

STARF School Counselling Service – Autumn Term 2025

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, STARF delivered vital mental health and emotional wellbeing support to children and young people aged 4–18 across **seven local schools** during the Autumn Term 2025. Alongside our established **one-to-one counselling**, we introduced **therapeutic group work** in two schools, enabling us to reach more children earlier, at a critical point in their development.



The Impact of your Donations in Autumn term 2025:

25 children and young people supported from age 4 – 18 years.

- 17 through one-to-one counselling
- 8 through therapeutic group work
- **278 hours** of professional therapeutic support delivered
- **81%** of children completing counselling showed measurable improvements in emotional and mental wellbeing
- **100% engagement** across all sessions

For those whose scores did not rise:

- One continues to benefit from ongoing STARF support
- Two reported feeling better, even where outcome measures did not fully capture their progress

This brings the total of children and young people receiving counselling to 112 since the service was introduced.

What Changed

Emotional Awareness and Regulation

Children and young people developed a clearer understanding of their emotions and behaviour. With therapeutic support, they learned to:

- Recognise emotional patterns and triggers
- Use grounding and calming techniques to manage anxiety, fear and anger
- Strengthen the mind–body connection (understanding how thoughts, feelings and physical sensations interact)

Impact: Reduced anxiety and stress, improved mood, and greater emotional intelligence.

Confidence, Self-Esteem and Resilience

Clear gains were seen in confidence and sense of self-worth:

- Increased belief in themselves and their abilities

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- Greater confidence facing change and uncertainty
- Easier separation from parents at school drop-off
- A stronger understanding that their feelings are valid

Impact: Children and young people became more resilient and better able to cope with everyday challenges.

Communication and Relationships

Children and young people became more open and expressive at home and school:

- Improved communication with parents, teachers and trusted adults
- Stronger friendships and improved peer relationships
- Healthier family relationships, supported by improved mood and emotional understanding
- Safe, supported conversations around difficult experiences, including bereavement

Our children & young people consistently described STARF sessions as:

- Safe, calm and enjoyable
- A space where they felt listened to and understood

They particularly valued:

- Learning ways to calm themselves
- Creative and sensory activities (playdough, Lego, sand, art and games)
- Having time and space to be themselves

Many described counselling as “the best part of my week” and reported feeling happier, more confident, and proud of who they are.

Parents and Carers consistently report feeling more supported and confident:

- Greater understanding of their child or young person’s emotional needs
- Improved communication and consistent boundaries at home
- Reduced anxiety and emotional escalation within the family
- Access to further support and signposting where needed

Result: Calmer homes, more independent children and young people, and stronger family relationships.

Schools observe meaningful and sustained improvements:

- Better attendance, engagement and happiness in school
- More confident transitions with reduced emotional distress and separation anxiety
- Reduced anxiety around school
- Improved focus and concentration
- Improved friendships and help-seeking behaviours

These outcomes contributed to a more positive learning environment for all.

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