



BRIGHT LIGHT
relationship counselling



Strategic Plan **2017-2022**



When you don't talk...

...there's a lot of stuff
that ends up not
getting said.

bright-light.org.uk

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Contents

A Warm Welcome	3
How We Developed Our Strategy.....	5
Our Vision.....	5
Our Aim.....	5
Our Mission	5
Our Values	6
Priorities for Action – Relationships Scotland Network.....	7
Our Main Objectives	8
How will we do it?	9
Contact Details.....	11



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A warm welcome

Bright Light has a proud and long history. Since 1947, through our counselling services, we have provided high quality professional counselling support for people who are struggling with issues in their lives and its resulting impact on their relationships with close others. Originally as Edinburgh Marriage Guidance Council we were set up to support married couples who were trying to make sense of the world and their relationships after the Second World War. We then became Couple Counselling Lothian with our main focus on supporting people living as a couple. On 29th February 2016 we launched our new name, Bright Light, as it reflected our services and where we are now as a charity, aiming to support people to build on their strengths enabling and empowering them to cope with life’s challenges, to get the best out of life and those relationships that matter so much.

We help others identify the Bright Light within both themselves and their important others and, through our counselling support, shine. It is from this strong foundation that we plan to grow so that we continue to meet the changing needs of people.



The speed of change in this modern world and challenges facing us as individuals, couples, families and communities is unprecedented. Relationships, including families, come in all shapes and sizes. Demand and need for our support services continue to increase. People are also frequently coping with more complex mental and physical health and social care problems than experienced by previous generations.

Our response to these challenges is set out in this strategic plan for the next five years. We will monitor progress closely throughout, as this strategic plan is a working document and subject to change just as the world advances. Our charity needs to ensure we can respond to the changing needs of people who come through our doors and to the challenges of the outside world. We commit to using our knowledge, expertise, and resources to support more people through their counselling journey with us so that their lives and relationships are stronger and their futures brighter. We will provide individual care and support when people need it, striving to prevent issues reaching crisis point and relationship breakdown whenever possible.

We realise, however, that we cannot do everything ourselves. We will continue to seek out and work in partnership across Edinburgh and the Lothians with many other organisations which play a part in supporting people to a good quality of life. We will nurture and grow these partnerships, working together to strengthen people, families and communities.

Relationships are important to all of us and it can be devastating when for some reason they go wrong. We will seek to sustain all the services our clients need and which have shown can clearly make a difference. We will also launch new services to meet clients' changing needs and to provide them with the vital support they say they need to build on their strengths and shape a better future. We will provide as many people as we can with accessible high quality, personalised counselling and family therapy from our headquarters, schools, and outreach work.

James R. Lyall
Chair

Our five-year strategic plan is ambitious and stretching but realistic, visionary and innovative. During this period we intend to sustain current services and establish new ones which grow our counselling and family therapy capacity; invest more in our counsellors and staff; harness technology to strengthen our reach directly and indirectly to people who need us when they need us, and use our expertise and networks to influence the development of relationship and wellbeing policy across Scotland.

To deliver these plans we rely on the generosity of our supporters, for which we continue to be immensely grateful and in return promise value for your investment in us.

We are grateful for the views of everyone who has helped us shape this strategic plan and we look forward to working together to make our plan a reality. Thank you.

Julie Hogg-Weld
CEO



How we developed our strategy

The process used to build our strategy was as important as the content of our final document. Bright Light is committed to inclusion and empowerment of people, therefore we wanted to listen and to involve as wide a circle of stakeholders as possible. It did take longer to achieve but its an investment we recognise and value.

We listened to many voices. We heard directly from people using our services and from referring and partner agencies. Our staff, counsellors, therapists and volunteers shared their experiences and suggestions of how to build on what we have achieved for the future. We discussed with others inside and outside Bright Light how we can improve our services in supporting people and their relationships.

We also included results from commissioned research and from our monitoring and evaluation to ensure that our plans for the future were underpinned by robust evidence.

We are grateful to everyone who gave their time, energy, encouragement, and voice. To people who shared their experiences and stories, thoughts and ideas, thank you. We hope they feel this plan represents your contributions accurately and that together we will strive to deliver it in full for the benefit of current and future clients.

Our Vision A better life and well being for all people and their families through having strong relationships.

Our Aim To provide, develop, and co-ordinate a confidential accessible counselling service in Edinburgh and the Lothians for people in relationships.

Our Mission As a not-for-profit organisation, we deliver a professional service in Edinburgh and Lothians to strengthen, promote and enable close personal relations and emotional well being.



Our Values

Always compassionate and caring

- Connecting and empathetic with people
- Starting from each person's needs and respecting them
- Non-judgemental
- Respecting and supporting people's choices, decisions, and aspirations.
- Keeping people as safe as possible
- Respecting confidentiality and boundaries
- Striving to be always accessible, inclusive, and empowering.

Pioneering and Professional in our Field

- Building on our 70 plus years' history of delivering a professional service
- Always learning and developing individually and as an organisation
- Building and sharing our unique skills, expertise and experience
- Innovating, testing, reflecting
- Striving to improve in everything we do
- Ensuring the best possible counselling journey for each of our clients
- Outward looking and developing partnerships

People Always at the Centre and in our Heart

- Valuing each person
- Everyone has a right to be heard and listened to
- Bringing people together and building strong resilient relationships
- Enabling each person to grow, thrive, flourish and achieve
- Building long-term resilience so people and families can cope with life's challenges now and in the future

"There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in" **Leonard Cohen 1934-2016**



Priorities for action

Bright Light is one of 22 member groups that make up the network of Relationships Scotland (RS). We are proud to be a member of RS and sign up to their three key priorities call for action (as at 2017).

- People across Scotland need to be supported to cope better with key life transitions such as relationship breakdown.
- The Scottish Government to lead an urgent debate on how to ensure there is far greater uptake of counselling, mediation, and other forms of dispute resolution as an alternative to court action in family cases.
- All future Scottish Government policies which impact on children and families to highlight the vital role relationships play in ensuring the best opportunities and outcomes in life.



The digital copy of the Relationships Scotland Manifesto outlines the three priorities for action in more detail.



Our 5 Main Objectives

Objective 1

We will sustain the suite of existing services and develop new ones that meet the changing needs of our clients, our mission and values.

Objective 2

Further evidence the impact of what we do – the difference we make to people's lives

Objective 3

Continue to grow financial sustainability so that we can support people who need us in the future

Objective 4

Ensure efficient and effective deployment and management of resources

Objective 5

Build on our 70 plus years' successful history and professional reputation, further raising our profile and reach, whilst developing strong partnerships.



How will we do it



Objective 1. We will sustain the suite of existing services and develop new ones that meet the changing needs of our clients, our mission and values.

We will:

- Develop an annual operations plan for Bright Light with individual staff performance plans linking into the overall operations plan and organisation's goals. This ensures we all know where we are going and how we will get there. It also gives confidence to our clients that we are business like, professional and caring.
- Research unmet need for individually tailored counselling and therapy and develop an Outreach Plan to extend our services across Edinburgh and the Lothians.
- Continue to train, develop and support our own professional workforce to deliver the highest quality of support and care with kindness, empathy, respect and dignity at its heart.
- Continually monitor our existing core services to ensure they are of the highest quality and fit for purpose, sourcing sufficient ongoing income to meet current and future client needs.
- Research and develop different communication channels for counselling such as digital and phone, web, mobile, social media, printed materials and through forums and networks.
- Develop different ways to gather feedback from clients so that their voices, views and suggestions are at the centre of all we do.
- Harness technology and social media to actively strengthen our reach into all communities.
- Continue to influence and respond to future challenges and opportunities that impact on people's lives so that we can best support them.
- Develop strong partnerships with other agencies, strengthening our ability to support clients, maximising shared resources.
- Meet our diversity and inclusion responsibilities for staff and client groups.
- Create and deliver our first Communication Plan for Bright Light with annual reviews to ensure our services are actively promoted across Edinburgh, targeting those most in need.
- Continue to review and monitor activities and services against our original mission and vision to ensure a strong match.





- Strive to ensure our fundamental values are embedded within the Bright Light culture.
- Use our knowledge, expertise, and networks to campaign for improved services, achieving longer term positive change.
- Help raise standards of counselling and family therapy across Scotland and beyond.



Objective 2. Further evidence the impact of what we do – the difference we make to people’s lives.

We will:

- Explore and develop technology, Social Return on Investment (SORI), SCORE and SCORE 15, plus other monitoring and evaluation tools to clearly evidence the positive difference we make to people’s relationships and quality of life.
- Share learning with a range of key stakeholders, always campaigning for improvement and positive change and working in partnership with Relationships Scotland and other agencies
- Continue to maximise the impact of your gift, always evidencing best value for money. Every penny invested in Bright Light by others is precious to us.



Objective 3. Continue to grow financial sustainability so that we can support people who need us in the future.

We will:

- Actively promote Gift Aid and other initiatives, researching and harnessing technology, strengthening accessibility and sustainability, sourcing vital additional income without additional cost to our clients.
- Help clients to understand we are a not-for-profit charity reliant on their contributions for long term sustainability.
- Include researching viability of social enterprise activities in our income stream plan, harnessing technology to deliver some counselling, and potential corporate/counselling partnerships.
- Continue to invest in our premises, diversifying and maximising its usage and income without impacting on our core service.
- Manage financial risk to ensure financial stability and longer-term viability.



Objective 4. Ensure efficient and effective deployment and management of resources

We will:

- recruit quality people, deploying them to meet our clients’ needs.
- invest in and value our people, developing and supporting them so that we retain them and deliver a consistent first class service.
- monitor finances closely to ensure robust financial management and value for money.
- regularly review our staffing model to ensure it is flexible, effective, and efficient.
- continue to invest in our client management system and other technology including digital.
- continue to plan for and manage risk, future proof, and creating/harnessing opportunities



Objective 5. Build on our 70 plus years’ successful history and professional reputation, further raising our profile and reach, whilst developing strong partnerships.

We will:

- Invest in our communications and social media profile.
- Continue to invest in our people through our Continuing Professional Development (CPD) programme and other training in partnership with other bodies.
- Recognise and promote our history and success and further raise our profile through a series of events to mark our 70 years service and beyond.
- Actively promote Bright Light. Our Communications Plan will clearly reflect this.
- Continue to attract committed and visionary Board members, to safely govern the next stage of Bright Light’s journey, and as Ambassadors, actively promoting our services and values.

Thank you for your interest in our organisation and taking the time to read our Strategic Plan. You can contact us at:

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A WORD TO OUR SUPPORTERS

The work we do would not be possible without your support. One of our aims is to build our body of supporters to make sure our work has long-term sustainability. We would like to conclude this report by saying a huge thank you for everything you have done for us over the years. We hope you will continue with us as we journey into the future and look forward to keeping you up-to-date on our progress.



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