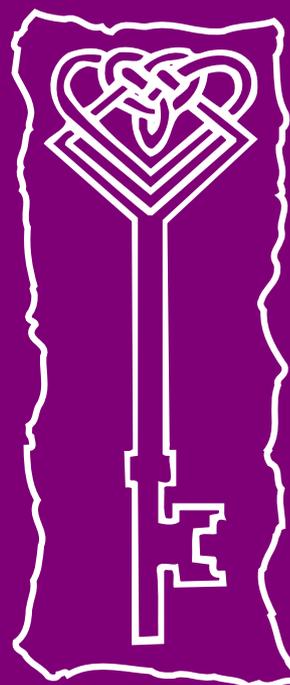


OPEN SECRET

Services offered by Open Secret include:

One-to-one Support
Groups
Befriending
Parent Support
Parents and Friends
Open Voices
**Information, Workshops
and Training**
Library and Resources



*A confidential service
for adult survivors of
childhood sexual abuse*

22 Newmarket Street
Falkirk FK1 1JQ

Tel: (01324) 630100 Tel/Fax: (01324) 635650

E-mail: info@opensecret.org

www.opensecret.org
also at

76 Port Street, Stirling FK8 2LP

Tel: (01786) 448504 Fax: (01786) 471204

E-mail: opensecretstirling@tiscali.co.uk
and

19 Mar Street, Alloa FK10 1HR

Tel: (01259) 729981 Fax: (01259) 222973

E-mail: opensecretalloa@btinternet.com

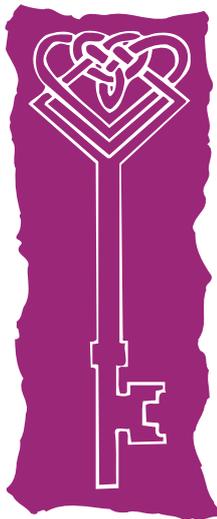
ANNUAL REPORT 2002 - 2003

*Open Secret is funded by the following
organisations:*

Open Secret is a registered charity in Scotland
number SC02465 and is supported by:
Falkirk Council, Stirling Council,
Clackmannanshire Council,
Forth Valley Health Board, Community Fund, and
Scottish Executive Domestic Abuse Fund.



OPEN SECRET



*A confidential service
for adult survivors of
childhood sexual abuse*

ANNUAL REPORT 2002 - 2003

Chairperson's Report

This has been another busy year for Open Secret and so too for the Management Committee. The organisation continues to go from strength to strength. In order to achieve this funding has been secured enabling the project to employ more staff, expand the premises in Falkirk and take on work in new directions.

The Management Committee has also grown. At the start of the year we invited on board seven new members bringing our total membership up to ten. It has been great to have so many new and enthusiastic people on board with the variety of skills and experience that they have brought with them, although chairing meetings of that size has been a challenge for me.

In order to harness all this potential the Committee undertook training with the staff introducing them to the organisation and discussing how best to support the organisation. I am pleased to say that we have been able, with much help from Catriona and the staff to establish eight sub-groups. They cover the following topics: Property, IT, Finance, Funding, Employment, Campaigning and Policies and Procedures.

The idea behind these is obviously to do some real work but it is also to ensure that the staff and Committee are working together on a practical level, sharing ideas and focus. The groups have opened up another avenue for communication between the Committee and the staff group and this has been very productive.

The last twelve months have been marked out with expansion and change. The Committee has spent a lot of time on finance issues and the appointment of a new Finance Officer has been most welcome. We are at present expanding the premises in Falkirk to provide much needed office space to house our growing staff group. We would also hope that the new room will be used for training and thus be income generating. Funding is always on the agenda and a large amount of time is spent discussing the need that is always around to secure more long term funding.

Looking forward the project is already moving into new and exciting areas of work. Funding was secured for a Youth Crime Prevention Worker who will be dealing with children and young adults who are at risk of offending or re-offending and who have been sexually abused. I am sure that this will be a challenging post but I am confident we can provide a very unique and much needed service.

On a personal note this will be my last Chairperson's Report as I am leaving to find gainful employment. So I would like to take this final opportunity to say that I am and have always been very proud to represent such a supportive and progressive organisation. Many thanks to everyone for their support over the past four years and my very best wishes for the future.

Lesley Thynne, Chairperson

Project Manager's Report

Nine years on and Open Secret is a well established organisation in our community and involved in a range of partnerships.

We have continued to look outwards and pay attention to abuse dynamics within the organisation which can result in insularity and isolation.

In September Open Secret held a conference "What's All The Noise About?" highlighting many of the issues and dilemmas in our work. It was chaired by Ruth Wishart and well attended by a broad section of workers from throughout Scotland. In addition to thoughtful speakers and lively workshops Open Secret singing and drumming groups gave the occasion extra sparkle and turned theory into reality.

Due to this event we attracted a strong representation on our Management Committee from a range of individuals with a variety of skills. This has allowed us to continue strengthening systems underpinning the work and ensuring adequate policies and procedures are in place to support and protect workers and service users. We also involved an independent consultant to assist in developing processes and structures. It will be a loss to Open Secret when our Chairperson, Lesley Thynne, steps down as she has had a strong commitment and interest in Open Secret and good relationships have been forged between staff and Management Committee.

We have a constant sense of change and movement in Open Secret and this year June Finlayson moved on as Clackmannanshire Development Worker and Annalisa Gibbons took over. A tough challenge on fourteen hours per week.

Prentice Smy came into post as part-time Group Development Worker and has revitalised Friends of Open Secret. We also obtained funding from the Scottish Executive Domestic Abuse Development Fund and Evelyn Kennedy was appointed to job share a Development Worker post with Hazel Walker who took over this post from Sue McDougall.

A new Finance Officer, Angela Dreyer-Larsen, was appointed resulting in more streamlined and efficient production of financial reports, a great asset in terms of strategic and financial planning.

Although a number of events are slightly outwith this financial year they highlight the constant energy and life force of Open Secret.

I went to Sweden for six weeks in April to meet colleagues involved in many aspects of abuse work and found the experience stimulating and energising. Traci and Patricia both had September weddings. Pauline has decided to move on after nine years of inspiring work with Open Secret. One of the spin offs of our stress on creativity and development potential is that no one is immune. We believe our own rhetoric.

We know it works and we wish Pauline every success in moving into creative and artistic work in which she was initially trained.

This year we have expanded and developed our work in Prisons and obtained some funding for Cornton Vale from Engender.

We trained a further group of volunteer support workers who were presented with their certificates by George Reid MSP for Clackmannanshire.

As usual we produced a very comprehensive Management Plan and Action Plan most of which we have put into effect although we are constantly influenced by external priorities. New initiatives such as the emphasis on Youth Crime and working with young people have resulted in less money being available either through the statutory services or through trusts and funds for work on core activities of sexual abuse projects.

Referrals continued at a steady pace as the demand for individual support remained consistently high. Groupwork also continued as a strong feature of our work and without it we would have to be extremely creative in employing community development methods. As Community Funding for groupwork ceases in September 2003 we have to rethink our objectives.

We had two student placements from Cumbernauld College and Robert Gordon University. Both Maureen and Annemarie have remained with us as volunteers. We also provided work through New Deal for a young person who has continued in post.

Our website is now almost complete and an exciting new development - Thank you to Rosina Prior who did not let us off with any sloppy practice.

Finally thanks to everyone who has contributed to Open Secret this year. Staff have worked consistently hard and remained committed to the ideals of the organisation. The Management Committee have been particularly supportive this year and genuinely interested in the work of the organisation. Friends of Open Secret is developing its role to support and assist Open Secret and also provide a vehicle for survivors to take their issues forward. I would encourage all service users to consider joining Friends of Open Secret.

Friends of Open Secret

Friends of Open Secret has had a busy and productive year. In March we took part in a "Planning Day" with Iyaah Warren from the Community Training and Development Unit. This event helped the group to clarify aims and prioritise goals for future work

Individuals from the group have taken part in a wide variety of activities over the year. "Friends" members are now available to talk to visitors at Open Days sharing information both about the organisation, the "Friends" activities and sometimes about more personal experiences as either service users or volunteers. Community outreach work has included: leaflet distribution to various local centres; a visit to the Park Street Community Centre to explore training possibilities; regular attendance at the monthly CVS networking lunches in Stirling; involvement in the Mental Health Day Services Consultation Forum.

Occasionally there is time to come in to the main offices and help with watering plants and tidying up.

The diversity of activities undertaken by members of "Friends" has proven the value of this group to the main organisation. Social events have included attending "The Magdalene Sisters" film in April at the Town Hall with an opportunity to have a question and answer time with Director, Peter Mullin, afterwards. In May there was the Body Shop Robbie Williams tribute event.

Training is a priority as it helps in building confidence and increasing knowledge within the group. Two members attended training on "Setting up your own social enterprise" in Glasgow and one member attended the Direct Grants Conference in Perth recently. The group as a whole has benefited from training on basic fundraising. This was carried out by Pauline Douglas, a Development Worker from "Kickstart". Pauline is offering our group ongoing support for fundraising initiatives. We all enjoyed meeting with Pauline to make a wish list and after much debate we prioritised raising money for a static holiday caravan near the coast, to be available to everyone involved in Open Secret. We realise this is an ambitious goal but we are all feeling motivated by the idea! Other aims identified by the training include planning more fun, social events and exploring ways to publicise the service for men. A successful funding application has been obtained from the Venture Fund for the Health and Fun Day on October 3rd 2003. Currently we are making new links with the Arts Development Team in Falkirk.

The "Friends" group as the name suggests is friendly and we would welcome new members. The monthly meetings follow a set agenda but are fairly informal and involve a lot of cake which magically appears each month without prior organisation. Our recently updated leaflet with a new logo designed by a member of Open Secrets Art Group has been distributed with the last newsletter and we hope this will attract others to the group.

Commitment to the group means attending monthly committee meetings while all other activities are optional and members of "Friends" decide their own level of involvement.

Survivor's Story

For over 20 years I've been a new-age mum talking openly to my son and daughter about drugs, sex, contraception, the ups and downs of relationships etc. For over 25 years I've been a nurse taking care of others and helping them cope with and overcome mental problems.

But for over 30 years I've lived with a secret, which I had kept hidden and despite my knowledge and common sense could not stop from having feelings of guilt, shame, self-loathing and isolation.

You see at around about the age of 11 over a period of several months I was sexually molested by a man employed in the trusted position of supervising children.

This has affected me, my life and my relationships, in many different ways whilst trying to carry on as "normal" and I did manage, most of the time. Then at the beginning of this year after the death of someone close, who herself had suffered years of anguish related to demons from her past, I realised I had to try and do something about my demon or it would continue to haunt me and taunt the rest of my life.

So I finally plucked up the courage and contacted Open Secret, where I was able through several emotional meetings, with a open-minded, non-judgemental or matter-of-fact counsellor, to talk about what had happened to me, my feelings and all the other things that had been effected. I was then able to address these feelings and put them into perspective.

I came to see myself not as a bad person but as a naive and vulnerable victim of a bad person. I could not have been his only one but I'll never know for sure. I can only hope that any others have managed to overcome their trauma.

I get angry when I think of that time now but I don't want to get hung up on that either because I don't want him to have any kind of hold on me, he probably did not even give me a second thought. I opened up and told my husband about all of this and he was, is and will continue to be my rock.

I feel I have achieved a sense of peace, a better sense of self-esteem and a little pride in myself for finding the courage to now have an "Open Secret" instead of a hidden one!

Thank you

Sandra

International Contacts

Open Secret network widely as contacts are crucial in raising awareness of issues of violence against women and children. We have well established links now with the Child Support Agency in Malawi. This year Open Secret had a visit from Dr Josephine Munthali and Colin Cameron the Malawi Consulate who updated us on the crucial work of the project, particularly in building schools and education for girls.

Open Secret have raised funds and will continue to support the Malawi Project.

Open Secrets Project Manager, Catriona Laird went on a six week study exchange to Sweden.

This was an intensive experience on how their system works with survivors, young people and perpetrators in prison. Catriona established many important links in Sweden and with professional exchange visitors from other countries.

We have also had visitors from the Centre for Psychosocial and Medical Rehabilitation of Torture victims in Georgia. They were very interested to hear how our service had developed and compare notes on the similarities between our organisations. We hope further contact can be extended.

Conference - "What's All The Noise About?"

In September 2002 Open Secret hosted their second awareness raising conference in Falkirk with delegates in attendance from all over Scotland. The title of the conference was chosen to highlight the fact that this is not the kind of work that can or should be done quietly. Like all survivors organisations we learn a great deal from those who use the service. We learn of coping strategies people have to adapt from childhood in order to survive and we learn a great deal about perpetrators. A lot of noise was made in grand fashion by our singing and drumming groups. We had an art exhibition and sold copies of the writers group anthology.

The conference also highlighted the need of Survivors Projects to continuing developing all areas of Protection, Prevention and Provision.

The day was hosted by Ruth Wishart with guest speakers, Cathie Peattie MSP (Falkirk East), Dougie Gray from Tayside Police, Sarah Nelson researcher and Ann Lindsay who shared her personal story.

Open Secret Training

Our internal training programme has been well accessed this year by individuals and organisations throughout Scotland. Many of our day courses have been over subscribed and we hope that the high profile of our training will continue to attract such a diverse range of practitioners next year.

Open Secret can also adapt training packages to the specific needs of individual organisations and we are happy to discuss your team or organisational needs by telephone.

External Training Presented in 2003

Victim Support - Kirkintilloch

Victim Support - The Borders

Queen Margaret University

Link Living

Sexual Health Unit - Stirling University

Simpson House

Joint Social Work / Police training

Health Centre Workers - Cumbernauld

Clackmannanshire GP's Conference

Networking Forums Open Secret Attend

Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group - Sexual Abuse Issues

Scottish Parliament Cross Party Group - Violence against Women & Children

National Victims Forum

Falkirk Suicide Prevention Working Party

Clackmannanshire community Care Forum

Falkirk Community Care Forum

Grangemouth Locality Health Promotion Group

Domestic Abuse Multi Agency Forum

Voluntary Sector Child Protection Forum

Scottish Eating Disorders Interest Group

Policy Sub Group

One of the strategic aims of the Open Secret Management Plan 2003 / 2004 is, to sustain the health of the organisation with supportive policies and procedures. With this aim as our focus we began by thinking about what policies do and why we need them. The following points emerged:

- Protection (for the organisation, the people we work with, volunteers and staff).
- Point of reference and guidance
- Visibility and common understanding
- Structure and a safe framework which informs good practice
- Planning aid
- Measure of strengths and limitations (evaluation tool)

Open Secret's policies need to reflect the values and principles that we hold and support our approach towards community development. Our flexible and creative approach to providing services that people want poses the challenge of creating safe balanced structures, which can allow informed risk taking. Healing from abuse is all about risk taking, the risk of trusting, the risk of disclosure and the risk of change, to name but a few. The infrastructure of the organisation must be designed to support the process by creating a safe framework from which people can heal, develop and realise their power.

The committee agreed a draft format for the presentation of the policy manual and work commenced. It was agreed to use the vast wealth of expertise and knowledge that exists in Open Secret by co-opting interested individuals when appropriate, e.g. the IT subgroup submitted an excellent Computer, Internet & Email Policy. Comments or suggestions on draft policies and procedures will be welcomed from staff, Friends of Open Secret and volunteers.

The existing Health and Safety policy was reviewed and amended and draft policies on Drug and Alcohol misuse and Code of Practice for staff and volunteers were amended and accepted. We have a comprehensive list to work through but we have made a positive start.

Campaigning Sub Group

Within Open Secret we see campaigning as a crucial aspect of the work we do. Survivors have carried a great burden of secrecy, fear and shame but their experience has informed our practice in the crucial areas of Prevention, Protection and Provision of services.

Finding their own voices, being seen and heard is crucial to their own healing and also in informing and influencing public policy and decision making.

Since inception of the Scottish Parliament we believe The Scottish Executive has demonstrated genuine interest and concern around all issues of sexual violence.

Open Secret attend two cross party groups, one on Violence toward Women and Children and on Sexual Abuse Issues. We are regularly asked for views on Consultation Documents and have often been quoted by The Scottish Executive.

IT Sub Group

Membership of the IT sub group has changed but seems to have settled to four enthusiastic contributors who have been:

- *Drawing up a policy on computer use including use of internet.* Thanks to Annemarie for this. The policy has gone to the management committee.
- *Overseeing the purchase of new computers for Falkirk and Stirling.* The new hardware is installed and working well.
- *Auditing of hardware and software.*
- *Recycling old computers*
- *Overseeing broadband installation.* OS Falkirk now has always-on, high-speed broadband internet access
- *Overseeing the website.* Last year OS secured the domain name **www.opensecret.org** and has begun producing a professionally designed website.
- A great deal of work has been done in gathering together information relating to all aspects of OS' work and fitting that information into an easily-accessible online structure. Thanks are due to all workers who were involved in producing the information. The work is still ongoing.

I am someone who does a variety of IT related work for OS and valued this opportunity to share ideas, concerns and issues around the use of IT at OS. What I didn't realise was quite how much I would learn about OS in the process of being a member of the sub group and how that would increase my respect for the organisation. It may not yet be an information superhighway at OS but the organisation has definitely upgraded from a footpath to an "A" road. I have no fear that the use of technology at OS will alter or dilute the fundamental values of the organisation.

Rosina Prior

Open Secret Volunteer Training - My Experience

It was a real privilege to complete the Open Secret volunteer training programme. The first day was held in the Alloa office and I was surprised to find so many in attendance. We were a large group of around twenty people.

Despite its size, the group gelled very quickly and we soon felt safe and comfortable with each other. The exercises used and the ground rules established on day one clearly helped us to bond well with each other and the highly skilled programme staff.

As the weeks progressed we learned an enormous amount about the role of Open Secret and the complexity of the consequences for survivors of childhood sexual abuse. The input from all the staff involved was excellent. They were thoughtful, encouraging and inspiring.

I think we all got a lot more from the training than we had expected and everyone said it had been a really positive group experience. The fact that no one dropped out was in itself quite remarkable. The volunteers themselves were a mixed and marvellous bunch of people whom I look forward to seeing again.

Patricia McCann

Survivor Story

I never thought that I would be writing something like this. I first came into contact with Open Secret about ten years ago. My life was a mess then, I trusted no-one and I was afraid of everyone. I had one-to-one counselling and some groupwork. To say it wasn't easy is an understatement. I couldn't handle all the different feelings I was having. But with a lot of hard work and patience from the staff I have come through it.

I never thought that I could be happy. If anything good happened in my life then I would push my self destruct button. I used to rely on drink to help me get through the day and I self harmed a lot. Now, thank god, I don't need to do all that any more. I never thought that I would go swimming because I was ashamed of my body now I go every week and I enjoy it.

I moved back in with my husband and although it was difficult at the beginning I'm now happy and at ease with my self and with him. Although I'll never forget what happened with me in my past I can move on. So for all the users of Open Secret persevere and stick with it. It will be hard and there will be pain and tears but in the end it is worth it because then you too will be able to move on, live life and enjoy it.

Carol

Finance

I joined Open Secret in February this year having spent most of my working life in the Arts. The problems are very similar: Constantly applying for

funding from statutory bodies, Trusts and Foundations and trying to make money stretch as far as possible.

Open Secret operates a combination of Sage and Excel as its accounting system. The organisation has a very complex financial structure, due to the different funding streams and the need to account for each of these individually, in part or collectively. One of the most complex areas is wages. A Development Worker may be being paid part-time by three different income sources i.e. 10 hours by Domestic Abuse, 10 hours by Criminal Justice and 15 hours by Falkirk Council. This means that the expenditure category for this one employee needs to be split across three budgets rather than from one. This complexity has now been worked into the system and allows us to budget and account by each individual office or by a particular funding source. We have offices in Falkirk, Stirling and Alloa and the finances of each of these offices can now be monitored and any potential problem highlighted in advance which allows us time to rectify the situation.

Both the Stirling and Alloa offices are under funded and we are active in trying to establish a more stable financial position for both.

There is still a lot to be done to ensure that Open Secret is working at its optimum but within its financial restraints. As we approach our 10th Anniversary we are determined that Open Secret will be financially stable, continue to grow and will continue to offer its invaluable services to its users.

Angela Dreyer-Larsen

Finance Officer

Open Secret - Corporate Key Patrons

Open Secret is inviting local businesses to join our newly formed Key Patron Programme. There are three levels from £300 - £1,000 per annum. This will give local businesses an opportunity to support a local charity and help to secure Open Secret's services to members of the community. Please contact the Falkirk Office on 01324 630100 for an application form to become a founder member of our Corporate Key Patron Scheme.

Fundraising

60's Night

Open Secret recently organised a 60's night to raise some funds. The event was held in Camelion Labour Club, who offered free use of their hall, and all who attended had a great time.

Several people got into the spirit of the night and came along in 60's style fancy dress which helped make the evening more memorable.

The event raised £130, which will go toward the cost involved in the Health and Fun Day, which will be taking place on the 3rd October.

Robbie Williams Tribute Night

Janet from the Body Shop hosted this fundraising event for Open Secret on 3rd May at the Three Kings Inn. Service users, staff and Management Committee members attended and had a great evening of dinner, dancing and entertainment from "Robbie Williams".

A further application for funds from The Body Shop was successful with £5,000 awarded to our group work programme.

Many thanks to Janet for her organisation and all who made this fundraising event a big success.

Treasurer's Report

Well another year gone by and again we have met and exceeded our service level agreements, and come in, on or around our financial targets.

We have continued to upgrade IT systems this year and are looking good for the next few years in this area, we also added to our extensive library and are in the process of taking on a training room next door.

We had a brought forward figure of £45,103 and had funding of £257,429 from various sources including Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannanshire councils, the Community Fund, Forth Valley Health Board, The Scottish Executive, Cornton Vale, Engender as well as individual donations, thank you one and all. Out of this we had expenditure of £256,728 which should have left us in a strong position for the coming year. HOWEVER as we are losing part of our core funding (the Community Funding ends this year) we desperately need to replace it, as this will leave us facing financial uncertainty once again.

I urge you to take advantage of our Key Patron Membership and help fund Open Secret's services in your community. Without Open Secret staff, sessional workers and volunteers our community would not have this valuable service, and without extra funding we will not be able to provide our core service never mind all the little extra activities that Open Secret is renowned for.

Our conference in September 2002 was a great success helping promote Open Secret and raise our profile, this has meant more referrals for our service, more referrals equals more expenditure.

Your community needs your help - sign up now to ensure Open Secret can maintain this essential service for all survivors in your area.

I thank you in advance for all your generous donations and for signing up for our Key Patron Membership for the coming year.

With your help and the unwavering help of staff, sessional workers and volunteers we can continue to offer the high standard of service Open Secret is so justly proud of. Thanks to all involved.

Elsbeth Hewitt, Treasurer

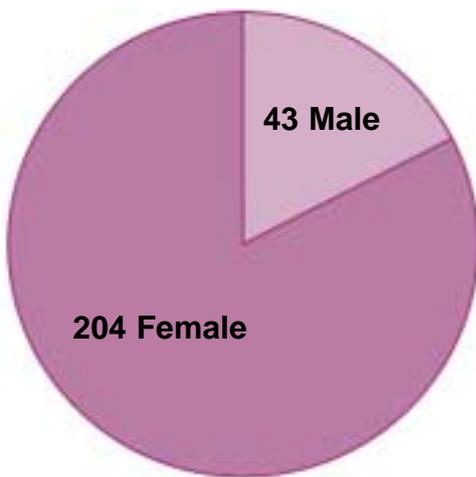
Statistics

Since beginning to collate our statistics using the Access Database package we have adapted the information collected continually as funders require different types of information in order to fit their criteria.

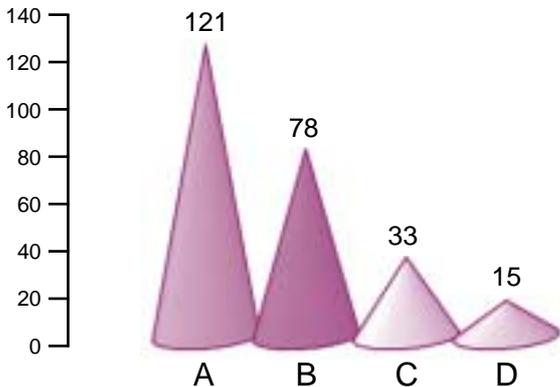
Some of the more recent changes we have made is in identifying the number of referrals we receive from prison services, and to begin collating new information such as what support systems service users have in their lives.

For the year 2002, we had 247 new referrals and the following charts illustrate some of the ways we break down our referral statistics for different purposes.

OPEN SECRET REFERRALS 2002 BY GENDER

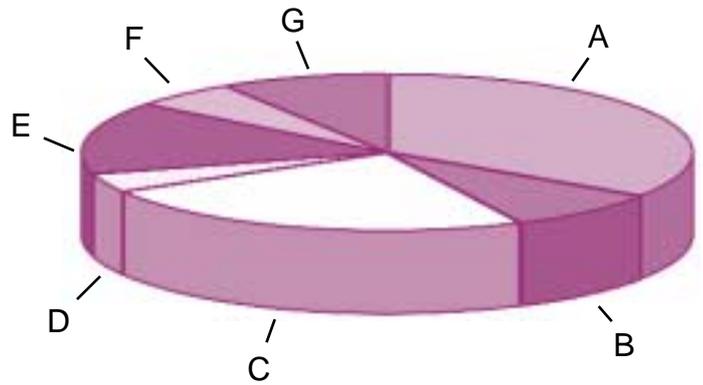


OPEN SECRET REFERRALS BY AREA



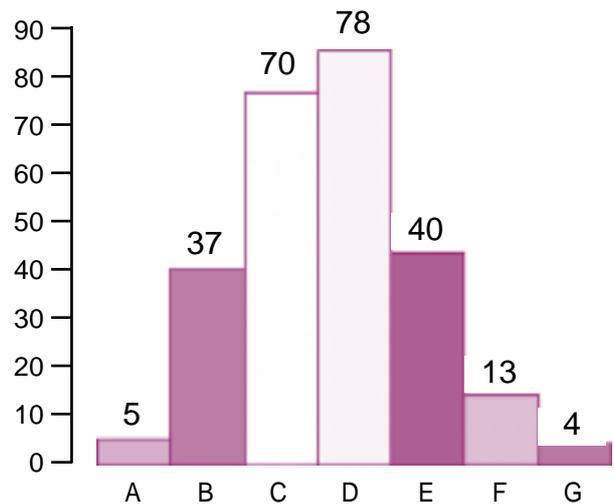
- A Falkirk
- B Stirling
- C Clackmannanshire
- D Other

OPEN SECRET REFERRALS BY AGENCY



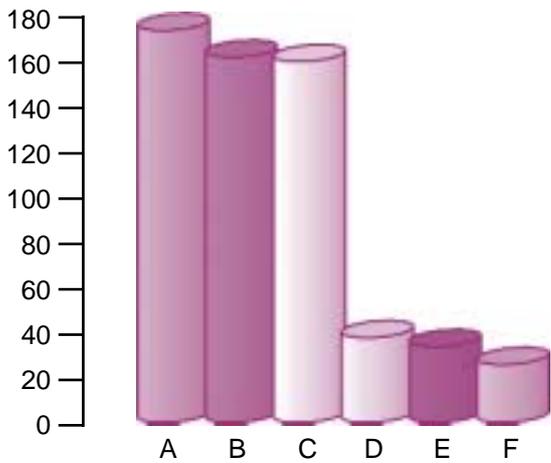
- A Self
- B Social Work Services
- C Health Services
- D Voluntary Organisations
- E Cornton Vale
- F Polmont YOI
- G Other

OPEN SECRET REFERRALS BY AGE



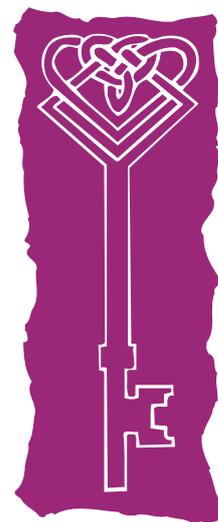
- A 0-15
- B 16-20
- C 21-30
- D 31-40
- E 41-50
- F 51+
- G Not indicated

**OPEN SECRET
CLIENTS WITH
MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES**



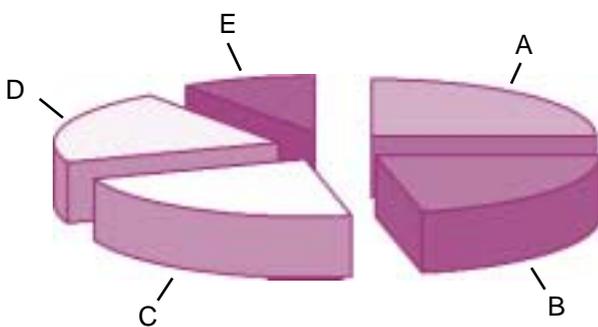
- A Suffering from Stress/Anxiety
- B Low Self Esteem
- C Depression
- D Phobias
- E Sexual Health Issues
- F Diagnosed with Mental Illness

**OPEN
SECRET**



*A confidential service
for adult survivors of
childhood sexual abuse*

**OPEN SECRET
COPING STRATEGIES USED
BY SURVIVORS**



- A Used Alcohol
- B Used Drugs
- C Used Aggression
- D Self Harm
- E Other