



Nexus

ANNUAL REPORT
2021 / 22

About Nexus

Nexus is Northern Ireland's leading sexual trauma charity with over 35 years' experience in supporting victims and survivors of sexual trauma, and more recently domestic abuse.

Our vision is twofold; Firstly, we aspire to **Rebuild Lives** for **Lasting Change** by ensuring:

- Individuals affected by sexual trauma and domestic abuse have received the support they need, enabling them to lead happier, healthier, and more productive lives.
- Positive, preventive approaches to sexual trauma and domestic abuse have created opportunities to create a society free from it.

Secondly, we aim to be **Champions of Lasting, Positive Change** for people affected by sexual trauma and domestic abuse by being:

- A person-centred organisation dedicated to making positive changes by informing and influencing effective policy development and service commissioning that meets the needs of victims and survivors.

We are an inclusive organisation that offers specialist support services, which include:

- Trauma informed 1-1 counselling to those directly affected by sexual trauma aged 4 and above
- Post counselling support and follow-up support
- A UK wide 24-hour Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline, which is funded by the Department of Health, Department of Justice and the Department for Communities in Northern Ireland
- Early intervention and prevention education programmes for professionals, organisations, parents, and young people on topics such as consent, child sexual exploitation, handling disclosures, and healthy relationships.

“ I was scared to attend counselling, I thought I would have to say the words for my counsellor to understand. I didn't, it was as if she could read my mind. I learnt that I don't have to verbalise it to address how these experiences ruined my life. I can focus on the now. I don't know how else to say this.....my counsellor saved my life.”

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Foreword Karly Greene Chair

2021/22 proved another challenging year as we continued to deliver important, high-quality services through COVID-19 pandemic. However, despite the challenges presented, we were as ever committed to supporting victims and survivors of sexual trauma and domestic abuse.

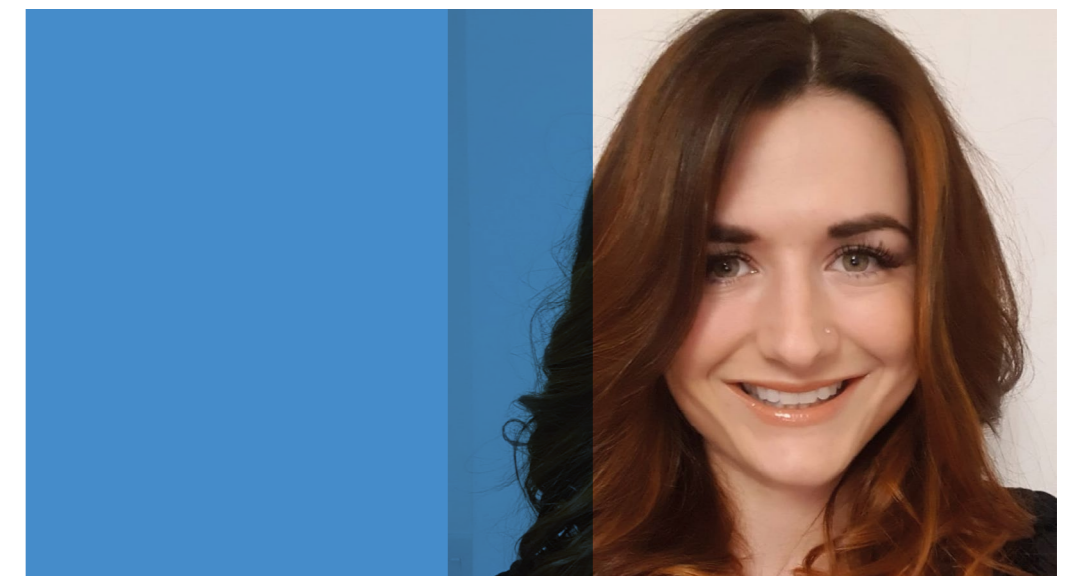
This was made possible by our passionate staff and volunteers who worked tirelessly to support those who use our services through the further embedding of virtual and telephone delivery alongside face-to-face delivery. This hybrid-working approach was crucial to maintaining service delivery and ensuring we remained accessible to those in need of our support. In recognition, I would like to pay particular thanks to our team and our funders who have continued to value and support our work.

In year, the Board also thanked Brenda Kelly for her contribution to Nexus and welcomed our new CEO Joanne Barnes, who has been focusing on implementing recommendations from our organisational review and maintaining high-quality service delivery through a period of uncertainty as we emerge from COVID. This process will help us to ensure that Nexus continues to be a person-centred organisation making a positive influence in the lives of individuals affected by sexual trauma, and is professional, quality-driven and sustainable.

For the incoming year, strategically we will focus on delivering against the last year of our current strategy alongside the development of our new strategy. While operationally, we will focus on developing our service delivery model to ensure a range of trauma-informed recovery interventions are available in a timely manner to best meet the needs of those who use our services.

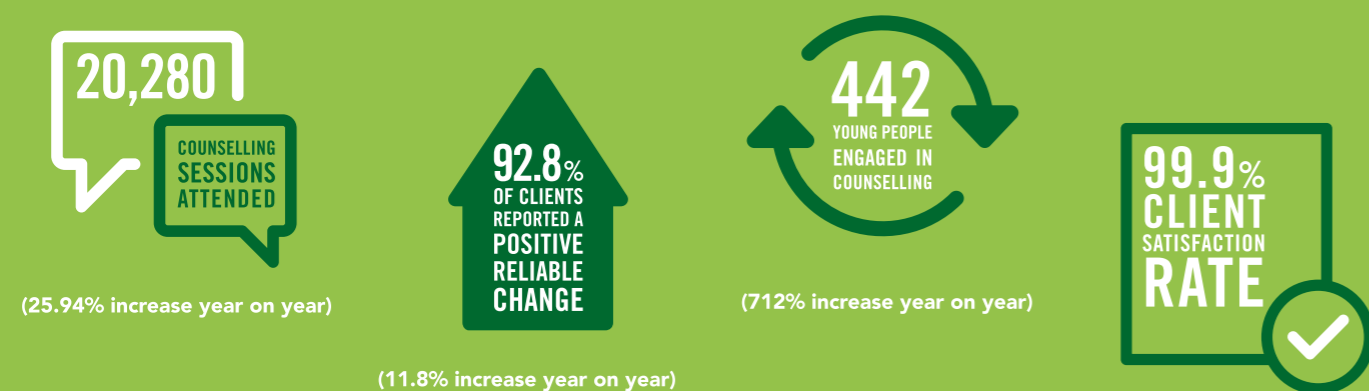
We will also continue to advocate for victims and survivors of sexual and domestic abuse to government officials and policy makers, as well as positively challenge perceptions of sexual assault/trauma through early intervention and prevention programmes.

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A Year in Review

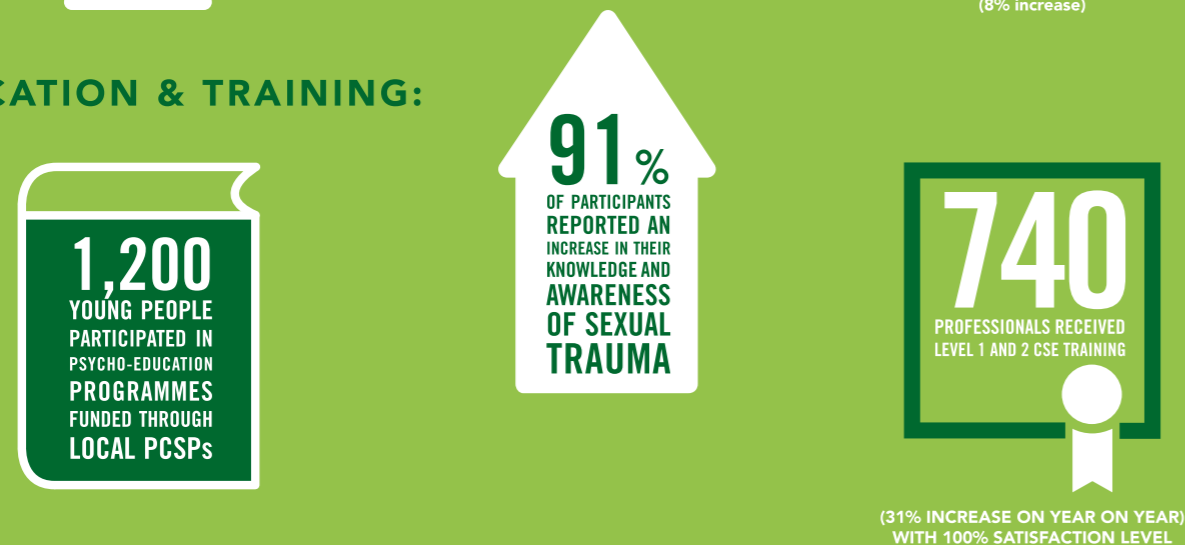
COUNSELLING:



DSA HELPLINE:



EDUCATION & TRAINING:



INFORMING & INFLUENCING



Counselling

Counselling remains crucial in the recovery journey for those who have experienced sexual trauma and domestic abuse. As an organisation, we recognise that anyone in our society can be affected by these issues. For example, this is reflected in the increasing number of referrals from those who identify as male. This highlights how as a society we are starting to recognise how widespread and diverse Domestic Abuse and Sexual Trauma is in Northern Ireland.

During 2021/2022, Nexus adopted a hybrid model following COVID-19. To ensure a client-led approach, we collaborated with our clients ensuring their session delivery preference was included at the assessment stage. Offering this to clients resulted in movement in our waiting lists; clients could conduct their sessions in a comfortable place at a time suitable and away from other commitments.

In line with its strategic priorities regardless of the challenges presented Nexus is committed to supporting all victims and survivors throughout the province through the provision of specialist trauma-informed counselling and the Domestic and Sexual Abuse (DSA) Helpline.

Harm to healing

Nexus continued to support 12 young people from the age of 4 to 11, on their recovery from sexual trauma. Harm to Healing utilised creative therapeutic approaches with each young person to provide a safe place for everyone to work on their healing at their individual pace.



Counselling Sessions Planned - 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022	24,111
Counselling Sessions Delivered - 1st April 2021 – 31st March 2022	20,280
Sessions delivered Face-to-Face	50%
Sessions delivered via Telephone	33%
Sessions delivered Virtually	17%
Clients reporting a Positive Reliable Change	92.8%

RTE Believe and Beyond

Nexus delivered 840 counselling sessions to 46 children and young people aged 5-18. These sessions were dedicated to their growth and development from their trauma. In addition, this programme enabled us to support the friends and family of the 46 young people meaning we were able to impact positive change for those indirectly impacted by the trauma.

Your C.H.O.I.C.E

A much-welcomed funded programme devoted to supporting children, young people (aged 8+) and their families impacted by sexual trauma. Your C.H.O.I.C.E launched in February 2022, offering both counselling and early intervention and prevention initiatives. A total of 29 young people availed of counselling support within the services first 2 months.

"I feel like me again, not afraid of everything that moves, I can go out and have fun with my mates without panicking"

"You noticed me when everyone else didn't"



Co-Nex-ion

The Co-Nex-ion project is a post counselling programme offering 12 months of aftercare support to clients. It aims to assist participants in building support networks and making use of social and emotional infrastructure already available within their local communities. The Co-Nex-ion project works 1-1 with participants to find activities and services which would be of interest as well as increase their personal wellbeing and connectedness to their community in the vulnerable period after counselling ends. The Co-Nex-ion project also facilitates group work to promote knowledge and skills around coping mechanisms, personal development, and emotional wellbeing. We introduced an OCN qualification in personal development to support participants to re-engage with formal education and enhance their employability.

144 clients engaged with the Co-Nex-ion Project undertaking a range of personal development activities including:



Education and Training

OCN level 2 in Personal Success and Well being
STEPS to Excellence Course
Trauma and the Body
Living Life to the Full



Arts Therapy

Creative writing
Art for the Heart



Community Engagement

Yoga
Self defence
Gym
Nexus Client Forum

Outcomes of the Co-Nex-ion project includes: increased independence around managing mental and emotional health; increased awareness of coping strategies tailored to the individual; promoting social interaction in a safe environment; encouraging clients to develop new interests and hobbies which will continue to benefit their wellbeing; ensuring opinions of Nexus clients are being heard and using these to promote service user involvement and a client led approach; developing relationships within the community; and promoting the work of Nexus as an organisation.

Education and Training

Early Intervention and Prevention Services

During 2021/2022, the continuing impact of COVID-19 meant that the way our education, training and awareness raising services were delivered took on a new hybrid approach of some face-to-face events alongside a degree of virtual delivery. The re-opening of schools and community organisations increased our ability to deliver our workshops and awareness sessions in person, which was welcomed by our training team.

Your C.H.O.I.C.E.

In February 2022, Nexus was successful in being awarded funding from the National Lottery Community Fund for a 4-year project called Your C.H.O.I.C.E. This project has two strands: Education for 11 – 25-year-olds & Counselling for 8 – 25-year-olds.

As the name denotes, the ethos of this project is that the young people can choose what they want to know more about within the vast range of topics that Nexus Early Intervention Team offers. This bespoke nature of delivery encourages engagement, which in turn gains the achievement of better learning outcomes for the young people and enhanced qualitative and quantitative outcomes for the project.

The Your C.H.O.I.C.E Project has been extremely well-received and bookings for sessions have started coming in at a promising pace. Popular requests have been for our workshops on Cybersafety, Healthy Relationships, Social Media and Body Image.



Feedback from a young person who attended a Healthy Relationships Workshop:

"It was very useful and I appreciate Nexus for educating me on what a good, healthy relationship should be like and what consent is in relationships even in friendships. I now know where I can get support or who to talk to when I am worried about something and, I can also help my friends if they have problems like this"

Accredited Training

Our Child Sexual Exploitation Project Levels 1 & 2 had a very successful first year delivering across Trust staff and other agencies including Criminal Justice staff, Housing Officers and Teachers. Targets were successfully achieved delivering:

CSE Level 1 to 560 participants

CSE Level 2 to 180 participants

Feedback from a CSE workshop:

"I found the training very useful, and it has definitely made me feel more confident in knowing how to help myself or others in abusive situations."

"Really helpful, the focus on avoiding victim blaming feels important."

"Enjoyable and engaging training. Trainer was friendly and informative which helped absorb the teaching materials better."

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Psycho-Education

Nexus also delivers a number of psycho-education projects, in year these included:

Talking about Consent Project delivering free workshops on Consent across the 4 areas of Belfast to over 800 participants. We were able to develop a push notification through 'GoodCourse' on Consent which we rolled out across our social media platforms to raise awareness on Consent virtually. This work was funded by PCSP Belfast.

Domestic and Sexual Violence Awareness Raising Project delivered sessions to over 400 school-age children, raising awareness of domestic and sexual abuse in an age appropriate and interactive way. This project was funded by PCSP Antrim & Newtownabbey.

We hope to secure continued funding with these partners to ensure consistent delivery of training and awareness raising of these important issues across Northern Ireland.

Nexus also offers a broad range of training courses to external agencies, including statutory and voluntary organisations who work with victims and survivors of sexual abuse.

In year, we have experienced increased demand for sessions on Breaking the Silence of Sexual Abuse, Handling Disclosures, Sexual Harassment and Bystander Intervention. We have delivered these sessions to multiple organisations, including: Army Welfare, Local Health Forums, Corporate Bodies, Schools and NI Health and Social Care Trusts.

We continue to develop our portfolio of bespoke training to ensure we can offer relevant and effective training to all and continue to break the silence by talking about sexual abuse and challenging societal attitudes and beliefs.

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Domestic & Sexual Abuse Helpline

The dedicated Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline has been managed by Nexus since April 2019.

During this time, our team of call handlers have developed a deeper understanding of caller needs, which has strengthened our ability to deliver a high-quality, client-focused service to a diverse demographic. The wealth of experience across the Helpline allows them to deliver trauma informed support to each caller. Our team continues to grow and excels in meeting the needs of the individuals impacted by domestic and sexual abuse 24/7 with no disruption to service throughout COVID-19, even when facing a significant increase in user activity.

Statistic: 20,939 Calls to DSA Helpline (8% increase)

Throughout 2021/2022, we saw an increase in non-verbal communications to the Helpline due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This clearly demonstrated that a lack of safe and private space to have a verbal conversation was a

reality for many individuals experiencing domestic and sexual abuse; the webchat and email function offered through the Helpline proved invaluable at this time. While we recognise that webchat and email mean support interactions are longer and require a greater degree of patience for the caller, the resulting outcome remains unaffected in that callers are supported, listened to, and feel connected and appropriately signposted to other services.

Statistic: 21,207 web chat and email interactions (13% increase)

The hard work of the entire team through COVID-19 was recognised through an invitation to Her Majesty's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. The Helpline's Head of Service, Nichola Greene, was honoured to attend on behalf of the entire Helpline Team.

20,939

TOTAL NUMBER OF CALLS MANAGED
(INBOUND AND OUTBOUND)

21,207

WEBCHATS & EMAILS MANAGED
(INBOUND AND OUTBOUND)
AN INCREASE OF 13% FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR

domestic and sexual abuse helpline

0808 802 1414

4,543

VICTIMS/SURVIVORS DIRECTLY SUPPORTED

1,744

REFERRALS MADE
AN INCREASE OF 8% FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR

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Volunteers and Fundraising

As always, we would like to say thanks and give recognition to the work of our volunteers and the support of those who have fundraised on our behalf or donated to the organisation. Their support is instrumental to ensuring we can develop and improve the services and support that we offer to our service users.

In 2021/22, Nexus had 14 volunteers working across various areas such as the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline, Early Intervention and Prevention Services, and our Communication and Engagement Team. Roles included call handling, supporting the delivery of training, attending awareness raising events, as well as administration roles. The commitment, support and motivation of our volunteers enables us to be more responsive and innovative in our approaches. We are very thankful and appreciative of the time given and skills shared by each volunteer, particularly given the continued challenges presented by COVID-19. We would also like to note a huge congratulations to 6 of these volunteers who successfully gained paid employment within the financial year, in part due to the experience gained through their volunteering.

In year, our supporters raised funds through a range of events, including birthday giving, 10k races, and marathon runs. Donations also increased through our Regular Giving channel and through one-off donations. In total, over **£47,000** was received by the organisation through fundraising and donations, and we are extremely thankful to every individual and organisation that acted to support us to break the silence on sexual trauma. The funds raised enabled us to pilot new ways of working and address the unmet needs of those affected by sexual trauma. We greatly appreciate everyone's efforts.

The recruitment of volunteers across all aspects of our work, along with the development of income generation, remains a focus for the year ahead to support the work of Nexus over the long-term.

Informing and Influencing

Informing and influencing is key to our commitment to ensuring:

- we amplify the voice of people with lived experience of sexual trauma
- we break the silence on sexual trauma
- we effect positive societal change

In 2021/22, we undertook a range of informing and influencing activities including:

Conference

Nexus partnered with Victim Support NI for a second year to deliver a joint conference on sexual trauma, support and justice during Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week (7 – 12 February 2022).

As with last year the conference was held virtually due to continued impact of COVID-19 and hosted activists, academics, and educators on a Q&A panel discussion as well as welcoming guest speakers including Miss M, Gina Martin, and Haleigh Lamont who shared their experiences navigating trauma, the justice system, and the ongoing road to recovery.

Thanks to a linked social media campaign, the conference's reach and engagement was optimised across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Stakeholder Feedback

Engaging the views of our clients, partners and funders is an integral mechanism to service improvement at Nexus. In year, we implemented 4 service improvement initiatives in direct response to client, partner, and funder feedback.

Our clients supported us to clearly articulate the benefits of trauma-informed counselling through the creation of client testimonials as well as developing service guides for counselling and post counselling support. These pieces are now hosted on our website to provide further insight into our services to people reaching out for support.

Our partners in universities, charities, and special interest advocacy groups provided us feedback on our website through our Diversity and Inclusion Forum, which supported us to make the site more accessible and inclusive.

Our funders provided feedback on the branding for the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline which was the catalyst for a re-branding exercise undertaken in consultation with funders, partners and clients.

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Consultations and Calls To Action

In 2021/22, we increased our informing and influencing activity thanks to the successful appointment of a Research and Policy Officer. This work is vital to ensuring the voices of those with lived experience are taken into consideration when government policy and service commissioning is being undertaken. In total, we responded to 6 consultation opportunities from government working groups and public sector organisations including: Call for Views for Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy; Call for Views on Ending Violence against Women and Girls Strategy; Workplace Policies; Use of Live Links in Tribunal Hearings; and the use of Self-Help Toolkits.

Additionally, in the run up to the 2022 Northern Ireland Assembly Election, we drafted and circulated a Call to Action Manifesto that outlined Nexus' priorities for the next government, including mandatory RSE in schools, criminal justice reform, and increasing public funding for third sector organisations and clients.



Treasurer's Report

In 2021/22 the robust financial management of Nexus has ensured that the organisation remains in a sound financial position, with a surplus made in year and Reserves Policy of 4-6 months of total costs in general reserves in place, to ensure the financial stability and continued provision of our core work.

The main sources of income for the year were from the Health and Social Care Board to cover core funding of our counselling services provided to adults affected by sexual trauma, and joint funding from the Department for Communities, Department of Health, and Department of Justice in support of the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline. We wish to recognise the importance of our funders who continue to both trust and work with us to break the silence on sexual trauma in our society.

In June 2021, Nexus relocated its head office to new premises at 59 Malone Road, Belfast. This space along with community venues across Northern Ireland enable us to effectively deliver our services and ensure we have a reach across the region. Our special thanks is extended to individuals, businesses, and charitable foundations, whose grants and gifts-in-kind contributed to the refit costs of our new premises.

As we look ahead, the strategy for managing existing funding streams while pursuing diverse income opportunities, including fundraising, will continue to be a focus as the organisation seeks to achieve its vision of rebuilding lives of individuals affected by sexual trauma through lasting change.

Finally, I would like to thank the Senior Management Team and the staff who have successfully managed and administered the finances of Nexus on behalf of the Board throughout the year. Their efforts are an important contribution to the ongoing strategic development of Nexus and the achievement of its mission to positively change lives affected by sexual assault/trauma.



Sheryl Henderson
Treasurer

	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total 2022	Total 2021
Income Resources	£1,657,200	£140,899	£1,798,099	£1,760,122
Expenditure	£1,674,508	£137,244	£1,811,752	£1,710,355
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	(£17,308)	£3,655	(£13,653)	£49,767
Capital and Reserves	2022	2021		
Unrestricted	£915,326	£911,671		
Restricted	£168,226	£185,534		
Total Funds	£1,083,552	£1,097,205		

Thank You

We would like to pay thanks and appreciation to our funders and partners during the 2021/2022 period, your support is integral to our success.



“I can’t thank you enough for all the work that was done with our daughter. I really do believe it helped us all, not just her. Eternally grateful to you. We finally have our daughter back”

“Thank you. I can now sleep and we don’t argue at home now. I feel my mum and dad understand me better now”



Nexus

Changing lives affected by sexual trauma

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Charity Commission
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