

The Sara Lee Trust
Charity Number: 1055048

The Sara Lee Trust Evaluation Report 2021-22



November 2022

The Sara Lee Trust Evaluation Report 2021-22

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The Sara Lee Trust

The Sara Lee Trust is an established charity in Hastings and Rother that aims to significantly improve the quality of life of local people, including loved ones and carers, affected by cancer and other life-threatening illnesses by providing free psychological and counselling support, complementary therapies, and therapeutic group activities.

The Trust is the only provider of this combined range of specialised services in the region, and is also the dedicated provider of these services for St Michael's Hospice (St Leonards on Sea) and The Rye, Winchelsea and District Memorial Hospital (Rye).

The Trust's aims are to:

- develop capacity to fully meet local need and reduce local health inequalities
- provide services of the highest quality that best meet patient needs
- deliver care in the most appropriate setting for the patient
- ensure long-term sustainability

The Evaluation Process

The Trust is committed to developing the services it provides to best meet its users' needs. Essential to achieving this core aim is effective and ongoing monitoring and evaluation.

Monitoring is how the Trust measures progress, identifies problems, and makes modifications and interventions accordingly. This is enabled by a number of tools and mechanisms including: bi-monthly performance reports covering referral and appointment activity; significant event monitoring; regular attendance at multidisciplinary team meetings; and the holding of regular meetings of the therapy team, service user group, operational team and Board of Trustees.

Whilst monitoring is an ongoing process, the aim of our annual **evaluation** is to step back, reflect on the year, and learn from our experiences and the information obtained, to make our operations more effective and efficient in the longer term. The aim of this report is to summarise the in year evaluation process, highlight key findings, and communicate the resulting action plan for year ahead. The action plan will serve as a road map in the ongoing monitoring process and a benchmark against which to evaluate our progress at the end of the year. Our monitoring and evaluation processes also cover reviews of other regular Trust reports which include:

- Trust performance reports
- Financial statements and reports
- Corporate governance and HR reviews
- Relevant external updates (e.g. legislative changes, Information Commission and Charity Commission guidance)

All stakeholders including staff, service users, volunteers, local partners and the wider local community are actively involved in the monitoring and evaluation processes through a variety of forums, regular events and feedback mechanisms which include:

- Service User Group
- Annual Surveys including Service User, Referrer, Staff and Volunteer surveys
- Focus group reviews
- Feedback forms and case studies
- Board of Trustees
- Specific project groups / committees (e.g. The National Lottery Community Fund Project Board, I-KNOW-HOW)

Information and Data collected

This report takes account of a wide range of feedback and information from key stakeholders, including patients, their carers and family members, staff, referrers, volunteers, community partners, and regional and national organisations to help evaluate and contextualise our service.



TRUST SERVICE USERS

- Quantitative data on service provision via EMIS clinical system
- Results of annual service user survey
- Feedback from Service User Group
- Complaints/suggestions forms and other feedback
- Monitoring & Evaluation form data

THE SARA LEE TRUST

- Referral and appointment activity data via EMIS clinical system
- Results of annual staff and volunteer surveys
- Therapy team meetings
- Therapy team personal development plans
- Operational and strategic meetings
- HR & Performance reports and audits including SEA analysis

LOCAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PROFESSIONALS

- Survey of local referrers
- Multidisciplinary team meetings
- Letters of support from local referrers
- GP and Secondary care activity data
- Local partner service feedback

THE WIDER COMMUNITY

- Feedback back from volunteers, local community groups and organisations.
- Local community and care networks (e.g Hastings Care Network / Integrated Primary Care Networks)
- Open forums at visioning events (inc. the Trust AGM)

REGIONAL & NATIONAL

- Updates from the BACP and National Association of Complementary Therapists in Hospice and Palliative Care (NACTHPC) and other relevant professional bodies
- ONS Data
- Public Health Statistics (Local area indices of deprivation)
- Regional groups such as the Sussex and Surrey Cancer Alliance

How this information is evaluated and used

Quantitative data on operational areas including service provision is compared to that of previous years to measure growth year-on-year, and track themes and patterns relating to seasonal and other variations. Data from our monitoring and evaluation sources and surveys, along with other feedback from service users, staff, volunteers, referrers, stake holders and community groups, is analysed to highlight key areas of achievement and areas for improvement.

These findings are shared with the Service User Group, Trust therapy and operational teams, and Board of Trustees. Recommendations for improvement and development are collated through these discussions by the Trust operational team, resulting in a Trust Action Plan which identifies the areas of learning and plans for improvement, and also highlights areas of best practice to support internal development and recognise good performance.

The Trust Action Plan is presented at the Trust's AGM and made publicly available via our website. Where appropriate, specific highlights and action points are shared with service partners and colleagues, in the interests of promoting best practice and improving partnership working. This includes sharing findings and developing plans through the following forums, initiatives and channels:

- INTERREG (EU) I know How International Partnership
- The Surrey and Sussex Cancer Alliances
- The Trust's bi-monthly newsletter, sent to various stakeholders including local healthcare professionals and Trust volunteers
- Regular meetings with the Hospice multidisciplinary team to explore ways of working in partnership to develop group activities and other opportunities

Service Delivery – The year in review

Service provision and activities

In the financial year 2020/21 the Trust supported 553 service users with 3,966 hours of therapy; an increase of 35% from 2020/21. Our ability to meet the exceedingly high level of local need remained heavily restricted for most of the year with long periods of full and partial lockdown. We are expecting a surge in demand for our support and care through 2022 and beyond.

In Year Developments

Highlights

- Despite the continued national and local restrictions and lockdowns, Trust practitioners continued to support local people with the care they need throughout the pandemic. Face to face support restarted earlier in the period and home visits in March 2022.
- Investment in additional therapy capacity has continued in recognition of the growing level of need and impact of the pandemic
- The Trust has expanded its services and capacity at the Hub on Rye Hill with counselling and complementary therapies now available weekly.
- Support for couples has increased significantly – both counselling support and couples massage
- Our counselling service now offers both EMDR and coaching support for patients wishing to return to a more active work life. Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) is a psychotherapy method proven to help people recover from distressing life experiences.

Developed through our I-KNOW-HOW European INTERREG funded project coaching support for people wishing to get back to a more active work and social life is now available from our Counselling Team. This 3-year collaborative project with partners from Belgium, France, the Netherlands and the UK is about supporting people affected by cancer to help them to remain in / return to an active life and work.

- Shiatsu was re-introduced to our therapy services in mid 2021. Shiatsu, where the practitioner applies gentle pressure with their palms and fingers has been shown to help reduce stress, deep seated tension, stimulate circulation, promote relaxation, easing aches and pains and helping to create a general feeling of wellbeing.
- Our group activities including gentle yoga, healthy cooking and Look Good Feel Better sessions are all running as usual and are as popular as ever



Current range of therapies and activities provided

The Trust provides the following specialist services:

(Please note that the below reflects the rota for a normal working week. Services are currently operating to a transitional timetable whilst The Sara Lee Centre is closed for reconfiguration works. Our usual rota (below) is expected to be back in use by the end of 2022)

| | Service | When | Where |
|------------------------------|--|--|--|
| Psychological Services | Counselling & Psychotherapy | Monday-Friday at St Michael's Hospice & Bexhill Therapy Centre. Tuesday at Hub on Rye Hill / Rye Hospital | St Michael's Hospice Bexhill Therapy Centre Hub on Rye Hill Rye Hospital |
| | CBT (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) | Monday & Thursday | Online & Telephone Home Visits |
| | Mindfulness Course | Dates issued periodically | Bexhill Therapy Centre / Online |
| Complementary Therapies | Acupuncture | Regular timetable to be confirmed | |
| | Aromatherapy | Monday-Friday | St Michael's Hospice Bexhill Therapy Centre Home Visits |
| | Dry Needling | Regular timetable to be confirmed | St Michael's Hospice Bexhill Therapy Centre Home Visits |
| | Massage | Monday-Friday at St Michael's Hospice & Bexhill Therapy Centre. Tuesday at Hub on Rye Hill, Wednesday Rye Hospital | St Michael's Hospice Bexhill Therapy Centre Hub on Rye Hill Rye Hospital Home Visits |
| | Reflexology | Monday-Friday at St Michael's Hospice & Bexhill Therapy Centre. Tuesday at Hub on Rye Hill, Wednesday Rye Hospital | St Michael's Hospice Bexhill Therapy Centre Hub on Rye Hill Rye Hospital Home Visits |
| | Shiatsu | Thursday | Bexhill Therapy Centre |
| | Reiki | Monday-Friday at St Michael's Hospice & Bexhill Therapy Centre. Tuesday at Hub on Rye Hill | St Michael's Hospice Bexhill Therapy Centre Rye Hospital Home Visits |
| Group Activities and Courses | Yoga (beginners courses and drop in maintenance classes) | Tuesday & Thursday | St Michael's Hospice Bexhill Therapy Centre Online |
| | Support Groups | To be confirmed | To be confirmed |
| | Healthy Cooking Course | Tuesday | Freedom Church, Bexhill |
| | Programme of Educational Events | Next course to be scheduled | Bexhill Therapy Centre St Michael's Hospice |
| | Look Feel Better Workshop | Bi-monthly Wednesday 6-8pm | Bexhill Therapy Centre St Michael's Hospice |

Eligibility and referral criteria

Eligibility

Our remit as a charity is to provide services to people affected by cancer and other life-threatening illnesses* in the Hastings & Rother area. The impact of a life-threatening illness varies from person to person and can be experienced at different times, with some needing more support through the course of their treatment, others once treatment is finished.

The high demand for our services means that we can generally only support those who meet the following criteria:

- are receiving palliative or end-of-life care, or
- are in active treatment for a life-threatening illness, or
- are within 2 years of active treatment, if in remission, and
- for whom equivalent mainstream services are not appropriate or adequate

We also accept referrals for carers and loved ones of patients under the same guidelines.

Suitability

Our services prove to be most helpful to those who meet the above criteria and one or more of the following:

- they have emotional or spiritual concerns regarding the illness and its effect on quality of life,
- are coping with the side effects of treatment e.g. chemotherapy/radiotherapy,
- need complementary symptom management e.g. pain, nausea, breathlessness, constipation, diarrhoea, tiredness, sleeplessness, poor appetite, or
- in the case of the patient's loved ones, are coping with the demands of the caring role and/or facing the prospect of bereavement.

Duration & Accessibility

- Patients receiving complementary therapies will be offered an initial block of 6 sessions.
- Carers/loved ones receiving complementary therapies will be offered an initial block of 3 sessions.
- The number of counselling sessions will vary depending on individual need with some people finding just 1 or 2 sessions sufficient and others requiring longer-term support of up to 12 sessions.
- Our mindfulness and yoga courses are open to patients and they run for a set number of weeks. Places are limited.
- Our healthy and nurturing cooking courses are open to patients and carers/loved ones, and they run for a set number of weeks. Places are limited.
- Our group activities are open to patients on an on-going/ad-hoc basis subject to them still meeting the eligibility criteria and to availability.
- Our Look Good Feel Better workshops are open to female patients. Places are limited to 1 workshop per patient during a 2-year period.
- Our information & support sessions are open to patients and carers/loved ones, with the exception of certain specific sessions – e.g. Men & Cancer, Lymphoedema, etc.

* **Life-threatening** describes a condition that will most likely be fatal if untreated, and may still be fatal even if treated; as opposed to **chronic**, which describes a condition that is limiting, of long duration and generally slow progression.

Referrals

Our services are accessed by referral from a healthcare professional (e.g. GP, nurse specialist, consultant). To refer patients or family members and carers for our services, please complete our referral form and, where relevant, the home visit needs/risk assessment form. These forms are available on our website and through the DXS clinical referral portal. Referrals should be sent electronically to our secure nhs.net email address: saralee.trust@nhs.net

On receipt of a completed referral form we will do the following:

- Confirm receipt to the referrer using the email address provided.
- Contact the person being referred, provide them with information on our services and a first appointment within three weeks (subject to their availability and ours).

Hours of services provided

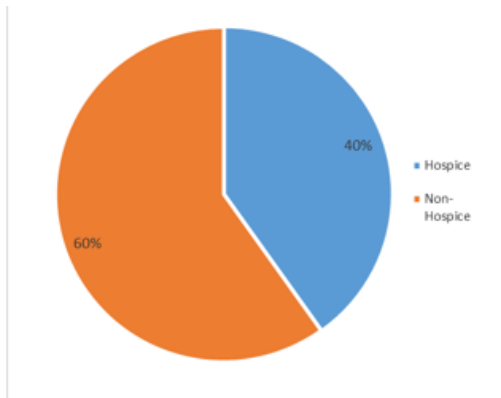
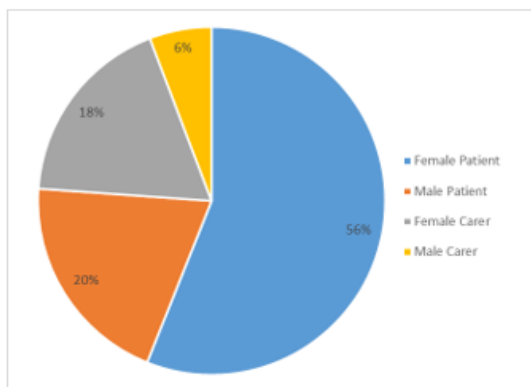
In the year 2021/22 the Trust provided 3,996 hours of therapy to 553 individuals. Our ability to meet the exceedingly high level of local need remained restricted during the period and a surge in demand for our support and care is expected through 2022 and 2023.

Hours of services provided

| Service | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | Total |
|-----------------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|
| Aromatherapy | 21 | 18 | 28 | 10 | 18 | 11 | 21 | 22 | 42 | 30 | 36 | 35 | 292 |
| CBT | 33 | 24 | 7 | 1 | | | 7 | 18 | 28 | 31 | 13 | 27 | 189 |
| Counselling | 163 | 165 | 146 | 98 | 124 | 146 | 184 | 127 | 151 | 131 | 141 | 146 | 1722 |
| Dry Needling | 4 | 11 | 14 | 8 | 8 | 21 | 46 | 8 | 24 | 18 | 6 | 10 | 178 |
| Healthy Cooking | | | | | 12 | 18 | 28 | 10 | | | 48 | 20 | 136 |
| Look Good Feel Better | | | | 12 | | 12 | 12 | | | 10 | 12 | | 58 |
| Massage | 30 | 28 | 36 | 38 | 36 | 36 | 40 | 17 | 35 | 31 | 47 | 41 | 415 |
| Reflexology | 24 | 20 | 18 | 10 | 14 | 18 | 24 | 11 | 25 | 35 | 51 | 33 | 283 |
| Reiki | 11 | 6 | 14 | 15 | 4 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 11 | 13 | 20 | 113 |
| Shiatsu | | | | 4 | 9 | 6 | 8 | 11 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 78 |
| Yoga | 27 | 25 | 31 | 30 | 26 | 43 | 71 | 39 | 27 | 53 | 84 | 46 | 502 |
| Total | 313 | 297 | 294 | 226 | 251 | 316 | 444 | 266 | 352 | 360 | 461 | 386 | 3966 |

Individual sessions are tailored by the therapist to meet the needs of the client at the time by using the range of skills and therapies they have. Often two or three therapies are given during one session to meet the needs of the client.

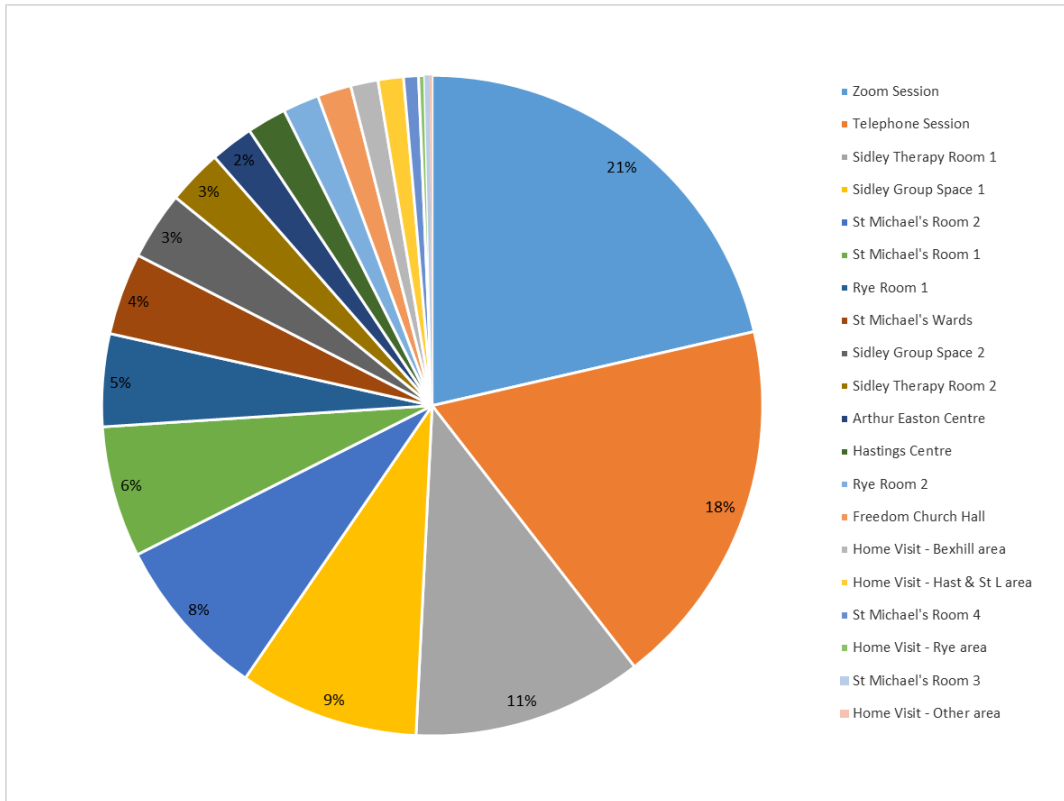
Who are we providing services to?



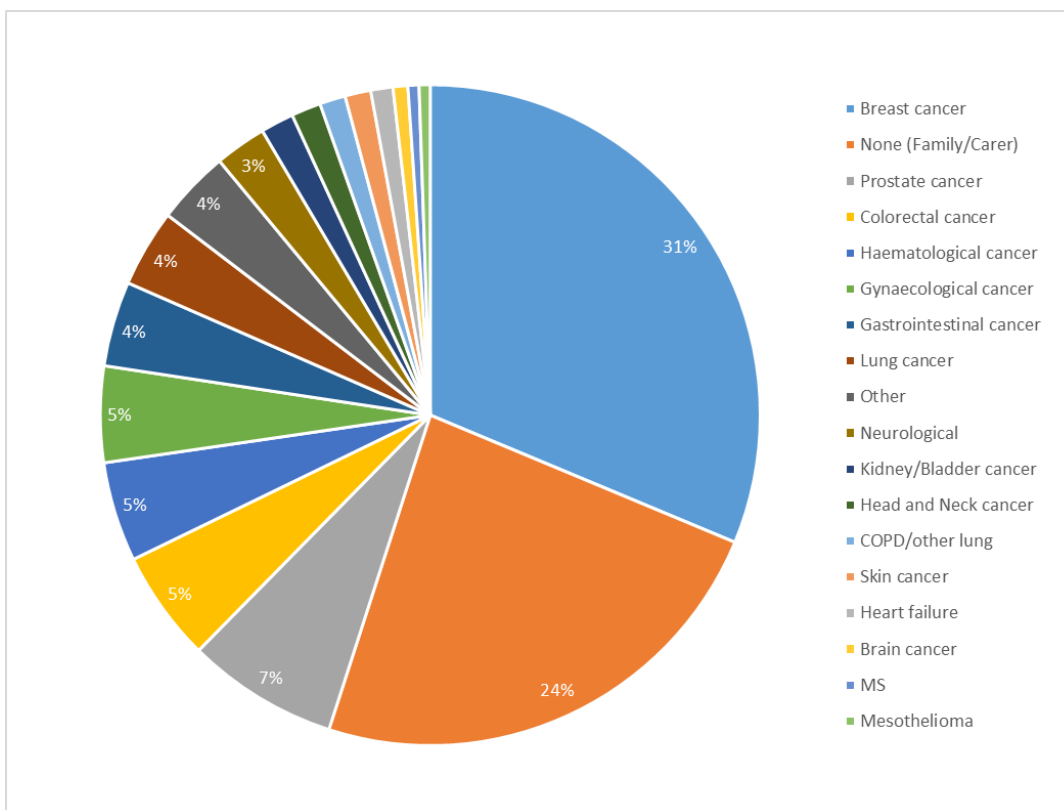
Referrals received

| Referrer | May | Jun | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | Total |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-------------|
| Hospital / Nurse Specialist | 48 | 57 | 43 | 46 | 41 | 40 | 31 | 21 | 32 | 30 | 56 | 29 | 474 |
| Hospice @ Home | 12 | 9 | 5 | 5 | 16 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 86 |
| Hospice / Rye Memorial Hospital IPU | 12 | 8 | 15 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 15 | 10 | 8 | 19 | 12 | 19 | 139 |
| SLT Team | 12 | 16 | 8 | 3 | 9 | 19 | 18 | 12 | 24 | 27 | 23 | 11 | 182 |
| GP | 3 | 7 | 8 | 2 | 11 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 11 | 10 | 3 | 75 |
| Hospice Wellbeing Services | | 2 | 6 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 6 | | 5 | 5 | 51 |
| Total | 87 | 99 | 85 | 73 | 89 | 84 | 79 | 56 | 78 | 91 | 114 | 72 | 1007 |

Location of therapies and activities



Service user diagnosis



Stakeholder Views

The Trust has established processes for engaging stakeholder views on its services and care which includes the use of monitoring and evaluation forms as well as annual surveys. The form and content of these are reviewed and agreed on an annual basis in partnership with the Trust Service User Group. The results of these processes are given below, along with a service user case study.

Annual Service User and Referrer Survey

The form and content of the Service User Survey is reviewed and agreed on an annual basis in partnership with the Trust Service User Group. The survey is hosted and completed online using Survey Monkey, an off-the-shelf interactive software provider. To ensure the survey is representative, the Trust requires a minimum of 10% of its service users to complete and return it. This is a challenging target given the acute ill health and short prognosis of many of the people we support.

This is the seventh year of asking service users to complete our survey, and the fourth year of asking referrers. The results of both surveys are incorporated in this report.

2021-22 Survey Findings

This year 95 service user questionnaires were completed compared to 89 last year. 28 of these were electronic entries and 67 paper copies. We sent 282 surveys out, with a return rate of 33%. The referrer survey was sent to 44 referrers (by email only) which is a similar number to last year, and was completed by 10 people, compared with 8 last year.

A better overall response to our survey was expected this year given the impacts of the pandemic over the previous 2 years. The Trust team will work with the SUG and other stakeholders over the coming months to identify and put in place measures aimed at improving response rates for future surveys.

Significant themes and trends are highlighted in this summary.

Summary

- Response rates, particularly from our referrers remain relatively low. Measures to improve these should be considered with our SUG and other stakeholders.
- The importance of retaining remote based services as part of our core offering continues to be highlighted by both service users and referrers.
- Respondents highlighted the importance of services restricted by the pandemic (i.e in person services, support groups & activities) and the need increase capacity in these areas where possible
- As services slowly return to normal the Trust needs to consider how it manages increased service user demand without compromising standards in relation to waiting times from assessment to first appointment.
- People continue to be very satisfied with the care they receive and feel it impacts positively on their health and well-being. Overall 99% of **service users** rated services as Excellent or Very Good, 90% of **referrers** rated services as Excellent or Very Good.

Awareness of and access to our services

- The impact of our promotional activities remains low with almost 84% of service users being made aware of our services through a health professional. This would appear to indicate that despite the pandemic, there is a good level of awareness of our services across the local health network.
- Whilst most people continue to be referred for our services relatively quickly, a higher proportion than in previous years said they had to wait up to 2 months for a referral. Less than 8% had a wait longer than 2 months.

Service user comments from the 2021/22 survey:

- *I was offered support by the Trust when I was finding it impossible to access elsewhere and I am extremely grateful for it. Thank you.*
- *I was in a very dark place with my mind and brain uncontrollable. My cancer nurses sprung into action and was referred in a very short time to the Sara Lee trust and offered counselling. I had always dismissed this type of need for counselling until it happened to me. The sessions I received surprised me emotionally and unlocked hidden dark places in my life. I can only thank you for the help I received.*
- *Life-saving, life changing, helped me to get back to being myself again.*

Impact of our care

People report that accessing support from the Trust results in significant improvements to their health and well-being. Highlights from this year's survey include:

- Over 70% said that our services helped reduce feelings of anxiety and/or depression.
- Almost 60% indicated improved confidence and/or wellbeing.
- Over a third said that treatment helped to reduce symptoms/side effects of treatment (e.g. radiotherapy, medications, surgery) such as breathlessness, pain, nausea, lack of appetite, poor sleep, fatigue, etc as well as providing self-care strategies to help with difficult times
- 33% reported reduced isolation

These indicators underline the importance of our services in improving mental and physical health in the people we support, and the lack of alternative comparable, accessible services to meet this essential need.

Service user comments from the 2021/22 survey:

- *In the time when you are feeling unwell the support given by Sara Lee in whatever form it takes is very reassuring that someone has time to be there to help you through. The physical changes can bring on emotional challenges which can easily become overwhelming if you are dealing with it alone. Whether you have a partner or a family it is my belief that most people don't wish to show those who are closest to them how vulnerable they truly feel so being able to share those things with a Sarah lee therapist can be a relief*
- *When it is the first time a serious/life threatening illness occurs-the need for therapeutic and counselling services is so crucial. It has been so helpful and meant that recovery is given a helping hand. It was incredibly useful and supportive.*

- *The acupuncture for hot flushes was really helpful, the therapist was amazing and very friendly. The yoga, which is ongoing has definitely helped me by improving my mobility. Thank you so much ♥*

Facilities

As in person care was restricted throughout most of the last year there was little feedback on our premises however considerations as to the “remote environment” were reviewed. Whilst most respondents were satisfied with our service some important areas for improvement were identified including improving the wifi signal from our therapy centre and ensuring adequate time is provided when using Zoom.

Service user comments from the 2021/22 survey:

- *Sarah Lee services are like a warm blanket around you after being stood out in the cold. Thank you x*
- *The Sara Lee Trust has made me feel less alone. It has provided services that have not only helped support both my physical and mental health but sessions have also given me some normality amongst the chaos of a life threatening diagnosis.*
- *I am in awe of the complimentary services available. Initially it was mental health support I was seeking. That was excellent but the inclusion into the complimentary therapies were a life saving confidence boost. Everyone I have encountered at every level have been remarkably wonderful. Thank you for being there.*

Developing our care and services

Our ability to develop the care and services that service users need is dependent, to a significant degree, on the effectiveness of our monitoring and evaluation processes. Over 90% of respondents felt the surveys/evaluations easy to understand and none indicated that they felt their feedback would not be put to good use.

Whilst the aim of the Trust and its team over the coming year will be mainly focused on recovery and building momentum respondents have identified the following areas as high priority developments / initiatives:

- Providing more in person care and care in the home
- Developing support groups and activities
- Guided self-help tools (e.g. online videos)

We asked referrers what they need or want from The Sara Lee Trust. They told us they would like us:

Support and training

- To offer more group support activities for patients as well as loved ones, carers and family members

Information

- To keep them regularly updated with what services patients can access and the relating detail e.g. what therapies, where and when, how many sessions etc
- Hold workshops and other activities for health professionals to improve awareness and understanding of our services

Service User Monitoring & Evaluation form collection and analysis

Our Monitoring & Evaluation form (M&E) are used across our services to evaluate outcomes and capture essential feedback. The form is provided to service users at the end of their block of sessions, along with an SAE, so that they can return it easily, voluntarily and anonymously.

2021/22 M&E Year-end outcomes

| | |
|--|-----|
| Outcome 1 - Improved mental wellbeing for local people living with life-threatening illness, and their family and carers. | |
| Service users reporting improved confidence and wellbeing | 89% |
| Service users reporting reduced anxiety and depression | 75% |
| Service users reporting reduced use of mental health services | 53% |
| Related comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Just such a lovely therapy brightens a day</i> - <i>My visits all made me feel better</i> - <i>Definitely contributed to my wellbeing</i> - <i>I always come away feeling much lighter and more positive</i> | |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Outcome 2 - Improved physical health for local people living with life-threatening illness, and their family and carers | |
| Service users reporting a reduction in symptoms/side effects of treatment | 62% |
| Service users reporting an improvement to physical health | 79% |
| Service users reporting reduced use of other health services: | |
| - GP Services | 29% |
| - Accident & Emergency | 6% |
| - Macmillan / Other Nurse Specialist | 26% |
| - Physiotherapist | 14% |
| Related comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - <i>Reduced tension</i> - <i>Shiatsu massage helped me to relax</i> - <i>Relaxing so helped me sleep</i> - <i>Confidence, less tension and better sleep</i> | |

| | |
|---|-----|
| Outcome 3 - Increased independence and reduced isolation for local people living with life-threatening illness, and their family and carers. | |
| Service users reporting participation in new social networks and/or making new friends | 22% |
| Service users reporting feeling less isolated | 57% |
| Service users reporting being more able to look after themselves | 41% |

Related comments

- *Helped me to cope with caring for my partner*
- *Having somewhere to go made me feel so much better*
- *I felt more energetic, restored and able to claim my own space and time*

General Service User Comments

- *Fantastic, therapist was absolutely lovely.*
- *My therapist is just an amazing person.*
- *Counsellor was great. After our chats helped me realise all was good.*
- *Invaluable, really helped me through dark times.*
- *The help I received from SLT helped me through a very, very challenging and dark time. I am so grateful!*
- *The Sara Lee Trust has given me the opportunity to receive massage therapy and counselling post my cancer treatment. What wonderful kind therapists. This has helped in my recovery tremendously.*

Service User Feedback

Case studies demonstrating how the Trust has made a difference to people through the services it provides. Names and identifying details have been changed to protect the privacy of our service users.

COMPLEMENTARY THERAPY

Cara (37 years old) was diagnosed with high grade, non-hodgkins lymphoma in June 2021. She was referred to the Trust for support in dealing with this diagnosis as it initially left her - in her own words – “absolutely floored”.

When I called Cara for the first time to see if she would like to receive some massage therapy, she replied “That is the best thing anyone has said to me all week!”

During her initial consultation, Cara told me she was experiencing debilitating muscle cramps and she asked for some treatment for her back, neck, shoulders and legs. Cara noticed instantaneous improvements, from her first treatment onwards.

She booked her subsequent sessions to give her enough time to recover from each session of chemotherapy and to therefore feel well enough for a massage. She described these appointments as “beacons of lights in the darkness of all the cancer treatments”, and that each session was “something to really look forward to”.

By the end of her six sessions of massage therapy, Cara felt that her mobility had vastly improved. She describes the impact of the support of the Sara Lee Trust as “invaluable”.

COUNSELLING

Following diagnosis of yet another life-limiting illness I was referred to the Sara Lee Trust for counselling by the hospital. This was without any doubt one of the very best things ever happened to me.

At that time, I felt scared, desperate, and sinking beneath the weight I had to carry on my shoulders. A counsellor quickly called me, and she has walked beside me through very complex trauma, loss, and pain, never wavering, with such expertise and compassion that have allowed trust in myself and others to grow and even more importantly glimpses of HOPE for a future to appear.

This opportunity has been an IMMEASURABLE GIFT worth more than I can express.

2022/23 Trust Action Plan

This action plan sets out the areas of focus for the Trust in the year ahead, as identified by this evaluation process and a separate HR evaluation process. The plan was approved by the Trust Service User Group on the 6th October and Board of Trustees on 9th November.

Services

Recovery and building momentum (post pandemic)

Due to the serious and continued impact of the coronavirus pandemic the first set of priorities for the Trust and its team during the period will continue to be focused on:

- Maintaining safe and accessible services
- Re-establishing services suspended or restricted by the pandemic
- Increasing therapy capacity to pre-pandemic levels and beyond
- Renewing and furthering existing and new partner relationships in the pandemic altered care sector
- Adapting our fundraising and income generating activities in response to the changed operating environment
- Delivering a sustainable post pandemic future for the Trust

Access

- Continue to integrate remote based services into our core service offering to improve support for those unable to access face to face services and activities
- Develop accessible online tools to promote self-care as well as support and care from others
- Further refine referral processes to improve accessibility
- Develop simple and easy to access service user guidelines to support access to online services
- Review internal systems with the aim of reducing average waiting times from assessment to first appointment to within 2 weeks

Awareness

- Further develop links with key partners and referrers to raise awareness and understanding of our activities through a range of promotional activities including periodic workshops
- Improve awareness of Trust Services through enhanced marketing activities across retail and social media

Meeting service user need

As and when restrictions and funding allow:

- Increase our core therapy and group support capacity
- Develop our group support activities including
 - Nature focused support groups
 - Post treatment / recovery short sessions
 - Rolling programme of educational events
 - Regular sessions offering practical support (e.g. breathlessness, fatigue)
 - Other therapeutic activities (e.g. walking groups)
- Develop local partnerships to enable the provision of care in other locations where a need is identified (e.g. Judy Beard unit, Conquest Hospital)

Improving the therapy environment

- Develop a dedicated and purpose designed group space to enable the provision of a full range of group activities
- Enhance our online environment through improved WIFI connectivity as well as ensuring all related tools are fit for purpose, regularly tested and team members fully trained in their use

Our People

The Trust will:

Communication, engagement and involvement

- Ensure that all team members are aware of and attend the regular opportunities for active engagement and involvement in relation to Trust operations and developments (e.g. regular Q&A sessions with Senior Management, regular departmental team meetings)
- Improve team engagement with Trust leadership through periodic team wide events and increased Trustee / Management attendance at regular team meetings
- Review the coverage and reach of the regular monthly Trust wide updates to ensure that these are routinely cascaded to all team members (employees, contractors, volunteers, supporters and other stakeholders)
- Ensure that all team members are aware of and attend regular departmental team meetings that are held across the Trust. Team Leads will ensure regular meetings cover all team members (employees, contractors, volunteers, supporters and other stakeholders) and cover core areas including:

Operational updates.

Trust developments and initiatives

Training and development opportunities

Support and advice

Performance review and feedback

Pastoral care and health and wellbeing in the workplace

- Raise awareness and improve promotion of established forums aimed at maximising stakeholder engagement and involvement including:

Volunteer committee

Service User Group

Open meetings with Senior Management

The Volunteer Committee will consider if it should meet more regularly to improve involvement and engagement

- Continue to refine the staff and volunteer annual surveys to enable better benchmarking and identification of key themes and actively encourage wider participation
- Further develop our “whole team” approach with better and increased integration across the Trust and its people
- Consider opportunities for anonymous feedback

Training and Development

- Ensure comprehensive induction and orientation programmes are provided uniformly across the Trust for all staff and volunteers
- Continue to improve access to Training and Development opportunities for all team members in particular through the regular meetings as set out above
- Establish a rolling programme of development sessions with open access to all team members, volunteers and supporters
- Provide support and training in key areas including health and safety, retailing and customer service and managing conflict

Valuing People

- Continue to review contractual standard terms and conditions (for employed team members) and the working environment with a view to making enhancements where practical and possible.
- Embed initiatives to recognise and value volunteer support including team discounts, thank you events and long service certificates and badges
- Continue to consider how career and volunteer pathways can be developed within the Trust

Monitoring

The action plan will be monitored on an ongoing basis with formal reporting to the Board of Trustees. A full review will be undertaken annually as part of the yearly Trust evaluation process.