Break the Silence 2025-26

ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



Published October 2026

Break the Silence

www.breakthesilence.org.uk

FOREWORD

FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVES





In 2025–26, the third sector faced delays or reductions in funding, rising costs and inflation, and volunteer shortages. Despite this challenging environment, Break the Silence continued to meet the growing demand for its specialist trauma services. We did this by adapting our services, collaborating with other organisations, applying for additional funding, and undertaking fundraising activities.

The charity's main income streams remain the Scottish Government's Survivors of Childhood Abuse Support (SOCAS) fund, which we have secured until March 2027, and a joint service level agreement with North and East Ayrshire Councils, that has been extended to March 2028. Alongside these core sources, Break the Silence has successfully obtained grants from trusts and foundations, corporate and community support, and donations from individuals, while also developing trading and fundraising activity to reduce reliance on any single funder.

We strengthened governance and financial oversight through the creation of a finance sub-committee, helping Break the Silence navigate funding uncertainty, maintain service continuity, and protect its work in an unpredictable economic and policy landscape.

We are deeply grateful to everyone who accesses our services for placing their trust in us. Also, to our staff and volunteers for their dedication, and to our funders, partners and supporters for making this work possible. Together, we will continue to support Survivors in North and East Ayrshire to live healthier, improved lives.

Our priorities:

- Provide accessible, trauma-informed counselling
- Support partners and family members with psychoeducation, information and practical tools
- Represent the collective voice of Survivors to influence and inform services and decision-makers
- Promote early intervention and prevention, reducing the long-term impact of sexual trauma in our communities

Sharon Belshaw, CEO Clinical and Lesley Craig, CEO Operations

BREAK THE SILENCE IN CONTEXT

Since 2004
3,500+ people supported in 46,000 sessions

About Us

We support people affected by childhood sexual abuse, as well as their partners and families, across North and East Ayrshire. We are a trauma-informed, trauma-specialist and Survivor-led organisation. Our work is guided by the principles of safety, trust, choice, collaboration, empowerment, and cultural consideration. We offer specialist, confidential counselling to support healing and growth so that no one has to face their recovery journey alone.

Track Record

Since 2004, we have supported over 3,500 people and provided nearly 46,000 sessions of professional support. Everyone who contacts us is treated with kindness, dignity and respect, and offered choice over how and when they receive help.

The Need for our Service

In Scotland, Survivors might wait years before they can access specialist support. Locally, demand continues to grow, while funding remains uncertain. Break the Silence exists to make sure people in North and East Ayrshire can access professional help, when they need it, close to home.

We understand that everyone's experience of trauma and recovery is different, and we tailor our support to each person's needs and preferences.

Our Values

- Compassionate & Collaborative
- Effective & Knowledgeable
- We Influence & Inform



OUR IMPACT 2025-26

Despite the challenging backdrop, our achievements reflect the need for our service and the trust that Survivors place in us.

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

398 Survivors supported in North & East Ayrshire

3,278 Sessions of professional support delivered

96% of Survivors reported increased confidence

100% Were satisfied and would recommend our service

We consulted with staff, volunteers and stakeholders to update our **strategic priorities** for 2025–2027:

- strengthening our service
- amplifying survivor voices
- sustainability and growth

We continued to provide a **hybrid** counselling service model:

- telephone
- online
- email
- face-to-face

100% of Survivors said staff were helpful, professional and responsive, and they had been treated with dignity and respect.



ADVOCACY

AMPLIFYING SURVIVOR VOICES - ADVOCACY & LIVED EXPERIENCE

A trusted voice on childhood sexual trauma, we represented Survivors' voices in key local and national forums, partnerships and strategic groups this year.

- The Survivors Trust
- BACP
- North Ayrshire Health & Social Care Partnership
- SOCAS portfolio
- Violence Against Women
- National Child Sexual Abuse & Exploitation Strategic Group
- North Ayrshire Chief Officers Group
- Suicide Prevention Participation Network
- National Prevention Group

RESOURCES



- Young Survivors: Understanding & Thriving After Abuse
- Self-Help Tool for Adult Survivors
- Pregnancy, Birth & Beyond
- Self-Help Tool for Partners & Family Members
- Maternity & Sexual Abuse training for professionals
- Updated midwifery training content
- Autism training modules

ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENTS

- Text reminders now sent ahead of appointments
- Website refresh project completed
- Recruitment of Development Officer
- New Board members and new Chair



YOUR SUPPORT MADE THIS POSSIBLE

Our work is made possible thanks to a mix of grants, corporate support, community fundraising and practical help. We are grateful to everyone who stood alongside us and the Survivors we work with in 2025-26.

Thank you to **Unity Trust Bank, CMS Social Impact Fund, the Royal Arch 314 Masonic Club in West Kilbride, and Bobby's Mini Market** in Crookedholm, along with its wonderful customers!

DEDICATED INDIVIDUALS

This year, **Lynn took a Polar Plunge, Scott ran the London Marathon, and Gillian and Noodle completed several Kiltwalks** - all raising money and awareness for Break the Silence. We are so grateful to them and our many other fundraisers for their incredible support!







CONCLUSION

LOOKING AHEAD TOGETHER



As Chair of Break the Silence, I am proud to be part of an organisation that continues to provide life-changing support to Survivors of childhood sexual abuse.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to Elaine Crichton, who stepped down as Chair in February, for her outstanding leadership and commitment to Break the Silence.

Looking ahead, our focus remains firmly on delivering high-quality, trauma-informed support, amplifying Survivor voices, and ensuring our long-term sustainability.

We will continue to invest in our people, enhance our services, strengthen partnerships, and make the best use of technology and data to support informed decision-making and continuous improvement.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to thank our staff, volunteers, funders, contractors, partners and supporters for their dedication and belief in our work. Together, we continue to make a positive difference in the lives of those affected by childhood sexual trauma.

While challenges undoubtedly lie ahead, we face the future with confidence, determination and a shared commitment to ensuring that no Survivor has to face their journey towards growth and healing on their own.

Our ambition:

- Attain the Survivors Trust UKAS National Standards
- Invest in staff learning, CPD and wellbeing
- Continue to collaborate with our Client Led Advisory Group to facilitate and support positive change
- Increase fundraising and digital development
- Recruit new skills to our board
- Safeguard organisational and operational sustainability

Nicola Buchanan, Chair of Break the Silence, September 2026