



ACI Recovery Services



Recognised by
COSCA
Counselling & Psychotherapy in Scotland



Practice Management Software user

Annual Review 2025/26

Who We Are

We are a charity, established in 1986, providing professional, stigma-free and empowering support services for individuals and families in the Highlands and Islands of Scotland affected by addiction and associated trauma.

We seek to achieve our objective by offering a comprehensive range of services delivered by qualified counselling professionals within a framework accredited by Scotland's professional body for counselling and psychotherapy, COSCA, specifically:

- **1-2-1 Counselling:** up to 24 sessions of in person counselling for individuals affected by addiction;
- **Family Therapies:** evidence-based therapies (CRAFT) for concerned families and close friends of people with substance use problems;
- **Recovery Coaching:** support and coaching for individuals who are not ready for the 1-2-1 counselling service or not sure what the counselling process entails; and
- **Group Therapies:** a range of therapies (e.g. creative writing and animal-assisted therapy) which complement our other services.

Our strategic priorities are to:

- ensure financial stability by increasing reserves and securing longer term funding;
- deliver exceptional value for money;
- recruit and retain our invaluable volunteer professional counsellors who deliver our services;
- maintain COSCA accreditation; and
- extend service coverage across the Highlands and Islands as/when funding and capacity permit.



Message from the Chair

It is fitting that as we celebrated our 40th anniversary on 18 February 2026, we also celebrated the completion of our transition from a wholly state-funded organisation, into a fully independent and self-funding charity. I am delighted that we rose to this challenge and replaced the funding previously provided by NHS Highland.

2025/26 was also a year of significant change organisationally with the departure of Sharan Brown, our long-serving General & Development Manager. Sharan made an extraordinary commitment to ACI and it is not an exaggeration to say that Sharan's leadership transformed ACI's professionalism and success. We are all deeply grateful to Sharan and wish her every success for the future. I am delighted that Val Bell agreed to succeed Sharan as General Manager starting in January 2026 and is already making her own significant contribution.

In January 2026, we launched our first partnership, with Centred, the leading mental health charity in the Highlands, to address a persistent gap in the system: what happens after counselling or residential support. The partnership strengthens the recovery and peer support pathway within ACI and formalises a clear progression route into Centred Discovery College (Inverness) and Centred HUBs in Invergordon and Wick.

Despite the challenge of managing change, the team's focus has remained on the delivery of services to our clients, whose powerful testimonies show that counselling services delivered by professionally qualified counsellors remains one of the most effective interventions for addiction.

I want to close by thanking our extraordinary staff and volunteers for their consummate professionalism and dedication to delivering and enhancing ACI's services for the benefit of our clients.



Jon Mayne
Chair of Executive Board



1-2-1 Counselling

Our primary service is FREE 1-2-1 counselling with a registered therapist. We are a COSCA organisational member and adhere to COSCA's Statement of Ethics and Code of Practice. Counselling provides a safe space for people to explore their behaviours around addictions, where these behaviours may have started, and how they would like things to change.

We offer up to 24 FREE sessions with a dedicated counsellor on a weekly basis as addictive behaviour is also often learned when people are young and as such can take some time to unlearn.

During 2025/26 we:

- received 281 referrals;
- offered 3,174 sessions of 1-2-1 counselling;
- completed counselling for 153 clients; and
- offered free counselling sessions at an average cost to ACI of £40 per session, ~50% below the market rate.



"The support provided was invaluable, without which I suspect my life was on course for disaster with likely consequences for my wider family and employability"

"I genuinely think the Service saved my life. I was in a bad way and didn't know which way to turn but my counsellor was almost a guardian angel really"

Family Therapy

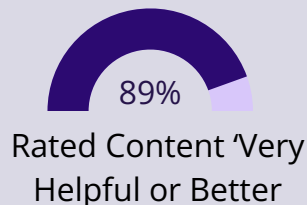
We provide up to 12 FREE sessions of 1-2-1 counselling for loved ones of those who are struggling with addiction to explore the feelings around a loved one in addiction and how to look after yourself first and foremost. We often find that when family members enter counselling the person with the addiction often follows.

We also provide Community Reinforcement and Family Training (CRAFT), an evidence based therapeutic approach for concerned families and close friends of people with substance use problems. This six-week programme is positive and motivational in its focus, and helps participants to work smarter, not harder, with their loved ones.

During 2025/26 we:

- offered 150 sessions of 1-2-1 counselling;
- completed counselling for 25 clients; and
- delivered CRAFT training for 42 family members.

CRAFT Client Feedback



"Phenomenal Team, Just thank you so much for all your help"

"I'm of great belief that if it's not broke don't fix it. I can't think of anything that can improve your service as I think it's second to none"

Recovery Coaching

Our Recovery Coaching service was developed by our Heilan Harbour Recovery Project in 2023. Developed as a complementary avenue alongside traditional counselling, Recovery Coaching offers a less formal yet equally impactful support system. Think of it as a different lane on the path to healing—one that embraces social intervention and peer support, fostering connections and camaraderie along the way.

Our experienced coaches accompany individuals through their recovery, whether navigating early sobriety or facing challenges further along the road.

During 2025/26 we:

- offered 27 sessions; and
- completed recovery coaching for 17 clients.

"The staff are friendly and always there to listen to anything you have to say no matter what. Going above and beyond to help and making each session a relaxing environment. Knowing I can totally relax and talk to the staff about any concerns I have about this service"



Group Therapies

To complement our other services we also offer a range of group therapeutic activities to our clients, including:

- **Roots of Resilience:** our programme for women and families in conjunction with Highland Therapeutic Animals combines 1-2-1 counselling with immersive animal therapy to build confidence, reduce anxiety, and promote emotional healing;
- **Creative Writing Group:** the informal creative writing group meets regularly and provides a safe space to explore creativity and recovery through writing;
- **Threads of Recovery:** our supportive art group designed to help clients connect with peers while building creative and practical skills and promoting focus, confidence, and a sense of achievement; and
- **Music for All:** a group offering clients the chance to get together with others, and to be creative and to have fun encouraging positive change in mood and wellbeing.

During 2025/26 we:

- provided group therapeutic activities for 27 clients; and
- held 97 group therapy sessions.



"After years of NHS (mis)treatment, I never thought I'd get any better. But then I started coming to Highland Therapeutic Animals with ACI and I finally started to feel safe again. Coming to see the animals became the best part of my week."

"Being part of this [creative writing] group means a lot to me and I don't know where I would be in my recovery without the friendships I have gained during my time here"

Centred Partnership

After years working side-by-side with Centred, the leading mental health charity in the Highlands, we are delighted to announce a formal partnership, supported by generous funding over a two year period from the Highland Third Sector Interface.

A challenge was identified in Centred's residential service: while not abstinence based, some residents are struggling to moderate or reduce alcohol use and need accessible, trauma informed addiction support that sits alongside mental health care. ACI consistently hears that people do not want to "start again" with a new service when ready to move on. Bridges, not handovers, are needed and best provided by ACI and Centred pooling skills and working together to:

- consolidate the Invergordon Recovery and Peer Pathway;
- create a formal, supported referral and progression route into Centred's Discovery College and HUBs;
- expand the model into Caithness and Wick;
- grow peer volunteering and facilitation routes; and
- recruit and support additional volunteer counsellors to sustain throughput and reduce waiting times.

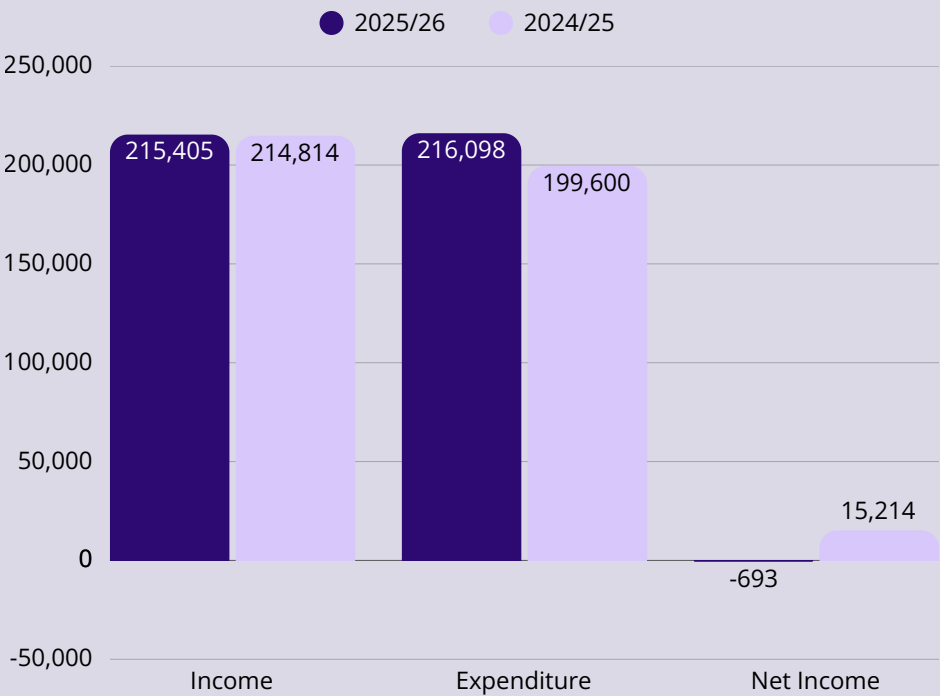
"Recovery doesn't happen because people have more appointments. It happens when they start to believe they have a future again. This partnership makes that future possible without people having to start again each time they move forward."



Our Financial Performance

Our financial performance in the 2025/26 financial year was slightly disappointing, but we are in a fundamentally better financial position than we were on 31 March 2024 when we reported negative net income of (£100,527) for the 2023/24 financial year. The highlights are as follows:

- **Income:** total income for 2025/26 was £215,405, almost identical to 2024/25;
- **Expenditure:** total expenditure for 2025/26 was £216,098 a rise of 8% over 2024/25, but only 1% over budget;
- **Net Income:** following a healthy positive net income of £15,214 in 2024/25, there was a small negative net income of (£693) in 2025/26, largely due to the end of long term funding from NHS Highland; and
- **Charity Funds/Reserves:** total charity funds/ reserves at 31 March 2026 were £71,165, all in the form of unrestricted funds.



	2025/26 (£)	2024/25 (£)
Net income	(693)	15,214
Unrestricted Revenue Funds available for the general purposes of the charity	71,165	69,023
Restricted Revenue Funds	0	2,835
Total Funds	71,165	71,858

Our Priorities for 2026/27

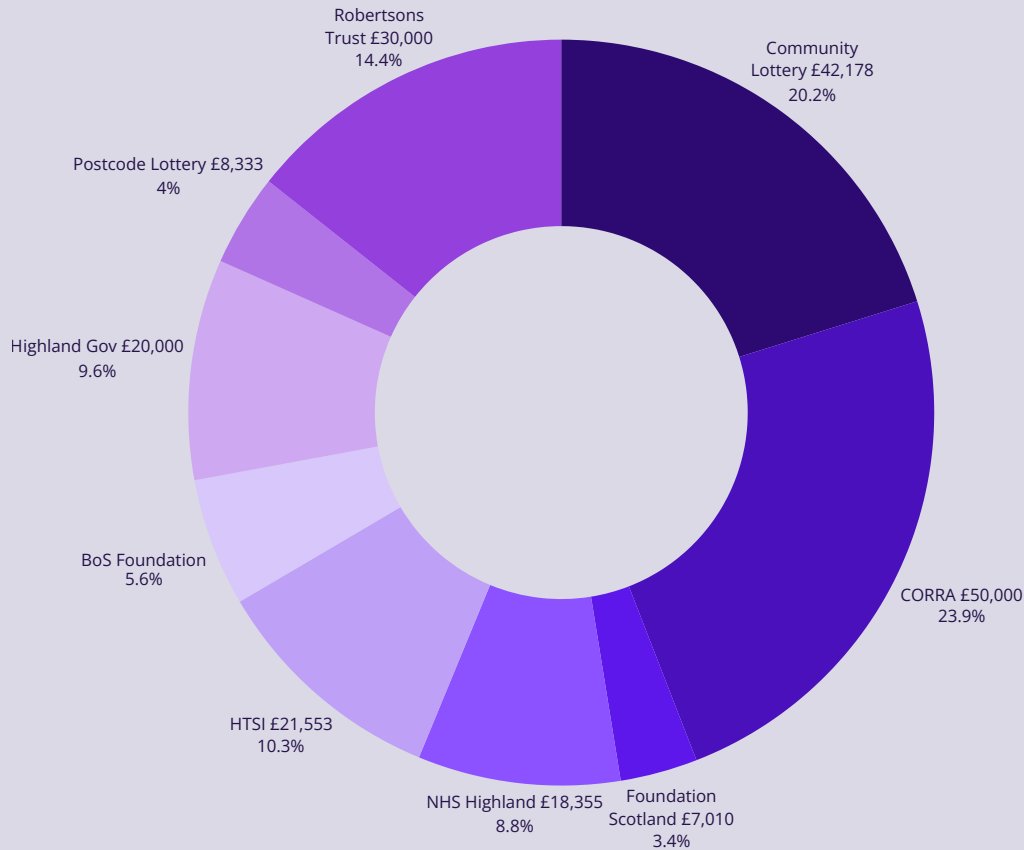
- Diversify funding sources and deliver a positive net income to increase reserves and improve sustainability
- Focus on developing our existing services (e.g. online CRAFT) rather than expanding our range of services
- Recruit additional qualified counsellor volunteers to increase 1-2-1 counselling capacity
- Implement improved outcome tracking process and method
- Operationalise our partnership with Centred
- Explore other partnership opportunities where there are complementary services and there is an opportunity to improve client outcomes (e.g. to expand our geographical coverage to the northern islands, Caithness and/or Lochaber)
- Retain COSCA accreditation



"If this service were to be in jeopardy, it wouldn't just be a loss for me – it would mean losing a potentially life-changing resource in a region where specialist support is already scarce. The idea that this kind of support could be lost due to funding cuts is deeply worrying – because what ACI offers isn't just helpful, it's essential...what they do matters more than words can say."

Our Funders

We want to thank everyone who demonstrated their belief in our services by giving us their generous support during the past year. We would not be able to help the communities of the Highlands and Islands without you.



Reference & Administrative Details

Company number

SC0097508

OSCR number

SC000233

Registered office and operational address

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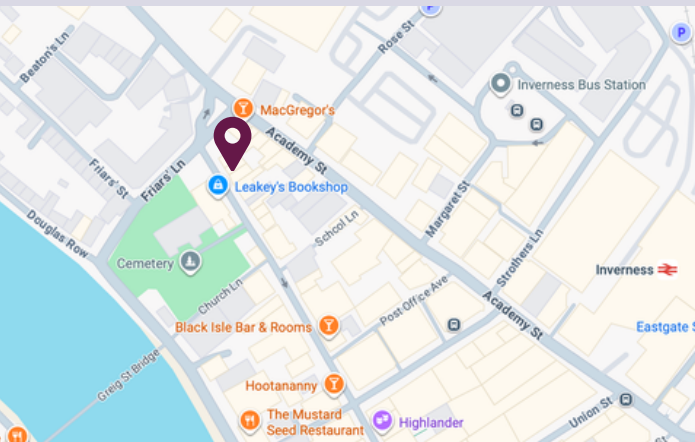
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Executive Board

Jon Mayne, (Chair)
Lesley Newton,(Secretary)
William Moir, (Treasurer)
Lesley Palm
Vivian Moir - resigned 4 December 2025
Kate MacLean
Alex Graham
Greg Allen

General Manager

Val Bell

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