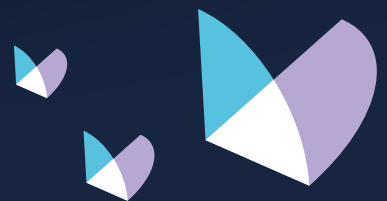


Impact Report

2022/2023



Nexus

Breaking the Cycle of Sexual Abuse
and Abusive Relationships

Vision, Mission and Values



Our vision is a society free from sexual abuse and abusive relationships.



Our mission is to enable positive change for those impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships through supporting, informing, and influencing society.

Our work is underpinned by our core values. These characterise how we interact with everyone:



Empowerment

We support you to recognise your strength and ability to make informed choices and create positive change.



Inclusion

We recognise our society is diverse. We are committed to being inclusive and accessible to all.



Dignity

We believe everyone has equal worth and must be treated respectfully.



Integrity

We are open, honest and ethical in the delivery of our work.



Advocacy

We amplify the voices of those affected by sexual abuse and abusive relationships to inform and influence positive societal change.



Collaboration

We work with you, our team and our partners to develop our services, grow our expertise and support change.

Nexus receives hundreds of pieces of feedback from clients. Some of these have been included throughout this document. These were received in the 2022/23 year.

About Nexus



Nexus is the leading organisation within Northern Ireland supporting individuals impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships.

Every year in Northern Ireland there are thousands of sexual abuse and abusive relationship offences reported to police, and thousands more go unreported. The support and services that Nexus provide are primarily focused on enabling positive change for those impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships.

Over the last year, Nexus has taken time to review its vision, mission and core values and develop a new 3-year strategic plan. This process has included listening to our service users, our staff team and Board members about what our priorities should be, how work can be more effective, what the strengths of the organisation are and what should be done differently.

Brand Refresh

This included a refresh of the Nexus Brand which is illustrated on the front cover of this impact report. One element of this refresh was developing a new strapline of 'Breaking the Cycle of Sexual Abuse and Abusive Relationships' to reflect the organisation's broadening scope of work. Our brand colouring changed from blues and green to navy, blues and lavender with the aim of providing a soft and welcoming feel that helps reflect the work we do. Navy and blue tones conjure feelings of security, strength, wisdom and trust, while lavender balances and represents wisdom, sensitivity, understanding and exceptional quality of service. This refreshed brand altogether represents a more holistic overview of what we do as an organisation.

The 3 'butterflies' that sit above the logo, while softened, remain and reflect the essence of hope, freedom, positivity and possibility.

"It's helped me recognise where problems are and have the confidence to know how to fix them. I've found my voice and I feel more free and hopeful."

- Client

Chair's Foreword

Catherine Cooney

2022/23 was an exceptionally busy year for Nexus with continued increase in demand for the services and supports that we offer. Our people as always have shown commitment, dedication, and passion in responding to this demand. They have worked with creativity and innovation to grow the reach of our services and enable positive change for those impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships.

Our ability to respond effectively and efficiently to current and future demand was considered through an organisational review which started in 2021/22. It focused on our structure, policy, processes, and systems and was undertaken by an independent external consultant. The process culminated in several recommendations to ensure the organisation's fitness for purpose for today and the future. I am pleased to say, as a Board, we fully supported the implementation of the recommendations, and these were taken forward through an agreed investment plan with all activity being completed in March 2023. I personally would like to thank all our clients, our people and our funders for investing their time in this process and supporting us to futureproof Nexus.

In 2022/2023, we also commenced our strategic planning process for 2023-2026. This involved reviewing progress against our 2020-2023 strategic plan and considering this against the ever-changing sectoral landscape, which had seen many developments including legislative changes, funding challenges, political instability and new and emerging needs of our clients.



On 31 March 2023 we launched our new strategic plan alongside a refreshed brand. Both will ensure the organisation remains relevant and focused on breaking the cycle of sexual abuse and abusive relationships by empowering recovering, influencing society, informing policy and practice and being fit for purpose.

"I feel lighter and I'm definitely not carrying the impact of trauma. I'm also more comfortable with touch and I can now identify feelings and work through them. I feel I now have the tools to work through triggers. I recognise what is difficult for me and deal with it in a good way. How I am with other people is different, I feel I've let my guard down a bit and meet people at an emotional level now."

- Client

Our Year In Review



*Funding for this service decreased from the previous year

Adult's Counselling

In 2022/23, Nexus continued to provide a high-quality accessible service, flexible to the needs of the client. Nexus has embedded the expanded options for delivering its model of care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

For example, we continue to provide remote counselling and have been continually evaluating our work to ensure that what we offer results in the best possible outcomes for our clients.

"The informal setting of a phone call helped me to relax in what could be seen as a stressful situation for some people if in a different setting such as face to face. I have been able to overcome my fears and rationalise my feelings and behaviours. With the help of the counsellor, especially coming up to the expected trial date, I was able to express and deflate my anxieties and worries related to the court. The counselling allowed me to accept my achievements so far in life, a huge step for me."

- Client



In our 2023 – 2026 strategy, the clinical team are developing plans to deliver services under the stepped care model. We listened to the feedback from our client base and will be investing in key areas of trauma training of our staff such as EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing) to enhance our offering and ensure we reach everyone who needs our services.

Referrals to Nexus continued to increase for our counselling services for both adults and children which presented a challenge to match delivery with demand. We remain steadfast as the leading organisation supporting people impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships; it is clear that not only does our counselling service help people deal with the impact of abuse, but this also has an impact on other areas of their lives including employment, healthy relationships and physical health as a few of our clients have outlined in their feedback.

Counselling Sessions Scheduled	21,032
Counselling Sessions Delivered	18,307* (funding decrease from 21/22)
Sessions delivered Face-to-Face	43%
Sessions delivered via Telephone	42%
Sessions delivered Virtually	15%
Clients reporting a Positive Reliable Change	97%

"Counselling has helped me get coping techniques to use when I feel anxiety coming on. It helped me manage to stay in work."

- Client

"I can now cope and manage a lot better. I'm more hopeful for the future. I have more routine and structure. I am no longer using drugs and alcohol to cope."

- Client

"I developed better communication skills and approaches which in turn helped me in my current relationship with my partner."

- Client





The main reason that I wanted to attend counselling was to address the realisation that I struggle with relationships. I have rarely shed a tear in the last 20 years. I feel extremely privileged as I have the most generous, understanding, loving and supportive family all around me. (My) way of coping had worked for me (but) I realised that it was negatively affecting my ability to develop proper relationships with friends, family and with my husband.

I have found my voice and I realise that I not only need to use it but I WANT to use it - particularly to bond with my husband. I feel prepared and equipped to move forward in life now. I feel more stable, alive and in control of my life. I feel brave to even make the admission that I have converted past feelings of anxiety into 'excitement' for what lies ahead.

I will forever have the deepest gratitude for your services at Nexus. I have felt overcome with such a mixture of emotions in the last week - emotions I haven't properly felt for many years - that is how I know that counselling has truly made a real difference to my life. Thank You.

- Client



Children's Counselling

Unlike adult counselling, children's counselling is not funded by Government and so Nexus must apply to grant making trusts to continue this work. Our counselling work with children was funded by three different funds for this reason.

Your CHOICE

As well as providing early intervention and prevention initiatives and training which are discussed further in this report, the Your CHOICE programme also supports children and young people (aged 8+) and their families who have been impacted by sexual abuse.



1,026
counselling
sessions offered to
57 young people



97%
increase in
the number
of children
supported

Children in Need - Harm to Healing

Nexus supported 30 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 them to work on their healing at their individual pace.

RTE Toy Show - Believe and Beyond

Nexus delivered 630 counselling sessions to 35 children and young people aged 8-18. These sessions were dedicated to their recovery from the abuse they experienced. In addition, this programme enabled us to support the friends and family of the 35 young people meaning we were able to impact positive change for those indirectly impacted by the abuse. There were 50 sessions attended by the friends and families of clients who found this support invaluable.

"Nexus has been a lifeline for us, helping me to support my child through the trauma they experienced at the hands of someone they should have been able to trust most in the world. I feel so lucky that Nexus can look after me and my baby and that we can come out the other end prepared for the road ahead."

- Mother of Client



Aftercare

Co-Nex-ions

The Co-Nex-ions project was a post-counselling programme offering 12 months of aftercare support to clients who completed counselling at Nexus. It assisted them to build support networks and make use of social and emotional infrastructure already available within their local communities. Co-Nex-ions worked one-on-one with clients to find activities and services of interest to them and increased their personal wellbeing and connectedness to their community in the vulnerable period after counselling.

The Co-Nex-ions project also facilitated group work to promote knowledge and skills on coping mechanisms, personal development, and emotional wellbeing. We also introduced an OCN qualification in personal development to participants to re-engage with formal education and enhance their employability.

Outcomes of The Co-Nex-ions project included:



An increased independence in managing mental and emotional health



Increased awareness of coping strategies tailored to the individual



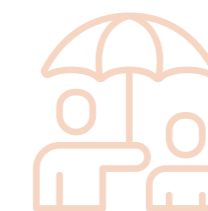
Promotion of social interaction in a safe environment



Developing new interests and hobbies which will continue to benefit client wellbeing



Client opinions of Nexus heard and used to promote service user involvement, a client led approach and to influence policy and decision making in responses to government consultations



Relationships developed within the community



Clients supported to promote the work of Nexus through testimonials

Early Intervention and Prevention Services

2022/2023 saw significant increased growth for the Early Intervention and Prevention Service. As well as attracting funding for new projects, there was a notable growth in requests for training from organisations outside the charity sector. We have been able to build upon new projects that were introduced last year and embed successful processes, content and techniques that have proved to enhance the service and the impact across society.

Funded Projects

- Community NI - Your CHOICE – Empowering Young People Project
- PCSP Antrim & Newtownabbey - Domestic & Sexual Abuse Awareness in Schools
- PCSP Mid & East Antrim – Domestic & Sexual Abuse Awareness Post Primary Schools
- PCSP Belfast – Let’s Talk About Consent
- ARCS – Bystander Intervention
- Child Sexual Exploitation Levels 1 & 2

(PCSP – Policing and Community Safety Partnerships, ARCS – Assets Recovery Community Scheme)

Your CHOICE – Empowering Young People

The early intervention and prevention element of Your CHOICE Project has continued to grow rapidly and in the first year of delivery, we exceeded targets by 35% delivering 119 sessions to 2,654 young people between the ages of 11-25. Some of our most requested sessions were Healthy Relationships, Consent, Staying Safe Online and Body Image.



We exceeded targets by 35%

Here is what we achieved in the Your CHOICE Project:

2,093
young people attended sessions



1,922
young people said they felt more confident talking about abuse

2,070
young people said they had an increased knowledge



Here's what a few of the young people had to say about our sessions:

“It was informative on common situations that happens to people our age. I feel like I could help myself or a friend to report an assault.”

“I like this workshop. It gave me lots of knowledge about what a healthy relationship is.”

“Let us talk openly and safely about sex, abuse and other issues not normally discussed in school.”

CSE Project

Our Child Sexual Exploitation Project Levels 1 & 2 is funded by the Department of Health’s Strategic Planning and Performance Group (SPPG), to deliver consistently high-quality training to professionals from within each Health and Social Care Trust area and other statutory and voluntary organisations. The PSNI, NSPCC, Education Other Than At School (EOTAS) and Bryson House learned about the indicators, impact and legislation around Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Northern Ireland.

Here’s what we achieved in the CSE Project:

18%
more sessions delivered



47 sessions to
590 participants

Policing and Community Safety Partnership (PCSP) Projects

PCSPs are local bodies made up of Councillors and independent people from each council area who work to make communities safer. They do this by focussing on the policing and community safety issues that matter most in their respective areas. There is a PCSP in each council area in Northern Ireland. We have formed ongoing good relationships with local PCSPs over the years and deliver many of their funded projects as they strive towards raising awareness of sexual abuse and abusive relationships. The PCSP Belfast Consent project will move into its third year and continues to reach young people in schools, colleges, universities and youth groups to help inform and empower them on the important topic of consent in relationships.



64 Consent workshops



reaching **1,851** young people in Belfast



Delivered **15** sessions on healthy relationships to **409** young people in Antrim & Newtownabbey and Mid & East Antrim

Bystander Intervention

This year saw the start of our Bystander Intervention project funded by Assets Recovery Community Scheme (DoJ, Victim's Communities Environment and Organised Task Force) where proceeds of crime fund projects that prevent crime or reduce the fear of crime. This project delivers sessions across Northern Ireland to all ages. They are designed to support individuals to safely intervene in situations and increase their confidence to "call-out" inappropriate and harmful behaviour.



100% participant satisfaction levels



100% of participants reporting an increased awareness



92% reported a positive change



92% reported an increased confidence to intervene



We look forward to delivering Bystander Intervention training to an even wider audience in 23/24.

Here's what some had to say about the Bystander sessions:

"I feel this session was beneficial as it makes you more self-aware of your own abilities to intervene and also explore and challenge why you might not."

"Gave me food for thought on how I can approach difficult situations and have a positive impact. I often worry about escalation of aggression/violence as a man if another man was involved. I now have the other options to consider."

"Very informative and engaging training. I wasn't aware about Bystander effect before. I feel more confident and empowered to intervene appropriately if I am ever in a situation that requires intervening or reporting."

Bespoke Training

The Early Intervention and Prevention team delivered bespoke and comprehensive training to several organisations and partners in 22/23. We continued our relationships with statutory and community organisations including delivering training to:

- Health and Social Care Trusts
- Police Service of Northern Ireland
- Northern Ireland Prison Service

We developed and delivered a new and improved suite of training to organisations across the region. These include sessions on:

- Handling Disclosures of Abuse
- How to Support Young People Who Disclose
- Child Sexual Abuse Awareness
- Rape and Sexual Abuse Awareness
- Dispelling Myths of Sexual Abuse
- Healthy Relationships

We delivered bespoke sessions to:

- Jobs & Benefits Office to support the pilot roll out of the 'Ask for ANI' campaign.
- Hydebank Wood Prison – to female prisoners on creating and maintaining healthy relationships, what abuse and coercive control is and the impact on self and others.
- Southern Health & Social Care Trust – a full day of training to their multi-disciplinary staff on Child Sexual Abuse Awareness and the long-term impact for adults and parents.
- Western Domestic & Sexual Violence Partnership – a half-day training to professionals on Rape & Sexual Abuse Awareness.

We also continue to work in partnership with many organisations including Onus, for whom we deliver Safe Place training, and NSPCC, with whom we co-deliver the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust's PANTS campaign Professionals Familiarisation sessions.

Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline

domestic and sexual abuse
helpline 0808 802 1414
dsahelpline.org

The Domestic and Sexual Abuse (DSA) Helpline is a 24/7 dedicated service hosted by Nexus on behalf of the Departments of Communities, Health, Justice since 2019. In 22/23 the service continued to grow and the team provided a client led empowerment model approach to help those impacted by abuse to take back power and control. The impact of Covid-19 and the enduring cost-of-living crisis has seen an increase in complex mental health calls as a result of increased familial pressures.

The Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline can be accessed in many ways. Webchat and email use has increased significantly, illustrating the increased preference for some people to interact online. In the broader context this brings extra challenges in relation to online/technological abuse.

As part of the DSA Helpline strategy of challenging stereotypes of abuse, new updated graphics were launched via online and offline campaigns showing that abuse isn't always physical. This campaign won the Helpline Partnership's Bonner Award for Innovation.



24,079
total number of
calls managed
(inbound and outbound).
An increase of

15%



38,791
webchats and emails
managed (inbound and
outbound). An increase

of **83%** from the
previous year



4,326
people directly
supported



Winner of Helpline
Partnership's Bonner
Award for Innovation



of **4,075** calls that
returned feedback

99% were satisfied
or very satisfied



of **525** that returned
webchat feedback

97% were satisfied
or very satisfied



Of **74** emails that
returned feedback

96% were satisfied
or very satisfied



Informing and Influencing

In 2022/23, we undertook a range of informing and influencing activities which are outlined below.

Conference

Nexus delivered its first solo, in person, conference on 8th February, during Sexual Abuse and Sexual Violence Awareness Week. The theme was 'Breaking the Cycle of Sexual Trauma' and in an event compered by Sarah Travers, professionals from across sectors came together to hear from Michael Maisey - Author of 'Young Offender', Founder of The CIP Project and TEDx Speaker and Dr Elizabeth Agnew, School of Law at Queen's University Belfast - a post-doctoral research fellow with interests in children's rights, issues of consent (particularly among young people) and children's engagement online. Delegates also heard from clients who engaged with Nexus counselling and participated in workshops delivered by Nexus and colleagues from organisations such as NSPCC, Common Youth, and Relate NI on a range of topics including: Relationships & Sexuality Education (RSE), Cybersafety, Online Misogyny & Young People, and Child Sexual Abuse Intervention & Prevention.

Here is some of the feedback received:

"I found the speakers truly informative and inspirational; and most especially the audio of client's lived experience, which was very moving, ensuring the focus of the event was on clients and the effectiveness of the services to break the cycle of sexual trauma."

"Inspiring" **"Insightful"**
"Made great connections"
"Eye opening" **"Empowering"**
"Hard hitting" **"Engaging"**
"Thought provoking"

Stakeholder Engagement

Engaging the views of our staff, clients, partners and funders is an integral mechanism to service improvement at Nexus.

The main activity in relation to stakeholder engagement in 2022/23 was guided by our organisational review which engaged internal audiences (clients, staff - including counsellors and helpline operators - management, Trustees, associate counsellors) and external audiences (Union, funders, charity partners etc). This review and its resulting investment plan ensures Nexus is fit for purpose now and well into the future and has allowed Nexus to develop strategies and plans to make sure we are client first, strategic, quality assured, tender ready, effective and efficient, agile, sustainable and are able to engage with key stakeholders on a regular basis to ensure continuous improvement.

Consultations and Calls to Action

In 2022/23 we increased our informing and influencing activity which makes sure the voices of those with lived experience are taken into consideration in government policy and service commissioning. In total, we responded to 13 consultations/calls for views, which is more than double that we responded to in 21/22. These included significant pieces of work such as the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Strategy, Ending Violence Against Women and Girls Strategic Framework and the Public Prosecution Service 'Prosecuting Cases of Domestic and Sexual Abuse'. The impact of responses will be monitored once policies and strategies are made public and finalised by Government.

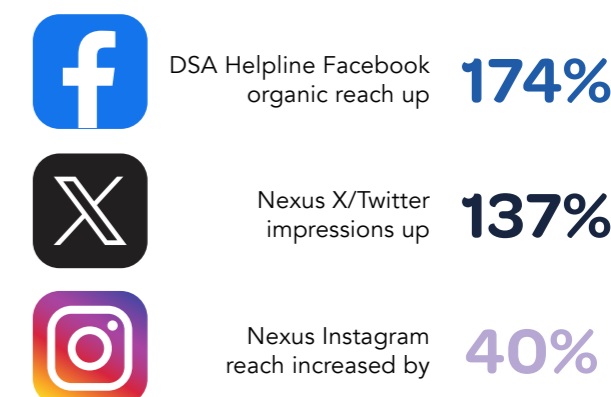


Media and Social Media

Renewed focus on media and social media, especially towards the end of 22/23 resulted in increased media coverage and social media engagement with key stakeholders. This year saw media engagement result in an overall reach of 39.5 million across news outlets online, broadcast and print platforms. This is an approximate 200% increase on reach in 20/21 and in 21/22 which averaged 12.5 million each year.



Impressions and reach on social media increased across the board from 21/22 to 22/23. For Nexus this resulted in X/Twitter impressions up 137%, Facebook organic reach up 108% and paid reach up 172%, and Instagram reach up by 40%. The Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline social media saw a 17% increase in X/Twitter impressions, and 174% and 171% increase in Facebook organic and paid reach respectively.



Fundraising & Donations

We are always grateful for the support of people who donate to, and fundraise for, Nexus. This support makes sure we can develop, innovate and improve the services and support that we offer to our clients.

In year, our supporters raised funds through a range of events, and donated directly to us either through regular giving or one-off donations. 22/23 saw an increase of 15% from £47,000 in 21/22 to over £54,000 which was greatly appreciated, especially as people continue to experience the cost-of-living crisis. We appreciate everyone's efforts and kindness.



Treasurer's Report

I am pleased to present the Treasurer's Report for the financial year ending 31st March 2023. The continual robust financial management of Nexus has ensured that the organisation remains in a sound financial position, with an effective reserves policy in place. 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 a society free from sexual abuse and abusive relationships.



The financial outcome for the year clearly illustrates the determination of the Nexus Board, supported by the CEO and both the Senior Leadership, and Senior Management Teams to ensure Nexus retains its position as Northern Ireland's leading organisation supporting individuals impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships.

Nexus has made a surplus for the 2022/23 year and the Nexus Board would like to express sincere appreciation to the CEO, the Senior Leadership and Senior Management Teams and staff for striving to ensure that Nexus is an organisation that is fit for purpose to achieve our mission.

Nexus cash-flow is in a solid position, with a Reserves Policy target of achieving four to six months of total costs in general reserves to ensure the financial stability and continued provision of the charity's main activities.

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 impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships, and joint funding from the Department for Communities, Department of Health, and Department of Justice in support of the Domestic and Sexual Abuse Helpline. I wish to recognise the importance of our funders who continue to both trust and work with us to break the cycle of sexual abuse and abusive relationships in our society.

During the year we successfully completed an organisational review, which resulted in staffing changes and associated costs to ensure Nexus remains fit for purpose and builds on its reputation and position. The additional budgetary cover required to support the subsequent staff and premises investment plan was successfully supported by the identification of cost savings in addition to new income generation streams. The Board will continue to support Nexus in managing its finances and seeking out opportunities in an extremely difficult and changing funding environment, coupled with an uncertain economic future and cost of living crisis.

Finally, I would like to thank the CEO, Senior Leadership and Senior Management Teams 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 enable positive change for those impacted by sexual abuse and abusive relationships through supporting, informing, and influencing society.

Sheryl Henderson
Treasurer

	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total 2023	Total 2022
Income Resources	£1,944,874	£83,330	£2,028,204	£1,798,099
Expenditure	£1,881,049	£118,721	£1,999,770	£1,811,752
TR between funds	(£111,907)	£111,907	-	-
Surplus/(Deficit) for the year	(£48,082)	£76,516	£28,434	(£13,653)
Capital and Reserves	2023	2022		
Unrestricted	£991,842	£915,326		
Restricted	£120,144	£168,226		
Total Funds	£1,111,986	£1,083,552		





When I started counselling I was in a very dark place and didn't want to live. There were days I wasn't washing or getting out of bed...I now have a future to look forward to that my perpetrator is no longer going to destroy. It is like Nexus have just taken all the childhood sexual abuse away. All I can say is it is fabulous I am now free.

- Client



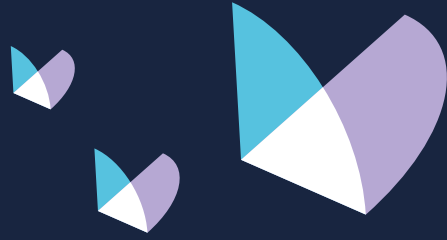
Thank You

We would like to pay thanks and appreciation to our funders and partners during the 2022/2023 period, your support is integral to our success.



Delivered by
THE NATIONAL LOTTERY
COMMUNITY FUND





Nexus

Breaking the Cycle of Sexual Abuse
and Abusive Relationships

Nexus

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Nexus is accredited with BACP (British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy) and NCPS (National Counselling and Psychotherapy Society).
Nexus is a registered charity: Charity Commission Reg No. NIC 102558



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REGULATOR**