



Bereavement Support for the Borough of Ealing

Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts

for the year ended
31st March 2023

Registered Charity Number 1077140

Suite 11, Central Chambers
The Broadway
Ealing
London W5 2NR

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

BANKERS

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

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Stephen Dover
2 Castlebar Road
Ealing
London
W5 2DP

TRUSTEES AND GOVERNANCE

TRUSTEES

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

Stuart Derbyshire
Katherine Elks
Rosaleen Gallen
Lisa Langley-Jones
Deirdre McLellan (Secretary)
Jacek Opienski
Kevin Scott (Chairman)
Christopher Wickenden (Treasurer)

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

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY – DEIRDRE McLELLAN

APRIL 2022 TO MARCH 2023

“From the very first conversation I had with you I felt supported and indeed, cared for. You recognised that I needed help even more than I did and provided me with a wonderful therapist.” Feedback from a client

Bereft has entered its twenty-fourth year and, thanks to the combined, unceasing efforts of the Bereft team of staff and trustees, I think we are justified in being proud of our record of delivering excellent counselling and support to the bereaved residents of Ealing Borough during all that time, including overcoming the difficulties that arose when Covid 19 made it all more difficult.

This has been a particularly challenging year, due to a relatively sudden need to find new premises as our old small office in Acton became increasingly untenable. With our modest budget, and many years of making-do with very modest space, it was a challenge to find ourselves having to look in the open office market for new premises. It’s a tribute to our two major players - Jo Houghton, our multi-talented Finance and Administration Manager, and Chris Wickenden, our invaluable Treasurer - that after many nail-biting weeks waiting for completion, we could finally heave a sigh of relief and take possession of our new counselling room-cum-office in April this year (2023), located at Central Chambers, opposite Ealing Broadway Station. The effect was immediate. We could hugely increase the number of clients seen face to face – a service wanted by the majority of clients and counsellors. (Online counselling still accounted for half the sessions delivered overall during the year.)

“ I am very thankful. Helpful staff, clear messages and a genuine willingness to support. My counsellor listened carefully and gave me thoughtful caring input.”

Feedback from a client

Our Counsellors and Supervisors

We could not offer our service without the willingness of our volunteer counsellors, most of whom are on placement from an ever-increasing range of training organisations, spread quite widely over London and beyond. Our good reputation with counsellors on placement has obviously spread by word of mouth.

Everyone who applies is interviewed and their suitability and readiness to counsel our clients is assessed. If they take up an invitation to join us (and most do!) they receive a very thorough induction from Jennifer Pitt, our capable and experienced Service Manager, after which they must join one of our eight Supervision groups before being allocated a client. The benefits work both ways; the clients receive the counselling, and the counsellors learn hugely from the clients, from each other and from working with us.

We have six Counselling Supervisors: Beata, Helen, Jadzia, Kevin Scott, Rosaleen Gallen and myself. Kevin was a counsellor on placement some years ago, and has since qualified as a therapist and Supervisor, in addition to being Chair of both the Trustees and the Practice Group. His contribution to Bereft is huge.

Maria, who has been a counsellor with us since May 2018, completed her qualification some while ago, and, pleasingly, chooses to continue working with us. She says:

“Both as a trainee, and since qualifying, I have felt supported by the friendly staff who have readily made themselves available when I have needed to discuss either a clinical or personal matter. This applies across the board: from the office staff, to my Supervisor and the Service Manager.”

As one of her clients said, about her,

“Maria was such a good counsellor. Changed my life. I will be forever grateful.”

And Nadia, who has finished her training and had to move on to other commitments, says:

“I am very sad to be leaving Bereft. I have so valued my ever-supportive Supervisor and monthly Supervision Group, and my lovely clients have provided me with a wealth of learning. Such a caring agency to volunteer with. I shall miss you all as you’ve been alongside me through my training and out the other side!”

Training Days

Maria continues: ***“I’ve also benefitted from Bereft’s training days, which provide an opportunity to meet other volunteers and build a sense of connectedness in work that has the potential to feel isolating. I thought they were varied, relevant, thought-provoking and, most importantly, practical. They are one of the elements which contributes to show how well Bereft operates as a team.”***

As part of their induction, all new counsellors receive basic training in recognising and dealing with trauma, as not all training organisations routinely cover this. Additionally, we had (free) workshops on Counselling and Autism, and Support and Challenge in Counselling. In March 2023 we met in person, for the first time since the Covid lockdown, for a workshop on Suicidal Ideation, which was most successful, not least because counsellors were delighted at the chance to meet each other to discuss this difficult topic. Our workshops are well-attended and valued by counsellors as a way to supplement their college training and ensure our practice remains at such a high standard. They are organised and run by Jennifer Pitt, our long-serving Service Manager, who has done so much to develop Bereft.

“My counsellor was extremely helpful and kind. He put me at my ease so I could share all my feelings and thoughts. I felt validated and gained the ability to move on through my grief.”

Staff and Trustees

Operating on the premise that “small is beautiful” we have kept our service local, contained and reliable – which is a major part of why, for instance, we are so well embedded locally with GPs and other health professionals who refer their patients to us. It also means that everyone on the team of Staff, Trustees and Supervisors is kept informed on all matters affecting the charity and knows they are needed for it to continue. We are indebted to Chris – our Treasurer – who has given untold numbers of hours of financial expertise over many years, coupled with warm support and belief in the value of what we do.

“My counsellor has made a difference to my life in a huge way. I owe so much to her at such a difficult time. I often think of her. She was amazing!”

Our clients

This year our counsellors provided 2,568 counselling sessions (2021/22 - 2,885) to 211 clients (10 more than the previous year). Due mainly to the effects of the ongoing need caused by Covid we began offering – instead of being open-ended – a maximum of 24 weekly sessions per client – to keep up with the demand and ensure no client had to wait very long for their counselling to start. Although 24 are generally offered, for some people less are needed and 12 is the average number overall, as opposed to 14 last year. This may change again now we have the new premises and the number of clients seen in person is increasing exponentially. However, we still offer remote counselling to meet the needs of those who choose it, or have difficulty accessing a counselling room.

Below is how a client experienced their ending with their Bereft counsellor:

“My counsellor was most sensitive in informing me our sessions would be coming to an end in the next month. This actually prepared me mentally, enabling me to move forward and giving me that strength. She guided me and gave me tools (to cope). Thank you.”

Ealing being such a culturally diverse borough, our clients come from 25 different stated backgrounds. They were: 34% white British, 23% from Mixed Heritage, and the other 43% identified as Asian, African, European, American, Australian and South American. The male to female client ratio was 21% to 79%, a change from the previous year – 18% to 82% - and hopefully this divide will continue to narrow as the male population gets to appreciate that seeking such help is acceptable when the pain of loss and despair gets too much to bear alone. This year has seen increased numbers of clients with long term mental health problems, referred by GPs or professionals from the NHS Mental Health Services. Our service often fills the gap for individual therapy and support that such clients desperately need but do not get from the NHS, for whatever reason.

“At the beginning of counselling I had thought of suicide, but this abated after two sessions”

We have, of course, a Safeguarding policy and procedure which extends to clients, counsellors and staff. Sadly, the numbers of clients who have lost someone to suicide seems to be on the increase, and this can lead to despairing thoughts and feelings which can be shared with counsellors when not safe to do so with anyone else. On a practical note, our work often results in a client being able to function much better, to take care of themselves, obviate the need for medication such as anti-depressants, and being able to return to work. Financially, it is impossible to quantify the value to society of this last, but it is nonetheless a benefit, and can also be a sign that someone’s bereavement counselling is completed.

The office staff, who are all working part-time, includes Samantha, originally a Bereft Counsellor and a capable third member of the staff team. All three have to take the time to deal with quite a few enquiries/referrals which are not suitable for our service and must be signposted elsewhere, but receive careful attention nonetheless.

“My counsellor has been a sanctuary every week, a space to explore my feelings and emotions, something I have not done before. He has enabled me to open up and delve into my inner self with empathy and compassion, and I am so very grateful for that”

Donations and Finance

With ballooning costs, though a no-frills organisation, the importance of client donations is absolutely crucial to our continuance. All clients are made aware of our need for funding and our acceptance of donations. This, it could be said, helps them value what they are receiving, as well as appreciate that their contribution enables others to receive the service. No-one, however, is turned away because they can only afford little or no donation and indeed, 31% of clients came in this category this year. Probably due to the every-increasing cost of living, the *average* donation was down to c£10 from £13.50 last financial year, but we did have several clients making very generous donations. We are also grateful to regular benefactors who are continuing to donate to us. We would welcome more - of course!

A downturn in donations, for whatever reason, also affects the amount of Gift Aid we can claim as shown in the financial statement but we are confident the Bereft team will identify other sources of funding once our current Health and Social Care grant comes to an end in October 2023. Both the demand from bereaved people, and the supply of counsellors giving their services, shows that Bereft is needed as much, if not more, than ever. And, as one client put it

“Amazing staff and service. 10/10!”

Deirdre McLellan, Secretary

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2023

	Undesignated		Designated		Total	
	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year
RECEIPTS						
Donations	27,091	42,640	-	-	27,091	42,640
Gift Aid (Note 4)	2,016	2,741	-	-	2,016	2,741
Grant	7,500	7,500	-	-	7,500	7,500
Legacy (Note 2)	-	-	-	1,114	-	1,114
Investment Income	532	13	-	-	532	13
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£37,139	£52,894	-	£1,114	£37,139	£54,008

PAYMENTS						
ADVERTISING inc. website & leaflets	-	260	-	-	-	260
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES						
Insurance & professional fees	563	465	-	-	563	465
Counsellors' Supervision	5,080	4,190	-	-	5,080	4,190
Manager & Assessor	15,274	15,541	-	-	15,274	15,541
Administrator & Assistant	19,238	13,607	-	-	19,238	13,607
Volunteers' Expenses	384	-	-	-	384	-
Room Hire	1,608	-	-	-	1,608	-
Training	250	1,192	-	-	250	1,192
Counsellor support (Note 2)	-	-	-	720	-	720
SUPPORT COSTS						
Office Rent	4,800	4,500	-	-	4,800	4,500
Phone & Broadband	2,525	2,197	-	-	2,525	2,197
Postage & Stationery	-	214	-	-	-	214
IT Costs including support & hosting	1,523	1,337	-	-	1,523	1,337
MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION						
Sundry Admin Costs	156	75	-	-	156	75
Bank & JustGiving Charges	293	312	-	-	293	312
Legal & Professional charges	485	-	-	-	485	-
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£52,179	£43,890	-	£720	£52,179	£44,610

NET CASH (OUTFLOW) INFLOW	-£15,040	£9,004	-	£394	-£15,040	£9,398
OPENING BALANCES 1 st APRIL 2022	£90,921	£81,917	£394	-	£91,315	£81,917
CLOSING BALANCES 31 st MARCH 2023	£75,881	£90,921	£394	£394	£76,275	£91,315

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND
LIABILITIES AT 31st MARCH 2023**

	Undesignated This Year	Last Year	Designated This Year	Last Year	Total This Year	Last Year
FIXED ASSETS						
Computer equipment – Laptop & Printer purchased in 2016/17 for £1,189 – net book value at year end >>	-	-	-	-	-	-
Computer equipment - Laptop & Printer purchased in 2018/19 for £1,029 net book value at year end >>	-	-	-	-	-	-
Office Furniture - purchased in 2016/17 for £306 net book value at year end >>	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	-	-	-	-	-	-
CURRENT ASSETS						
Gift Aid Claim outstanding	633	551	-	-	633	551
Cash & Bank Balances as per page 7						
CAF Deposit Account	65,945	75,819	-	-	65,945	75,819
CAF Current Account	9,916	15,082	394	394	10,310	15,476
Cash in hand	20	20			20	20
	75,881	90,921	394	394	76,275	91,315
CURRENT LIABILITIES						
Accrued Legal Expenses	(648)	-	-	-	(648)	-
NET ASSETS	£75,866	£91,472	£394	£394	£76,260	£91,866

Notes:

1. The accounts have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis.
2. The charity has used fund accounting principles in the preparation of these accounts.
 - a. Funds
 - i. All funds are unrestricted
 - ii. The charity received a legacy from the estate of Catherine Fowler, a former Chairwoman of Bereft during the year ended 31st March 2022. The trustees resolved to designate this legacy to be used to provide additional support for our volunteer counsellors. No payments were made out of this fund during the year (2021/22 - £720)
3. The trustees consider that no capital commitments have been entered into other than shown in the financial statements (2021/2022 Nil).
4. Receipts from HMRC in respect of Gift Aid claimed on donations received are included in the Receipts and Payments account in the year in which they are received. Any Gift Aid due to the charity for the current financial year but not received by the year end, is shown in the statement of assets and liabilities above.
5. The trustees recognise the financial year's deficit and the consequent reduction in reserves but are confident that the plans that they have put in place to develop and implement a new financial plan as well as to move to a more suitable base of operations, will enable Bereft to continue to provide the service it is committed to in its charitable aims.

POLICIES

RESERVES POLICY

Bereft ensures that it maintains cash reserves sufficient to cover an appropriate level of operating expenditure together with any anticipated downturns in income. This level of reserves is reviewed annually by the trustees.

RISK REGISTER

Bereft maintains a risk register that is reviewed and amended as necessary annually.

SIGNATURES AND DECLARATION

DECLARATION

Signed on behalf of the trustees by:

KEVIN SCOTT - CHAIRMAN

DEIRDRE McLELLAN – SECRETARY

CHRISTOPHER WICKENDEN - TREASURER

19th October 2023

REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES & MEMBERS OF BEREFT IN RESPECT OF THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2023 SET OUT ON PAGES 7 - 9

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

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 31st March 2023

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which give me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- the accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; or
- the accounts did not accord with the accounting records; or
- the accounts did not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached

>

Mr Stephen Dover
2 Castlebar Road
Ealing
London W5 2DP

>