



Bereavement Support for the Borough of Ealing

Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts

for the year ended
31st March 2021

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

BANKERS

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

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER

Mr Stephen Dover
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:

Catherine Fowler (died 16th July 2021)
Christopher Wickenden (Treasurer)
Deirdre McLellan (Secretary)
Nina Kallis
Rosaleen Gallen
Jacek Opienski
Kevin Scott
Katherine Elks (appointed 20th October 2020)

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

ACTIVITIES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

REPORT OF THE SECRETARY & ACTING CHAIRPERSON – DEIRDRE MCLELLAN

APRIL 2020 TO MARCH 2021

“I should like to thank you for the support Bereft has given me over these weeks and to let you know how appreciative I am of this kindness and for the invaluable service that you provide to people like myself” (feedback from client, November 2020)

I think the word ‘kindness’ stands out from this feedback. Kindness and compassion are two of the major qualities Bereft offers, both by the staff and by our counsellors. And perhaps there has never been a time when it was needed more, with the Covid 19 lockdown causing so many of our clients to lose loved ones without being able to visit them or say goodbye. Clearly the span of this report from April 2020 to March 2021 was a time of challenge for the way in which Bereft operates, consolidating the change from face to face sessions in counselling rooms to “remote” working on Zoom videolink or on the phone. Half our clients opted for counselling on Zoom and half on the phone. Either way, the onus was on the client to find a suitable space at home to talk to their counsellor, uninterrupted by family, friends or deliveries. Not always easy for them, and more than one had to resort to sitting in their cars instead.

It is generally believed that the lockdown had a deleterious effect on mental health, and certainly there was increased demand for our services.

“M gave me tremendous support and understanding around my partner’s death. It was the worst year of my life.” (client had 33 counselling sessions)

“It was such a relief to hear my sessions would be open-ended rather than numbered, and for that I think Bereft are incredibly special.” (client received 28 sessions)

Our Counsellors

Unlike many counselling organisations we provide “open-ended” counselling, referred to by this client, which means that our policy from the start in 1999 has been to allow for as many sessions as clients and counsellors feel are necessary to complete their work together. This year 25% of our clients attended more than 20 sessions, some even benefitting from over 40 sessions when needed.

Our counsellors work voluntarily for us on placement from a wide range of training organisations once they are in at least their second year of training, have studied bereavement issues and are ready for clients. Since the lockdowns we have had to ask for an additional requirement: to have undertaken training in ‘remote’ counselling after face to face was no longer a possibility. It is to their credit that they have coped so well and adapted to the different way of working. However, we do plan to return to face to face counselling when circumstances permit.

We ask for a commitment of a year from our counsellors but many have stayed much longer with us after qualifying, and appear to value working with us as we value them.

“Your help helped me to move on from a very dark place I felt stuck in.”

“I cannot thank my counsellor enough. I felt so relaxed with him and was able to talk about things I had been scared to. He got me to a much much better place.”

Statistics

Bereft saw 199 clients for a total of an amazing 2,694 sessions this year. These number are up by 17% and a 40% from last year, in spite of losing a couple of weeks of sessions during the change over to remote counselling during the first lockdown in March/April 2019. As mentioned elsewhere, we took on more counsellors to meet the demand. Referrals also increased, from 223 to 241, though not everyone goes on to receive counselling, as some are not ready, really available, or feel pressured by family etc.

The male to female split was 20% male to 80% female. We have more male counsellors these days and took on a male supervisor and supported his training, and we do hope that the m/f split in the clients will even out in time. In terms of age groups, 88% were 18-64, 10% were 65-74 and 2% were 75-82 years of age. (This year saw 77 clients who had a role as a carer, which is an increase of 10% from last year.)

Unusually, due to counselling remotely being possible, some clients who had travelled to stay with family during the pandemic were able to work with us from Spain, Italy and Abu Dhabi.

The ethnicity of our clients was as diverse as usual, from 20 different stated backgrounds. Overall 45% were white British and 55% were 'other'. I have made the point in previous years that our counsellors also come from a number of different ethnicities.

The majority of our referrals come via GPs (32%), and 30% via the NHS Counselling Service IAPT. Clients self-refer, and 12% were from former clients or had researched on the Internet and 15% from hearing about us by word of mouth. People are also told about us by the NHS Crisis and other Mental Health teams, Cruse, local hospitals or private therapists. The average donation per session per client was a little down at £15, but several clients made well above average donations at £40 to £45. (No-one is excluded from counselling if they can only make a modest donation, or none.) We have also been grateful for gifts from private donors, and later in the year an ex-counsellor ran the London Marathon on our behalf. We also receive Gift Aid on donations (see the Accounts).

"Thank you K (counsellor) for your help getting me through some of the biggest questions I've faced in my life. This has been so rewarding - trying to stand on two feet again."

Our Staff

The trio of part-time staff we had had for a long while and who worked so well together sadly saw the loss this year of Annette d'Alton who reluctantly had to stop working for Bereft due to health reasons. We hope to find a third person to join our very hard-working Manager, Jennifer and our Counselling Co-ordinator, Jo before too long, though since then one of our current counsellors is moving across to partly fill her role. The staff cover a huge range of tasks, including personal support for counsellors, as well as for clients for whom picking up the phone to request our service can seem a daunting prospect. The kindness and compassion they receive, as mentioned above, is beyond price.

Our Supervisors

We upped the number of voluntary counsellors to thirty and had therefore to provide extra essential counselling supervision sessions. With the increase in counsellors, we now run eight monthly (mandatory) supervision groups, with up to four counsellors in each one. This is an essential part of a safe and efficient counselling service, of value to counsellors and clients alike in ensuring good practice. Again, these have to take place on Zoom until we can reinstate face to face groups. For some it is actually more convenient, being people with busy lives juggling their training, employment and family commitments.

Training

Although we are not a training organisation, we do offer at least a couple of free training sessions a year for counsellors' CPD (Continuing Professional Development) on issues related to bereavement.

Our Manager Jennifer Pitt felt counsellors needed more this year and organised and facilitated the following by Zoom videolink:-

- *Delivering Bereavement Counselling Remotely during the Pandemic* – small group discussions
- *Bereavement and Coronavirus* – small group workshops
- *Basic Trauma Skills in the therapy room* facilitated with Jadzia, one of our supervisors and a specialist in trauma therapy
- *Diversity in our Work* – Laurie O'Garro, trainer

Our Trustees

Distressingly, our loyal and committed Chair, Catherine Fowler, suddenly contracted a serious illness at the end of 2020 and had to cease her Trusteeship and also her work as a Counselling Supervisor for us, which was a shock to everyone. She had been with Bereft since its inception in 1999 and her warmth, humour and unswerving support are much missed. Sadly, Catherine died in July 2021.

Fortunately, our invaluable Treasurer and all round adviser, Chris Wickenden, continues with us as do our other Trustees. We are pleased too, to have co-opted a new Trustee - Lisa Langley-Jones - who was a counsellor with us way back in 2004 and has made a career in psychotherapy, currently working with the NHS.

Donations and Funding

"Thank you, and please continue with your super, inspiring and nourishing work. It is SO important." (from a letter from a grateful client in memory of the person he, and his family, lost)

We have every intention of Bereft continuing into the future. Our finances are healthy due to clients' donations and careful management. We are grateful for the (diminishing) funding from the Health and Social Care Fund, which we obtained because we are part of a consortium of local counselling services. However, this will run out next year.

However, we trust that we are well-known enough as a proven, well-established, unique and valuable service for Ealing residents to be looked on favourably if grants are available.

"My counsellor was a lifeline for me. She listened and understood what I was going through and when everyone around you seems to shy away from asking you about your loss, or doesn't hear what you're saying when you do talk, it is the most life-affirming thing.... She made me feel normal when I felt as though I was on fire. Warmest and deepest thanks." Extract from a long appreciative letter from a client with multiple losses

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2021

	Unrestricted		Restricted		Total	
	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year	This Year	Last Year
RECEIPTS						
Grants	7,500	7,500			7,500	7,500
Client Donations	36,874	38,329			36,874	38,329
Other Donations	780	695			780	695
Investment Income	31	102			31	102
Gift Aid (note 3)	6,300	1,227			6,300	1,227
TOTAL RECEIPTS	£51,485	£47,853	£0	£0	£51,485	£47,853

PAYMENTS						
ADVERTISING inc. website & leaflets	0	711			0	711
CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES						
Insurance & professional fees	488	559			488	559
Counsellors' Supervision	3,050	3,337			3,050	3,337
Manager & Assessor	12,012	8,794			12,012	8,794
Assistant Manager	3,477	6,671			3,477	6,671
Administrator	10,043	8,230			10,043	8,230
Volunteers' Expenses	0	0			0	0
Room Hire	589	7,059			589	7,059
Training	1,183	515			1,183	515
SUPPORT COSTS						
Office Rent	3,600	4,500			3,600	4,500
Phone & Broadband	2,054	4,290			2,054	4,290
Printing, Postage & Stationery	368	307			368	307
IT Costs including support & hosting	1,227	510			1,227	510
MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION						
Sundry Admin Costs	104	284			104	284
Replacement Laptop PC		0				0
Bank Charges	69	60			69	60
TOTAL PAYMENTS	£38,264	£45,827	£0	£0	£38,264	£45,827

NET CASH INFLOW (OUTFLOW)	£13,221	£2,026	£0	£0	£13,221	£9,442
OPENING BALANCE 1st APRIL 2020	£68,696	£66,670	£0	£0	£68,696	£57,228
CLOSING BALANCE 31st MARCH 2021	£81,917	£68,696	£0	£0	£81,917	£66,670

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES
AT 31st MARCH 2021

	Unrestricted This Year	Last Year	Restricted This Year	Last Year	Total This Year	Last Year
CASH FUNDS						
Current Accounts	7,472	1,504			7,472	1,504
Deposit Account	74,425	67,173			74,425	67,173
Cash in hand	20	19			20	19
TOTAL CASH FUNDS	£81,917	£68,696	£0	£0	£81,917	£68,696
CURRENT ASSETS						
Gift Aid Claims Due for 2019/20	0	3,430			0	3,430
Gift Aid Claims Due for 2020/21	0	0			0	0
TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS	£0	£3,430	£0	£0	£0	£3,430
FIXED ASSETS						
Computer equipment – Laptop & Printer purchased in 2016/17 for £1,189 – net book value at year end >>	0	0			0	0
Office Furniture purchased in 2016/17 for £306 net book value at year end >>	0	0			0	0
Laptop & Printer purchased in 2018/19 for £1,029 net book value at year end	0	343			0	343
TOTAL FIXED ASSETS	£0	£343	£0	£0	£0	£343
LIABILITIES	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0	£0

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 (2019/2020 Nil).
3. 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. Gift Aid due to the charity but not received by the year end is shown above

POLICIES

RESERVES POLICY

Bereft ensures that it maintains cash reserves sufficient to cover an appropriate level of operating expenditure together with any anticipated downturn in grant 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:

MRS DEIRDRE McLELLAN – SECRETARY



MR CHRISTOPHER WICKENDEN - TREASURER

19th October 2021

REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES & MEMBERS OF BEREFT IN RESPECT OF THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR
ENDED 31st MARCH 2021 SET OUT ON PAGES 6, 7 AND 8

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;
2. Or to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Mr Stephen Dover
Castlebar Road
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London
W5 2DP

Date

21st January 2022

