



# **Report on alcohol counselling provision across SACC member organisations 2022- 2023**

## INTRODUCTION

SACC is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO) with current membership of 11 local, voluntary alcohol support agencies from across Scotland. SACC aims to make a meaningful contribution to communities across Scotland by improving counselling and support for individuals and families affected by alcohol and other drug use.

We have a focus on sharing knowledge, experience and support across member organisations and on increasing partnership working with other organisations concerned with the harm caused by alcohol use.

SACC runs highly regarded, COSCA validated, training courses for volunteer counsellors working with people with alcohol issues - and continuing professional development short courses for our members' workers and volunteers.

Each year SACC asks member organisations to provide information around their alcohol counselling services.

The aim is to better understand the demand, uptake and provision of alcohol counselling services provided by SACC member organisations across Scotland – and the role SACC plays in supporting this.

This is essentially a report by, and for, SACC member organisations – but it may provide some insights and emerging issues of interest to other agencies.

This report provides an overview of the annual figures collated for 2022-23 from 10 member organisations.

- ACA (Ayrshire Council on Alcohol)
- ACI (Addictions Counselling Inverness)
- DACA (Dumbarton Area Council on Alcohol)
- ELCA (Edinburgh and Lothian Council on Alcohol)
- FASS (Fife Alcohol Support Service)
- GCA (Glasgow Council on Alcohol)
- Liber8 (South Lanarkshire)
- New Way (Helensburgh)
- TCA (Tayside Council on Alcohol)
- WLDAS (West Lothian Drug and Alcohol Service)

As SACC membership can change from year to year, a comparison of collated information across time periods has not been consistently available. However, 7 organisations have submitted information consistently for 4 years and 8 organisations for 3 years - providing information on referral rates across time.

# REFERRALS

## 1. Gender

The total number of new referrals across SACC organisations for 2022-23 was 7154. 58% were male and 42% female - similar to last year. Less than 0.17% of referrals describe their gender in other ways.

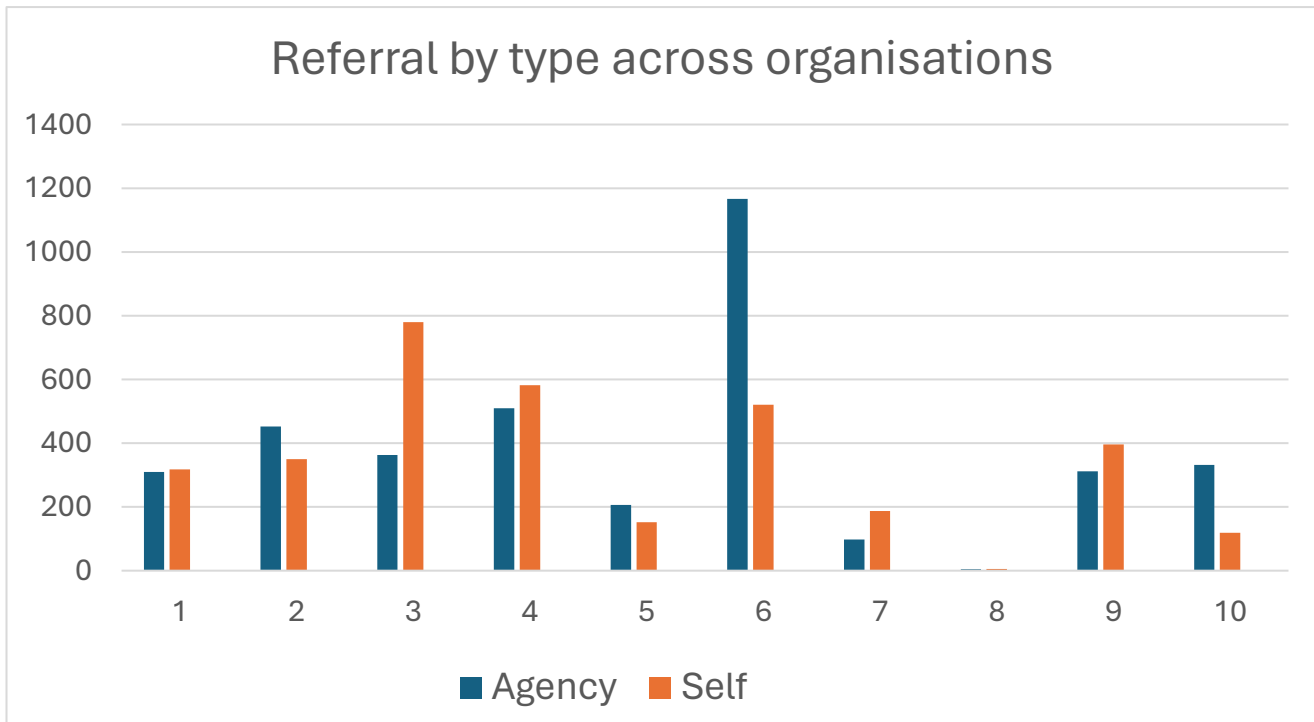
## 2. Age

SACC attempted to collect age range information across organisations. However, as this is recorded using different age ranges in different areas, it is not possible to collate age range information currently. SACC hopes to develop a method of collating this information in the future.

## 3. Source of referral

52% of new referrals were from other agencies and 48% were self-referrals. There are significant differences in ratio of agency and self-referrals across organisations (Table 1) with half of SACC organisations receiving more self-referrals than agency referrals. Referral processes vary across areas.

Table1



### Comments from individual organisations on referral source

*“The ability to offer a self-referral route into our services is a key fundamental part of our organisation and our values.”*

*“The only referral route now available to us is via RADAR (Rapid Access to Drug & Alcohol Recovery) - a multi-disciplinary team who offer same day screening & assessment.”*

*“We have seen a change in referral source since COVID with more self-referrals of people who have struggled with alcohol and never accessed any service before.”*

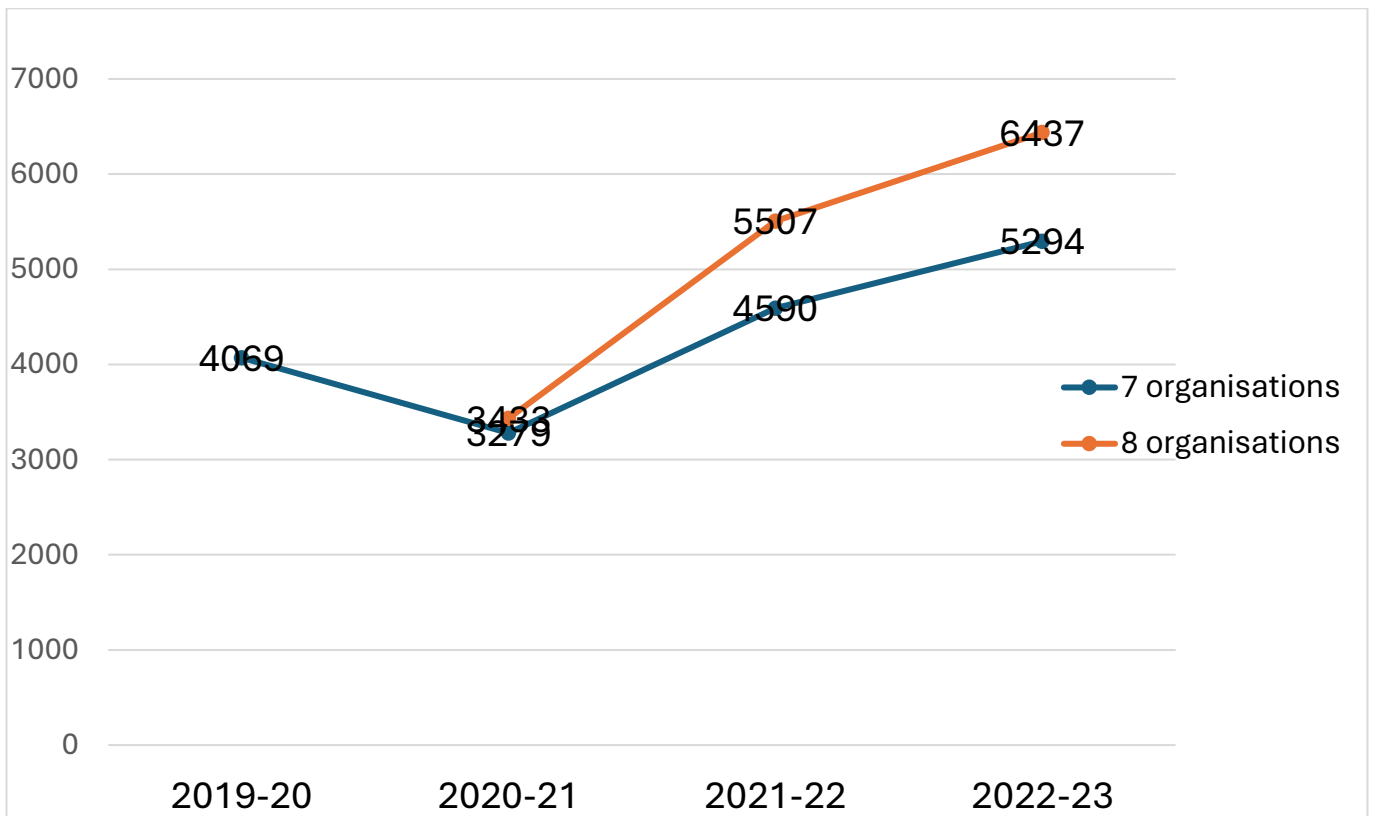
#### 4. Numbers of referrals across time

This is the fourth year SACC has collected stats from member organisations. We are now able to compare total referrals from 7 organisations across 4 years and 8 organisations across 3 years.

The chart shows a drop in referrals during COVID lockdowns a but a steady increase in referrals since then with a 30% increase in total referrals from pre-COVID (2019-20) figures. Again the picture varies across organisations.

Table 2

Referrals to SACC organisations over 3 and 4 years



## COUNSELLING PROVISION

### 1. Attendance rates

During 2022-23 over 48,000 hours of counselling support were offered to people across Scotland by SACC organisations. Of the 48,402 hours offered, 33,098 hours were provided - an attendance rate of 68%.

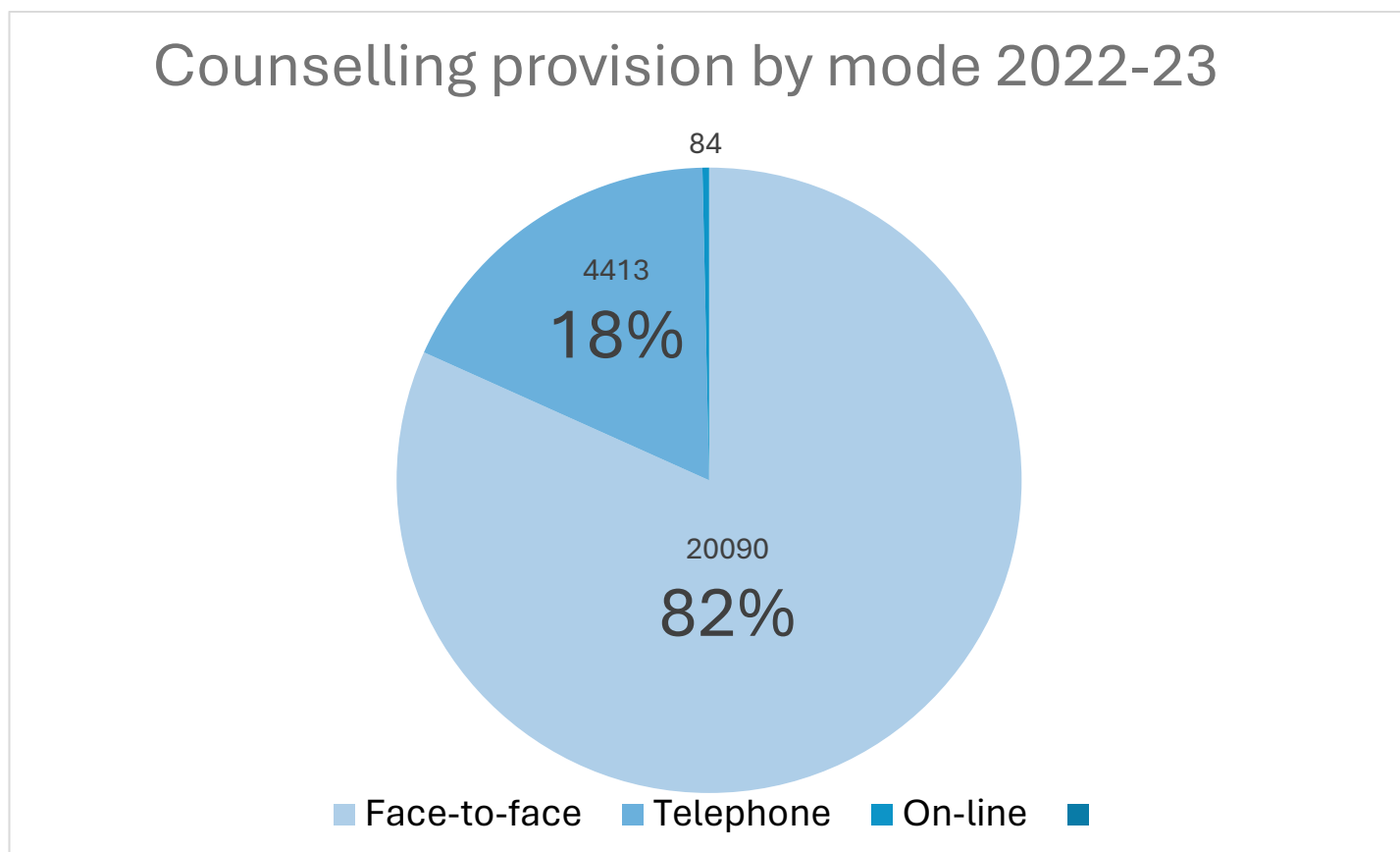
### 2. Mode of counselling provision

During the lockdowns of the COVID 19 pandemic, services developed new ways of delivering counselling services to clients - offering phone and on-line counselling. This has continued across 2022-23, with most agencies continuing to provide a choice for people using counselling services. Across 2021-22 face-to-face counselling was 62% of all sessions - this has risen to 82% in 2022-23.

7 organisations were able to break down their counselling provision into mode.

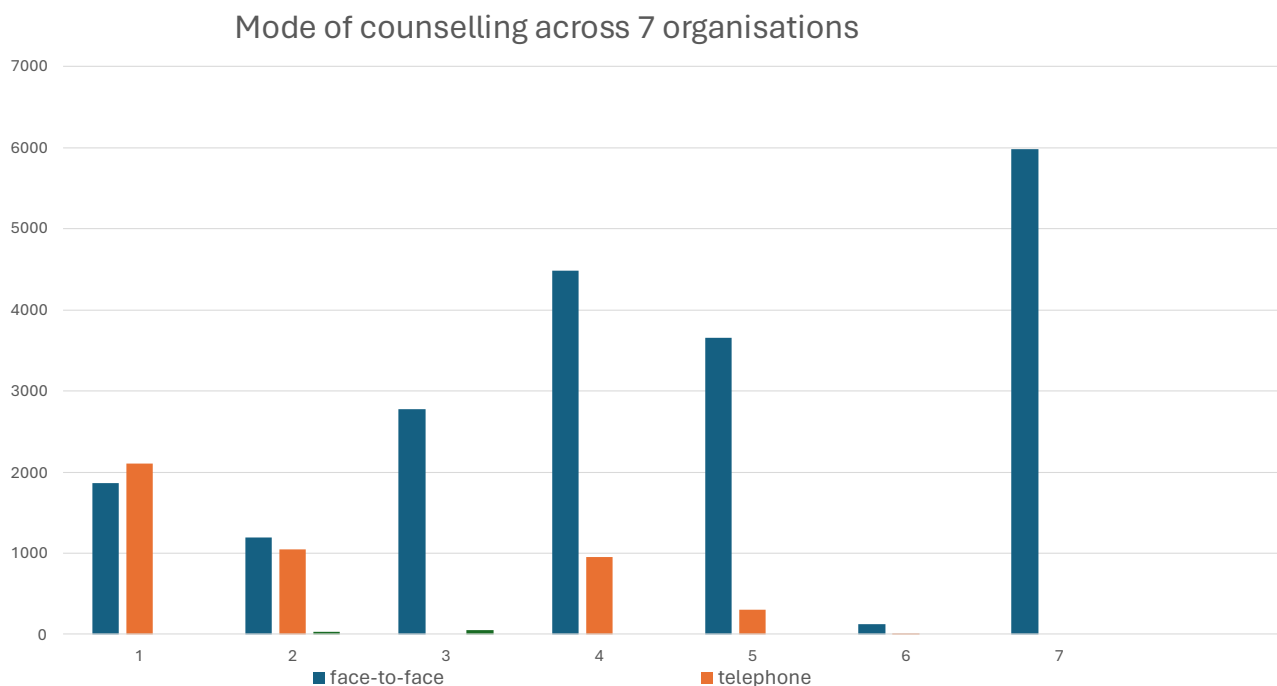
Of 24,587 hours - 20,090 were face-to-face; 4,413 by telephone; and 84 on-line.

Table 3



The mode of counselling provision varied across the 7 organisations that provided data.

Table 4



### Comments from individual organisations reflecting approaches to counselling mode

*“We generally only use online if requested by the client, this does not amount to many - and we do not allow students to provide online counselling.”*

*“We can do telephone check-ins if required - but no telephone counselling appointments.”*

*“We do not report on this, however I can confirm that our service is predominantly face-to face counselling - this is our preferred way of working.”*

*“Attending face-to-face sessions offers opportunities for socializing and can add some routine to clients’ lives.”*

*“Post COVID both our clients as well as staff/volunteers much prefer face-to-face sessions and we only use online/telephone in extreme circumstances - mainly to individuals with anxiety or mobility issues.”*

*“We continue to offer a hybrid service to meet the needs of our clients. Some people prefer the option of telephone/online as it makes it easier for them to engage for various reasons.”*

*“We have found that not many clients like the Zoom option. More clients are experiencing difficulty in accessing the office due to challenges with their mobility or financial hardship and are opting for telephone counselling.”*

*“Both volunteers and clients value face-to-face counselling sessions.”*

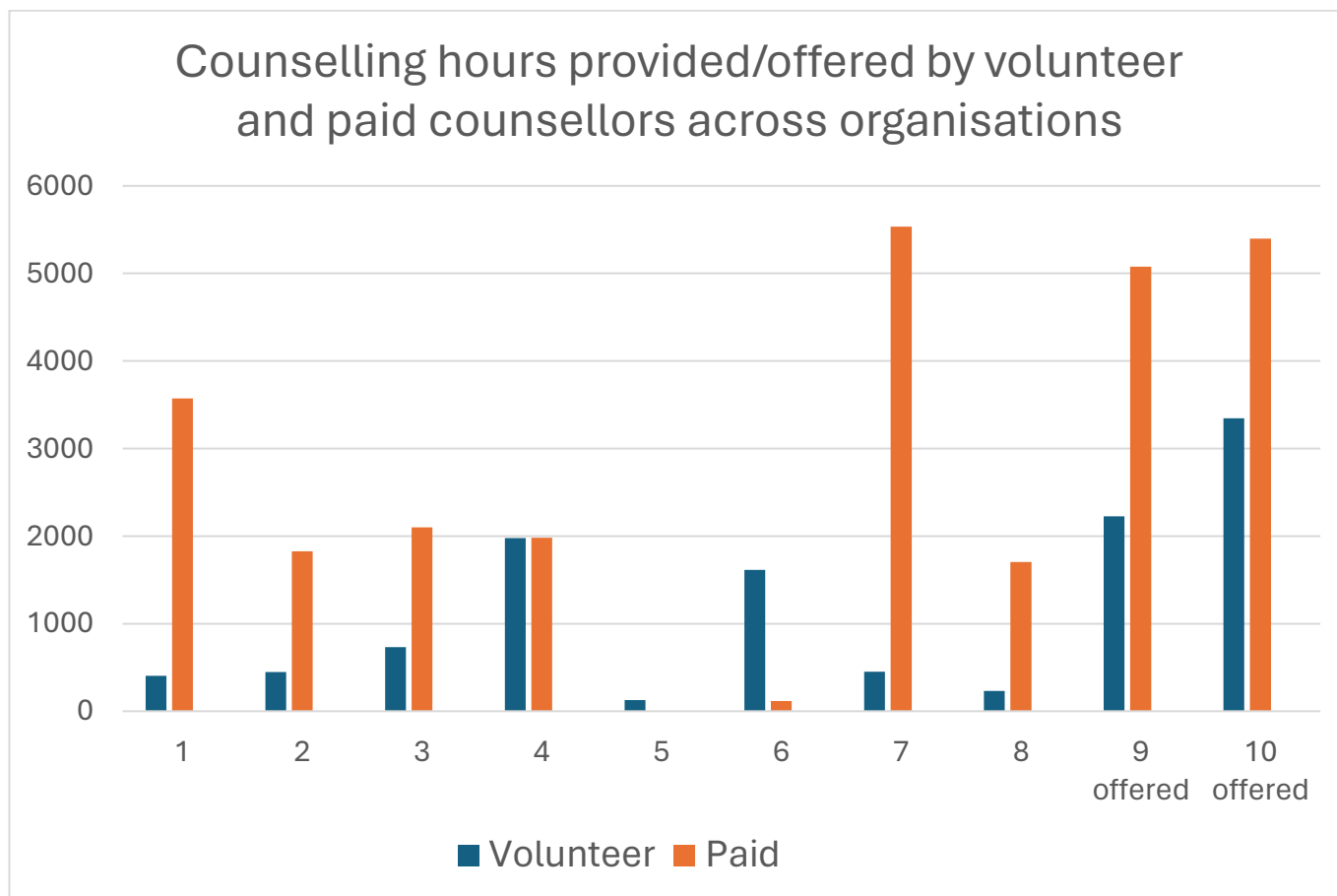
### 3. Counsellors

Counselling services across SACC member organisations are provided by both paid and volunteer counsellors - including students on placement. All counsellors have specialist knowledge, skills and experience of alcohol and addictions counselling. The majority of volunteer counsellors access training from SACC.

Most organisations have submitted the hours provided by volunteer and paid workers. However, a couple have submitted the hours offered by volunteer and paid counsellors - this includes DNA's and cancellations. Therefore, it has not been possible to collate the total number of hours provided by volunteer and paid counsellors.

Table 5 provides information submitted by individual organisations. This shows that, across most agencies, the majority of counselling hours are provided by paid counsellors – although the ratio of volunteer counsellors to paid counsellors varies considerably across organisations.

Table 5



However, the actual number of volunteer counsellors is considerably more than paid counsellors. There are 157 volunteer counsellors and 87 paid counsellors across the same organisations. Clearly, volunteers will work fewer hours than paid staff – however all counsellors require supervision and support. This is something that organisations are finding harder to resource.

#### **4. Counselling supervision**

Over 1,700 hours of counselling supervision were provided to volunteer counsellors during 2022-23 by SACC organisations. This does not include the external supervision used by some students on placement. Some organisations now require students to have their own, external supervisors before offering placements, whereas others offer supervision as part of the placement.

#### **Comments from individual organisations around counselling supervision**

*“Supervision is provided within COSCA/BACP Guidelines.”*

*“Students also receive clinical supervision from their respective course providers and/or engage in private supervision.”*

*“Recruiting new practice supervisors has been proving difficult and providing practice supervision is expensive, especially as we provide it for the students on placement.”*

*“We are lucky that only one of our supervisors is paid on a sessional basis. The rest of the (supervisor) team is made up of current staff and volunteers. We are currently at the limit of what the team can provide - this is preventing us taking on more volunteer trainee counsellors.”*

*“Using external supervisors can be expensive - we don't have the funds for this.”*

*“Most students receive supervision from their training provider - we only provide supervision if they have used up their allocated supervisions by the training provider - once qualified, we class them as volunteers and provide supervision.”*

*“Student counsellors are required to identify and access external supervisors for clinical supervision and are therefore not represented in the supervision hours delivered.”*

*“In our area it is an ongoing challenge to recruit counselling supervisors – including freelance supervisors. We are currently having to train some of our own more experienced counsellors to try and meet our supervision needs.”*

#### **OTHER VOLUNTEERS**

SACC member organisations offer a range of local volunteering opportunities within their local communities and worked with a total 248 volunteers (including volunteer counsellors) across a range of roles.



## **SACC**

### **1. Training**

SACC provides support, networking and training opportunities across its member organisations.

Over 2022-23 60% of SACC organisations had volunteers attend SACC's Counselling People Towards Behaviour Change (CPTBC) course.

60% had volunteers register for SACC's COSCA Certificate in Counselling Skills - a new opportunity offered during 2022-23 to try and engage more people from different backgrounds in volunteer counselling.

80% had volunteers /paid staff attend SACC CPD sessions.

50% had counsellors working towards SACC's Certificate in Advanced Alcohol Counselling Skills (portfolio).

Organisations were asked to rate how important SACC training is for them - very important; important; not important. All SACC organisations rated SACC training as very important.

#### **Comments from individual organisations on SACC training**

*“Our volunteers and paid counsellors, with different levels of experience, have accessed SACC’s CPTBC course. Everyone said the course was really valuable and increased their skills and confidence in working with people with alcohol issues.”*

*“Counselling people with alcohol problems requires specialist knowledge and approaches -the SACC course provides this.”*

*“Although we have not utilised this yet, it is an important aspect of SACC which we will certainly be using in future.”*

*“Please note, our organisation has only recently joined SACC as a member organisation” (therefore haven’t yet had opportunity to take up training).*

*“We are hoping to recruit new volunteer counsellors who will access the SACC (volunteer pathway) training and complete this within our organisation.”*

### **2. Membership**

100% of SACC organisations also rated their membership of SACC as very important for their organisation.

#### **Comments from individual organisations on SACC membership**

*“SACC helps us keep up to date with new policies/legislation.”*

*“Networking opportunities with other councils on alcohol are key for us.”*

*“As a small organisation, we really appreciate the networking, peer support and information sharing opportunities that being a member of SACC provides.”*

*“There is strength in being a member of a national consortium – it provides a stronger voice than an individual organisation.”*

## CONCLUSIONS

The alcohol counselling services provided by SACC member organisations continue to provide an important resource for individuals and families affected by the harm caused by alcohol - as well as providing a key resource for other agencies.

The training and support offered by SACC is very important to member organisations across Scotland, enabling them to train volunteer alcohol counsellors and contributing to continuing professional development for volunteers and workers.

Referrals for alcohol counselling are continuing to rise year on year - with similar numbers of self-referrals to agency referrals - although this varies widely across organisations.

SACC organisations continue to provide different options for accessing counselling (face-to-face, telephone, on-line). However, face-to-face sessions account for 82% of all counselling.

Volunteer counsellors continue to play a key role in the provision of alcohol counselling across agencies. There are more volunteer counsellors than paid counsellors - but paid counsellors still provide the majority of counselling hours - although this varies across organisations. Providing supervision for volunteer alcohol counsellors is becoming more challenging for some organisations - in relation to cost and recruitment.

Membership of SACC is very important to all SACC member organisations – providing access to training, networking, peer support and information sharing, and keeping up to date with alcohol related policies.

SACC member organisations vary in relation to size, resources, number and sources of referrals, and use of volunteer and paid counsellors. They range from large, urban agencies to small rural organisations. All our members are committed to tackling the harm caused by alcohol and other drug use in their local area. SACC members agree that, as a consortium, SACC provides a stronger voice for local alcohol support organisations and the people who use their services.

[www.scotacc.org](http://www.scotacc.org)

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