivery partner of Make a Change in Trafford. The programme is jointly run with Trafford Domestic Abuse Services (TDAS). It supports those enacting harmful behaviours to change, and helps professionals recognise and respond to abuse.

Sayid was referred to us by a social worker. He was in an on/off relationship characterised by verbal and emotional abuse, and drug and alcohol misuse.

It became clear within our first few sessions that behind his bravado, Sayid was a reserved person. He talked about being extremely insecure growing up, and how this still impacted how he interacts with people on a day-to-day basis.

Sayid shared that his ex-partner had introduced him to drugs and blamed her for making him into someone he didn't want to be. He said she was responsible for his abusive behaviour and the course his life had taken.

Over the 10 weeks Sayid was with us, he gradually began to accept that his behaviour was a choice that he must be responsible for. He was reluctant to talk about his relationship because it caused him a lot of hurt, but he opened up more and more as he built a relationship with our practitioner.



"Sayid now uses the grounding strategies we worked on to keep himself calm during intense and emotional situations."

TLC Practitioner

**"It was reassuring to have someone support me without judging me."**

Sayid, Programme participant





## DRIVE➤

Drive is a national programme, developed by Respect, Safe Lives and Social Finance. We are proud to be a delivery partner in Greater Manchester. Drive seeks to prevent high-risk, high-harm individuals from continuing to abuse by **disrupting** their harmful activity and **supporting** them to change.

### Breaking high risk habits

Tom was referred onto our high-risk Drive programme after he was arrested for threatening to kill his partner. He and his partner had been married for over a decade and had multiple children together.

Tom initially took no responsibility for the problems in his relationship. Though he decided to engage with us, he blamed his partner and social services for his behaviour. He also didn't understand how his behaviour was negatively impacting his children.

We adopted a multi-agency approach to Tom's case, maintaining regular contact with his social worker to review the risks he posed to his family and keep up to date on any possible disruptive activities. We engaged Tom in grounding and mindfulness work, established personal goals with him, and since he reported adverse childhood experiences, engaged in discussions on childhood, timelines, and trigger points.

Tom broke through his resistance to change and was able to reflect on his behaviour and take responsibility for his actions. He's since been able to better navigate stressful situations, and now enjoys full-time employment and a stable living situation.

### Tom's Story





# Partnering up for progress

We believe in the power of partnership, and we know we have the greatest impact when we collaborate with other organisations to deliver our work.

Collaboration is a daily feature of all our work at TLC. We pull together with statutory agencies and other third sector organisations to ensure the highest quality of support is given to those we work alongside.

We also partner with national charities, foundations, housing associations, schools and businesses to ensure everyone within our community benefits from safe, healthy and happy relationships.



We love our role in The Prevention Alliance, a partnership between Age UK Stockport, Skylight, Jigsaw Support, Nacro and TLC, working together to support individuals across Stockport. Through The Prevention Alliance, we are proud partners of Stockport Support Hub, a dedicated helpline providing information, advice and pathways to a range of early help services. And we collectively provide dedicated key worker support to enable people to live a full and independent life through Your Support.

In partnership with Age UK Stockport, Skylight and Stockport Without Abuse we also deliver an integrated domestic abuse service for victims (adults and children) and perpetrators.

488

referrals through  
Stockport Support Hub

2.3k

referrals through  
Safe in Salford



In Salford, we deliver an integrated domestic abuse service for victims (adults and children) and perpetrators, working in partnership with Salford Foundation, Manchester Women's Aid and Trafford Domestic Abuse Services.

“Working with TLC through Safe in Salford has been a fantastic experience. The team do a fantastic job supporting those that need help. They consistently demonstrate their commitment to the partnership and its aims — not just their part of the service delivery. TLC are a highly valued partner, and we really look forward to developing our relationship with them.”

Phil East, CEO, Salford Foundation, Lead Partner, Safe In Salford Partnership

“Our partnership with TLC has led to a successful project that has put adults and children who have suffered harm at the forefront. It's been a great success and good communication has been a huge part of this.”

Sharon Doyle, Trafford Domestic Abuse Services





# Investing in the future

We've continued to maintain our core belief about unhealthy behaviours in relationships: the best way to prevent them in adulthood is to address them in childhood. That's why this year, we expanded our work encouraging healthy relationships among young people and supporting children who have witnessed domestic abuse.

Referrals to our Children in Need youth groups, Encouraging Healthy Relationships programme, and Respect programme steadily increased throughout the past year, reaching a total of 800. We also currently host 30 in-person support groups for young people – our highest number ever – and we offer support to children impacted by domestic abuse across 8 of the boroughs of Greater Manchester.

Additionally, we delivered 2,500 counselling sessions to children and young people this year through projects, schools and private sessions.

We continued our project The Right Angle, delivering counselling to 40 children in alternative provision throughout the academic year.

“I enjoyed the sessions because I felt like I had someone to open up to. I've learned things about abuse that I can use in the future and share with my friends.”

Programme participant, Encouraging Healthy Relationships

**Encouraging Healthy Relationships:**  
for young people displaying unhealthy behaviours towards other young people, like their partners or their siblings.



## Danny's Story

Danny was referred to our Respect programme because he was showing aggressive behaviour towards his mum and younger sibling. He had witnessed his dad abusing his mum until they split up when he was 6 years old.

We conducted our first one-to-one session with Danny at school, but he seemed quite disengaged and clearly felt uneasy. We reassured him and worked hard to establish trust, after which he felt comfortable sharing his feelings and discussing his anger and emotions.

We worked creatively with Danny and used different techniques to help him control his anger and reactions. We discussed coping strategies with him, and Danny set goals to help himself be happier and grow his confidence at school.

Both Danny and his mum suffered from anxiety, so we adapted the programme to be delivered individually. We did audio sessions, where both Danny and his mum had an opportunity to communicate to each other without interruption. During one session, Danny's mum acknowledged how much she loved him, which was a powerful moment for Danny, as he said he hadn't heard that in a long time. The realisation allowed Danny's mum to recognise the importance of vocalising her love for him.

Danny and his mum had made significant progress upon completion of the programme. While there were still challenging moments, both were visibly in a better mental state. Since they finished their time with us, there have been no more reports of aggression or hostility between Danny and his mum.

**“My son has changed so much; he's even playing with his younger brother. I'd tell anyone to do it. It's been so nice to know other people are in the same boat. Being able to talk about our problems has been amazing.”**

Parent of programme participant, Respect Young People's Programme

**Respect Young People's Programme:**  
for young people displaying  
unhealthy behaviours, or causing  
stress or harm to parents or  
caregivers.







# It helps to talk

Managing difficult and overwhelming emotions such as anger continued to be a major presenting need for children and young people referred to us this year.

The number of children we saw coping with worry and anxiety, and the number of children impacted by domestic abuse at home, continued to grow.

We continued to help young people recontextualise difficult situations and relieve the stress they face through individual counselling and group therapy sessions.



“These young peoples’ lives can be complex. In a group setting, emotions can be explored through play with peers going through the same thing.”

Helen Stuart, Head of Domestic Abuse (Children and Young People)

“The counselling sessions really helped me to explore my problems and recognise how important the people that I care about are. I’m not dwelling on negative comments made by a few people who aren’t nice and who aren’t important to me.”

Young Person, Counselling client

2.4k

counselling sessions delivered to children and young people

84%

more children engaged with counselling in 2022 than the year before

800

young people referred to us for help with unhealthy relationships





# Support behind the scenes

TLC saw significant change behind the scenes this year.

We restructured our administration team by centralising management to increase flexibility. This has helped people enquiring about our programmes, and professionals, to access the services they need faster and more efficiently.

Our finance team has centralised operations, simplifying our expense claim system and ensuring our cash flow sits just right.

TLC team members also established a staff improvement group in order to direct suggestions to senior staff, who use these to make changes for the benefit of everyone at the organisation.

Pictured: Michelle Hill, CEO - All staff conference

Pictured: Alvin Raymode, Trustee

30%

of our Board are from minoritised communities

57%

of our Board identify as female

14%

identify as LGBTQIA+

We welcomed six new trustees to our Board in January 2023. Carolyn Blunt, Grant Lowe, Chong Liu, Sarah Ingleby, Charlotte Spain and Ruhena Tarafder joined us after an intensive recruitment process. We were blown away by the calibre of our applicants, and we're looking forward to getting to know our new trustees more.

We also said goodbye to trustees Graham Ellis, Verity Calderbank and Anita Shepherd, and we're very grateful for the support they gave to us and the contributions they made whilst serving on the Board. They helped TLC implement the Charity Governance Code for large charities, worked through a year-long governance action plan, and launched a new committee structure.



"I am so proud of the whole range of services we deliver, making a positive impact on people's lives and promoting good relationships."

Maggie Shannon, Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees

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# Upskilling staff for internal support

Six of our staff have now been trained as mental health first aiders, meaning they can offer initial support (before professional help is available) to staff struggling with mental health problems – including when they are in crisis. This has helped us assure our team that their mental health is as important as the mental health of the people they support.

We worked with Happy to provide leadership training to current leaders at TLC and those aspiring to be leaders in the future. We were also fortunate to get eight places on the HOPE leadership programme, commissioned by the Drive partnership, for staff from black and minoritised communities to support their leadership journey.

“Happy worked with us to deliver three programmes for existing and emerging leaders. The aim of these programmes was for participants to explore the principles of management and leadership within TLC; develop understanding, practical skills and techniques; and build relationships with fellow participants along the way.”

Emily Williams, Director of Development

happy<sup>®</sup>

“I’ve been able to learn more about communication and management styles, and successfully implement knowledge into my daily work practices.”

Hannah Naeem, Children and Young People’s Admin Lead

H.O.P.E.  
HOPE

“Understanding the impact of structural and systemic inequalities has made me more aware of my own wounds, allowing me to have more empathy for others.”

Sarah Townsend, Domestic Abuse Prevention Facilitator



## Volunteering

We have recruited new volunteers this year who provide vital internal support to our children and young people’s practitioners.

All our volunteers receive one-to-one support and personal development plans from their mentors. We help upskill our volunteers as we would paid members of staff.

Along with our existing team of volunteers, they’ve helped us extend young people’s support, and helped with the delivery of external projects in Trafford including Talk Shop, Street Talk, and Stay and Play baby clubs - even distributing 100 hampers to new parents in need thanks to funding from Trafford Housing Trust.

3

new volunteer managers recruited

“Our volunteers help us do so much for so many more people, making them invaluable to our organisation.”

Laura Brown, Volunteer Project Manager

Pictured left to right: Laurie Beach, Volunteer Coordinator.  
Laura Brown, Volunteer Project Manager



# Staff network

It is important that our staff feel as valued as the people we support. We host three internal staff networks for people from often marginalised communities to ensure we maintain an inclusive and progressive workplace. Our LGBTQIA+ Network, People of Colour Network, and Network for People with Disabilities actively inform our policies and operational priorities.

The network coordinators host regular group sessions to ensure everyone within their network feels they can bring their whole self to work. They also represent their respective networks in frequent meetings with our CEO, where they give feedback, raise issues, and provide suggestions to improve diversity, equality and inclusion at TLC.

We also host several social groups, established by our staff to share common interests, talk about shared problems, and build better relationships across the team. Some of these include a book club, allyship group, and a menopause group.



“This year we launched an LGBTQIA+ resource library for all staff. Having a place to share with others who can relate to your experiences really helps you feel that you are not alone.”

Nathan Frost, LGBTQIA+ Network Lead



“We have been able to influence the organisation’s sick pay policy and how TLC delivers internal training.”

Andrea Thompson, People with Disabilities Network Lead



“We helped establish a new Wellness Room in our head office. Functioning as a multi-purpose space to pray, reflect, and take medication, it allows people to readjust following any emotionally-intense client sessions.”

Indhu Sharma, People of Colour Network Lead



Pictured left to right: Michelle Hill, CEO. Indhu Sharma, Partner Support Worker. Vicky Durkan, Admin Project Manager. Avenash Chaggar, Partner Support Worker. Sarah Townsend, Domestic Abuse Prevention Facilitator



of our staff are from minoritised communities



of our staff have a disability



of our staff identify as LGBTQIA+



# Celebrating 5 years of achievements

2022 marked five years of TLC as an independent charity. To celebrate our successes and pave the way for future endeavours, we held our first all-staff conference in December. Over 90 staff members gathered to share achievements from their respective departments and collectively refresh our organisational values.

“The day left us all feeling appreciated and excited for the work TLC will do in the future.”

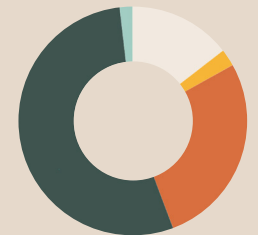
Staff member feedback



2022-23 team

145

total staff  
members



our team split by  
department

1.4k

hours volunteered  
by our staff  
outside work



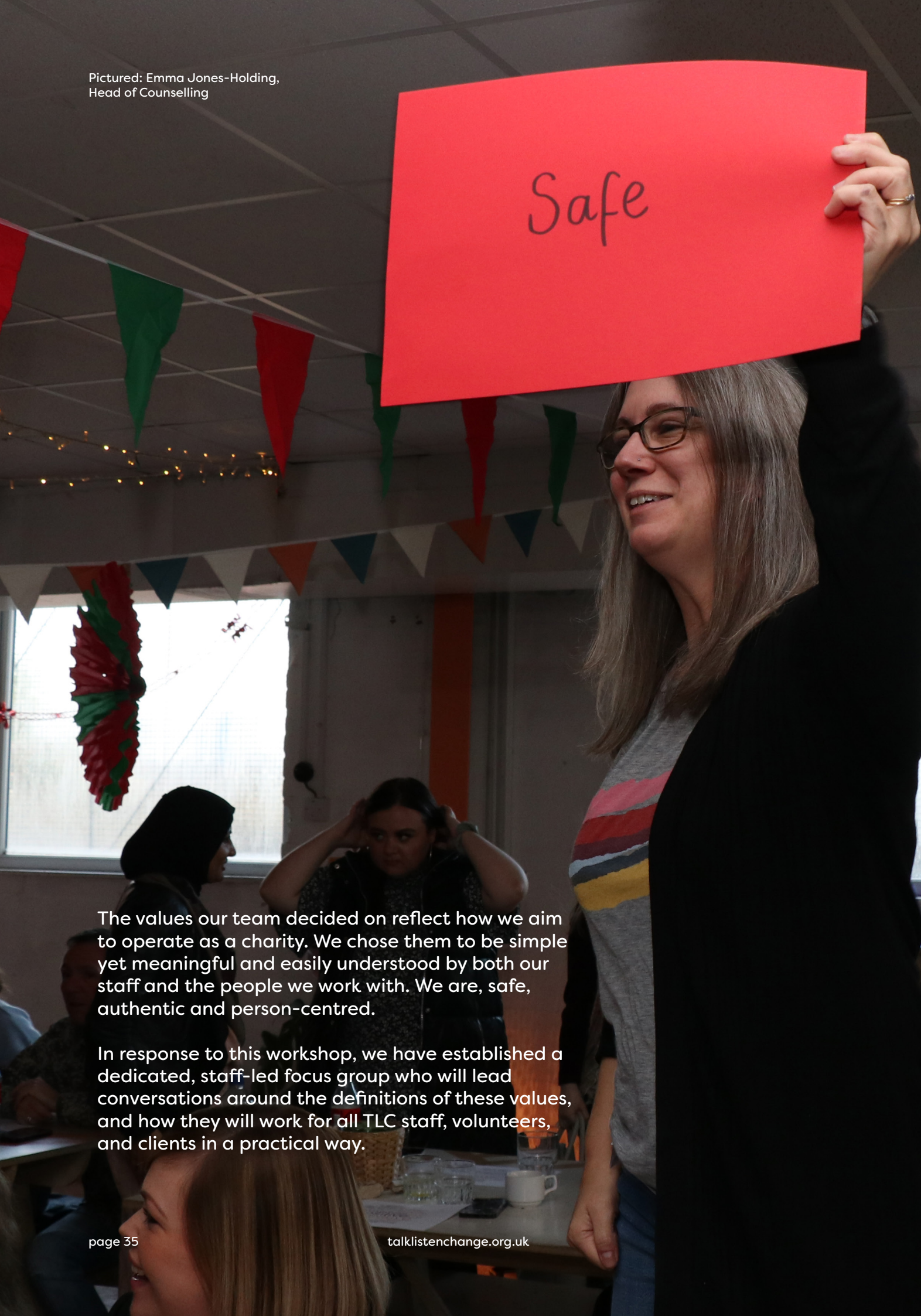
“I was delighted to see so many staff at the conference and watch everyone come together to decide on something that will underpin all the work we do from this point forward.”

Anna Callaghan, Director of Services





Pictured: Emma Jones-Holding,  
Head of Counselling



The values our team decided on reflect how we aim to operate as a charity. We chose them to be simple yet meaningful and easily understood by both our staff and the people we work with. We are, safe, authentic and person-centred.

In response to this workshop, we have established a dedicated, staff-led focus group who will lead conversations around the definitions of these values, and how they will work for all TLC staff, volunteers, and clients in a practical way.



Pictured left to right:  
Adiba Charlesworth, Trustee.  
Hassan Raza Ahmed, Children and Young People Who Use Harm Worker

Above: Lisa Wilkie, Head of Domestic Abuse (Adults)



# Looking ahead

We have grown a lot over the past five years, from a small relationship support provider to the medium-sized charity we are today. We understand that relationships affect all areas of people's lives, and we want to offer our knowledge, experience, and professional services to as many people as possible. Everyone deserves a circle of support around them.

We are three years into our current five-year plan and have already achieved some of the goals we set in 2020. However, we know there is an ever-growing number of people looking for help with mental health, separation, and domestic abuse.

## By 2025 we hope for:

- More children, young people and adults accessing our support.
- Operational activity across a wider geographical footprint.
- Fully-diversified funding with modest surpluses year-on-year.
- Maximised digital solutions with the highest level of information governance security.
- A voice as a leading relationship support provider throughout the UK.



“I am so excited about what we have planned over the next couple of years. We will continue to strive for everyone within our reach to enjoy safe, healthy and happy relationships.”

Michelle Hill, CEO

## With thanks:



The Henry Smith Charity



MariaMarina FOUNDATION



Pilgrim Trust

## In partnership with:

Age UK Stockport  
Bury Council  
Bury Integrated Care Partnership  
CAFCASS  
Cheshire West and Chester Council  
Creative City

Family Mediation Council  
Fortalice  
Greater Manchester Combined Authority  
Legal Aid Agency  
Manchester City Council  
Manchester Women's Aid (the Pankhurst Trust)


Nacro  
Oldham Council  
Respect  
Rochdale Council  
Safe Lives  
Safenet

Salford City Council  
Salford Foundation  
Salvation Army  
Skylight part of the Stockport Homes Group  
Stockport Council  
Stockport Without Abuse

Talk Shop  
Tameside Council  
TDAS Trafford Domestic Abuse Services  
The Prevention Alliance  
The Tutor Trust  
Trafford Council

Victim Support  
Wigan Council





TLC: Talk, Listen, Change

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