

BW elects a new Chair- Mr. Neil Hawkins



Mr. Neil Hawkins, MA (Cantab) PGCE.

Neil Hawkins studied History and then Education at Robinson College, Cambridge University, before embarking on a 32-year career in education. After teaching at several top independent schools in the UK for the first half of his career, for the last 16 years Mr. Hawkins has been Principal of Concord College in Shropshire, England. The College is an International school which is committed to bringing young people together from around the world in a spirit of harmony and kindness. During his tenure as Principal, Concord has doubled in size, quadrupled its turnover and become one of the UK and the world's top boarding and day schools. Throughout his educational career, Mr. Hawkins has placed an emphasis on the well-being of young people as a bedrock on which to build external skills, talents and success. Mr. Hawkins' has chosen to step aside as Principal this year and is taking on a new role as Global Principal of Concord College International. He intends to combine this with the role of Chair of Befrienders Worldwide.

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To contact us:

To submit articles or information for the newsletter, please contact communications@befrienders.org

Befrienders Worldwide

July 2021



Neil mingling with Concorde college students in June 2021

As Neil put it:

“I am grateful and humbled to have the opportunity to become Chair of Befrienders Worldwide. There is an unambiguous good that lies at the heart of the BW. If we can support one more person in crisis, we are making their world and therefore our world a better place: I find this utterly inspiring. That BW is built on the generosity and skills of volunteers from diverse cultural and national backgrounds makes its resonance even more inspirational. The kindness and generosity of each volunteer gives one faith in the fundamental goodness of the human spirit.”

“For the future, I am sure that we would agree that our mission is to reach and assist more individuals for whom another day seems too much. We should also further develop BW and the BW family to support each other in this mission. I look forward to working with you in the months and years to come.”

Farewell from BW Trustee Marion Gibson

BW Trustee Dr. Marion Gibson has informed the Board that she wished now to step down as BW Trustee and to progressively retire from her various professional activities. The Trustees wished to express their appreciation to Marion for her excellent and significant contribution to BW since joining the Board in 2016 and, in particular, for her work with a major shipping Company, facilitating the creation of an emotional support service for the Company which continues to this day.

The Trustees also recognised Marion’s very insightful contributions during Board meetings which has helped to steer BW on steady and expansive path. The Board agreed to keep Marion informed of BW activities and asked former Chair Martin to pass on our very best wishes to her.



BW Kosovo members - Linja e Jetes - An inspiration



Providing such a service, in a social context like the Kosovo one, has been a challenge on its own. The presence of stigma, skeptical attitudes towards mental health services and especially towards non-traditional services in our culture, such as a lifeline, and the lack of information about how such a service can be effective, have been just a few factors that have complicated the process of gaining support from relevant institutions, trust of volunteers and that of the callers in our lifeline.

But over time, thanks to the dedication of each volunteer, the aspiration to contribute to reducing the alarming number of suicides in the country, and thanks to the financial support offered from the German Embassy in Pristina, the initial challenges began to fade. The use of different media channels (e.g., social media networks, and TV) and non-media (e.g., training and workshops) has helped us reach different members of the audience; including enthusiastic volunteers and callers in need.

Through various and frequent fun activities, we aim to strengthen the cohesion between our volunteers, and at the same time, we aim to create a warm and collaborative environment. Maintaining such an environment has also made it easier to accommodate new volunteers who join our centre on a monthly basis. Moreover, in order for the volunteers to feel that their concerns are valid, we offer consistent group therapy to maintain their psychological well-being.

Training the Linja e Jetes Team



Our volunteer family is made up of many individuals from different cities and backgrounds, where everyone, in addition to personal goals, also shares a common goal with each other and with the Life Line, which is to be there for every person in need to talk about the things that are affecting them.

During the first months of its establishment, for more than 6 months, the lifeline has been open to receive calls every day from 8 pm to 1 am. But, thanks to all the new volunteers who joined our centre, the schedule was extended from 6 PM to 2 AM. This has been our operating schedule for more than a year, but, thankfully, with the dedication of more than 50 volunteers, starting mid-July, "Linja e Jetës" will be open for every call, every day from 2 pm to 2 am

BW Samaritan's New Zealand Team



This past year has presented more than its share of challenges to Samaritans Wellington

2020/21 was a year like no other! When this financial year started, we were just one week into our first, and only, nation-wide Covid-19 lockdown. That already feels like a life-time ago, because what followed was a year of new challenges and big changes, for all of us - at home, at work, and wherever we found ourselves. It was a year of challenges and changes for Samaritans of Wellington too. Through a combination of flexibility, innovation, and use of data - but mostly through the generosity and commitment of our volunteers - we have weathered the challenges.

Covid-19 saw a change in peoples' needs and responsibilities.

Amongst all the challenges and changes in our community, calls made to our service have been up and down across the year, falling from about October 2020. However, until the end of Project Unite (below) the number of callers didn't shift by the same degree. This means we were answering fewer calls from higher-demand callers - we went from 20-25 calls per caller on average, each month, to 10-15 calls. This can generally be seen as a good thing, as we are more available for new or one-off callers. At the same time, we, like many other volunteer organisations, have seen a reduction in volunteer numbers across the year. Covid-19 affected all of us, and for some people, the changes wrought by covid were an impetus to change their own lives and responsibilities. In the wake of the lockdown and ongoing restrictions on gathering, our callers took calls from their own homes, in order to keep our service running for those people who need us. This was a completely new way of working and volunteers embraced it with patience and fortitude.

Following some quick work with our national organization and our Telco provider about a third of our volunteers were able to take calls at home. This was a wonderful outcome and definitely tested our model of working. It was acknowledged that for some volunteers taking calls at home was not possible while other volunteers opted to take calls from the centre. Following this forced change, we implemented changes to the way our volunteers work. Out of an abundance of care for the quality of service we provide, we have not always been quick to change in the past - but this year we trialed and introduced more flexible ways of working, to ensure we can retain volunteers and continue to provide the high-quality service our community needs. Supported by appropriate peer support, training, and quality control, some volunteers now carry out their shifts from home, or on solo-shifts, where appropriate.

Our proportion of callers each month has generally improved across the year. We expect our marketing and media efforts to increase awareness of Samaritans as the helpline for anyone, regardless of issue, need, or background, to see demand increase from people who need our help.

During the 2020/21 year our centre's volunteers spent more than 2600 hours on the phone taking over 15,000 calls. Besides listening to callers our volunteers also contributed many hundreds of hours of service to the work of maintaining Wellington Samaritans: including filling leadership roles; interviewing prospective volunteers; training, mentoring volunteers; fundraising, as well participating in events to raise awareness of mental health and suicide issues. Although the call numbers are less than last year, they indicate our amazing volunteers' ongoing commitment and reflect the challenging environment we have endured this past year.

BW Help App- 1-Year On

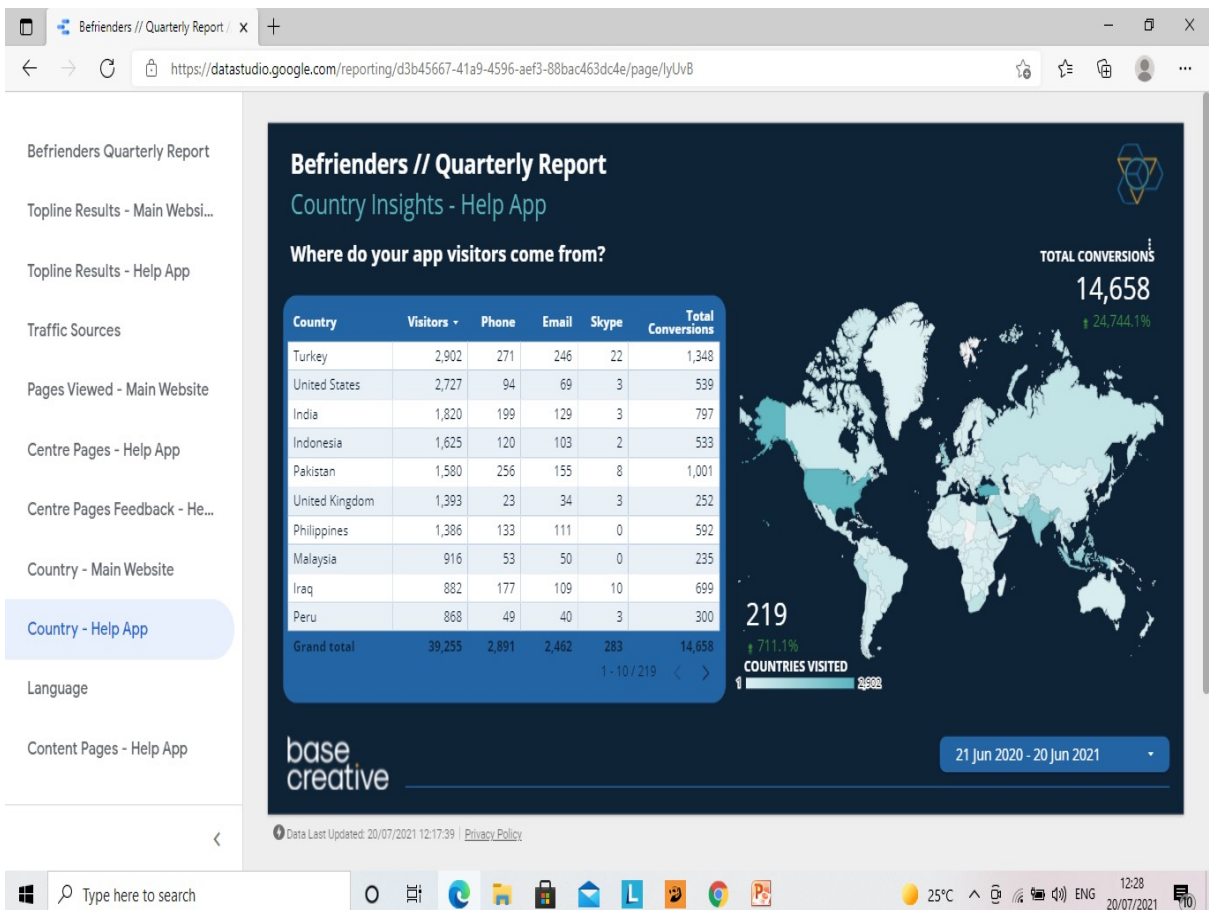
The link to the BW Help App:

<https://datastudio.google.com/reporting/17GDrdpU4VOR3We7g-9DCbjmn8WT5Tdh6/page/hMqH>

The BW App reached its 1-year milestone on 21st June 2021. The App, which was accessed in over 200 countries, received 45,502 contacts during the year. The number of contacts has been growing since the app was launched, up from 90 a day to 172 a day now. Just as significant is the number of conversions; a conversion is where a person makes contact with the centre via phone, email or Skype, or goes to the website.

When the App was first launched in June 2020 the average conversion rate was 26.1% and now it is 32.2%. In the last month June 2021 it has increased to 39.4% This is great news and shows that trust in using the service is increasing.

The *Country insights* page shown on the next page shows from which country contacts have been made over the last year and how they have made contact with BW centres.



Visitors to the Help App over the past year 2020/21

A comprehensive set of data can be found by clicking onto the link (previous page). This data can be used by each centre to see how their service is being accessed and will allow you to monitor trends.

The chart below shows the number of website conversions which has been steadily increasing over the year.



Annual Returns - Many thanks so far...

Befrienders Worldwide

Section 1 of 7

Annual Return 2020

As part your membership of Befriender Worldwide would you please complete this form for the year 2020. It will only take a short time to enter this information. Please complete this within a week of of receiving this. Thank you for your help

(BFWW-Annual-Return-for 2020 -DW3)

After section 1 Continue to next section

BW has revised its process for collecting Annual returns from its centres with the result that we are now able to convert the data into more visual reports to allow BW to better understand the operation of each member centre.

While we recognise that some centres were not able to get access to their centres to collect the data, BW requests that every centre try to obtain this information in order for BW to have a complete picture of the organisation in terms of its impact in helping those with emotional support.

In the next newsletter, BW will publish some of our data to show our impact. Therefore, we would like all centres to re double their efforts to send in their Annual Return data using the new Google forms reporting platform.

E-Learning Training-Update

BW can confirm that the new E-learning training will be available from the beginning of October 2021. Samaritans UK/ROI have been working closely with BW on this project and will have completed the necessary modifications to their existing E-Learning training so that it will be ready for our BW members by October 2021.

The Core Development E-Learning training looks at the role description of a listening volunteer, and the six key skills required to provide emotional support:



Samaritans UK/ROI created a workbook to bring together the group sessions and online learning. There is space in the workbook for the new volunteers to make notes, and there are examples of phone calls and emails, feedback forms to complete after each skills practice, and a skills checklist to complete with a mentor to demonstrate their progress.

Purchasing of the E-Learning Licence

The invoicing process for the purchase of the E-Learning licence has been agreed by both BW and Samaritans UK. A separate BW bulletin will be issued shortly, explaining how the licences can be ordered.