

# Monday 7 October 2019 was Beyond The Horizon Charity's 5<sup>th</sup> birthday as an independent charity. You can read here how our CEO, Jenny, sums up our year.

So 2018-2019! What a year...

A really tough year. Our income was less than it had ever been, we were a full-time member of staff down and the referrals and requests for help did not stop coming.

I honestly did not know whether we would be here to celebrate our fifth year and to have another AGM.

But here we are! Our recent funding successes from Children In Need, National Lottery Community Fund and Henry Smith mean that we have four roles funded for three years. We also have two other roles funded for a year from West Midlands Police and Eveson Charitable Trust.



**We look stronger than we have looked in a long time.**

Our most recent approved budget forecasts a surplus of £14,000 for the current financial year. To be in this position after the last 2 years feels amazing.

Our work now can be broken down into four areas:

- Out of School Hours Counselling and Play Therapy to Children and Young People after loss
- Counselling and Play Therapy for children affected by complex loss (that is children whose loss experience is complicated by other adverse childhood experiences)
- Counselling and Play Therapy to children who have experienced of domestic abuse
- Therapeutic Family work – through the BEAR project and Filial Therapy

We still have four contracts with schools to provide one to one therapy.

Last year we started to really look at our referral criteria and have now produced a revised end to end process which we feel means that we are responding to the needs of children ethically and responsibly, and that Counsellors and Therapists have the confidence they are offering the right support to the child or family. We want to engage much more with those around the child, those who will be there after the therapy has ended, their family and school staff, extending the impact of our work.

Our recent funding successes mean that we can we begin to offer bereavement groups to young people and re-establish a participation panel. Offering a range of interventions to bereaved children means that we are actively responding to the outcomes of consultation that we have carried out over the last few years.



I have to be honest and say that last year was really about survival, the majority of my time was spent on funding applications and what kept the charity going was our wonderful team. Every member of the team is responsible for us still being here. On behalf of the 185 children we supported last year and the hundreds more yet to come, thank you so much.

**We are so lucky to have such committed volunteers who make up a vital part of our team.** They make appointments for children to see Counsellors and Play Therapists, they input data so that I can report to funders how many children we have seen and how effective our support is, prepare paperwork for Counsellors to use. They prepare our Financial Accounts, they write policies, they maintain our website, they rescue us when our IT fails us, they listen when things are tough. They provide therapy to children and young people, they help with planning and strategy, they make tea and they often say “is there anything else I can do?” I hope I have given you a sense of just how vital they are.

**This AGM really needs to be a celebration,** not only of us still being here, but because the seeds we have planted are growing. One of our part time counsellors is now full time and two further part time counsellors will start with us over the next month or so. I am so excited to be adding to our already brilliant team.

We need to tend our seedlings carefully and over the next three years we will focus on working with children affected by complex loss, develop our therapeutic work with families even further and look closely at sustainability and the longevity of the charity.

We want to explore collaborative projects with other organisations which benefit the emotional and mental health of children and young people in Birmingham.

I took this photograph in France this year, of a field of sunflowers, I joked to my husband about how this one looked like it was still ready to party after all of the others had decided enough was enough.

We want to continue to be like the sunflower in this picture, who seeks out the sun and finds the determination to keep its head above the rest, when it would be so easy to give in.

