

bereft

Bereavement Support for the Borough of Ealing

Trustees' Annual Report

for the year ended
31st March 2017

Registered Charity Number 1077140

Hawkco House
35 Horn Lane
Acton
London W3 6NS

LEGAL & ADMINISTRATIVE INFORMATION

GOVERNING DOCUMENT

bereft's governing document is the Model Constitution for an Unincorporated Charitable Association which was adopted on the 4th June 1999

OBJECTS OF THE CHARITY

bereft's object is to provide a service of support and counselling to bereaved people in the London Borough of Ealing. Thereby alleviating distress and suffering and helping in the avoidance of future mental health problems.

SPECIFIC INVESTMENT POWERS

bereft's investment powers are conferred by the Trustees' Act 2000

PROFESSIONAL ADVISERS

Charities Aid Foundation Bank Limited 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4JQ

Mr Brynmor R Edwards, Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales (Independent Examiner), 79 Lightwater Meadow, Lightwater, Surrey GU18 5XJ

TRUSTEES AND GOVERNANCE

TRUSTEES

Trustees who served throughout the period of this report unless otherwise indicated, were as follows:

Catherine Fowler (Chairman)
Christopher Wickenden (Treasurer)
Deirdre McLellan (Secretary)
Nina Kallis
Rosaleen Gallen
Jacek Opienski

Trustees are elected or re-elected annually by the members in General Meeting.

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

SECRETARY'S REPORT

"I would have been lost without Bereft. They helped to put me back together at a time when I felt utterly lost and broken. I will never forget my sessions with my (Bereft) counsellor. I learnt so much about myself. I will be eternally grateful for the support received – words aren't enough!"

This is what one of the 159 bereaved clients we saw this year said in a post-counselling questionnaire. This is an increase of 19 clients over the year. Naturally, we are always happy to receive such words of appreciation about one of our counsellors, and of our service.

We are now in our seventeenth year, counselling Ealing residents aged 16 or over, who come to us with for help with the emotional pain of one or more bereavements, or having lost someone particularly suddenly or traumatically.

Our counselling has always been offered on an open-ended basis, as we believe working with bereavement does not fit neatly into a set number of sessions. Generally we prefer it to continue until counsellor and client both feel the work with us is complete. We delivered 1548 sessions this year – an increase of about 19% over last year. (It continues to be the case that fewer males seek our counselling than females though we feel this may be for other reasons than having no need for it. Princes William and Harry recently speaking out about their own need for it may help to dispel the male perception that it is weakness to seek counselling.)

A recent survey by the University of West London found that that only 10% of people with anxiety and/or depression over the age of 70 are referred for therapy. Apparently this is partly due to increasing isolation, but also to barriers such as a lack of transport or being unable to leave the home. We have always been proud of having a policy of arranging counselling at home for people who need it. One in ten of our clients is over 70.

The ethnic background of our clients has included Polish, Asian, European, Brazilian and Chinese, as well as people of Mixed Race and White British. Our counsellors too, are from a range of backgrounds and some speak other languages including French and Polish.

"I found my counsellor very sympathetic and easy to talk to. I could express emotions and sorrow much earlier with him than I could with any friends or relations."

How we Work

We have twenty four counsellors working with us at any one time. Most are on placement from a number of different training organisations including Metanoia, The New School, Regents' College, the Mary Ward Centre. They are at least in their second year of training in a humanistic approach, heading for a Diploma or Degree. Additionally, we are fortunate in retaining a number of people who have completed their qualifications but continue to volunteer with us.

Careful attention is paid to matching counsellors to the needs of our clients, bearing in mind the availability of both, plus the need to secure a suitable counselling room for them to meet in. Our Acton office is used for this - when not being used as an office – and we hire other rooms around the Borough as required. Counsellor and client meet weekly for sessions. We are always on the look-out for new, reasonably-priced rooms to make for easier access for clients.

All our counsellors must attend a Bereft Supervision Group, regardless of whether they are receiving supervision elsewhere. This – and their contact with the staff in the office if they have problems – is to ensure Best Practice and a caring and efficient service.

How do people hear of us?

After all this time we are well embedded in the local community. Just over 50% of our clients heard of us from their GP and 12% came from the NHS Counselling Service. The rest find us on the Internet, or through a friend, or have had counselling from us before and want support following another bereavement.

Training

Bereft is a small organisation and does not generally offer training, but twice a year we all meet together with our counsellors for a free day's training workshop on a Saturday in Hanwell. Everyone brings some lunch to share, and there is much networking! Topics relate to our counselling. This year we ran workshops on Personality Disorder and Bereavement & Trauma.

Funding and Donations

In order for the Bereft charity to maintain itself, clients are asked for a donation for each session according to their means. Generally this is between £15-£20, with the maximum at £35. No-one is turned away if they can't afford it for some reason. This makes up about two thirds of our funding. As members of a local Counselling Consortium of organisations offering low-cost counselling, we receive funding from a Health and Social Care grant which makes up the remaining third. This will come up for renewal in 2018, and a new tender will be put in by the Consortium - essential for the work to continue. Gratifyingly, some of our clients give us an additional donation at the end of their counselling to show their appreciation, as do others who value the work we do.

Our Staff and Trustees

Staff

At the end of February we welcomed Rebeca Santos to work alongside Jennifer Pitt, our Manager and Jo Houghton, who handles our finances and statistics. Besides Jennifer, Rebeca and Jo also take calls from distressed potential clients which calls for a calm and caring manner with which to assess their situation and offer support. (While clients are waiting for a counsellor to be allocated, staff in the office offer further telephone contact.)

Trustees and the Future

Some of our Trustees have been with us since our inception, and continue actively to contribute to ongoing work. One such is Chris Wickenden, our Treasurer, whose knowledge and support is invaluable. Apart from our excellent counsellors, I believe that our close-knit group of Staff, Trustees and Supervisors has been the most significant factor in the continuing success of our small charity. Having said that, we would still welcome some new Trustees and are on the look-out for them.

There is no sign that the need for our work is abating. With careful management we are currently in a healthy situation financially and, providing we continue to receive our Grant funding, our future as part of the Ealing community seems assured. Something to be proud of in these turbulent times.

"S (Bereft counsellor) was excellent. She has a most insightful and empathic manner and she helped me enormously through my grief."

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2017

	Unrestricted This Year	Last Year	Restricted This Year	Last Year	Total This Year	Last Year
RECEIPTS						
Grants	11,600	9,852			11,600	9,852
Client Donations	23,258	19,906			23,258	19,906
Other Donations	80	565			80	565
Investment Income	352	130			352	130
Gift Aid (note 3)	0	4,986			0	4,986
TOTAL RECEIPTS	35,290	35,439	£0	£0	35,290	35,439

PAYMENTS

ADVERTISING inc. website & leaflets

CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

	79	55			79	55
Insurance	1,129	1,117			1,129	1,117
Counsellors' Supervision	2,430	2,300			2,430	2,300
Manager & Assessor	8,150	8,535			8,150	8,535
Assistant Manager	4,884	4,795			4,884	4,795
Administrator	7,842	3,477			7,842	3,477
Volunteers' Expenses	0	31			0	31
Room Hire	2,527	2,149			2,527	2,149
Training	1,002	572			1,002	572

SUPPORT COSTS

Office Rent	2,205	2,021			2,205	2,021
Phone	2,020	1,518			2,020	1,518
Postage & Stationery	378	530			378	530
IT Costs including support	367	60			367	60

MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION

Admin Costs	336	325			336	325
Office Furniture Purchased	306	50			306	50
Replacement Laptop PC	1,189				1,189	
Bank Charges	25				25	

TOTAL PAYMENTS

	34,869	27,535	£0	£0	34,869	27,535
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NET CASH INFLOW (OUTFLOW)

	421	7,904	£0	0	421	7,904
OPENING BALANCE 1 st APRIL 2016	52,665	44,761	£0	0	52,665	44,761
CLOSING BALANCE 31 st MARCH 2017	£53,086	£52,665	£0	£0	£53,086	£52,665

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31st MARCH 2017

	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year
Current Accounts	7,966	2,882			7,966	2,882
Deposit Account	45,008	49,741			45,008	49,741
Cash in hand	112	42			112	42
TOTAL	£53,086	£52,665	£0	£0	£53,086	£52,665

Notes:

1. The accounts have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis.
2. The trustees consider that no capital commitments have been entered into other than shown in the financial statements (2016 Nil).
3. Gift Aid claims for the tax years 2015/16 (£1,733.77) and 2016/17 (£2,775.95) were submitted in 2017/18 and the funds received in September 2017. These amounts will included in the accounts for the year to 31st March 2018.

POLICIES

RESERVES POLICY

bereft ensures that it maintains cash reserves sufficient to cover an appropriate level of operating expenditure. This level is reviewed annually by the trustees.

RISK REGISTER

bereft maintains a risk register that is reviewed and amended as necessary at each trustees meeting.

SIGNATURES AND DECLARATION

DECLARATION

I declare, in our capacity of charity trustees, that the trustees have approved the report and accounts above and have authorised us to sign on their behalf

MRS DEIRDRE McLELLAN – SECRETARY

MRS CATHERINE FOWLER – CHAIR

19th October 2017

REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES & MEMBERS OF BEREFT IN RESPECT OF THE ACCOUNTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2017 SET OUT ON PAGES 5 AND 6

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER

Bereft's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. Bereft's trustees consider that an audit is not required this year (under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is the examiner's responsibility to:

- Examine the accounts (under section 145 of the Charities Act)
- Follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioners (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act and to state whether particular matters have come to the examiner's attention.

BASIS OF THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

My examination was carried out in accordance with General Directions given by the Charity Commission.. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by Bereft and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts and seeking explanations from the Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently, no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair" view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

1. Which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - To keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - To prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

B R EDWARDS FCA, JDipMA, FIMC

4th January 2018

Mr Brynmor R Edwards
Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England & Wales
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Lightwater
Surrey
GU18 5XJ