



Bereavement Support for the Borough of Ealing

Trustees' Annual Report & Accounts

for the year ended
31st March 2024



Registered Charity Number 1077140

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

Phone: 020 8896 2800

Email: bereftbereavementsupport@hotmail.co.uk

Website: www.bereftbereavementsupport.co.uk

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:

Lucas Dawe (appointed 17th October 2024)
Stuart Derbyshire
Katherine Elks
Rosaleen Gallen
Lisa Langley-Jones
Deirdre McLellan (Secretary)
Jacek Opienski
Kevin Scott (Chairman)
Kevin Stinton (appointed 17th October 2024)
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 2023 TO MARCH 2024



After no less than 25 years of Bereft offering skilled and caring bereavement counselling and support to residents of Ealing Borough, I think we can be forgiven for looking back with some satisfaction at the ground we've covered. Usually at Bereft we look forward - constantly working out ways to improve or adjust our service to meet changing needs, to manage the financial and other problems which beset small charities and, not least, to support our clients and counsellors.

As co-founder, I initiated a regular meeting of a Practice Group, where our small team of staff and counselling supervisors gather together at regular intervals. Everything from clinical practice to the finances is on the table, and everyone has a say in the running of the charity. Some of those in this group are also Trustees, who meet regularly to review progress and keep Bereft on track. Chris Wickenden, our Treasurer, does a great deal more, updating us on Charity Commission and employment requirements and, vitally, monitoring our cash flow month by month in conjunction with our very capable staff member Jo Houghton who is responsible for Client Administration, Finance and Accounting. Jennifer Pitt, our Manager, who has been with us for many years, gives unstinting clinical support to our counsellors and has done much to develop our



service. The third member of the staff team, Sam Miller – Client Assessor/Client Liaison, gives much-valued support to our clients and counsellors alike.

A major change for us this year has been the move to a new counselling room/part-time office in Central Chambers, opposite Ealing Broadway station. We have more facilities than before, and the location couldn't be more accessible from all parts of the Borough.

Comments from some of our key players:-

Jennifer (Manager): *"It is no surprise that Bereft – like many, many voluntary sector operations – has had its share of ups and downs over the year (fortunately, more of the former!). And reflecting on the downs, the challenges, I cannot think of a more professionally generous, supportive and wonderful bunch of people to overcome these with."*

Jo (Office and Finance Manager): *"Working for Bereft, I do always feel valued and the last eight years have been a pleasure."*

Chris (Treasurer): *“I’ve had the pleasure of working with the staff and trustees of Bereft for over ten years now. I am proud to be part of such a caring, professional and committed team.”*

Kevin (Supervisor and Chair of Trustees): *“As a trainee and now qualified counsellor I’ve had the pleasure of working with colleagues who care deeply about our clients. On many occasions I have seen the difference we make to those affected by a death, or multiple deaths. People who feel there is no hope can be supported to take those first steps to move forward. It’s privilege to be alongside them.”*

Our Clients

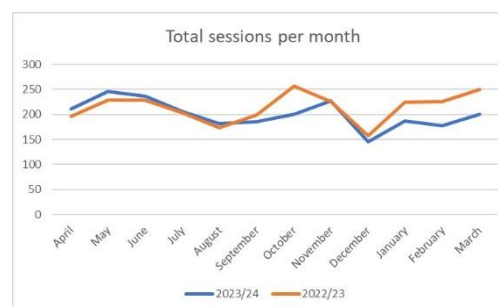
Comment from post-counselling feedback:

“Initially, I was reluctant to go for bereavement counselling but was persuaded by my son. I had my mind made up that I would just try a couple of sessions. Thanks to my counsellor H, I completed all twenty four meetings with her and it has been of great benefit to me.

She helped me to explore and reflect on my feelings and actions and to make adaptations to my life after the death of my much missed husband. I would certainly recommend Bereft to help anyone coming to terms with the loss of a loved one”

Over the past 25 years, counselling – and particularly bereavement counselling – has become much more accepted as something helpful to seek when suffering the pain of bereavement and grief. I like to feel that we have contributed to this understanding through the existence of Bereft. Moreover, the subject of grief is much more openly and frequently covered in the media these days, which has led to increased perception of the possible damage to mental wellbeing that can occur in suppressing the feelings, particularly if the bereavement is traumatic, and/or relates back to events in the past.

As with the client above though, some still find making the initial approach takes courage, but, thankfully, they invariably end up grateful and appreciative of the warmth of their initial welcome and the skill and care of their counsellor.



“Bereft was a godsend at a difficult time.”

Finding Us

Although mostly we need our clients to make an approach to us in person, the way they hear of us varies. The majority (32%) are told of us by their GP, which has always been the case. Some seek online and find our excellent website. Other routes are via staff at local NHS Trusts, Mental Health Services, social prescribers (16%) and word of mouth. Former clients also return sometimes after further bereavements, trusting to the support they have received in the past.

Owing to the demand, we now offer 24 counselling sessions to each client, rather than being open-ended as we were in the past. (This can be increased in special circumstances if the need arises.)

To adjust to the demands of the outbreak of Covid, we switched to delivering counselling on Zoom or by telephone. Subsequently, this has continued in that we now offer a *hybrid* service, seeing 60% of our clients face to face at their request, mostly at our premises in central Ealing or a rented room elsewhere.

The majority (87%) of our clients are aged between 17 and 64. They come from diverse backgrounds and ethnicities, as has always been the case – 44% white British (2022/23 34%), 19% mixed heritage (2022/23 23%) and the remainder Asian, European, American, Australian and South American.

We saw 229 clients this year, which was 18 more than the previous year, with the ratio of male to female was 23% to 77% (2022/23 21% to 79%). 82 of our clients identified as carer, either currently or to the person they lost.

“My counsellor was excellent at supporting me. I really valued our sessions and they helped me very much”

Donations

Vital in keeping Bereft afloat, we offer each client an opportunity to make a donation to support the work of Bereft (according to their means). This helps to ensure that others will be able to receive our service in future. The vast majority appreciate this opportunity to donate, and many clients make generous donations. There are even three ex-clients who continue donating, even though their sessions with us have finished. Whether or not they can donate, however, clients receive the same service from us.

Our Counsellors

As a Counselling Supervisor, I have never ceased to be awed by the personal qualities, skill and commitment of those counsellors who apply to us for a placement in their second year (or further) of training. Without them we would have no service to offer of course. Some have stayed on with us after the end of the placement and/or qualifying, which we greatly value, and they also offer each other generous peer support. It is pleasing to note another change over the years. An ever-increasing number of different counselling training organisations recommend us to their students for placement, often from outside West London. All applicants are offered a rigorous interview to assess their suitability for us, and vice-versa.

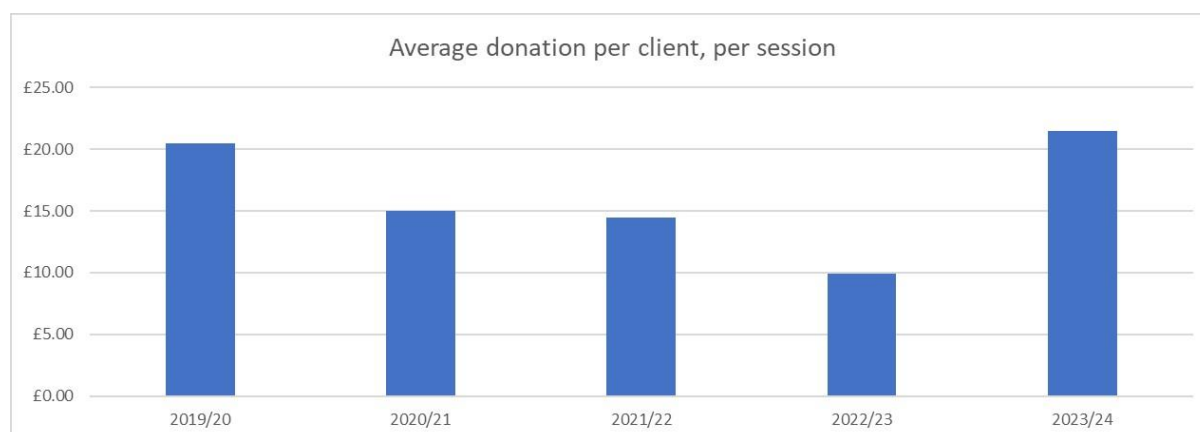
Upon acceptance, our staff get to know them through a package of induction, basic trauma training, and allocation to one of the mandatory Bereft supervision groups, delivered via Zoom. (To keep up with demand, there are eight of these groups now.) Excellent support to counsellors, is key to retaining them and this support is supplied by our Supervisors, our very experienced Manager – Jennifer - supported by Staff Jo and Samantha. Although not a training organisation as such, Bereft offers some free training workshops each year on topics related to our work, which are very popular as they offer an opportunity for counsellors to enhance their Further Professional Development as well as to learn from each other and to feel part of the wider organisation.

“I just wanted to let you know that I really appreciate your service. I would also mention that my therapist is really intuitive and asks the difficult but important questions as he listens and hears what is being said – or not said. I’m so grateful for your service at this terrible time.”

“My counsellor A was knowledgeable, empathetic, respectful, supportive, kind and gently encouraging... without this time and space I honestly don’t know how my mental health would have coped. “

Finance and the Future

We are a highly professional but no-frills organisation (as will be seen from the attached Accounts) and always have been. However, as our service developed and expanded to meet the demand, and not least with our having to pay – for the first time – the market rate for our new premises, our costs have risen unavoidably. The donations from our clients go a long way towards meeting our running costs, but as no-one is turned away, other funding streams are vital.



“This compassionate service is vital and (I think) shows humanity at its best.”

We bid for – and won – a modest Health and Social Care Grant from London Borough of Ealing. This bid required many hours of hard work from an already committed part-time staff. A recently-formed Funding Committee is now tasked to find other funding streams to ensure we can continue to increase our revenue. Kevin our Chair of Trustees and Chris, our Treasurer are confident that the next 25 years will see Bereft continue to give help to those in often extreme distress who have been bereaved.

“This compassionate service is vital and (I think) shows humanity at its best.”

Deirdre McLellan - Secretary



RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2024

| | Undesignated | | Designated | | Total | |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|------------|-----------|----------------|----------------|
| | This Year | Last Year | This Year | Last Year | This Year | Last Year |
| RECEIPTS | | | | | | |
| Donations | 32,124 | 27,091 | - | - | 32,124 | 27,091 |
| Gift Aid (Note 4) | 1,983 | 2,016 | - | - | 1,983 | 2,016 |
| Grant (Note 6) | 3,750 | 7,500 | - | - | 3,750 | 7,500 |
| Legacy (Note 2) | - | - | - | - | - | - |
| Investment Income | 1,241 | 532 | - | - | 1,241 | 532 |
| TOTAL RECEIPTS | £39,098 | £37,139 | - | - | £39,098 | £37,139 |

PAYMENTS

CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

| | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------|--------|--------|---|---|--------|--------|
| Combined Commercial Insurance | 568 | 563 | - | - | 568 | 563 |
| Counsellors' Supervision | 5,610 | 5,080 | - | - | 5,610 | 5,080 |
| Manager & Assessor | 17,581 | 15,274 | - | - | 17,581 | 15,274 |
| Administrator & Assistant | 22,934 | 19,238 | - | - | 22,934 | 19,238 |
| Volunteers' Expenses | 433 | 384 | - | - | 433 | 384 |
| Room Hire | 3,733 | 1,608 | - | - | 3,733 | 1,608 |
| Training | 681 | 250 | - | - | 681 | 250 |
| Counsellor support (Note 2) | - | - | - | - | - | - |

SUPPORT COSTS

| | | | | | | |
|---|--------|-------|---|---|--------|-------|
| Office Rent, Service Charge & Premises Insurance (note 5) | 10,051 | 4,800 | - | - | 10,051 | 4,800 |
| Office Light & Heat | 444 | - | - | - | 444 | - |
| Phone & Broadband | 2,511 | 2,525 | - | - | 2,511 | 2,525 |
| IT Costs including support & hosting | 1,384 | 1,523 | - | - | 1,384 | 1,523 |

MANAGEMENT & ADMINISTRATION

| | | | | | | |
|---|-------|-----|---|---|-------|-----|
| Printing, Postage & Stationery | 495 | 92 | - | - | 495 | 92 |
| Sundry Admin & Office move-in Costs | 909 | 64 | - | - | 909 | 64 |
| Bank & JustGiving Charges | 277 | 293 | - | - | 277 | 293 |
| Legal & Professional charges re new Lease | 683 | 485 | - | - | 683 | 485 |
| Rental Deposit on Central Chambers | 1,503 | - | - | - | 1,503 | - |

| | | | | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------|----------|----------------|----------------|
| TOTAL PAYMENTS | £69,797 | £52,179 | - | - | £69,797 | £52,179 |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------|----------|----------------|----------------|

NET CASH INFLOW / OUTFLOW (-)

| | | | | | |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|
| -£30,699 | £-15,040 | - | - | -£30,699 | £-15,040 |
|-----------------|-----------------|----------|----------|-----------------|-----------------|

OPENING BALANCES 1st APRIL 2023

CLOSING BALANCES 31st MARCH 2024

| | | | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|----------------|----------------|
| £75,881 | £90,921 | £394 | £394 | £76,275 | £91,315 |
| £45,182 | £75,881 | £394 | £394 | £45,576 | £76,275 |

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES AT 31st MARCH 2024

| | 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 | 471 | 633 | - | - | 471 | 633 |
| Cash & Bank Balances as per page 7 | | | | | | |
| CAF Gold Account | 43,381 | 65,945 | 394 | 394 | 43,775 | 66,339 |
| CAF Current Account | 1,793 | 9,916 | - | - | 1,793 | 9,916 |
| Cash in hand | 8 | 20 | - | - | 8 | 20 |
| Total cash at bank & in hand | 45,182 | 75,881 | 394 | 394 | 45,576 | 76,275 |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES | | | | | | |
| Accrued Legal Expenses | - | (648) | - | - | - | (648) |
| NET ASSETS | £45,653 | £75,866 | £394 | £394 | £46,047 | £76,260 |

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

- The accounts have been prepared on a Receipts and Payments basis.
- The charity has used fund accounting principles in the preparation of these accounts.
 - Funds
 - All funds are unrestricted
 - 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 (2022/23 - £NIL)
- The trustees consider that no capital commitments have been entered into other than shown in the financial statements (2022/23 - £Nil).
- 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.
- On 12th April 2023, the trustees entered into a Lease of Suite 11, Central Chambers, Ealing, London W5 2NR for two years at an annual rental of £5,010 + VAT
- During the year BEREFT was awarded a grant of £14,500 per annum for 4 years from 1st October 2023 until 30th September 2027 by the London Borough of Ealing. The grant is conditional on various clauses in the agreement, including one which stipulates the grant is only payable "...subject to the necessary funds being available when payment falls due". Income from the grant is therefore included as and when it is received.
- TREASURER'S REPORT** The trustees acknowledge the financial year's deficit but are confident that the plans that they have in place to develop additional as well as existing sources of income, coupled with the current level of reserves will enable BEREFT to continue to provide the service it is committed to, into the foreseeable future.

8. **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.

SAFEGUARDING

Bereft's safeguarding policy is available on the website

SIGNATURES AND DECLARATION

DECLARATION

Signed on behalf of the trustees by:

Kevin Scott

KEVIN SCOTT - CHAIRMAN

Deirdre McLellan

DEIRDRE McLELLAN – SECRETARY

Christopher Wickenden

CHRISTOPHER WICKENDEN - TREASURER

17th October 2024

REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES & MEMBERS OF BEREFT IN RESPECT OF THE ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31st MARCH 2024 AS 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 2024

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.

Stephen Dover

Stephen Dover
2 Castlebar Road
Ealing
London W5 2DP

9th December 2024