



Contact

Restoring
wellbeing
through

Contact

contents

introduction to contact 02

vision, mission and values 04

analysis of contact performance since 2004 06

strategic aims and priorities 08

section one

introduction to contact

1.1 This plan sets out the strategic direction of Contact for the next three years. It has been prepared by the Board, management team and staff of Contact and is based on a thorough analysis of the fast changing and challenging environment in which Contact operates. The plan has been developed in the context of an environment which requires the intervention of Contact more than ever since it was set up in 1977. Current political, economic and social pressures mean that the unique role fulfilled by Contact's therapeutic interventions, for many save lives and for others, improves the quality of their lives, restoring well-being and confidence.

1.2 Since the 2004 – 2009 Strategic Plan, Contact has expanded its role significantly by creating and leading delivery of the Lifeline Service which takes account of the needs of all ages rather than young people only. In addition Contact delivered the DE Independent Schools' Counselling Programme and had a presence in almost every post primary school in Northern Ireland until summer 2009.

1.3 Since 2004, a number of factors have impacted on the environment and on the work of Contact:-

- Contact has been awarded the Lifeline contract for a four year period. This has involved sub-contracting a range of support services associated with Lifeline.
- While Contact no longer deliver the Independent Schools Counselling Service, they still maintain strong links with schools and are actively diversifying their Creative Art Therapy work with schools.
- The Review of Public Administration has resulted in the establishment of a number of new stakeholders. This has had a challenging effect on established relationships and delayed decision making within government departments. Contact will work with all of the new structures developed through the RPA.
- A number of government strategies and reports have been produced which have impacted on the work of Contact, e.g. Protect Life, The Bamford Report and the Children's Strategy.

-
- Contact's significant growth has meant the swift adjustment of systems, policies and procedures to ensure best governance practice. This has significantly changed the nature of the organisation.
 - There has been a shift from a culture reliant on grant aid to the experience of competitive tender and service level agreements. This has changed the basis on which Contact works and will direct it more towards a social economy model in the future.
 - The profile of Contact has increased significantly over the past five years and it is now seen as a corporate and clinical governance model of best practice.
 - The current economic climate will result in reduced public expenditure, therefore Contact will need to focus on other funds like philanthropic giving and corporate donations.
 - The focus on mental health has improved over the past year, in particular there is now a recognition of the needs of young people to have their mental health and well-being needs adequately addressed.
 - The level and quality of competition has increased which means that Contact must continuously improve the provision, management and marketing the organisation. Contact will actively seek to achieve appropriate quality accreditations.

Restoring
wellbeing
through
Contact

section two

vision, mission and values

vision

2.1 The vision for Contact is:-

“A society where every person has equal access to timely appropriate support to improve their mental health, recover from trauma and enhance emotional wellbeing.”

mission

2.2 In delivering the vision it will be necessary for Contact to:-

“Create safe spaces by developing and delivering high quality therapeutic interventions, breaking down barriers which prevent people from accessing appropriate support.”

The mission will be achieved by:-

- Introducing best practice based on research and training at all levels.
- Being innovative in both the development and delivery of therapeutic services.
- Working in partnership with others to maximise synergies created by pooling expertise.
- Influencing policy by lobbying policymakers in constructive and concerted campaigns.
- Raising awareness of the range of expertise, capability and capacity on offer regionally from Contact.

Statement of Values

2.3 Contact is committed to the belief that every person has the right to appropriate support which should be high quality, independent, free and confidential.

- The basic values of therapeutic support should be integrity, impartiality, confidentiality and respect.
- The needs and welfare of people will be at the heart of everything that Contact does.
- Contact recognise the importance of communities in addressing individual needs and as a result will focus on building community capability.
- Equality and social justice will underpin the approach taken by Contact at all times.
- Contact will invest in developing and delivering therapeutic trauma recovery and counselling support of the highest possible standard, benchmarked by rigorous evaluation, research and training.

section three

analysis of contact performance since 2004

3.1 The following section sets out the analysis undertaken of Contact by the Board of Directors and Senior Management. The analysis involves a PESTL analysis. The PESTL looked at the Political, Economic, Social, Technical and Legal issues which will face Contact over the next three years.

PESTL ANALYSIS

Political

- The legacy of the troubles still has a major impact on the health and wellbeing of people in Northern Ireland.
- Poverty is a key cause of stress, the effects of which are encountered by Contact daily.
- The Review of Public Administration, setting up new structures and the delay in decision making will impact on the work of Contact.
- The impact of EU Directives on the freedom of movement and demographic shifts impact on the type of support delivery requirements.
- The implementation of service level agreements and the regular tendering process mean that, inevitably, resources are directed away from front line service delivery.

Economic

- The current economic climate, increase in unemployment and reduced access to credit will increase pressure on individuals and communities and as a result increase demand for therapeutic support.
- Government spending is directed to welfare and to cover the tax deficit created by reduced corporate profits and the loss of personal tax contributions. This will reduce funds available for Contact service provision.
- The benefits system conspires to trap people in a cycle of poverty from which it is very difficult to escape.

PESTL ANALYSIS

Social

- **Contact needs to develop a critical incident response strategy over the next three years.**
- **Individuals and communities are more inclined to seek therapeutic support, which has become a much more acceptable form of intervention over the past three years.**
- **There is less family and community cohesion than in the past, therefore traditional supports are not available, creating a demand for the type of therapeutic supports provided by Contact.**
- **Contact supports should wherever possible strive to enhance family and community cohesion.**

Technical

- **Improved development in technology has reduced civil liberties and increased ability to track individuals.**
- **Communication opportunities have increased and Contact should use new technologies such as “blogging” and “twittering” to deliver its message.**
- **Mobile communications have overtaken traditional forms of communication, therefore Contact must rethink and refresh its IT strategy.**

Legal

- **Data protection and Human Rights legislation cover much of Contact’s work.**
- **Regulation of the counselling profession may present opportunities for Contact.**

section four

strategic aims and priorities

4.1 The following section sets out the strategic aims for the next three years. The key concepts which underpin the strategy are:-

- **A recognition that community and individual problems and traumas are not created in isolation and need to be addressed in a systemic way to include family and community in all its configurations.**
- **Contact believe in the right of people to appropriate support to help them thrive, and that everyone has the capacity for change.**
- **Contact is dedicated to professionalism, support, creativity and flexibility in all our dealings.**

strategic aims

4.2 The following Strategic Aims were agreed by the Board

- To proactively pursue relationships, across all sectors which will contribute to problem solving within communities and remove barriers to appropriate support for individuals.
- To develop therapeutic support based on rigorous research backed up by excellent training for staff. This will ensure professional standards and best practice at all levels.
- To cultivate relationships that are healthy, challenging, supportive and honest in all aspects of our work.
- To celebrate success and continue to resource Contact so that valuable work can continue to develop.
- To build on the existing levels of service and continue to improve stakeholder experience at all levels.
- Contact will ensure that it can support people at times of crisis, restoring well-being and confidence.

strategic priorities

4.3 The twelve Strategic priorities for the next three years are set out in the following section.

1 Continue to develop and refine systems, processes, procedures to ensure that governance exceeds minimum standards at all times.

- Review the Memorandum and Articles of Association to ensure they adequately reflect the strategic direction of Contact.
- Address the issues identified in the Governance Review and Risk Assessment carried out in April 2009.
- Undertake a fundamental review of the recruitment procedures and policies and ensure they comply with current legislation and best practice.
- Review current performance management systems to ensure management information is relevant, timely and accurate.
- Develop a programme to review all policies and procedures every three years. This will involve establishing a governance sub-committee which reviews, improves and reports to the Strategic Team.
- Connect with and develop dynamic exchange based learning relationships with selected national and international best practice contexts striving to create a Centre of Excellence and Innovation.

2 Maintain and develop quality relationships with statutory and corporate funders.

- Identify the key organisations with which Contact interacts and which have common aims and objectives.
- Develop a system to allocate key staff to manage relationships, ensuring information is shared and opportunities are jointly developed.
- The organisations which have been identified are:-
 - Department of Health
 - Public Health Agency
 - Health Trusts
 - Education Skills Authority
 - Department of Education
 - Political institutions and parties
- Develop a fundraising strategy and review the potential for engaging with professional fundraising support.
- Develop relationships with commissioners and purchasers in each of the Health Trusts.

strategic priorities

3 **Develop innovative communication strategies to ensure that awareness of Contact reaches those people most in need.**

- Undertake a review of Contact's communications activities and identify the most effective approaches at present.
- Undertake research into the most effective communication approaches for the various target audiences.
- Establish a series of communication objectives.
- Set out a costed communications plan which includes:-
 - New media
 - Local and regional promotion
 - Internal and external communications

4 **Achieve appropriate accreditations and deliver excellence in all activities. This includes IIP, BACP and THA accreditation.**

- Identify the most appropriate accreditation by engaging with organisations which have already achieved the various accredited standards.
- Prioritise the accreditation standards which will be achieved.
- Agree responsibility for each accreditation with a member of staff and a date by which it will be achieved.
- The accreditations to be reviewed are:
 - BACP
 - IIP
 - THA

5 **Develop and deliver innovative therapeutic supports.**

- Establish a new product/service development /working group with responsibility to identify and present potential opportunities.
- Agree a review template which will be used to assess and prioritise opportunities to expand the existing service portfolio.
- Initiate discussions with a range of organisations which have the potential to provide opportunities. An indicative list is set out below.
 - Education
 - GP Surgeries
 - Training
 - Private counselling
 - Crisis intervention
 - Private sector
 - Specialist services
 - Creative therapies
 - Residential Therapeutic & CPD Centre

strategic priorities

6 **Create awareness of our flagship projects within a range of key stakeholders, NIHE, A&E, PSNI, Fire Service, Social Services, Ambulance Service, GPs, Benefit Helpline, Benefits Office, Acute Services, Youth Clubs and Sports Associations, Councils, Publicans, Federation of The Retail Licensed Trade, Taxis, Taxi Drivers Associations, Bus Drivers, Translink, Churches, Religious Groups, Industries etc.**

- Identify key personnel in each of the different organisations. This will involve initial research.
- Meet with targeted personnel to promote the benefits of Lifeline or other key services and identify a strategy for documentation of information to all relevant staff in the organisation.
- Identify a champion in each organisation who will take on the role of promoting Contact services.
- Maintain regular communication with the champions and provide feedback on success.

7 **Develop a cadre of advocates for Contact with the possibility of having a high profile ambassador.**

- Establish a working group of individuals well positioned within a range of organisations who will agree to promote the work of Contact with their organisations and to their clients. These could include:- Health, Housing, PSNI, Ambulance, Education Skills Authority, Criminal Justice, Prison Service.
- Agree to meet on a quarterly basis to discuss how mutual benefits can be achieved through working together.
- Consider the benefits/risks of having a high profile ambassador and how an ambassador could be used to achieve the aims and objectives of Contact.

8 **Take the lead in forming alliances involved in dealing with trauma related to human negligence and aggression.**

- Establish a working group with clear terms of reference. This could involve:-
 - Networking – regional, national and international
 - Communities of learning
 - Partnering
- Identify a range of organisations which are working in the field of trauma, related to human negligence and aggression.
- Host initial meetings to explore potential allegiance.
- Agree way forward based on consensus and mutual benefit to all parties.

strategic priorities

9 Influence the development of policy which will further achievement of the Contact vision.

- Get involved in policy discussion with a range of policy makers.
- Define the role of Contact in advocacy and link with other advocacy organisations.
- The key strategies on which Contact should impact are:-
 - Protect Life
 - Children's Strategy
 - Education Strategy
 - Health Strategy
 - Drugs & Alcohol Strategy
 - Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy
 - Human Rights Strategy
 - Children's Commissioner Strategy
 - Strategy for Victims and Survivors of the Conflict
 - Cross-border regional and international developments

10 Continue undertaking quality research which will lead to the development of appropriate CPD and therapeutic supports.

- Establish a research partnership with one of the academic institutions to ensure rigour and validation of research findings.
- Develop a prioritised list of research topics which are current and critical to the achievement of Contact aims and objectives.
- Agree an action plan, timescale and resources required to complete identified research projects.
- Prioritise CPD targets, develop budget, funding strategy and enact 3-5 year corporate CPD plan

11 Develop a critical incident response strategy.

- Undertake research with other organisations involved in the field of trauma to identify critical incident response models of best practice.
- Establish a team made up of relevant stakeholders to agree terms of reference.
- Develop a draft strategy for consultation with stakeholders and agree a market testing process.
- Review and update strategy as required.

12 Undertake a re-branding exercise for Contact.

- Bring together a small group of stakeholders to get feedback on the current brand in the form of a focus group.
- Develop a list of key issues for the brand and agree a design brief.
- Issue brief to a number of experienced design houses and get concepts and prices to complete branding.
- Set up an in-house focus group to review concepts and appoint a designer.
- Launch new brand when agreed.



Contact

1st Floor Lanyon Building
North Derby Street
Belfast, BT15 3HL

TEL

028 9074 4499

FAX

028 9074 0798

EMAIL

info@contactni.com

Contact

6th Floor Embassy Building
3 Strand Road
Derry, BT48 7BH

TEL

028 7127 9449

Charity number XR 2398
Co Ltd guarantee NI 30452

Restoring
wellbeing
through

Contact

028 9074 4499
www.contactni.com



0808 808 8000
www.lifelinehelpline.info