



# CirclesEurope

**December 2024**

## **WELCOME TO CIRCLESEUROPE**

**The Association for European Providers of Circles of Support and Accountability  
and their Supporters**

Dear Colleagues

It is hard to believe that we are at the end of another year. But what a wonderful year it has been as we celebrated 30 years since the first Circle started in Canada in 1994 for Charlie Taylor by Rev Harry Nigh and the congregation volunteers who became known as Charlie's Angels. Circles UK and the Board of CirclesEurope were overjoyed that so many of you could join us in London at Friends House and we think you will agree that it was a very special occasion. To continue the spirit of the 30 year Celebrations, we thought it would be good to devote this Newsletter to the Celebration event and an overview of the amazing presentations and contributions that were made. As this Newsletter is for the European Circles Providers, we have only included references to the European inputs. However, we are sure you will agree that the whole day, including the contributions from the UK, was a fantastic tribute to the Circles journey over the last 30 years.

## **STUDY VISIT ON 7 NOVEMBER 2024**

We combined a Study Visit with the 30 Year Celebration event because it was a great opportunity for Circles Providers to meet each other in person and share how Circles are provided in their respective countries. We were pleased to welcome representatives from Latvia, Sweden, Norway, the Netherlands,

Catalonia and Spain. Claire Ashley from Circles UK led the planning and organisation of the Study Visit which was a big job. Thank you, Claire, for all your work on this!

We are grateful to Circles South East who provided a very interesting input to our European colleagues which included the attendance and contribution from two Core Members who shared how attending a Circle has positively influenced their lives. We are also grateful to the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) who did an online presentation on their National Clinical Assessment and Treatment Service (NCATS) which is a national service that offers assessment, treatment, consultation and training for and about children and young people where there are concerns about harmful sexual behaviour. The feedback from the participants was extremely positive as participants found out about Circles practice in the various countries, what works well and the differences in approaches between countries. Ideas were shared on how to recruit and support volunteers, how to engage with Core Members with different needs and how to grow and develop Circles.

Below is a picture of Claire Ashley with the attendees from Latvia, Norway, Catalonia, Spain and Sweden (two of our Swedish colleagues' flight was delayed and they were unfortunately not able to appear in the photograph).



*Claire Ashley (Circles UK), Mireia Oliva Framis (Circles Catalonia), Miguel Brito Giménez (Circles Spain), Nerea Quintero González (Circles Catalonia), Diāna Ziedīņa and Jānis Nicmanis (Circles Latvia), Lienke Kooistra (Circles Netherlands), Hanna Fagerberg (Circles Sweden) and Katrine Fjørtoft and Maren Riis (Norway)*

**CIRCLES 30 YEAR CELEBRATION EVENT  
8 NOVEMBER 2024  
FRIENDS QUAKER HOUSE, LONDON**



## PRESENTATION BY REV HARRY NIGH

It was an incredible honour to welcome Rev Harry and his wife, Shirley who came all the way from Hamilton in Ontario, Canada. All agreed that his presentation was truly inspirational. He also shared some additional information on how the first Circle came about, how the community reacted to Charlie Taylor's release and the personal impact on Rev Harry and his family at the time. Thanks to Rev Harry for continuing to inspire us 30 years after the first Circle!







Here Rev Harry and Sir Terry Waite answer questions from the audience.

After the event, a journalist did an interview with Rev Harry which appeared in the Guardian. It can be accessed [HERE](#).

## THE PRESENTATION FROM CIRCLES NETHERLANDS AND CIRCLES BELGIUM

In the feedback of the event, Circles UK received many comments about how interesting participants found the presentation by Mechtild Höing, Marijke Bijlsma and Ann Castrel who talked about Circles in the Netherlands and Belgium. They gave interesting information about how Circles started in Europe, how they developed in the Netherlands and Belgium and how they currently operate. They also made the audience laugh with clever graphics and photographs. Thank you Mechtild, Marijke and Ann for an inspiring, interesting and entertaining presentation! Here are a few pictures of their session:



## THE VOLUNTEER PANEL



One of the highlights of the day was the Volunteer panel where Volunteers from the UK and the Netherlands came together to talk about their experiences of being a Circle Volunteer. Volunteers are special people because they make Circles work and they give many hours of their time to help Core Members reintegrate safely into the community, desist from reoffending, making our communities safer. Here Lienke Kooistra, Volunteer from the Netherlands makes an important point during the panel discussion.

Thank you to all the hundreds of Circles Volunteers that do amazing work every day! We value and appreciate each and every one of you.

## THE EXPERT PANEL

We were fortunate that we could hear from experts who work in the field of sexual abuse who shared their thoughts on how to address the stigma which is still attached to work with perpetrators of sexual abuse, how to positively influence public attitudes, improve our evidence base for Circles and find more funding to increase Circles provision. The Expert panel was facilitated by Simon Bailey, Trustee of Circles UK. Below are pictures of the panel sharing a light moment and Laura Negredo from Circles Spain making an important point.



## A FEW OTHER PICTURES



Our Swedish and Norwegian colleagues with the Circles UK CEO and CirclesEurope Board Chair, Riana Taylor.





## FEEDBACK FROM THE 30 YEAR EVENT

The feedback of the event was extremely positive and showed that we managed to arrange a high class and top quality event. It was attended by close to 100 people and about 40 people accessed the livestream. Here are a few of the comments that we received:

- It was a wonderful experience to be part of such a fantastic, well organized, informative and humane event. I learned a lot and gave me even more energy to keep working. The theatre performance was really touching. It comes to my head from time to time...and of course, the best part was to meet all of you in person.*



- *I especially enjoyed the presentations from Circles EU but also hearing from Circles volunteers. And so many people to catch up with!! Priceless.*
- *What an inspiring day - it was brilliant! Delighted to be part of it. Very well done on marking this special anniversary and thank you to all involved.*
- *Congratulations on an informative and inspiring event on Friday – what a great day.*
- *It was lovely to be part of the day. I really enjoyed seeing so many people from the past and spending time with them again.*
- *I just wanted to extend a huge thank you for the invite to your event on Friday. The speakers, panels and performance pieces were truly inspiring. I'm more passionate than ever to shine a light on the important work you do.*
- *Thank you for lovely days in London – very inspiring going back to our work!*
- *Thank you for putting on such a brilliant event I found it very cathartic and felt inspired.*
- *I just want to pass on my congratulations for a fantastic anniversary celebration. I was sorry not to be there in person, and can imagine it was even more enhanced in person, but I thoroughly enjoyed it online too. The agenda was so well thought through, and the calibre of speakers from the first to the last was exceptional. What a wonderful way to mark the special occasion.*

## OTHER NEWS

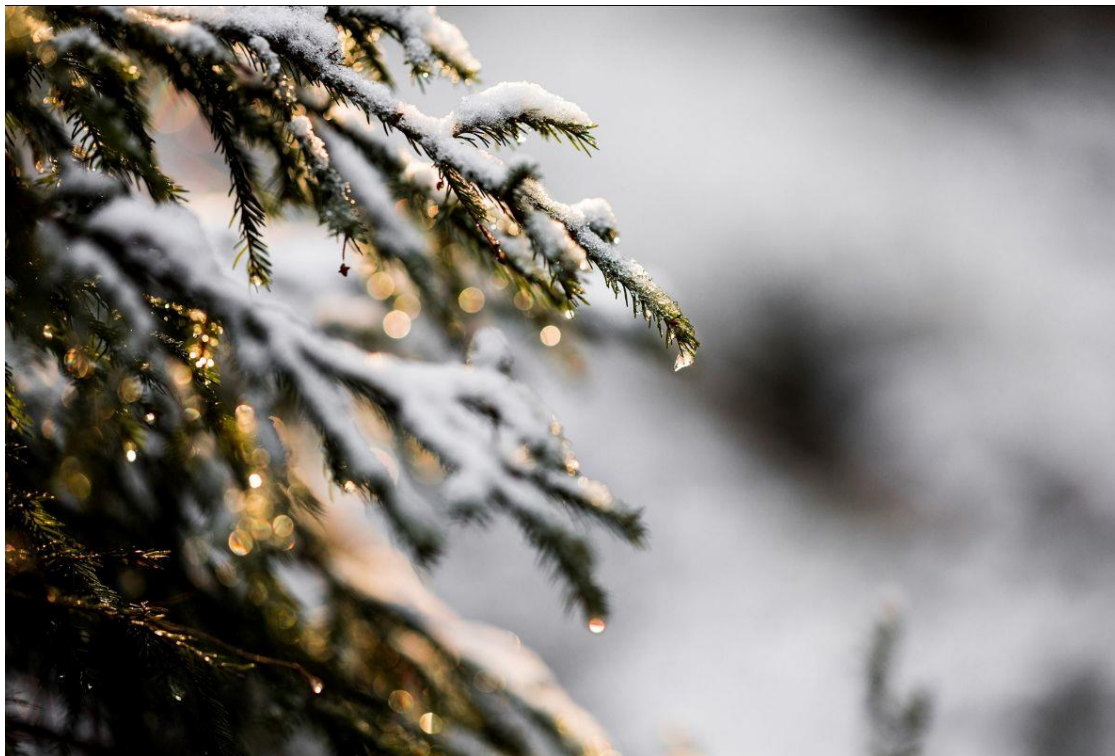
Marijke Bijlsma sent out invoices for membership at the beginning of December 2024. Please let us know if you have not received your invoice.

## INTERESTING PUBLICATIONS

Michael C. Seto, Kailey Roche, Nicole C. Rodrigues, Susan Curry and Elizabeth Letourneau published an evaluation of Child Sexual Abuse Perpetrator Prevention Efforts which focuses on 7 approaches. The abstract can be accessed [HERE](#).

## FESTIVE SEASONS'S GREETINGS!

Finally, all that remains is to thank you for all your support over the past year and to wish you all the best for the festive season. It has been wonderful to see so many of you this year and we look forward to continuing our work in 2025.



## **JOINING THE CIRCLESEUROPE ASSOCIATION**

Full membership of the Association is open to all Circles Providers in Europe, including Trustees, Staff and Volunteers. Associate and Associate Individual membership is available for non-European Circles Provider organisations and individuals, as well as those with an interest in Circles but who are not COSA Providers. If you want to join the Association, details are available on the website: [www.circleseurope.eu](http://www.circleseurope.eu). Membership fees are 40 Euros for full membership, 25 Euros for Associate Membership (for organisations) and 10 Euros for Individual Associate Membership.

We are pleased that the membership of the Association is steadily growing. Please circulate the information to all your volunteers and staff and encourage them to join the Association. We are always looking for funding and the limited funding that we have at the moment limits how much work we can do. Please may we therefore ask that you continue to share the news of the Association, and that we need donations and members to grow the Association to the benefit of COSA in Europe. The Board will of course continue to keep you updated on its work and progress.

## CONTACT

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