

# cynnal<sup>+</sup>:

*It is not just the laity whose health and well-being are suffering in post-lockdown Wales. Cynnal is a free, confidential counselling service for all clergy, ministers of religion, church workers and their families, as Wynford Ellis Owen, a Specialist Counselling Consultant at the organisation, explains*

In April 2015 Living Room Cardiff (LRC), launched Cynnal, to deal with all manner of problems and take a holistic approach to the interaction of mind, body and soul. The service recognises the spiritual dimension of life and, if appropriate, offers signposting for further spiritual guidance. The service is delivered in Welsh or English in all parts of Wales. Cynnal's predecessor, the Churches Counselling Service for Wales, had ceased to exist because it had encountered difficulties in meeting demand, managing its mainly volunteer workforce and providing them with appropriate supervision, professional training and on-going support. It therefore became impossible to maintain the service, although the need and demand were there.

Our services now include a dedicated bilingual website and regular national conferences are organised to further raise awareness and to debate some important issues of the day. Cynnal and the Living Room have designated the last Sunday in October as Recovery Sunday, and services, in both Welsh and English, are made available to churches of all denominations throughout Wales. We also commission twice-yearly prayers, at Easter and Christmas, which are eagerly awaited and despatched nationwide.



Cynnal provides services in centres based in Cardiff, Carmarthen, Caernarfon, Colwyn Bay, Wrexham and Aberystwyth. In some instances, we can visit clients in their homes if sickness or disability prevents them from attending the designated centres. However, during this challenging period of the pandemic, one-to-one counselling and group therapy sessions are being held on-line.

We currently offer help and support to 110 clients in Wales. Demand is far in excess of what we had originally anticipated. Denominations themselves need to ask why so many Christian workers and their families are seeking help.

The Living Room, and its parent company CAIS, have a proven track record. We, at Cynnal, are overseen by CAIS's Board of Directors and our service adheres to their Monitoring and Evaluation framework. Our performance is scrutinised in depth to ensure the strategy is on target and identify performance improvement opportunities; an Advisory Panel meets twice yearly to review the service and advise accordingly.

To find out more about Cynnal, or to support our work, please visit [www.cynnal.wales](http://www.cynnal.wales). You can also contact me directly, tel: 07796464045/029 2049 3895; e-mail: [wynfordellisowen@cais.org.uk](mailto:wynfordellisowen@cais.org.uk)